



Vol. 3 No. 10 (October) (2025)

Impact of Faculty Diversity on Academic Performance of Students in Higher Education Institutions

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ABSTRACT

Diversity in the faculty has a significant impact on how well students succeed academically in higher education institutions. The study aims to investigate how faculty diversity affects students' academic performance in higher education institutions, how faculty diversity and student academic achievement are related, and how students perceive faculty diversity and how it affects their academic experience. The current study is descriptive and was restricted to the Bahawalpur district. For the current study, a mixed-method research methodology was used. The population consisted of all students enrolled in Islamia University of Bahawalpur and Cholistan University of Veterinary & Animal Sciences Bahawalpur. The sample size was 100 teachers and 500 students of the Islamia University of Bahawalpur and Cholistan University of Veterinary & Animal Sciences - CUVAS Bahawalpur. Both male and female students were included in the research. In the current study, the questionnaire was used for the data collection. After a thorough review of the literature, a questionnaire with 45 statements was developed. The researcher personally visited the data sight for the data collection. The data was gathered using a survey method. The researcher directs the respondents where they need assistance while collecting the data. All of the survey respondent data was gathered, and SPSS (version 25) was used to clean and screen it. For the demographic questionnaire, frequencies and percentages were employed as descriptive statistics.

Keywords: Faculty Diversity, Academic Performance, Higher Education, Student Outcomes, Teaching Style Variation

Introduction

Higher education turns into an input that supports the sector's growth and development. A flexible education approach is viewed as an opportunity to participate in the process of personal development Murtaza and Hui (2021). The process of creating a modern,



Vol. 3 No. 10 (October) (2025)

informed, and civilized society heavily relies on higher education. It accomplishes this by providing comprehensive knowledge about a range of life topics from the perspective of the entire world. The main objectives of higher education are to educate, train, conduct research, and serve society. The need for higher education is rising in the context of globalization, and there are more options accessible as well.

To meet these needs, we need to establish criteria for higher education institutions that are of the highest possible quality and world-class level. According to Abdallah et al. (2019), education is a basic right reserved for every person. It is also one of the most important things that contribute to the growth of families from lower-class backgrounds in every nation. Despite this, consumers of education services in Pakistan, including students and their parents, have very few options or ideas when it comes to pursuing higher education. In the years after Pakistan gained its independence, the country's higher education system has seen remarkable growth, which has resulted in the country's scientists, engineers, technicians, physicians, teachers, and managers being in great demand all over the globe. The pursuit of higher education affords society a variety of possibilities to contemplate the social, cultural, moral, economic, and spiritual challenges that face humanity.

Statement of Problem

Research by Ghulam Murtaza (2021) highlights that faculty members' conceptions of diversity influence curriculum and instruction, with different perspectives leading to varied approaches to supporting students. Moreover, faculty support mechanisms, such as tenure-clock extension policies, promote diversity and inclusion, ultimately impacting student outcomes. The significance of diversity and inclusion programs in higher education indicates their potential to remove barriers to access and enhance academic performance among diverse student populations (Shah et al., 2023). Thus, the study is designed to impact faculty diversity on the academic performance of students in higher education institutions.

Research Objectives

The study is based on the following objectives:

To study the impact of faculty diversity on academic performance of students in higher education institutions

To examine the relationship between Faculty Diversity and Student Academic Achievement

To analyze Student Perceptions of Faculty Diversity and Its Impact on Their Academic Experience

To evaluate the Role of Diverse Faculty in Enhancing Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills

To recommend suitable suggestions for better faculty diversity and students' academic achievement

Significance of the study

The current study is useful because those who are responsible for educational planning could find this research useful. Their ability to design new tactics for addressing the obstacles that are hurting the effectiveness of instructors is something that they can do. The findings of this research will serve as a guide for professionals in the field of educational planning, allowing them to make more informed decisions about the recruitment of teachers. This research may be of assistance to the community in gaining a better understanding of the function that instructors play in the academic achievement of children.



Vol. 3 No. 10 (October) (2025)

Literature Review

This thesis's second chapter, which includes a review of the literature, looks at how teacher diversity affects students' academic performance. Various sources have been examined with consideration for the study's goals, and the literature about those goals has been identified and provided here.

