
	Global Journal of Arts Humanity and Social Sciences			
	ISSN: 2583-2034			
	Abbreviated key title: Glob.J.Arts.Humanit.Soc.Sci			
	Frequency: Monthly			
Published By GSAR Publishers				
Journal Homepage Link: https://gsarpublishers.com/journal-gjahss-home/				
Volume - 4	Issue - 8	August 2024	Total pages 525-534	DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.13208658

ADVANCING GLOBAL EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN: GROWTH, CHALLENGES, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

BY

¹Zohaib Hassan Sain, ²Razvan Serban

¹Faculty of Business & Management Sciences, Superior University, Pakistan

²Universitatea Nationala de Stiinta si Tehnologie POLITECHNIC Bucuresti, Romania



Abstract

Transnational Education (TNE), or borderless, cross-border, offshore, or advanced global education, refers to an educational model that enables students to attain foreign qualifications without studying abroad. The rise of TNE is a significant characteristic of today's globalized world. This paper investigates the inception and development of the TNE sector in Pakistan, examining its diverse aspects within its educational framework. It emphasizes critical concerns and notable challenges encountered by the TNE system in Pakistan. Over the last two decades, Pakistan's TNE sector has witnessed steady and substantial expansion. This rapid growth signals promising opportunities for the higher education sector in Pakistan. The remarkable progress of TNE institutions in Pakistan has opened up new prospects while simultaneously posing challenges that must be effectively tackled to realize the sector's full potential. This research employs a qualitative approach, drawing on various secondary data sources such as reports, publications, working papers, and online materials. It concludes with several recommendations and proposals to enhance TNE, outlining strategies to explore and capitalize on future opportunities within Pakistan's TNE sector. Furthermore, the paper underscores the significance of regulatory reforms and increased collaboration between local and international institutions to further strengthen the sector's growth and integration into the global education landscape.

Keywords: Cross-Border Learning; Educational Challenges; Globalized Education; Higher Education; Transnational Education (TNE).

HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS PAPER

- The paper highlights the significant expansion of Transnational Education (TNE) in Pakistan over the past two decades.
- Emphasizes the critical role of technological advancements and online learning platforms in enhancing the accessibility and affordability of TNE.
- Identifies significant challenges such as regulatory hurdles, quality assurance issues, and the digital divide.
- Recommends improving regulatory frameworks, enhancing quality assurance, diversifying academic offerings, and increasing inclusivity through scholarships.

INTRODUCTION

Globalisation has profoundly transformed various sectors of the global economy, with the education sector experiencing significant changes. The emergence of Transnational Education (TNE), also known as borderless, cross-border, or offshore education, exemplifies a positive outcome of globalisation (Wilkins & Juusola, 2017). Modern societies thrive on innovations fueled by the free exchange of knowledge and information across borders,

strengthening educational foundations at all levels and significantly enhancing global higher education prospects (Francois et al., 2016). Transnational Education is an educational arrangement where learners reside in a different country from the institution awarding the qualification. The British Council describes TNE as a scenario where students pursue foreign qualifications without leaving their home country.



Transnational Education is an increasingly vital component of internationalised higher education in today's globalised world. The technological boom and globalisation have facilitated and accelerated TNE initiatives worldwide, including Pakistan. As with all emerging processes, TNE presents unique opportunities and challenges. In Pakistan, the value and innovation brought by TNE are acknowledged by education stakeholders and regulatory bodies (Abidi, 2024). Over the past two decades, the proliferation of TNE offerings and the establishment of numerous TNE study centres and institutions have yielded promising educational prospects while introducing complex issues for stakeholders, including educational institutions, students, parents, academics, and regulatory authorities. This paper aims to elucidate the multifaceted nature of TNE in Pakistan, exploring the diverse issues, challenges, and opportunities within the sector.

Globalisation and technological advancements have significantly reshaped the Transnational Education Institutions (TEIs) landscape in Pakistan. Global interdependence has encouraged educational institutions to collaborate more closely, offering Pakistani students access to international qualifications and programs (Hill et al., 2021). The pivotal role of internet-based learning technologies in this development cannot be overstated, as it has enabled students to obtain high-quality education at reduced costs. The COVID-19 pandemic further underscored the importance of online learning, prompting many Pakistani TEIs to transition to virtual classrooms and prioritise online education (Alam et al., 2022).

However, these trends also present significant challenges for TEIs in Pakistan. The digital divide, which denotes the disparity in access to technology between urban and rural areas or between wealthy and impoverished populations, remains a critical issue (Jamil, 2021). This divide undermines the objectives of TNE by restricting participants' access to the internet, thus limiting their educational opportunities. Additionally, online programs must consider pedagogical philosophies, instructional design, and effective online assessment methods, which differ from traditional campus-based approaches (Abidi, 2024). The rapid pace of technological change necessitates continuous improvements, the adoption of new technologies, and the use of new platforms to maintain a competitive edge in the TNE industry. This dynamic nature of the TNE industry underscores the need for ongoing professional development of educators in digital teaching methodologies and enhanced support for students in online learning environments, which are essential for the sustained success of TNE initiatives in Pakistan.

RESEARCH PROBLEM STATEMENT

Over the past thirty years, Pakistan's higher education sector has made significant strides. Among the many positive advancements, the introduction of Transnational Education (TNE) degree programs is noteworthy. These emerging TNE qualifications have broadened the horizons of higher education in Pakistan, providing new opportunities for students and various stakeholders. While the TNE sector presents numerous possibilities, it also faces significant

challenges and obstacles. This study aims to evaluate these challenges and propose recommendations to address them.

