

# Role of Universities in the Transformation of Students: A Study of University in Punjab Pakistan

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#### Abstract

The role of universities in directing, administrating and facilitating students to achieve their objectives and produce inner momentum to enable them to respond to challenges as professionals and learned beings, is of the utmost importance and a required ingredient to meet the cherished ends of an education system. The main objective of this study is to find out the role of universities in transforming the students as true professionals. The research is conducted on one university of Lahore, Pakistan. It includes the analysis of data of students collected at their entry and exit level. The gap analysis between the two clearly defines the role of university in transforming the students.

**Keywords:** Universities, Transform, Students

#### Introduction

The typical role of education is to shift the knowledge of one generation, usually the formal, to the other, usually the next (A W Astin, 1977; Schultz, 1971). The educational institutes facilitate and formalize this role (Lambooy, 2004). The institutes of higher education have an additional role, as discussed by De Weert (1999), of equipping the students with knowledge of their being (Gibbons, 1998), of their self (Alexander W Astin, 1977), of their environment (Gumport, 2002), of the society they are living in (Jarvis, 2001), of the expectations of their parents (Weinstein & Weinstein, 2002), or in more comprehensive vocabulary, the meaning of life, in addition to the shifting of the knowledge of their yester generation. The present study is an attempt to



investigate the role of universities, and of institutes of higher learning in inseminating the meaning of life which made the students cognizant of themselves and of their goals; how these meanings are developed, are molded, and are refined; and how the students get transformed into "better" and "useful" citizens of the society.

The "self" is a non-unitary embodiment that transcends the limits of individualism and rationalism (Hermans & Kempen, 1993). In the childhood, the broader social environment, as defined within the theory of social cognition (Fiske & Taylor, 1991), as well as the narrower world of the family (Offer, Ostrov, & Howard, 1982), contribute to the shaping of a child's self (Piers & Harris, 1964). The society as a whole and the immediate family are the main characters of shaping the concept of self within children. However, this is not the case in the adolescent and at the beginning youth years. Many more actors enters and, the concepts and images about self are/can be molded (Bong & Clark, 1999), redefined (Troiden, 1985), reshaped (Skaalvik & Valås, 1999), and transformed at the institutes of higher learning (Marsh & Hattie, 1996).

The process of education, at the universities and the institutes of higher education, may be taken as a self-paced and self-directed process (Astin, 1984; Dalziel, 2003) where no effort is made to steer the next generation in some particular direction (Bowers, 1980; Simpson, 1978) or to mold them in a certain type of citizens. This is a wide spread established school of thought among academicians, (liberalism in the domain of education (Jonathan, 1997), as some call it) where curriculums are designed for the mastery in the discipline (S. Davies & Hammack, 2005), pedagogy is simply teaching (McLaren & Kincheloe, 2007); intelligent but focused only at the mastery of the discipline (Block, 1974; Guskey, 1997), and the university environment is conducive only to the student. On the other hand, it may be taken as a controlled paced and fully administered process (Apple, 1999) to steer the next generation towards certain known directions, to meet certain pre-defined and pre designed objectives (neo-liberalism in the domain of education (P. B. Davies & Bansel, 2007; Ross & Gibson, 2007), as some call it); where curriculums are intelligently designed (K. Ryan, 1993), pedagogy is purposive (McLaren & Kincheloe, 2007), and the university environment is positioned (Giroux, 2002) for pre-defined ends and intentions. However. We find no trace in the course of history where this process is let loose free to assume whatever pace and direction (Traynham, 2012). But, there always exist religions, mythologies, philosophies, doctrines, disciplines to control and administer this process of education. Throughout the course of history, there has been numerous such attempts to engineer the pursuits of next generations. Lifelong efforts of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-98) for the revival of Muslims (Hoodbhoy & Salam, 1991), institution of Fort William College (founded on July 10, 1800) by Lord Wellesley in then British controlled Calcutta (Das, 1978), M.A.O. College (Bhatnagar, 1969); first in the then British controlled Aligarh (1920) and then in the then British controlled Lahore (1933), Darul Ulloom e Deoband founded in 1866 by several prominent Islamic scholars at Deoband (Geaves, 2012), Jamia Ashrafia founded in 1947 at Lahore (Hussain, 1994), are a few examples of disciplined, and directional education where students are deliberately steered towards certain pre-defined and pre-designed ends.

