

Analyzing the Problems of Pakistani ESL Students Studying in European Countries

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the challenges encountered by Pakistani ESL learners residing in European countries. For this purpose, two research objectives were made. The study utilized a survey research approach, employing a questionnaire consisting of 28 close-ended statements rated on a Likert scale of 1 to 5. The instrument demonstrated high reliability with a coefficient of .904. A selective sampling method was employed to select participants. Data analysis involved both descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings suggest that studying overseas provides a plethora of advantages that transcend academic realms. The result also indicates that studying in European countries provides you with better educational opportunities and experiences. It can also open doors to international job opportunities and employability in a globalized workplace for Pakistani ESL students.

Key Words: Analyzing, problems, challenges, education, benefits, advantages, opportunities, experiences, employability, globalized.

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INTRODUCTION

Pakistani students pursuing higher education in European countries have been steadily increasing in recent years due to various factors such as the search for better academic opportunities, exposure to multicultural environments, and the desire to enhance career prospects. Yet, the migration for education presents distinctive obstacles for Pakistani ESL learners, encompassing linguistic, cultural, and academic barriers that may hinder their academic success and overall educational journey (Jenkins,2009).Pakistani students studying abroad in European Colleges/Universities after completing their Bachelor's and Master's Programmed still face problems in understanding and communicating with foreign students and the residents of the specific country where they are living at.

The objective of this study is to scrutinize the challenges encountered by Pakistani students learning English as a Second Language (ESL) while pursuing their education in European nations. The study investigates the problems and barriers encountered by Pakistani ESL students during their academic journey, focusing on their linguistic, cultural, and academic adaptation in European educational settings .Investigation into the English language acquisition among Pakistani students studying in European countries for their tertiary education usually focuses on their academic writing and the issues they will face in other country is usually unexplored at their school/college levels in their home country (Kumar et al., 2020). This research work will spot the problems & difficulties faced by ESL students from immigrant and refugee backgrounds as they pursue higher education across various European universities and colleges through a questionnaire-based investigation.It will also provide remedies & solutions for local students to overcome their future issues.

ESL students encounter various challenges, yet all are surmountable. Pakistani students studying in European countries face specific problems/challenges due to their unique cultural and linguistic backgrounds. These challenges include limited exposure to English-speaking environments in Pakistan, disparities in educational systems, and the need to adjust to a new cultural context culture (Khan et al., 2019). Pakistani ESL students may face difficulties in adapting to the teaching styles and assessment methods used in European educational institutions. They may also encounter biases or stereotypes related to their nationality, which can affect their self-esteem and social integration (Ali, 2018).The globalization of education has facilitated the mobility of students, and European nations have become popular destinations for ESL programs due to their esteemed academic institutions and diverse cultural environments. However, these students face a range of problems/challenges that can hinder

their educational (Volet et al., 2008) and overall well-being. This study explores the language barriers, cultural differences, financial constraints, discrimination, and lack of support systems that Pakistani ESL students often encounter. (Ali,2018).

By examining these issues, the research provides insights into the impact on their academic performance and personal development. This research thesis aims to analyze the problems encountered by Pakistani ESL students studying in European countries such as Language Barriers, Cultural Differences, Financial Constraints, Discrimination and Prejudice, Lack of Support Systems, Home Sickness,

The research focuses on analyzing the challenges Pakistani ESL students encounter while pursuing higher education in European countries. These include language barriers, cultural differences, financial constraints, discrimination, lack of support systems, homesickness, academic pressure, curriculum requirements, and accommodation issues. Pakistani students aiming to study in Europe must learn additional languages to navigate personal matters. While English proficiency was once rare in Europe, it is now widespread, with around 370 million people able to communicate in English out of about 450 million EU residents.