Additionally, the integration of TNE programs has facilitated access to diverse and international curricula, enhancing the academic experience for Pakistani students. By partnering with foreign institutions, local universities can offer a broader range of courses and specialized programs that may be available elsewhere. This collaboration also encourages cultural exchange and global networking, preparing students for the international job market. However, addressing issues such as regulatory compliance, quality assurance, and the digital divide is essential to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of TNE programs in Pakistan. Enhancing support services for students and faculty, investing in technological infrastructure, and fostering stronger collaborations between local and international institutions are crucial steps towards overcoming these challenges and maximizing the benefits of TNE in Pakistan.

RATIONALE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Previous research has generally concentrated on the higher education sector in Pakistan as a whole. In contrast, this study uniquely zeroes in on Transnational Education (TNE) as a distinct subset of higher education in the country. Over the past two decades, TNE has gained considerable importance, and this research aims to contribute to the existing body of literature by examining the challenges and obstacles faced by the TNE sector. More comprehensive studies on TNE in Pakistan need to be conducted, representing a critical research gap that this study seeks to fill. Previous literature on Pakistan's TNE is either scarce or primarily descriptive, failing to delve into detailed analyses that could provide clear recommendations. This study traces the development of TNE and explores the various problems and issues confronting the sector, ultimately offering suggestions to enhance and improve TNE in Pakistan.

Moreover, the study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the impact of TNE on Pakistan's educational landscape, including its influence on student mobility, academic standards, and institutional collaborations. By addressing both the macro and micro-level challenges, such as policy implementation, institutional readiness, and student preparedness, this research intends to present a holistic view of the TNE sector. Additionally, the study will explore the potential for future growth and sustainability of TNE in Pakistan, considering global trends and technological advancements. By offering evidence-based recommendations, this research hopes to guide policymakers, educators, and stakeholders in making informed decisions to strengthen TNE and leverage its benefits for Pakistan's higher education system.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this research study are outlined as follows:

- To examine the origins and development of Transnational Education (TNE) in Pakistan.

- To assess the challenges and obstacles encountered by the TNE sector in Pakistan.
- To provide recommendations and suggestions for improving and enhancing TNE within the country.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions were aligned with the qualitative research methodology employed in this study. Consequently, the questions were designed to facilitate an in-depth understanding of the subject matter. The research questions are as follows:

Research Question 1: What are the origins of Transnational Education (TNE) in Pakistan, and how has it developed within the country?

Research Question 2: What are the various issues and challenges encountered by the TNE sector in Pakistan?

Research Question 3: What measures can be taken to reform and enhance the TNE sector in Pakistan to realize its full potential and achieve optimal outcomes?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Evolution and Integration of Transnational Education in Pakistan

The emergence of Transnational Education (TNE) in Pakistan has been a relatively recent development, gaining traction over the last two decades. Early research indicates the gradual assimilation of TNE into Pakistan's higher education structure. Wilkins and Juusola (2017) observed that TNE presents substantial opportunities for countries like Pakistan to elevate their educational standards and accessibility through partnerships with foreign institutions. These collaborations often introduce advanced curricula, pedagogical advancements, and international academic benchmarks, significantly enhancing the domestic education system. However, the initial phase of TNE integration was characterized by regulatory and infrastructural hurdles that necessitated careful navigation.

Regulatory Challenges in Transnational Education

The literature emphasizes that Pakistan's regulatory framework for Transnational Education presents a significant challenge. Francois et al. (2016) stressed that stringent regulations and bureaucratic obstacles often hinder the smooth operation of foreign educational institutions in the country. While these regulations aim to ensure quality and protect local institutions, they can also pose substantial barriers to entry for international players. Ahmad (2020) further highlighted the importance of balancing regulatory frameworks to foster an environment conducive to global collaboration and innovation while maintaining educational standards.

Technological Impact on Transnational Education

The crucial role of technology in enabling Transnational Education (TNE) cannot be emphasized enough. The rapid advancement of technology has contributed significantly to the expansion and availability of TNE programs. Alam et al. (2022) highlighted how the COVID-19 pandemic hastened the adoption of online learning platforms, enabling students to access high-quality education from

a distance. This shift has been especially advantageous for TNE programs, allowing institutions to reach a more comprehensive student demographic without requiring physical presence. However, the digital divide presents a significant challenge. Jamil (2021) pointed out that disparities in technology access between urban and rural areas and among different socio-economic groups continue to hinder the fair distribution of educational resources.

Sustainability and Strategic Planning in Transnational Education

To ensure the success and longevity of Transnational Education (TNE) in Pakistan, it is crucial to enhance and strategically plan its implementation continually. Abidi (2024) emphasized the need for regular updates to curricula, teaching methods, and assessment techniques in response to the constantly changing global education landscape. This entails embracing new technologies and establishing robust support systems for students and educators. Furthermore, Hill et al. (2021) recommended the promotion of solid collaborations between local and international institutions to bridge gaps and fortify the TNE infrastructure. Such partnerships facilitate the exchange of best practices, knowledge transfer, and capacity building, ultimately resulting in a more cohesive and high-performing educational system.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology utilized in this study is inherently qualitative. Data was collected from various secondary sources, including reports, publications, working papers, and online resources. This paper examines the evolution and expansion of Transnational Education (TNE) in Pakistan. The analysis is conducted through both descriptive and theoretical lenses. In addition to leveraging secondary sources, the researchers drew upon their extensive experience in the TNE field, spanning over a decade, significantly enriching the paper's content. Furthermore, the data, encompassing facts and figures, was sourced from academic and regulatory bodies such as the Higher Education Commission (HEC), British Council, Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), and Lahore Grammar School (LGS). The article is structured to review the state of TNE, beginning with its origins and subsequent growth. It then addresses the problems and challenges encountered by the TNE sector, concluding with recommendations and suggestions for improvement.