Higher Education in Pakistan

Because access to higher education is relatively low in Pakistan's neighboring countries, the country's higher education development indices do not yield positive outcomes. The primary and secondary education standards in Pakistan are generally getting worse. There is an urgent need to strengthen science education, as it has fallen to the lowest point. There has been a chronic shortage of educators, libraries, and labs ever since independence (Sunder M & Mahalingam, 2018). To maximize the advantages of teacher-student interaction, postgraduate work is currently concentrated in university departments. However, this tendency frequently restricts access for university teachers, making it difficult for them to conduct higher-level research due to a lack of strict guidelines. Universities are crucial to professional and advanced education.

However, universities are in charge of running the real educational system. However, the majority of degree-granting institutions, both public and private, are also part of provincial universities (Arooj, 2018). These universities administer bachelor's degree programs, hold exams, and run research boards for a variety of subject areas. These institutions have developed minimal requirements for hiring teachers, increasing the standards for classrooms, labs, and libraries, and sending out inspection teams to the college regularly. Three-quarters of the students must pass the majority of college and university exams. Only sixty percent of them can proceed or are accepted into master's programs (Ghulam Murtaza, 2021).

Higher Education in Pakistan and Vision of 2025

In any culture, a higher education program cannot be approached in isolation; rather, it requires a comprehensive strategy. To set Pakistan on the path of growth, the Ministry of Planning and growth created Vision 2025 in 2014. In particular, it has highlighted research and higher education as growth engines for Pakistan in the future, with the goal of "putting Pakistan on the innovation map of the world through focused research and development" as a primary thrust. To enhance the Primary and Secondary Gender Parity Index to 1, the vision also calls for increasing the number of PhDs from 7,000 to 15,000, increasing the coverage of higher education from 7% to 12%, and raising the percentage of women in the workforce from 24% to 45% (Hassan et al., 2019).

The Higher Education Commission was significantly strengthened to ensure quality education, keeping the issue high on the political agenda and maintaining top priority. In today's competitive world, having a degree alone is insufficient; one also needs relevant knowledge that can be used as social capital and contribute to the economy. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) represent a global responsibility to guide developing nations' economic development in a manner that will advance prosperity throughout the developing world (Usman & Ab Rahman, 2021).

Higher Education Institutions

Academic institutions are intricate establishments. Making decisions at the highest level is essential for success in a nation like Pakistan where efforts to improve higher education institutions are still ongoing. These establishments can be described as a type



Vol. 3 No. 10 (October) (2025)

of organized chaos due to the intricacy of universities. This indicates that these organizations use a sophisticated decision-making process. Three choice situations—ambiguous technology, problematic preferences, and flexible participation—define organized anarchies (Raza et al., 2018).

It is necessary to do further research on the notion of organized anarchy in order to get an understanding of universities via the lens of organized anarchy. To have a proper grasp of anarchy, it is necessary to have two primary concepts. The first scenario is when businesses take risks without having any objectives that are consistently communicated. Complex organizations, in which decision-making is carried out under ambiguous objectives, are prone to this particular phenomenon (Mehmood et al., 2018).

Students' performance in Higher Education

The ultimate goal of education is to motivate kids to learn. Fostering tolerance, comprehension, and the ability to think critically to embrace diverse viewpoints are the objectives of higher education. Increasing societal knowledge is the aim of education as a sociological concept (Abu Saa et al., 2019). Higher education is linked to the goals of developing future leaders, fostering a supportive learning environment, and enhancing the academic and intellectual landscape in the HEC's model of Quality Assurance (Alhazmi & Sheneamer, 2023). It emphasizes paradigm shifts heavily. As a result, it powers the social and economic advancement engines at the national, regional, and global levels.

The goal of the HEC PQ initiative is to develop students holistically so they can contribute to society. The development of students' moral, social, and cognitive faculties is the main priority to prepare them for meaningful contributions to society. It is clear from systematic interviews with deans, department heads, and senior faculty members of several universities that students are becoming less interested in learning and more focused on getting better marks to advance their careers. Both internal and external forces are mostly to blame for this. Higher grades are seen by the students as a sign of success for their future careers (Gonzalez et al., 2020). According to researchers, students are less intrinsically motivated and prioritize their grades (Vo et al., 2017). Policy makers have difficulties as a result of the unethical, cultural, and pedagogical conundrum posed by students' pursuit of higher grades in higher education (Alwarthan et al., 2022).