English is commonly taught worldwide as a second or foreign language, with categories like EFL, ESL, and EAL. TEFL is the predominant method for teaching English as a foreign language. However, the term "English language learners" or "English learners" has gained popularity to emphasize the importance of students' native languages and cultures. Learning English alongside their native language is crucial for students abroad to navigate daily life and secure job opportunities. Host governments often fund language programs to aid newcomers in adjusting to their new country, sometimes as part of citizenship initiatives.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In such work, researcher tried to explore problems encountered by Pakistani ESL students studying in European countries. The review encompasses studies addressing linguistic difficulties, Language Barriers, Cultural Differences, Financial Constraints, Discrimination and Prejudice, Lack of Support Systems, Home Sickness, financial and academic pressure, course requirements of existing curriculum, and accommodation Problems. This review examines the challenges Pakistani ESL students face, focusing on language acquisition and cultural adaptation.

English learners, particularly those from multilingual backgrounds, face challenges in adapting to new cultures and languages. Learning English alongside their native language is crucial for functioning effectively in their host country and education system. This acquisition is often supported by the host government to aid in immigrant settlement and integration. However, students studying abroad may not always be fully prepared to maximize learning opportunities due to linguistic and cultural barriers, as well as difficulties in assimilating into the host society.

Foreign students, especially Pakistani ESL learners in Europe, encounter various challenges like language barriers, cultural adjustments, and academic expectations (Ingraham et al., 2004). Research highlights issues such as vocabulary limitations, adapting to different teaching methods, and struggles with academic writing (Khan et al., 2019; Ali, 2018). Limited resources and financial constraints exacerbate these difficulties (Watson, 2015). Support services, including language programs and counseling, are crucial for their academic success (Rizvi, 2016).

The language barrier presents a significant challenge for Pakistani ESL students in European countries like the UK and Ireland. Adjusting to native accents and dialects can be tough, impacting their academic performance and social integration (Allen, 2010). Limited English proficiency hinders communication and participation in academic settings (Allen, 2010). Language support programs, like ESL classes, are crucial for bridging this gap (Allen, 2010). International students, especially during their initial months, face academic, linguistic, and cultural hurdles (Allen, 2010). Overcoming language and cultural barriers is essential for academic success (Allen, 2010).

Cultural differences between Pakistan and European countries can also pose problems for ESL students. The way of life, societal norms, and customs in European nations may vary significantly from what these students are accustomed to. Cultural differences between Pakistan and European countries contribute to feelings of isolation and difficulty adapting for Pakistani ESL learners. These disparities in communication styles, social norms, and religious observances can lead to cultural shock and hinder social relationships and academic adjustment. Educational institutions should promote cultural sensitivity and awareness among the student body, provide orientation programs that address cultural differences, and establish support networks or student organizations that help create a sense of belonging and support for Pakistani ESL students (Hofstede, 2001; Ward & Kennedy, 1993).

Financial constraints are another problem faced by Pakistani ESL students while studying in European countries. Pursuing education abroad can be expensive, considering tuition fees, accommodation costs, and living expenses. Pakistani students often rely on scholarships or financial assistance, but these resources may not be sufficient to cover all their expenses. As a result, they might need to take up part-time jobs to support themselves, which can affect their academic performance and limit their time for study and engagement in extracurricular activities. Managing finances while studying abroad can be stressful. Pakistani students may face financial constraints due to currency exchange rates, high tuition fees, living expenses, and limited job opportunities. Financial constraints, limited access to resources, and unfamiliarity with European systems of support can create significant barriers to their academic success and well-being.

Unfortunately, Pakistani ESL students in European countries can also face discrimination and prejudice. Instances of racial profiling and stereotyping can negatively impact their experiences and interactions within the local community. Such discriminatory behaviors can create an unwelcoming atmosphere, leading to feelings of exclusion and isolation. This, in turn, can hinder their ability to fully immerse themselves in the educational and social aspects of their new environment.

A lack of proper support systems and resources can further compound the problems faced by Pakistani ESL students in European countries. These students often struggle to find guidance and assistance, both academically and personally. They may face difficulties accessing language support, tutoring services, or counseling facilities tailored to their specific needs. This lack of support can increase their feelings of helplessness and make it harder for them to overcome the challenges they encounter.

Being away from family, friends, and familiar surroundings can evoke feelings of homesickness. Pakistani students may miss their culture, food, celebrations, and the support system they had back home. This can lead to feelings of sadness, nostalgia, and longing. Finding affordable accommodation is a significant challenge for students studying abroad, as apartments in foreign cities tend to be expensive to rent. This poses a fundamental need that must be addressed before embarking on the journey of studying abroad (Paras et al., 2019).