While the philosophy of the directional or outcome based education is imbibed in the curriculum, pedagogy and the environment of the university, it is also distinguished by the type



of graduates it produce (Davis, 2003; Luitel, 2002; Spady, 1994). Probably, it is this end the whole process of education is designed for (McKernan, 1993). Religious, or religion based education, attempts to develop skills and qualities, among its students, which are more akin to their religious teachings. Convent based schools (Smyth, 1991), in western world, madrissas (Bandyopadhyay, 2002), in Muslim world, and monasteries of Bhakshoos (Junhua, 1997; Nima, 2001), in Indian peninsula, are the prime examples of such educations where the graduates are obvious distinctive. The Higher Education Council of Australia has explicitly defined the attributes a successful graduate should possess as; the skills, personal attributes and values which should be learned by all graduates irrespective of their discipline or field of study (Bath, Smith, Stein, & Swann, 2004; Biggs & Tang, 2011). The general skills represents the core achievements of higher education as a process. The famous Dearing report (Dearing & Barnett, 1997) enunciate the skill set cherished at the institutes of higher education (Barr & Crawford, 1998) the student should possess in a global society. Among the qualities, the report discusses critical thinking, creativity, independent problem solving, ethical practice, professionalism, communication, teamwork, and the like. The students of directional and outcome based education process are expected to have a more refined, meaningful, value loaded concept of their self and they are expected to be more cognizant of the meanings, even colored in some particular tone, of their lives. In summary, they have well-grounded, well delineated, and well rationalized answers to these four questions;

- 1. where they are coming from,
- 2. where they are going to,
- 3. why they have come here,
- 4. how should they live,

The vocabulary of these questions is very philosophical and they have their origins and undertones in religious, or mythological, affiliations. All these questions are related to a particular understanding of the self and give a very particular meanings to life. The hallmark of any outcome based education is to inseminate the answers of these questions into the mental chemistry of its students.

The process of such outcome based education is not a one man show. While it encapsulates the whole society; the students, the teachers, the parents, the neighborhood; everyone has a specific role and place with a specific function. Starting with the role of parents, who make the personality of their children, and nurture them to prepare them for an independent survival as an adult. The role of parents has new demands and expectations at each age. At the time of adolescence, when the children are stepping into a university for higher learning, the role of parents has got even more importance. Then comes the university with its academic structure, environmental ecumenicity, and inseminating atmosphere. Universities have been naively viewed as "engines" of innovation that pump out new ideas that can be translated into commercial innovations and regional growth (Blumenthal, Causino, Campbell, & Louis, 1996). This has led to overly mechanistic national and regional policies that seek to commercialize those ideas (Boyd & Bero, 2000) and transfer them to the private sector (Blumenthal, 2003). Although there is nothing wrong with policies that encourage joint research, this view misses the larger economic picture: Universities are far more important as the nation's primary source



of knowledge creation and talent. Smart people are the most critical resource to any economy, and especially to the rapidly growing knowledge-based economy on which the U.S. future rests. Misdirected policies that restrict universities' ability to generate knowledge and attract and produce top talent suddenly loom as large threats to the nation's economy.

#### Present State of Education in Lahore, Pakistan

At present, some 40 universities, both in public and private ownership, are working within Lahore (HEC, 2013). Most of these universities, especially those in private sector, were given charter for operations in the mid 1990's while in prior there were only a few public universities were operating. This phenomenon gave a new dimension and direction to higher education. Quantitative expansion is just one aspect of this phenomenon while qualitative expansion is still remain a question.

Most of these universities are imparting education in the field of management and business administration and preparing students for the business sector of Lahore, in particular, and of Pakistan, in general. The higher education, in its existing state, can be dubbed as a big "supermarket" where enhanced transaction are keeping a "bullish trend". Teachers in this model of supermarket are reduced to sales persons whose job is to deal with students politely and deliver the "goods". As it happens in a free market, the labor is always exploited, thus teachers are made to work for long hours and in return get low salaries. The concept of knowledge in the "supermarket" culture of education is reduced to a commodity. As in a superstore only those items are kept which have popular demand, similarly now a days the subjects of higher education are determined by the market forces. Consequently, the hot items in the supermarket of higher education are management, IT related courses. Humanities and social sciences are not very popular in the market so the higher education institutions are happily engaged to serve the interest of the market forces by selling hot subjects.

Such is state of affairs, currently, in the education atmosphere of Lahore. The student graduated with a particular vision and mission of a university is very rare to find.