The methodology section underscores the importance of triangulating data from multiple reputable sources to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings. This comprehensive approach not only provides a historical overview but also offers a critical analysis of current practices and policies. It allows for a nuanced understanding of the TNE landscape in Pakistan, highlighting both achievements and areas needing reform. By integrating insights from experienced practitioners, the study bridges the gap between theoretical frameworks and practical applications, offering actionable recommendations that have the potential to make a significant impact.



DISCUSSION

Research Question 1: What are the origins of Transnational Education (TNE) in Pakistan, and how has it developed within the country?

The Beginnings and Growth of Transnational Education in Pakistan

The roots of transnational education (TNE) in Pakistan can be traced back to the British colonial period in South Asia, a time that significantly influenced the formation of the modern educational framework (Kanu, 2005). The British introduced an educational system with the aim of creating an adaptable administrative class to support colonial governance. This model, which emphasized English as the medium of instruction and incorporated a curriculum grounded in Western methodologies and philosophies (Asim & Shah, 2014), laid the foundation for the educational landscape we see today. Despite these advancements, Pakistan's higher education sector struggled to meet the growing demand for quality education due to limited resources and capacity (Ahmad et al., 2014). This imbalance between supply and demand and the increasing desire among Pakistani students for international education set the stage for the robust growth of TNE in the country. The government's recognition of the need to enhance human capital by bridging the skills gap further fueled interest in TNE (British Council, 2013a). Additional factors contributing to the growth of TNE in Pakistan include the economic liberalization policies of the 1990s that attracted foreign investment and collaboration (Ali & Tahir, 2009) and efforts to curb currency outflow by enabling students to access foreign education within the country (British Council, 2013a).

The establishment of TNE in Pakistan was initially driven by pioneering collaborations between local and foreign institutions, often supported by historical ties and shared educational models. A significant milestone was the introduction of O/A Levels by Cambridge Assessment International Education in 1959, which allowed Pakistani students to achieve internationally recognized qualifications (Ishfaq, 2009). This alignment with British educational standards fostered further partnerships between Pakistani and international institutions. The Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), founded in 1985, emphasized high-quality education and partnered with various international universities to offer joint degrees and exchange programs (LUMS, 2023, 2024). The 21st century saw exponential growth in Pakistan's TNE sector, building on these early partnerships. Factors such as increasing demand for foreign education, continuous government support for international linkages, and the rise of online learning platforms facilitated this expansion.

Recognizing the potential of TNE to address the complexities in the higher education sector, the Pakistani government, through the Higher Education Commission (HEC), began actively investing in international education. The HEC, as the national regulatory body, played a crucial role in regulating and accelerating early TNE initiatives by developing guidelines and policies to protect students' interests, ensure quality, and maintain academic standards (British

Council, 2021). The HEC, in collaboration with the British Council, created the Transnational Education Handbook, which provides a comprehensive framework for international partnerships and the establishment of offshore university campuses in Pakistan (British Council, 2021). The government also prioritized areas such as business, technology, science, and engineering, influencing the initial types of TNE qualifications offered (British Council, 2013a). The Pak-UK Education Gateway, a joint initiative between the UK and Pakistan, further supported the TNE model by promoting partnerships and collaborative projects in various educational fields (British Council, 2022).

Pakistan's TNE landscape comprises a diverse network of key players, with institutions from the UK, USA, and Australia at its core (Aqib et al., 2024a). These universities typically partner with local institutions, bringing their international curricula, brand recognition, and expertise to offer their programs (British Council, 2021). Beaconhouse International College, Lahore Grammar School, and Roots Ivy are notable examples, offering degree programs from the University of London, the University of Bedfordshire, and BPP University (HEC, 2024). The rising number of students enrolling in TNE programs indicates a growing demand for foreign education in Pakistan. Data shows that Pakistani student enrollment in UK TNE programs increased by 49 percent, from 5950 in the 2018–2019 session to 8200 in the 2020–2021 session (British Council, 2022). This surge reflects the heightened awareness among students and parents about the benefits of overseas education for career development and global mobility. The growth of TNE is also linked to the vast array of programs available, including diplomas, professional qualifications, training courses, and bachelor's and master's degrees (Faruk, 2023). The expanding range of student enrollments and TEIs, along with the increasing diversity of programs, is bolstering the TNE industry in Pakistan. In addition to traditional academic degrees, these institutions provide vocational training and skill-oriented courses and certifications. This expansion allows TEIs to align with the evolving needs of the Pakistani economy and prepare students for the demands of the modern workforce. The British Council (2013a) emphasizes that TNE offerings should include digital and vocational learning to meet dynamic market needs. The HEC also prioritizes technical and vocational training in its policies and guidelines (British Council, 2021).

Research Question 2: What are the various issues and challenges encountered by the TNE sector in Pakistan?

Challenges and Issues in the TNE Sector of Pakistan

While promising, Transnational Education (TNE) in Pakistan faces unique challenges that require effective solutions to yield the best outcomes for all stakeholders involved. This section delves into the significant issues and offers potential solutions for improving TNE in Pakistan.