Living in a different cultural context may trigger an identity crisis among Pakistani students. They may struggle to balance their Pakistani identity with the host country's culture,

values, and expectations. This internal conflict can create confusion and a sense of identity loss (Dolby, 2004).

Studying abroad undoubtedly offers a plethora of benefits, spanning beyond mere academic enrichment. Research extensively documents these advantages, highlighting the competitive edge students gain in their future endeavors (Pottie et al., 2019). Exposure to diverse cultures and educational standards, such as in the USA with its robust astrophysics programs, opens up unparalleled opportunities for professional growth (Pottie et al., 2019). Interacting with industry experts, as seen in the UK's mechanical engineering programs affiliated with major corporations like Mercedes and Bosch, enriches students' technical knowledge and enhances their prospects (Pottie et al., 2019). Additionally, the social aspect of studying abroad fosters the formation of lasting friendships transcending national boundaries, ultimately contributing to the development of multicultural perspectives and potentially even multiracial families (Pottie et al., 2019). Despite these benefits, it's essential to critically evaluate the challenges and complexities associated with studying abroad, including issues of cultural adaptation, language barriers, and the financial burden placed on students seeking international education.

Studying abroad undeniably offers invaluable opportunities for language acquisition, providing an immersive environment for learners to practice and improve their skills (Paige et al., 2017). Interaction with locals reduces anxiety and enhances motivation, leading to enhanced writing and listening abilities (Paige et al., 2017). However, while language proficiency is indeed a valuable asset in today's global job market, it's essential to recognize the challenges and complexities associated with language learning, including the time and dedication required to attain fluency. Additionally, the emphasis on language acquisition should not overshadow other crucial aspects of studying abroad, such as cultural immersion and academic enrichment.

Studying abroad offers access to a diverse range of educational institutions and programs, enriching students' academic experiences with specialized courses and renowned professors (Jenny et al., 2017). While international education may provide superior prospects in the job market, it's essential to critically assess the benefits against the challenges, such as adapting to different teaching styles and management approaches (Jenny et al., 2017). Despite the perceived academic benefits, it's crucial to acknowledge the potential biases in self-assessment surveys and faculty observations regarding the academic performance and

intellectual development of study abroad students (Ingraham & Peterson, 2004). While renowned universities attract international students with their academic reputation, the quality of education abroad should be critically evaluated in the context of individual needs and goals (Pottie et al., 2019).

Studying abroad offers a unique opportunity to establish a diverse network of international contacts, fostering valuable relationships that can benefit future academic and professional pursuits (Jenny et al., 2017). Building connections with students and professionals from different backgrounds enhances one's network, potentially leading to career opportunities, collaborations, and lifelong friendships (Jenny et al., 2017). However, while abroad facilitates the formation of these connections, it's essential to actively engage with the diverse community and nurture these relationships for mutual support and growth.

Studying abroad encourages professional and personal development. You will probably face a variety of issues and challenges, overcome challenges, and gain useful abilities like problem-solving, flexibility, resilience, and intercultural competence. These abilities can help you in all facets of your life, not only in the classroom and at work.

Studying abroad equips students with valuable skills like adaptability, cross-cultural competence, and a global perspective, highly valued by employers (Paige et al., 2017). These experiences make candidates more competitive in the job market, as they demonstrate the ability to navigate diverse environments and communicate effectively across cultures. Additionally, international experience opens doors to global job opportunities, enhancing employability in today's interconnected workforce.

Studying abroad offers the invaluable opportunity to bolster your self-assurance, empowering you to tackle and overcome any obstacles that come your way. You first expose yourself to uncertainty by being in a new setting. You instantly become more aware of your surroundings and vigilant. You develop your ability to observe, something you won't do if you stay in your comfort zone. Second, when you interact with new people and experience new things, you expand your knowledge and develop into a trustworthy individual. Both in your personal and professional life, it will boost your confidence. And finally, you will surely get better at communicating, especially if you go to a place where the people don't speak your language.