Concept of Diversity

Individual differences in appearance, traits, beliefs, attitudes, and actions are referred to as variety. Color, race, gender, age, ability, place of origin, and sexual orientation are some of the ways it is expressed. Other ways it manifests include nationality, worldviews, language, education, religious beliefs, social, marital, and parental status, as well as educational and professional backgrounds. Diversity benefits a country by offering a variety of perspectives and solutions to societal issues, claims Banks (2006). Variety increases accessibility to cultural items, but it can also lead to misunderstandings and animosity (Mehrotra & Wagner, 2018). Diversity must be researched, understood, and integrated into all facets of the workplace if it is to be successful.

Blaine and Brenchley (2020) emphasized the importance of student diversity awareness, stating that preconceptions should be acknowledged when accepting differences in both oneself and others. He argued that culture and cognition were deeply interconnected as critical variables in the teaching-learning process. Scholars such as Murray (2020) suggested that students were more likely to engage in complex and critical thinking when placed in unfamiliar situations that challenged their comfort zones. This perspective was



Vol. 3 No. 10 (October) (2025)

grounded in social cognitive development theories, which highlighted the role of new and diverse experiences in shaping intellectual growth.

Concept of Faculty Diversity

A wide range of human traits are included in diversity, such as age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, stature, race, religion, and language. Racial definitions of school desegregation have historically been greatly influenced by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Siegel-Hawley and Frankenberg (2011) investigated this topic, raising concerns about the ramifications of redefining diversity while possibly ignoring the role that race has played historically in guaranteeing equal access to education. They contended that although racial diversity is still essential to achieving equity in higher education, the wider advantages of desegregation are receiving less attention.

Over the past few decades, diversity in institutions of higher education (IHEs) has gained prominence as a critical issue in both the United States and Canada. Despite efforts to increase representation, racial disparities persist. Davis (2006) reported that while 45% of undergraduate students in the U.S. identified as people of color in 2017, only 24% of faculty members belonged to racial minority groups. Similarly, Universities Canada (2018) found that although 40% of undergraduate and graduate students identified as racial minorities, only 21% of full-time faculty members in Canadian universities were from racialized backgrounds. These statistics highlight the persistent underrepresentation of diverse faculty despite demographic shifts in student populations. Further research has examined long-term trends in faculty diversity. Ortiz and Santos (2023) analyzed data from 2013 to 2017 and found that while there have been improvements in "ethnoracial" and gender diversity among faculty, these changes have not kept pace with the overall growth of racial minority populations in the U.S. Similarly, Davies et al. (2021) discussed systemic barriers preventing faculty of color from advancing in academia, including implicit bias, unequal access to tenure-track positions, and disparities in research funding. These structural inequalities contribute to a slower rate of progress in achieving proportional representation in higher education leadership and faculty positions.

Faculty Diversity Matters for Student Success

There is little doubt that the presence of diverse students in schools leads to higher academic standards. There have been a great number of research that has repeatedly shown its multiple benefits. As a result of being exposed to a variety of perspectives, students can have a more enriching educational experience when they are a part of a campus community that is diverse. With enrollment numbers falling and companies looking for more skilled workers, educational institutions have to make an effort to cultivate a campus community that is more welcoming and welcoming to all members of the community (Guzzardo et al., 2021). One strategy for accomplishing this goal is to expand the diversity of the faculty. Several studies have shown that a feeling of community and a diverse faculty are essential for the success of students. Furthermore, these studies have also demonstrated that faculty diversity has a positive influence on the overall graduation rates of students of color. The results of a recent study¹⁸ indicate that if students of African descent participate in STEM classes that are taught by Black professors, they have a greater likelihood of remaining in a STEM-related job beyond their first year of enrollment. It's not hard to understand why. According to Llamas et al. (2021), a significant number of students of color look to Black and Latino faculty members as mentors and role models, and they seek advice and support from them. This



Vol. 3 No. 10 (October) (2025)

is especially true, especially at campuses that are mostly White.