Delivery Modes of TNE in Pakistan

A critical issue in TNE provision in Pakistan is determining the most suitable delivery mode that aligns with the country's environmental and societal dynamics (Abbasi, 2014). TNE in



Pakistan is delivered through various modes, each with advantages and disadvantages. The branch campus model is one such mode. The University of Bolton, for instance, has expanded its presence in Pakistan by establishing a well-equipped campus in Islamabad with the support of the Corniche International group of companies (University of Bolton, 2024). This campus offers undergraduate and postgraduate business, computing, engineering, and law courses, allowing Pakistani students to earn a British degree without leaving their country. However, establishing university campuses is costly, requires substantial infrastructural development, and may face adaptability issues with the local environment (Alam et al., 2013). Joint degree programs, another delivery model, involve partnerships between international and Pakistani institutions to offer a single degree. These programs provide an affordable way to obtain global qualifications locally. The dual-degree model offered by the University of Lancaster and COMSATS for Pakistani students exemplifies a successful joint degree model (COMSATS, 2021; British Council, 2013a). Despite this, such programs require strong cooperation between partnering institutions, and meeting mutual quality standards can pose challenges (Knight & Lee, 2021). Distance learning and online programs offer flexibility for working professionals or students in remote areas. The University of London has provided distance learning programs to Pakistani students since 2001, significantly increasing student enrollments in Pakistan (British Council, 2013a). However, these programs face challenges like ensuring online education's quality and effectiveness, students' technological capabilities, and providing adequate support (Ahmad et al., 2014). Lastly, franchising and twinning programs allow a local university to deliver a foreign university's program. Twinning programs require students to complete part of their studies in Pakistan and the rest abroad (British Council, 2013a). While these models can be affordable and tailored to the local context (British Council, 2021), concerns about the qualifications of local tutors and the overall quality of education delivered via franchising and twinning remain (British Council, 2013a). A blend of two or more delivery modes might maximize benefits for all stakeholders, ensuring collective interests and maintaining academic and quality standards.

Quality Assurance in TNE

Quality Assurance (QA) is a significant challenge in the TNE sector. QA in education involves processes to achieve specific standards across various educational institutions and academic programs. Harvey and Green (1993) categorize QA in education into different dimensions. The core element of QA involves setting requirements and standards, which include curriculum content, teaching-learning processes, evaluation and assessment, student affairs, and organizational management. These standards ensure that educational activities align with the institution's mission and objectives (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2015). Internal quality assurance (IQA) systems play a crucial role, encompassing self-checks, internal controls, and feedback from students and staff. IQA helps institutions identify quality deficiencies and improve educational processes (Sursock & Smidt, 2010). External quality assurance (EQA), conducted by

accrediting organizations or governmental entities, provides additional safeguards to ensure institutions meet certain quality levels (Martin & Stella, 2007). Stakeholder involvement is vital in QA processes. Engaging students, faculty, employers, and society members ensures that education meets societal needs. Constructive feedback from students and teachers helps identify areas for improvement in educational practices (Lim, 2021). Continuous improvement is a fundamental principle in QA, emphasizing the need to constantly evaluate and enhance educational processes (Imai, 1986). Transparency and accountability are also crucial, ensuring that QA outcomes are publicly accessible and fostering trust in the institution's commitment to quality (Harvey & Williams, 2010).

Global QA Models and Their Adaptation

Global QA models adapted to specific educational systems offer valuable insights. The UK's Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) developed a QA framework defining higher education institutions' academic standards and quality expectations. The QAA framework includes internal reviews, accreditation, and consultations to inform institutions of quality standards (QAA, 2018). These frameworks provide a clear path for institutions to improve their QA practices, ensuring they meet client expectations and engage in continuous improvement. QA is particularly critical in TNE, where maintaining education quality is strategic in the global learning environment. Research highlights the need for a common QA approach in TNE due to varying practices and standards across countries (Knight, 2016). Flexible QA processes that adapt to host countries' cultural and regulatory contexts are essential for achieving TNE program goals and maintaining qualification quality (Smith & Jarvis, 2007). Enhancing QA rigour can improve student learning experiences and outcomes, supporting TNE institutions' sustainability. QA also helps establish trust and institutional reputation, as proper QA models build stakeholder trust (Lim, 2021). Organizations must continuously evolve, and QA helps identify areas for improvement and innovation (Knight, 2016). Equity and access are recurring themes in QA, emphasizing the need to provide equal-quality education across different locations (Heffernan & Poole, 2005).

Regulatory Aspects in TNE

Regulatory aspects are crucial for the functioning and effectiveness of the TNE sector. In Pakistan, several regulatory bodies oversee TNE across various professional areas to ensure high standards. These include the Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC), Pakistan Bar Council (PBC), Pakistan Council for Architects & Town Planners (PCATP), Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC), Pakistan Nursing Council (PNC), Pakistan Pharmacy Council (PCP), and Pakistan Veterinary Medical Council (PVMC). The HEC, established in 2002, is the leading institutional supervisory body, guiding higher learning institutions through accreditation, quality assurance, and funding for research and development (Higher Education Commission, 2021). The National Auditor General provides the academic equivalence of TNE programs per HEC guidelines, fostering collaboration between local and international universities. The

HEC's 2020 "Policy for Transnational Education" outlines the accreditation system for TNE programs, registration measures for foreign institutions, and supervision practices (Higher Education Commission, 2020). The DPI supports the HEC's mission to promote TNE quality and excellence. The PEC ensures the accreditation of engineering programs, maintaining consistency in curricula and educational practices (Pakistan et al., 2021). The PBC oversees legal education standards, ensuring foreign law programs meet local requirements (Pakistan et al., 2021). The PMDC regulates medical and dental education, ensuring programs from overseas universities meet national standards (Pakistan Medical & Dental Council, 2021). Although most TNE programs fall under the HEC, PBA, and PEC review, further details about other regulatory bodies are limited.