Being compelled to communicate greatly boosts self-confidence since you have to find solutions on your own rather than receiving them. It's one of the best things you can do to increase your tolerance and appreciation for the simple. When you are planning to study abroad, it's essential to be prepared and equipped to face potential challenges. Here are some strategies to assist you in overcoming those challenges. Start your preparations well in advance. Explore various universities, programs, and countries to discover the optimal match for your academic aspirations. Understand application requirements, deadlines, and financial obligations. Planning will give you a lot of time to gather the necessary documents and make informed decisions.

Studying abroad can be expensive, so it's crucial to plan your finances carefully. Research scholarships, grants, and financial aid opportunities specifically available for Pakistani students. Explore funding options from both the host country and Pakistan. Create a budget and consider the cost of living, tuition fees, accommodation, insurance, and other expenses.

Depending on the country and program you choose, you may need to demonstrate proficiency in the language of instruction, such as English. If English is not your first language, consider taking language proficiency tests like IELTS or TOEFL and undertake language training if needed. Improving your language skills beforehand will help you succeed academically and adjust to the new environment easier.

Moving to a different country with a different culture can be challenging. Take the time to learn about the customs, traditions, and social norms of your host country. Familiarize yourself with the local laws and regulations. Understanding cultural differences and respecting them will help you adapt more smoothly and build positive relationships with locals.

Seek support networks for Pakistani students studying abroad. Connect with student associations, cultural groups, or alumni networks from your home country. These networks can provide valuable advice, support, and a sense of community while studying abroad. Reach out to them for guidance on accommodation, academics, and social integration.

Familiarize yourself with the healthcare system in your host country. Understand the health insurance requirements and coverage options available to international students. Take necessary vaccinations before traveling and carry any required medications. Additionally,

familiarize yourself with safety protocols, emergency contacts, and any specific safety concerns in your host country.

Homesickness is common among students studying abroad. Stay connected with your loved ones back home using video calls, messaging platforms, or social networking sites.. Share your experiences and challenges with them, and seek their support when needed. It's also essential to create a balance between staying connected with home and actively engaging in your new environment.

Seek guidance and support from your university's international student office. They can offer assistance with visa-related matters, academic inquiries, and cultural adaptation. Don't hesitate to reach out to university staff, professors, or fellow students for help when needed (Paras et al., 2019).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employed a quantitative approach to provide a descriptive analysis. The questionnaire in the form of a Google Doc was shared among the students studying abroad in European countries. All those ESL Pakistani students who are studying in European countries were the population of this current study. The study sample comprised 50 Pakistani ESL students enrolled in various universities and colleges across Europe. Purposive sampling was utilized to select participants for this research endeavor. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher under the guidance of a supervisor focusing on the Impact of the learner's attitude toward learning the English language. The survey included two sections. The initial section gathered demographic details regarding the participating schools and students. The second part consisted of 28 close-handed statements based on the attitude of learners toward learning the English language. The instrument underwent a pilot test with 10 Pakistani ESL students studying in European countries to assess reliability using Cronbach's Alpha. The Scale, consisting of 28 items, demonstrated a Cronbach Alpha value of .904, indicating high reliability. Additionally, the validity of the instruments was confirmed through expert evaluations.

Data was obtained through a purposive sampling technique. Data collected included the participants' responses received online in the form of Google Docs. In this segment, data analysis involved the utilization of descriptive and inferential statistics, where means and

standard deviations were employed to demonstrate the distribution of test scores. The analysis presented mean values and standard deviations across all variables. All data were collected for research purposes only. The confidentiality and privacy of respondents were highly maintained.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Research Question 1

What are the problems which are being faced by Pakistani ESL students in European countries?