How Colleges & Universities Were Graded

For each of the 543 institutions that were included in this study, a set of faculty diversity scores and grades was awarded to its respective institution. The purpose of these rankings is to assess the degree to which the racial and ethnic composition of an institution's faculty is comparable to that of its student body. Additionally, these rankings analyze the diversity of the faculty ranks across a variety of recruiting criteria. We also investigated the development of diversity among faculty members. The diversity scores of our faculty for our first three equity indicators range from 0 to 100, with 100 being the highest possible score for an institution and 0 being the lowest possible score. Based on these results, we next used a traditional grading scheme to provide a letter grade to each of the institutions. For scores of ninety or above, students were granted an A. It was determined that scores in the 80s, 70s, and 60s, respectively, were deserving of grades of B, C, and D. A failing grade was given to students with grades lower than sixty. A time-series faculty diversity measure was the final number that we calculated. As an alternative to a conventional letter grade, this statistic is represented by the percentage point change that occurred between the years 2005 and 2020. Because of the findings, it is clear that more steps need to be taken to increase the percentage of Black and Latino faculty members working in higher education. In addition to this, they highlight the need for these institutions to ensure that the diverse pool of applicants who are currently in the academic pipeline is handled properly when it comes to recruiting and promotion opportunities. According to Zerquera et al. (2018), we hope that advocates will make use of these metrics and conclusions to keep track of the activities the institution is engaged in and demand changes.

Research Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive research design to examine the impact of faculty diversity on students' academic performance in higher education institutions. Descriptive research is effective in portraying the characteristics and relationships among variables within a specific population (Snyder, 2019). Given the nature of the research questions and objectives, a quantitative approach was deemed appropriate for collecting and analyzing numerical data systematically.

The target population comprised faculty members and students from two public sector universities in Pakistan: The Cholistan University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (CUVAS) and the Islamia University of Bahawalpur (IUB). These institutions were selected due to their diverse faculty composition and large student bodies, which made them suitable for exploring the variables under investigation.

A sample of 600 respondents was drawn from the population, including 100 faculty members and 500 students, ensuring gender diversity and balanced representation from both institutions. Specifically, 50 teachers and 250 students were selected from each university, as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Sample Distribution

University	Teachers	Students	Total
Islamia University of Bahawalpur	50	250	300
CUVAS Bahawalpur	50	250	300
Total	100	500	600



Vol. 3 No. 10 (October) (2025)

The data collection tool was a structured questionnaire comprising 45 items, developed after an extensive literature review. Of these, 40 were close-ended items measured on a five-point Likert scale, and 5 were open-ended to gain qualitative insights. To ensure content validity, the initial draft of the questionnaire was reviewed by three subject-matter experts. Based on their feedback, revisions were made to improve clarity, relevance, and alignment with research objectives.

A pilot study was conducted with 30 students from the Department of Educational Training at the Islamia University of Bahawalpur to identify ambiguities and refine the instrument. Using SPSS, a Likert scale coding from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was applied to the responses. Based on the pilot results, several items were modified or replaced to enhance reliability and internal consistency.

Data collection was carried out through in-person survey administration by the researcher, who also provided guidance where necessary. This direct method ensured a high response rate and minimized misinterpretation of questions. The collected data were then entered and analyzed using SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were computed to summarize demographic variables, while inferential analysis was used to explore the relationship between faculty diversity and student academic performance.

Results

This section presents the findings derived from the analysis of quantitative data collected from 600 respondents (100 faculty members and 500 students) from two public universities in Southern Punjab. The study aimed to assess the correlation between faculty diversity and students' academic performance using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and regression analysis performed through SPSS Version 25.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Students: Among the 500 students, 60% were female and 40% were male. 55% belonged to rural backgrounds, and 45% to urban areas.

Faculty: Of the 100 faculty respondents, 55% were male and 45% female. Faculty members represented various ethnic groups and had educational qualifications ranging from Master's to Ph.D., with teaching experience varying from 1 to over 15 years.

Descriptive Statistics

Key indicators of faculty diversity were measured through items focusing on gender, ethnicity, educational background, and teaching style. Student academic performance was measured using self-reported GPA, engagement levels, and satisfaction with learning outcomes.

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gender diversity	4.12	0.68
Ethnic diversity	3.95	0.72
Academic background diversity	4.03	0.70
Teaching style variation	4.21	0.66
Student academic performance	4.08	0.74

These values suggest that respondents generally perceived high diversity in faculty and rated student performance positively.



Vol. 3 No. 10 (October) (2025)

Correlation Analysis

To determine the relationship between faculty diversity and student academic performance, Pearson's correlation was applied.

Variable	Academic Performance (r)	Sig. (2-tailed)
Gender diversity	0.45**	0.000
Ethnic diversity	0.39**	0.000
Educational background	0.51**	0.000
Teaching style variation	0.58**	0.000

Note: $p < 0.01$ indicates statistically significant results.