Academic and Administrative Challenges

In addition to regulatory, governance, and delivery-level challenges, academic and administrative issues must be addressed to sustain the TNE sector in Pakistan. Academic challenges include limited qualification programs and restricting students' academic choices. Students are keen to study trends like Artificial Intelligence, IoT, robotics, business analytics, digital marketing, and sustainability studies, but TNE offerings are often limited to traditional disciplines (British Council, 2013a). Expanding the range of programs can capture a larger student market seeking foreign degrees. The University of London offers various degree programs in social sciences, economics, finance, management, and law (British Council, 2013a). Partnerships like the North Consortium UK-Pakistan (NCUK) offer 2+2 study opportunities, allowing students to begin their studies in Pakistan and complete them in the UK (British Council, 2013a). As Pakistan's middle-class population grows, so does the demand for TNE qualifications, driven by limited domestic higher education capacity (British Council, 2013a). The development of TNE has introduced new delivery modalities like online and blended learning, making global education more accessible and affordable (Abidi, 2018). The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the shift to virtual classrooms, offering new opportunities for TEIs in Pakistan. Technology has created opportunities for international partnerships and knowledge transfer, evident in the increasing research collaborations between Pakistani and international universities (British Council, 2013b). However, expanding the academic program base and improving faculty competence remains critical. TNE setups often need more experienced faculty, which is essential for quality education. Capacity-building initiatives and skill development for teachers and academics are needed to provide world-class education.

Upholding Academic Integrity

Upholding academic integrity is another pressing issue in TNE. Academic integrity standards must be met by avoiding malpractices like contract cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. TNE operations must ensure academic integrity to maintain quality assurance and compliance. Instances of students using unfair means to secure academic gains, such as plagiarism and outsourcing assignments, are increasing. The rise of AI tools like

ChatGPT poses new challenges to academic integrity (Huallpa, 2023). Plagiarism and AI detection software help mitigate these issues, but not all TNE providers can afford these services, compromising academic work integrity.

Pedagogical, Linguistic, and Cultural Challenges

Rijst van der et al. (2023) identified pedagogical, linguistic, and cultural challenges in TNE. Pakistan's cultural dynamics present both opportunities and challenges. The upper and middle classes can afford TNE offerings, and the young population presents a promising market. English as the formal language of instruction facilitates adaptation to TNE. However, higher costs due to foreign currency conversion rates pose difficulties for middle and lower-class segments. Social acceptance and cultural friction in TNE establishments, where children from elite backgrounds study, add to the challenges. These cultural conflicts need to be managed alongside academic and administrative issues.

Research Question 3: What measures can be taken to reform and enhance the TNE sector in Pakistan to realize its full potential and achieve optimal outcomes?

Future Directions and Suggestions

The diverse challenges and critical issues in the TNE sector necessitate a holistic and collaborative effort from all involved parties, including international educational partners, TNE providers, the Higher Education Commission (HEC), students, academics, administrators, regulators, and QA agencies in both the host and parent countries where the academic qualifications are based. An integrated approach is essential to achieve the best outcomes and ensure promising prospects for TNE in Pakistan. Below are detailed suggestions and measures to realize the full potential and sustainable success of TNE in Pakistan:

Reinforcing Regulatory Frameworks

A comprehensive and coordinated approach is essential to deploy regulatory regimes seamlessly. This can only be achieved by enacting and implementing a robust and transparent TNE policy framework. Historically, there has been close collaboration between HEC and the British Council to establish an effective regulatory regime in Pakistan's TNE sector. Specifically, for UK qualifications offered in Pakistan, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) invests significantly, in collaboration with HEC, to ensure quality regulation. The QAA conducts systematic audits and reviews using risk-based models to identify areas needing more attention (Quality Assurance Agency, 2018).

Similarly, HEC conducts thorough evaluations and continuous monitoring to ensure that education meets quality standards (Higher Education Commission, 2021). Institutions responsible for TNE regulation should receive adequate funding and technical support to strengthen their capacity for monitoring and evaluation. This includes enhancing knowledge of QA processes and leveraging technology for audits and assessments. Transparency and stakeholder involvement are fundamental in QA processes. Engaging stakeholders such as students, faculty, and employers ensures that programs meet market demands (Lim, 2021). HEC also encourages public participation in accreditation and quality

assurance processes to confirm relevance and compliance (Higher Education Commission, 2021). Pakistan can adopt these international practices to enhance its quality assurance, improve accreditation policies, increase public information availability, and engage stakeholders through surveys, forums, or advisory committees. The guidelines set by the QAA are accurately reflected in its Quality Code, which mandates that TNE programs ensure their curriculum is equivalent to those taught locally (Quality Assurance Agency, 2018). The recent conference on April 22, 2024, in Islamabad, attended by TNE champions and senior UK educationists, highlighted the need for a strengthened and well-implemented policy framework to ensure TNE in Pakistan adheres to world-class academic standards.

Upholding Academic Excellence and Integrity

The primary objective for all stakeholders, especially TNE providers and TEIs in Pakistan, should be to enhance academic standards and promote innovation. The appeal of TNE lies in its adherence to global academic standards and best practices. Ensuring world-class education within a localized context should be the central strategy for regulators, including HEC, QA departments, and TNE centers' administrators and decision-makers. TNE centers must refine their curriculum design, adopt innovative teaching methodologies, and align with the processes and policies of host-country universities. This ensures higher academic standards and sustainable long-term success, building a robust reputation for TNE programs distinct from domestic academic qualifications (Aqib et al., 2024b). Upholding academic integrity is crucial. Students often outsource assignments or use AI tools like ChatGPT to complete coursework, undermining the principles of academic integrity. Stringent measures are necessary to discourage and penalize such practices, ensuring quality assessments and grading policies.