## Objective of the study

To capture the mammoth size of the problem, the study is circumscribed to a single university which is established for a certain predefined vision of the life and universe, and is working according to a pre designed mission, where the students are admitted for higher education in the domain of management and technology, and these students are instructed with an ideology in mind, an ideology based upon the very vision. The single objective of the study is to thrash out the reflection of self- understanding and meaning of Life in the university entrance and exit level documents, according to the philosophy of the university.

## **METHOD**

University offers diversified programs more than 100 degrees at variety of levels; undergraduate, graduate, bachelors, masters, doctors and engineers. There is a wide range of disciplines from business to commerce, social science to Government, Law & policy. The



objective, asks for a (kind of) cohort based, pre versus post, longitudinal analysis. In the following sections, these analyses would be conducted to reach at some decision;

# **Target Population**

For the sake of current study, students of following programs are selected Masters of Marketing (16 years), MS in Management (18 years), Masters of Human Resource Management (16 years), Masters of Business Administration (MBA) (18 years), Masters in Banking & Finance (16 years).

The Construct variables of five keywords; Create Powerful Momentum Inside, Respond to Challenges Outside, Capture New Realities, Foresight & Unfold New Possibilities, and Knowing God gifted Potential, selected from the analysis of the university vision statement, were used to develop a questionnaire for the study. Basically, these are the distinctive features, which the university is striving to develop within its students. So the students have to be judged and tested on the very features. The questionnaire has 26 questions seeking information on all the five keywords.

The questionnaire is formally tested for its validity, both internal and external, and reliability on the basis of a pilot survey conducted on the very students of the programs listed above. The pilot survey was being conducted on a very small subset of the students of university, studying at different levels in different disciplines. For a sample of size 20, the Cronbach Alpha (see Gliem and Gliem (2003); Cortina (1993); Bland and Altman (1997) for its calculation mechanics and details) for the whole questionnaire (as calculated by SPSS version 22) turns out to be 0.7923 which is establishes the reliability of the questionnaire (Santos, 1999).

#### Sample Size

The sample size for the pre versus post analysis of the university entrance and exit level documents is 234. Eleven questionnaires were discarded after having less than quality data. So the actual sample size for the study reduced to 223.

## **RESULTS**

# **Scanning of University Entrance Level Documents**

The entrance data is collected on the basis of university's Admission Form. The Admission Form is added with a special section which is designed exclusively to scan student's mindset. Of course, the admission form was not developed for this study but it was developed by keeping in mind the philosophy of the university which is the spirit of this study. Not all the questions of the admission form relates to this study. However, there are many which are directly or indirectly relates to this study.

These admission form is scanned to obtain information and data for the students at the time of admission. The results are as under;

Table 1: SPSS Output Showing Status of Student's approach at Admission



Question	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Skew	Std. Err.
I feel the power inside to drive myself towards my goals.	223	1	5	2.09	1.016	.763	.163
I can deploy myself to achieve my goals.	223	1	7	3.03	1.415	.608	.163
I feel myself enable enough to achieve my goals.	223	1	7	3.98	2.175	.108	.163
I feel myself confident enough to cultivate within me the new skills to achieve my goals. I feel myself confident	223	1	7	6.13	1.249	-1.513	.163
enough to deliver what is expected from me. I can start new projects on my own. I can chalk out action	223	1	7	3.00	1.379	.489	.163
plan on my own to achieve my goals. I am daring enough to	223	1	7	4.11	2.139	072	.163
think and start new projects I can think of modified	223	1	7	3.14	1.435	.326	.163
action plans for the failing projects. I can think of new solutions for the failing	223	1	7	3.01	1.502	.637	.163
projects. I am confident enough to assess the gravity and dimension of the issues	223	1	7	3.00	1.467	.492	.163
at hand. I feel myself confident enough to deliver what is	223	1	7	6.12	1.226	-1.609	.163
expected from me. I feel myself confident enough to arrange available resources to meet my goals.	223	1	7	2.86	1.437	.338	.163



I am confident enough to implement what I have chalked out to achieve my goals.	223	1	6	2.74	1.231	.455	.163
I am confident enough to generate enough force within me to achieve my goals. I am confident	223	1	7	3.06	1.532	.455	.163
enough to generate enough force around me to achieve my goals.  I feel myself enabled to critically review the plan to make it more akin to new situation.	223	1	6	2.36	1.351	.850	.163
I am smart enough to adjust to the new situation. I can make use of different dimensions of	223	1	7	5.64	1.401	939	.163
the knowledge to adjust in the new situation.  I feel myself enabled to think new ventures for me.	223	1	7	5.70	1.327	-1.149	.163
I am smart enough to adjust quickly to the new situations. I am smart enough to understand new unfolding environment. I feel myself enabled to	223	1	7	4.06	2.032	.024	.163
transform myself according to the new unfolding situation. I feel myself enabled to	223	1	6	2.53	1.345	.808	.163
manipulate within new situations. I feel myself enabled to change myself according to the new unfolding	223	1	7	2.61	1.460	.754	.163