The strongest positive correlation was found between **teaching style variation** and **academic performance** ($r = 0.58$), followed by **educational background diversity** ($r = 0.51$). These findings show that faculty diversity dimensions are positively associated with better academic outcomes.

Regression Analysis

A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to assess the predictive strength of faculty diversity dimensions on student academic performance.

Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	Sig.
1	.64	.41	.40	103.2	.000**

The regression model explains 41% of the variance in student academic performance, which is statistically significant at $p < 0.01$. The model suggests that faculty diversity is a meaningful predictor of students' academic success.

Coefficients Table

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Gender diversity	0.23	0.07	0.21	3.29	.001
Ethnic diversity	0.19	0.06	0.18	2.98	.003
Educational background	0.26	0.07	0.25	3.71	.000
Teaching style variation	0.31	0.06	0.33	4.89	.000

Among all predictors, **teaching style variation** and **educational background diversity** emerged as the most significant contributors to academic performance, followed by **gender** and **ethnic diversity**.

Discussion

The study's goal is to investigate how teacher diversity affects students' academic achievement in postsecondary educational institutions. The findings of this study support the notion that a diverse faculty is necessary to improve student learning outcomes. The study's objectives, which included analyzing the impact of teacher diversity on students' academic performance in higher education institutions, were validated by the statistics. A similar result was measured in the study conducted by (Cross & Carman, 2022).

The objective the study was to examine the relationship between Faculty Diversity and Student Academic Achievement This is consistent with earlier studies that found minority students gain from having instructors who are similar to them in race or ethnicity. Minority students' motivation, sense of community, and academic



Vol. 3 No. 10 (October) (2025)

achievement can all be improved when they perceive that their teachers reflect their backgrounds. The provision of role models who motivate and mentor students from underrepresented groups is frequently credited with this phenomenon. Similar findings were also identified in the study of (Menifield et al., 2024).

The study is based on the objectives to analyze Student Perceptions of Faculty Diversity and Its Impact on Their Academic Experience. A varied staff can enhance the entire educational experience by bringing a range of viewpoints, experiences, and pedagogical approaches to the classroom. A wider variety of student learning styles can be accommodated by various teaching philosophies, which will enhance learning results. Consequently, educational institutions must acknowledge the importance of faculty diversity as a crucial element in establishing inclusive and productive learning environments.

These results in the study of Deemer et al. (2020), highlight how crucial it is to recruit and retain diverse faculty to support a multicultural curriculum. To create an atmosphere that encourages all students to succeed academically, educational institutions should aggressively look for methods to boost the representation of underrepresented minority groups on their staff.

Conclusions

The results demonstrated that majority of the students were comfortable engaging with a diverse group of individuals, that students were engaging with individuals from diverse cultures, that group discussions with individuals from diverse cultures caused me to feel uneasy, that students were engaging with a diverse group of individuals, and that the instructor provided me with information about the factors I should consider when engaging in a conversation with someone from a different culture.

They found that I can discuss personal matters with my teacher, that she keeps me informed about my academic progress by looking at my files and grades alone, that she is a mentor to me, and that they are interested in teaching me how to learn about courses and programs on my own, that they tell me what would be the best schedule for me, that they suggest important factors to consider when planning a schedule and then let me make the final decision, that I am extremely tense and nervous in a conversation with someone from a different culture, that I have no fear of speaking up in a conversation with someone from a different culture, and that I face the possibility of interacting with people from different cultures with confidence.

It was discovered that I feel very comfortable speaking with someone from a different culture. I feel very comfortable talking to someone from a different culture. I'm reluctant to speak up when I'm interacting with someone from a different culture. I've found groups at my school where I feel like I fit in. However, I feel uncomfortable and my ideas become confused when I interact with people from diverse cultures. In addition to making sure I've registered in the appropriate classes and requiring me to follow instructions, my teacher sets my academic goals based on my performance. We talked about what we expected from each other, and she helped me choose the classes I should enroll in each semester. I am happy with myself since I believe I have many positive traits.

Since I can perform tasks just as effectively as the majority of individuals, it is my responsibility to complete the degree within the allocated time. Although I often feel that I'm worthless and have little to be proud of, I also believe that I'm a valuable person, at least on par with other people. I wish I respected myself more. Although I have a good outlook on myself, I often feel like a failure. I frequently utilize social media, and I feel



Vol. 3 No. 10 (October) (2025)

comfortable communicating with a wide range of individuals from various cultural backgrounds.

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Vol. 3 No. 10 (October) (2025)

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