Improving Recognition and Acceptance of Foreign Degrees

Increasing the acceptability and recognition of foreign qualifications in Pakistan is vital. Recognition and equivalence of qualifications are crucial in TNE. The QAA has standardized the comparison and evaluation of foreign qualifications with local ones to facilitate acceptance (Quality Assurance Agency, 2018). Under HEC, additional specifications regarding the accreditation of degree qualifications from overseas countries enable smooth graduate transitions (Higher Education Commission, 2021). Clear policies are needed to accredit foreign degrees in the Pakistani system to eliminate confusion and ensure that TNE graduates are recognized according to their areas of speciality. A unique initiative should ensure that students acquiring TNE qualifications receive equivalence and affirmation of their academic credentials from educational boards, HEC, and other relevant departments and ministries.

Enhancing Quality Assurance in Pakistan's TNE Sector

To enhance QA in Pakistan's TNE sector, adopting best practices from countries offering quality TNE services is essential. The QAA in the UK and HEC provide exemplary models that Pakistan can emulate to improve its QA arrangements. Adopting a unified and comprehensive QA regime involves a systematic approach to

improving QA processes. The QAA in the UK has developed criteria and a quality code for higher education, outlining necessary quality standards and benchmarks for higher education institutions, including TNE programs (Quality Assurance Agency, 2018). Similarly, HEC has clear accreditation and quality assurance procedures for domestic and TNE programs (Higher Education Commission, 2021). Pakistan should follow a similar framework, consolidating the demands of different professional councils and HEC. Digital technologies play an expanding role in QA processes. QAA and HEC use virtual platforms to report quality assurance, conduct online site visits, and collect electronic feedback (Lim, 2021). Implementing these technologies in QA processes can provide significant benefits, including identifying, reporting, and monitoring data analytics systems for decision-making, conducting virtual audits, and designing more effective QA approaches.

Addressing Faculty-Related Challenges for Superior Academic Delivery

Educational institutions are defined by the quality and competence of their faculty and students. TNE entities must ensure their faculty is qualified, experienced, and academically proficient to deliver quality education. Initiatives for faculty development and capacity-building through technical and pedagogical training and workshops are essential. A clear distinction between academic and non-academic staff should be maintained. Faculty in the TNE sector should have a proper career progression roadmap, similar to those offered in Pakistani and UK universities, starting from Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and finally to Professor. HEC maintains a list of HEC-approved PhD supervisors and should also maintain a list of approved TNE Staff available to stakeholders such as students, parents, and foreign educational institutions for evaluation and verification. Faculty should be encouraged to focus on research, development, and practical knowledge delivery to ensure superior academic provision.

Prioritizing Infrastructure, Internationalization, and Inclusion

TEIs in Pakistan must strive to build and enhance their infrastructure, technologies, facilities, and logistics, including campus buildings, lecture halls, classrooms, administrative offices, teaching methodologies, libraries, learning management systems (LMS), internet facilities, and laboratories. Impressive tangible and non-tangible infrastructure is necessary to support a quality TNE proposition. Internationalization involves expanding international partnerships and collaborations, increasing the number of degree offerings, expanding subject and course choices, and adding new and emerging areas of study for specialized academic experiences, enhancing students' positions in the global job market. More cross-border partnerships are essential for improving the quality of TNE programs (Knight, 2016; Lim, 2021). University partnerships in Pakistan should be result-oriented, promoting strategic partnerships with internationally recognized foreign universities. Academic inclusion must be addressed by offering fee concessions, discounts, and scholarships to deserving students. Considering the financial difficulties of Pakistan's middle class, a uniform fee reduction should be considered. Providing TNE offerings to less fortunate students through fee waivers, installment payment options, and

student loans is crucial to maximizing the impact of TNE and ensuring all segments of Pakistani society can access global educational qualifications. An integrated approach to promoting and strengthening the TNE set-up in Pakistan is imperative, addressing diverse challenges effectively. TNE should be an attractive and affordable academic proposition for most of society, enabling students to pursue TNE qualifications without leaving the country and at an affordable fee.

CONCLUSION

Over the past two decades, the Transnational Education (TNE) sector in Pakistan has experienced substantial growth. This steady and consistent development suggests promising prospects for Pakistan's higher education landscape. Transnational Educational Institutions (TEIs) have significantly contributed to this progress by providing access to high-quality overseas education previously unavailable in the country. This expansion of educational opportunities has increased the number of choices available to students and enhanced their global competitiveness and employability. Furthermore, these institutions have introduced innovative teaching and learning methodologies emphasising problem-solving, analytical and critical thinking, and practical skills, aligning their standards with international benchmarks.

TEIs in Pakistan must also focus on crucial areas such as faculty development and research promotion. This can be achieved through capacity building, workshops, and training sessions, and integrating into global research networks. Additionally, these institutions should play a pivotal role in developing Pakistan's knowledge economy by equipping students with skills that enhance their adaptability to modern workforce demands. However, to fully realise the sector's potential, it is essential to address the challenges that come with the stable growth of TNE establishments. This includes implementing a robust regulatory framework to ensure academic compliance, uphold quality education standards, and expedite the recognition and equivalence of TNE qualifications at the national level.

Furthermore, to foster the sustainable development of TNE in Pakistan, attention must be directed towards three key areas. Firstly, there is a need to develop and expand the necessary infrastructure, including physical facilities, logistics, and technology. Secondly, TNE institutions should diversify their offerings by increasing the number of subjects, courses, and specialisations available to students, thereby providing more academic choices. Lastly, it is crucial to lower tuition fees and offer more scholarships. This will ensure academic inclusion and make world-class education accessible to underprivileged Pakistani students, thereby contributing to the sector's growth and the country's socio-economic development.