situation. I feel myself enabled to make my way in the new unfolding situations.	223	1	6	2.56	1.327	.604	.163
	223	1	7	2.41	1.366	.860	.163
	223	1	6	2.35	1.295	.891	.163
	223	1	6	2.47	1.381	.723	.163
	223	1	6	2.24	1.246	.838	.163
	223	1	7	5.62	1.353	996	.163
	223	1	7	5.67	1.314	832	.163

It is evident that most of these bars shows a mean score of lesser than even the middle value (i.e. 3) which shows an abysmal status of the minds of the entrants. Such a state of mind is where an open challenge to the system and pedagogy of the university where it also gives a sufficient space to work for the overall uplift of this mindset.



# **Scanning Of University Exit Level Documents**

At the second stage, the same students are to be scanned for the same questionnaire at the end point of their degree programs. This second observation would help in assessing the effectual role and performance of the university system and pedagogy.

A special survey is arranged where the same students are relocated and observed for their mindset through the same questionnaire, which has al- ready been used to have their observation at the time of their admission to the university. Special care is made to locate the very same students and it is estimated that almost 90 percent of the students are the same. The remaining 10 percent have either left the university unfinished or simply un-locatable due to some reason. The summary statistics is calculated and is as under;

Table 2: SPSS Output Showing Status of Student's approach at Exit Level

Question	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Skew	Std. Err.
I feel the power inside to	223	3	7	5.76	.950	525	.163
drive myself towards my							
goals.							
I can deploy myself to achieve my goals.	223	3	7	5.78	1.023	746	.163
I feel myself enable							
enough to achieve my	223	3	7	5.78	1.060	543	.163
goals.							
I feel myself confident		_	_				
enough to cultivate	223	3	7	5.79	.978	449	.163
within me the new skills							
to achieve my goals.							
I feel myself confident	223	3	7	5.85	.987	522	.163
enough to deliver what is expected from me.							
I can start new projects							
on my own.	223	1	7	5.17	1.125	389	.163
I can chalk out action			_				
plan on my own to	223	1	7	5.06	1.234	489	.163
achieve my goals.							
I am daring enough to	223	2	7	5.22	1.164	429	.163
think and start new		-	,	3. <b>LL</b>	1.101	. 123	.103
projects. I can think of modified							
action plans for the	223	2	7	5.10	1.189	484	.163
failing projects.							
I can think of new		_					
solutions for the failing	223	2	7	5.24	1.155	316	.163
projects.							



I am confident enough to assess the gravity and dimension of the issues	223	2	7	5.13	1.213	366	.163
at hand.							
I feel myself confident	223	1	7	4.80	1.170	639	.163
enough to deliver what	223	_	,	4.00	1.170	.033	.103
is expected from me.							
I feel myself confident	223	1	7	4.80	1.177	431	.163
enough to arrange	223	_	,	4.00	1.177	.431	.105
available resources to							
meet my goals.							
I am confident enough to	223	1	7	4.87	1.246	211	.163
implement what I have		_	•				
chalked out to achieve							
my goals.							
I am confident	223	2	7	4.93	1.230	281	.163
enough to generate							
enough force within me							
to achieve my goals.							
I am confident	223	1	7	4.83	1.226	292	.163
enough to generate							
enough force around me							
to achieve my goals.							
I feel myself enabled to	223	2	7	4.78	1.173	147	.163
critically review the plan							
to make it more akin to							
new situation.							
I am smart enough to	223	1	7	4.81	1.246	376	.163
adjust to the new							
situation.							
I can make use of	223	2	7	5.17	1.213	460	.163
different dimensions of							
the knowledge to adjust							
in the new situation.							
I feel myself enabled to	223	3	7	5.74	.979	271	.163
think new ventures for							
me.							
I am smart enough to	223	2	7	5.73	1.004	812	.163
adjust quickly to the new							
situations.		_	_				
I am smart enough to	223	3	7	5.79	1.016	685	.163
understand new							



unfolding environment I feel myself enabled to transform myself	223	2	7	5.67	.994	598	.163
according to the new unfolding situation.							
I feel myself enabled to manipulate within new	223	2	7	5.78	1.024	605	.163
situations.							
I feel myself enabled to	223	3	7	5.61	.993	335	.163
change myself according							
to the new unfolding							
situation.							
I feel myself enabled to	223	3	7	5.78	1.020	721	.163
make my way in the new							
unfolding situations							

Evidently, almost all the items, from first to last, have their mean values greater than 5 which is quite a higher value in the used 1 to 7 scale. The situation shows an apparent improvement in the mean values.