Table 4.1

Mean score of Role of Problems of Pakistani ESL students in European countries

Sr. No	Statements	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1.	English language is the main problem for Pakistani ESL students in European countries.	3.76	1.031
2.	Language is a crucial problem affecting the academic performance and social integration of Pakistani ESL students in European countries.	4.27	.917
3.	It is a difficult task for Pakistani ESL students to learn a language quickly in European countries.	4.04	1.150
4.	Cultural differences also pose significant problems for Pakistani ESL students in European countries.	4.27	.944
5.	Cultural differences can affect social interactions, adaptation, and overall well-being.	3.78	1.169
6.	Socioeconomic problems also contribute to the problems encountered by Pakistani ESL students in European countries.	4.04	.969
7.	Financial constraints are a big problem faced by Pakistani ESL students while studying in	4.10	1.086

	European countries.		
8.	Managing finances while studying abroad can be stressful for Pakistani ESL students.	4.28	.896
9.	Pakistani ESL students in European countries also face discrimination and prejudice.	3.93	1.076
10.	The biggest problem of studying in European countries for Pakistani students is the lack of a support system.	3.88	1.075
11.	Being away from family, friends, and familiar surroundings can evoke feelings of homesickness.	3.88	1.078
12.	Mostly problems of Pakistani ESL are related to financially and academic Pressure.	4.27	.893
13.	Accommodation is one of the biggest problems for Pakistani ESL students while living in European countries.	4.11	.956
14.	Living in a different cultural context may trigger an identity crisis among Pakistani students.	3.98	1.058

Total N = 50

Table 4.1 illustrates the descriptive scores concerning the challenges faced by Pakistani ESL students in European countries. The study uncovered that the statement "Managing finances while studying abroad can be stressful for Pakistani ESL students" received the highest mean score (M=4.28), indicating that the majority of students strongly agreed with this statement.

Research question Sample 2

What advantages do ESL students gain from studying in European nations?

Table 4.2

Descriptive Scores about the Benefits for ESL students to study in European countries

Sr. No	Statements	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1.	Studying in European countries offers numerous benefits/advantages that extend beyond academics.	3.81	1.135
2.	Studying in European countries provides the right environment and the motivation to learn a new language.	3.82	1.184
3.	The immersive environment can significantly improve your language skills and fluency, making you more proficient in a second language,	3.83	1.161
4.	Learning a new language will always be a major benefit for everybody in European countries.	3.94	1.114
5.	Studying in European countries provides you with better educational opportunities and experiences.	4.01	1.068
6.	Studying in European countries can enhance a student's knowledge and skills, contributing to their overall academic excellence.	3.95	1.154
7.	Studying in European countries enables you to establish connections and build a diverse network of international contacts.	3.90	1.203
8.	Studying in European countries encourages professional and personal development.	3.95	1.029
9.	Studying in European countries can significantly enhance your career prospects.	3.78	1.231
10.	Your experiences in European countries can set you apart from other candidates, making you more competitive in the job market.	3.76	1.209
11.	Studying in European countries can also open	4.10	1.086

doors to international job opportunities and enhance employability in a globalized workforce.

12.	The great benefit of studying in European countries is equipping yourself with the confidence to conquer any challenges/problems.	4.01	.953
13.	Studying in European countries provides an opportunity to immerse yourself in a different culture.	3.87	.965
14.	Studying in European countries increases cultural awareness and knowledge of diverse beliefs, living conditions, and customs.	3.99	.898

Total N = 50

Table 4.2 presents the descriptive scores regarding the advantages for ESL students studying in European countries. The study found that the statement "Studying in European countries can also open doors to international job opportunities and enhance employability in a globalized workforce" received the highest mean score (M=4.10), indicating strong agreement among the majority of students.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Finding of work reflected that there were 14 statements about the problems of Pakistani ESL students studying in European countries. Results indicate that all statements were gone into agree or strongly agree with the highest mean score of 4.28. So, it was observed that these problems are existed in European countries for Pakistani ESL students. The results of this study show that 14 statements were about the benefits for ESL students to study in European countries The result tells that all statements were gone in the highest mean score with (M=4.10). The result of all statements indicates that there are a lot of benefits to studying in European countries.

The study aimed to analyze the challenges faced by Pakistani ESL students in European countries. The first objective was to identify these challenges, which include language barriers,

cultural differences, financial constraints, discrimination, lack of support systems, homesickness, and academic pressure. The second objective was to explore the benefits of studying in European countries, which include better educational opportunities, international job prospects, and enhanced employability in a globalized workforce for Pakistani ESL students.

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