By adopting a coordinated and integrated approach to reforming and rejuvenating the TNE sector, Pakistan can pave the way for a promising future for its TNE setup. This approach will not only enhance the quality and accessibility of education but also strengthen the country's position in the global education arena,

ultimately contributing to Pakistan's overall socio-economic development.

References

1. Abbasi, M. N. (2014) 'Higher Education in Pakistan: Issues and Challenges', *Journal of Education and Practice*, Volume 5 Issue 18: pages 16-24. Available at: <https://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JEP/article/view/13750>
2. Abidi, S. A. H. (2018). The dynamics of transnational higher education in Pakistan. Retrieved May 21, 2024, from The News website: <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/301101-the-dynamics-of-transnational-higher-education-in-pakistan>
3. Abidi, S. A. H. (2024). Maximising transnational education: Challenges, opportunities for Pakistan. Retrieved May 21, 2024, from The News website: <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1181263-maximising-transnational-education-challenges-opportunities-for-pakistan>
4. Abidi, R. (2024). Innovative Approaches to Transnational Education in Pakistan. *Educational Innovations and Emerging Technologies*, 15(1), 98-115.
5. Ahmad, I., Kahil Ur Rehman, Ali, A., Khan, I., & Khan, F. A. (2014). Critical Analysis of the Problems of Education in Pakistan: Possible Solutions. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE)*, 3(2), 79-84. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v3i2.1805>
6. Ahmad, S. (2020). Regulatory Frameworks and Transnational Higher Education in Pakistan. *Higher Education Review*, 52(2), 127-146.
7. Alam, A., Amin, F., & Sadiq, M. (2022). Impact of COVID-19 on Online Learning in Pakistani Higher Education. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 82, 102392.
8. Alam, A. S., Ma, L., Watson, A., Wijeratne, V., & Chai, M. (2022). Transnational Education and E-Learning during a Pandemic: Challenges, Opportunities, and Future. In *E-Learning and Digital Education in the Twenty-First Century*. IntechOpen. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.101089>
9. Alam, F., Alam, Q., Chowdhury, H., & Steiner, T. (2013). Transnational Education: Benefits, Threats and Challenges. *Procedia Engineering*, 56, 870-874. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.proeng.2013.03.209>
10. Ali, S., Tahir, M. S. (2009). Reforming education in Pakistan – tracing global links. *Journal of Research and Reflections in Education*, 3(15), 1-16. Available at: http://ecommons.aku.edu/pakistan_ied_pdck/77
11. Aqib Ali, M., Verda, Y.B., Shabbir, S., and Khalid, U. (2024) THE TRICHOTOMY OF PAKISTAN'S EDUCATION SYSTEM: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS. *International Journal of Contemporary*

- Issues in Social Sciences, 3(2), 2256–2269. Retrieved from <https://ijciss.org/index.php/ijciss/article/view/944>
12. Aqib Ali, M., Verda, Y.B., Shabbir, S. and Khalid, U. (2024b), Academic Integrity in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) of Pakistan: Problems and Recommendations, International Journal of Social Science Archives, April - June 2024, 7(2), 638-648. Retrieved from: <https://ijssa.com/index.php/ijssa/article/view/339/264>
 13. Asim, M., & Shah, S. R. A. (2014). Educational System in British India and its Socio-Political Impacts on Pakistani Society. 7(1), 87-97. Retrieved from: <https://ijias.issr-journals.org/abstract.php?article=IJIAS-14-163-01>
 14. British Council. (2013). Gearing up for Growth: Transnational education in Pakistan. Retrieved from: https://www.britishcouncil.pk/sites/default/files/pakistan_tne_2013.pdf
 15. British Council. (2013b). The shape of things to come. Retrieved from https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/the_shape_of_things_to_come_2.pdf
 16. British Council. (2021). Transnational Education Handbook Pakistan. Retrieved from https://www.britishcouncil.pk/sites/default/files/transnational_education_handbook_pakistan.pdf
 17. British Council. (2022). Environment for Transnational Education Partnerships and UK Qualifications: Challenges and Opportunities. Retrieved from https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/bc_environment_for_tne_partnerships_in_pakistan.pdf
 18. COMSATS Institute of Information Technology (2021) International Collaboration. Available at: <https://www.comsats.edu.pk/international.aspx> (Accessed: 25 May 2024).
 19. European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (2015) Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). Available at: https://enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf (Accessed: 25 May 2024).
 20. Faruk, A. (2023). Transnational Education in Pakistan—Universal College Islamabad. Retrieved May 21, 2024, from Universal College Islamabad website: <https://www.uci.edu.pk/transnational-education-in-pakistan/>
 21. Francois, E. J., Baughan, P., & Hettich, P. (2016). Transnational Education: Current Issues and Future Trends. Springer.
 22. Francois, E., Avoseh, M., & Griswold, W. (2016). Perspectives in transnational higher education. Perspectives in Transnational Higher Education, 1-219. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6300-420-6>
 23. Harvey, L. & Green, D. (1993) 'Defining Quality', Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 18(1), pp. 9-34. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0260293930180102> (Accessed: 25 May 2024).
 24. Harvey, L. & Williams, J. (2010) 'Fifteen Years of Quality in Higher Education', Quality in Higher Education, 16(1), pp. 3-36. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13538321003679457> (Accessed: 25 May 2024).
 25. HEC. (2024). Universities Recognised Foreign Collaboration Institutions. Retrieved May 20, 2024, from HEC website: <https://www.hec.gov.pk/english/universities/Pages/Foreign-Collaboration-Institutions.aspx>
 26. Heffernan, T. & Poole, D. (2005) 'In Search of —The China Experience! An Examination of Collaborative Teaching Ventures in China', Journal of Studies in International Education, 9(3), pp. 282-295. Retrieved from: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1028315305277681> (Accessed: 25 May 2024).
 27. Higher Education Commission (2020) Policy for Transnational Education. Available at: https://www.hec.gov.pk/english/services/students/TNE/Documents/TNE_Policy_2020.pdf (Accessed: 25 May 2024).
 28. Higher Education Commission (2021) About Us. Available at: <https://www.hec.gov.pk/english/aboutus/Pages/default.aspx> (Accessed: 25 May 2024)
 29. Hill, C., Lamie, J., & Gore, T. (2021). The Evolution of Transnational Education: Pathways, Globalisation and Emerging Trends (1st ed.). London: Routledge. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003225386>
 30. Hill, C., Cheong, K. C., Leong, Y. C., & Fernandez-Chung, R. (2021). TNE Partnerships and Collaborations: A Case Study Approach. Asia Pacific Education Review, 22(1), 87-102.
 31. Huallpa, J. J. (2023). Exploring the ethical considerations of using Chat GPT in university education. Periodicals of Engineering and Natural Sciences, 11(4), 105-115. Retrieved from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21533/pen.v11i4.3770>
 32. Imai, M. (1986) Kaizen: The Key to Japan's Competitive Success. New York: McGraw-Hill.
 33. Ishfaq, U. (2009). A Study of The Rapid Growth of O and A Levels of Education in Pakistan. Contemporary Issues in Education Research (CIER), 2(1), 75–80. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.19030/cier.v2i1.1107>
 34. Jamil, S. (2021). From digital divide to digital inclusion: Challenges for wide-ranging digitalization in Pakistan. Telecommunications Policy, 45(8), 102206. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.telpol.2021.102206>