## Comparison

After presenting the mindset of the students at the time of admission and at the exit level here is an analysis showing how they are different. Large is the difference, large is the intervention of the university. Large is the difference, large is the effort made by the university to mold their minds in a predefined, predesigned and particular direction. And significant the difference, significant is the intervention and effort of the university.

However, these comparisons needs statistical test for their significance. Table 3 shows these statistical significance tests for the comparisons. The table does have the data (both mean value and the standard deviation) at the time of admission and it does have the data (both mean value and the standard deviation) at the exit level. The situation calls for a paired sample test based upon Student t distribution (Fisher, 1977; Hey, 1978).



Table 3: Comparison of Mean Responses

	At Ad	mission	At	Exit	Statistical Test		
	Mean	Std.Dev.	Mean	Std.Dev.	t	<i>p</i> -value	
1	2.09 3.03	1.016 1.415	5.76 5.78	0.95 1.023	39.35 23.45	0.000	***
3	3.98	2.175	5.78	1.06	11.07	0.000	***
4	6.13	1.249	5.79	0.978	-3.15	0.999	
5	3.00	1.379	5.85	0.987	25.04	0.000	***
6	4.11	2.139	5.17	1.125	6.55	0.000	***
7	3.14	1.435	5.06	1.234	15.09	0.000	***
8	3.01	1.502	5.22	1.164	17.30	0.000	***
9	3.00	1.467	5.1	1.189	16.57	0.000	***
10	6.12	1.226	5.24	1.155	-7.79	1.000	
11	2.86	1.437	5.13	1.213	17.97	0.000	***
12	2.74	1.231	4.8	1.17	18.03	0.000	***
13	3.06	1.532	4.8	1.177	13.40	0.000	***
14	2.36	1.351	4.87	1.246	20.36	0.000	***
15	5.64	1.401	4.93	1.23	-5.65	1.000	
16 17	5.70 4.06	1.327 2.032	4.83 4.78	1.226 1.173	-7.17 4.58	1.000 0.000	***
18	2.53	1.345	4.81	1.246	18.50	0.000	***
19	2.61	1.460	5.17	1.213	20.10	0.000	***
20	2.56	1.327	5.74	0.979	28.73	0.000	***
21	2.41	1.366	5.73	1.004	29.16	0.000	***
22	2.35	1.295	5.79	1.016	31.18	0.000	***



23	2.47	1.381	5.67	0.994	28.01	0.000	***
24	2.24	1.246	5.78	1.024	32.73	0.000	***
25	5.62	1.353	5.61	0.993	-0.12	0.547	
26	5.67	1.314	5.78	1.02	0.96	0.169	

The last column shows the statistical significance of these tests and of comparisons calculated for an alternative hypothesis of an improved exit level mindset with respect to the features and characteristics being asked in the questionnaire. These asterisks shows the statistical significance based upon the p-value; One asterisk for a p-value lesser than 0.1 (10%), Two asterisks for a p-value lesser than 0.05 (5%), and three asterisks for a p-value lesser than 0.01 (1%).

Evidently, the p-values and the asterisks in the last columns shows that most of the features and characteristics the university is striving to improve among the students have been improved significantly.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Education plays an important role in shaping and carving personalities of the future generation. This is one of the characteristics and intrinsic feature of the university education, in addition to mere transferring of knowledge of one generation to the other. These institutes of higher learning facilitate and formalize this role using different methods. This is usually embedded in their philosophy of operation, their curriculum, their pedagogy and andragogy, their classroom environment, etc. The current study is an attempt in measuring how far the university manage to fulfill their role of inseminating their philosophy of life into their students. As a case study, the study is focusing on one university. The study is divided broadly into four sub-studies for ease in understanding and investigation. The first sub-study is a comparative analysis of the university students; comparing their mindset at the admission time and that at the exit.

The objective seeks to appraise the university intervention efforts in molding the student's life as according to the pre-designed philosophy, called vision. It has been observed that there is a statistically significant improvement in the minds of the students regarding the the inculcation of the self-understanding and specific meanings of life. Which means the university is capable enough to intervene the students' mindset to change it according to its philosophy as laid down in its vision statement.



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