35. Jamil, M. (2021). The Digital Divide in Pakistan: Implications for Transnational Education. *Journal of Information Technology Education: Research*, 20, 289-307.
36. Kanu, Y. (2005). Tensions and dilemmas of cross-cultural transfer of knowledge: Post-structural/postcolonial reflections on an innovative teacher education in Pakistan. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 25(5), 493-513. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2005.01.002>
37. Knight, J. (2016) 'Transnational Education Remodeled: Toward a Common TNE Framework and Definitions', *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 20(1), pp. 34-47. Available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1028315315602927> (Accessed: 25 May 2024).
38. Knight, J., & Lee, J. T. (2022). International joint, double and consecutive degree programs: New developments, issues, and challenges: In D. Deardorff, H. de Wit, B. Leask, & H. Charles (Eds.), *The Handbook of International Higher Education* (pp. 415-428). Stylus.
39. Lahore University of Management Sciences (2021) Global Partnerships. Available at: <https://lums.edu.pk/global-partnerships>
40. Lim, F. C. B. (2021) 'Quality Assurance in Transnational Higher Education and Challenges of Providing an Equitable Learning Experience: An Institutional Case Study', *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 25(3), pp. 225-243. Retrieved from: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1028315320906171>
41. LUMS. (2023). Welcome to OIA | OIA. Retrieved May 20, 2024, from LUMS website: <https://oia.lums.edu.pk/>
42. LUMS. (2024). About LUMS | Welcome to LUMS. Retrieved May 20, 2024, from LUMS website: <https://lums.edu.pk/aboutlums>
43. Martin, M. & Stella, A. (2007) *External Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Making Choices*. Paris: UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning. Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000159384>
44. Pakistan Bar Council (2021) *Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils Act, 1973*. Available at: <http://pakistanbarcouncil.org/legal-practitioners-and-bar-councils-act-1973/>
45. Pakistan Engineering Council (2021) *PEC Act*. Available at: https://www.pec.org.pk/pec_act.aspx
46. Pakistan Medical & Dental Council (2021) Overview. Available at: <https://pmdc.org.pk/>
47. Quality Assurance Agency (2018) *UK Quality Code for Higher Education*. Available at: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>
48. van der Rijst, R. M., Lamers, A. M., & Admiraal, W. F. (2022). Addressing student challenges in transnational education in Oman: the importance of student interaction with teaching staff and Peers. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 53(7), 1189-1205. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2021.2017768>
49. Smith, K. & Jarvis, J. (2007) 'Transnational Education: An Intercultural Flow of Higher Education', *International Journal of Educational Development*, 27(5), 527-536. Retrieved from: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S073805930700016X>
50. Sursock, A. & Smidt, H. (2010) *Trends 2010: A Decade of Change in European Higher Education*. Brussels: European University Association. Retrieved from: <https://eua.eu/downloads/publications/trends%202010%20a%20decade%20of%20change%20in%20european%20higher%20education.pdf>
51. Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (2017) *TEQSA's Risk Assessment Framework*. Retrieved from: <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/risk-assessment-framework>
52. Tsiligiris, V. (2022). Environment for Transnational Education Partnerships and UK Qualifications: Challenges and Opportunities: Pakistan and the UK. Retrieved from: https://irep.ntu.ac.uk/id/eprint/48427/1/1736356_Tsiligiris.pdf
53. University of Bolton. (2024). About Us. Retrieved May 21, 2024, from UOB Islamabad website: <https://uobislamabad.com/about-us/>
54. Wilkins, S., & Juusola, K. (2017). The Benefits and Drawbacks of Transnational Higher Education in the UAE. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 21(4), 347-363.
55. Wilkins, S., & Juusola, K. (2017). *Transnational education*. *Encyclopedia of International Higher Education Systems and Institutions*. edn. Edited by Teixeira P, Shin JC. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 1-7.