

# Journal of Educational Research & Social Sciences Review (JERSSR)

## Transnational Education (TNE) in Pakistan: Challenges and Way Forward

1. **Dr. Muhammad Aqib Ali** (Corresponding Author)  
Associate Professor, The Millennium Universal College (TMUC),  
Email: [email\\_aqib@yahoo.com](mailto:email_aqib@yahoo.com)
2. **Sana Muhammad Tariq**  
Program Manager, The Millennium Universal College (TMUC)
3. **Usman Khalid**  
Director Learning and Development, Teach Globally



### Abstract

*Transnational education (TNE) also referred to as borderless, cross-border, or off-shore education refers to a system of education wherein the students, without leaving their home country, study to attain a foreign qualification. The rise of transnational education is one of the most prominent aspects of modern globalized world. This paper assesses the origin and development of TNE sector in Pakistan by evaluating the multifarious facets of TNE in the context of Pakistan's education system by highlighting the important issues and major challenges faced by the TNE system in the country. The TNE sector of Pakistan has grown steadily and progressively over the last two decades. The encouragingly fast-paced growth of TNE system omens positive prospects from the perspective of Pakistan's higher education sector. The commendable progress of the TNE establishments and institutions in the country have both offered opportunities as well as also posed various challenges which are to be aptly addressed and countered in order to unlock the true potential of TNE sector in Pakistan. The paper entails a qualitative research approach and surveys a range of secondary data sources including the reports, publications, working papers and online sources. The paper eventually presents a few proposals and recommendations for the uplift of TNE by suggesting the way forward to explore and exploit the future prospects in the TNE sector of Pakistan.*

**Keywords:** Transnational Education, Pakistan, Higher Education, International Degrees, TNE Challenges, Academic Quality Assurance, HEC.

### Introduction

The era of globalization has revolutionized all sectors of the global economy including the education sector. The rise of transnational education (TNE) also referred to as borderless, cross-border, or off-shore education is one of the positive aspects of a globalized world (Wilkins and Juusola, 2017). The modern societies are thriving upon the innovations hinged upon free-flow of knowledge and information across borders solidifying the frontiers of education at all levels especially boosting the higher-education prospects globally (Francois et al., 2016). TNE as defined by the Council of Europe and UNESCO is a study proposition wherein the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based or situated. According to British Council, TNE refers to a scenario wherein the students are studying to attain a foreign qualification without leaving their home country. TNE is an increasingly important part of the internationalized higher education domain of modern globalized world. The technological boom and the globalization fashioned and facilitated processes and practices to foster and bolster the TNE initiatives in the world including Pakistan. As in case of all emerging processes and scenarios, there are some unique opportunities as well as challenges that accompany, the same applies to the TNE sector in Pakistan. The significance of TNE as an innovative and value-driven philosophy is also recognized by the stakeholders in the education sector and regulatory institutions in Pakistan (Abidi, 2024). The rise of TNE offerings and a huge growth in the number of TNE study centers and institutions over the last two decades have presented positive educational prospects and has also put forth complex issues to be dealt with by the concerned stakeholders including the educational institutions, learners, students, parents, academics, and regulatory institutions. The paper elucidates the various facets of TNE in Pakistan and also explores and explicates the diverse issues, challenges and prospects in the TNE sector of Pakistan.

Globalization and technological changes have had a major impact on TNE institutions (TEIs) based in Pakistan. As globalization focuses on the interdependence of countries, it has brought

educational institutions closer together to promote mutual collaboration (Hill et al., 2021), providing Pakistani students with an opportunity to obtain overseas qualifications and programmes. Internet-based learning technologies have significantly contributed to the development of the aforementioned trend, as they have helped students access higher-quality education at a lower cost. Regarding online learning, COVID-19 pandemic has shown the vital significance of online learning, especially in Pakistani TEIs, as now most of these institutes have been shifted to virtual classrooms and prioritize online classes (Alam et al., 2022). In contrast, these trends have also posed constricting challenges to the TEIs functioning in Pakistan. One of the issues that continues to affect the use of this technology is the digital divide, which refers to the inequality in terms of access to and use of technology between urban and rural residents or rich and poor people (Jamil, 2021). This adversely impacts the objectives of TNE, as its participants may be unable to access the web, limiting their participation. Secondly, online programmes must take into account pedagogical philosophies and strategies, instructional design, and instructor's online methods for assessment compared to traditional methods for campus programmes (Abidi, 2024). The rapid rate of change also implies that regular improvements, adoption of new technologies and utilizing new websites/platforms are essential to maintain market leadership in the TNE industry.

### **Problem Statement**

The higher education sector of Pakistan has shown remarkable progress over the last three decades. Among other positive and progressive development, a great initiative has been introduction of TNE educational qualification and degree programs in Pakistan. The emerging TNE degrees and academic qualifications have opened up new horizons and expanded the scope of higher education in the country for the students and other stakeholders. The TNE sector has offered a plethora of opportunities at one end but has also been facing considerable challenges and obstacles in its way. This study assesses these challenges and attempts to offer some recommendations in this regard.

### **Rationale and Significance of the Study**

The past studies have mostly focused the Pakistan's higher education sector in general whereas this research study specifically focuses the transnational education as a peculiar segment of higher education in the country. The TNE has assumed a significant status over the past two decades and this study would certainly add value to the existing literature in this perspective by assessing the problems and obstacles faced by TNE sector. The dearth of studies on TNE in Pakistan is a vital research gap that is being addressed by this research because either the studies in the past literature which discussed Pakistan's TNE are very scarce or they have only discussed the TNE in a descriptive manner without evaluating the profound details in order to present any lucid propositions. This study not only assesses the development of TNE but also ponder upon different problems and issues faced by the TNE sector to eventually offer suggestions to enhance and improve the TNE in Pakistan.

### **Research Questions and Objectives**

The research questions and objectives were chalked-out based on the research methodology which was qualitative and therefore the research questions and objectives were designed accordingly. The research questions are given hereunder:

- What is the origin of transnational education (TNE) in Pakistan and how it has progressed over the years in the country?
- What are the various problems and challenges faced by TNE sector in Pakistan?
- How the TNE sector in the country be reformed and uplifted to attain the best potential and favorable outcomes?

The research objectives for the research study are elaborated as below:

- To review the beginning and progress of transnational education (TNE) in Pakistan.
- To evaluate the various difficulties and hurdles faced by TNE sector in Pakistan.
- To offer recommendations and proposals for the betterment of TNE in the country.

### **Methodology**

The methodology employed by the researchers is qualitative in nature. The data was gathered using a range of secondary sources including the reports, publications, working papers and online sources. The paper reviews the developments and growth of TNE in the country from its origin till date. The paper evaluates the information in terms of descriptive and theoretical perspectives. The researchers in addition to secondary sources also benefited from the vast experience in the field of TNE spanning more than a decade which further added to the vitality of the contents of the paper. The data including

the facts and figures were collected from the academic and regulatory institutions including the Higher Education Commission (HEC), British Council, LUMS and COMSATS among many others. With reference to the structure of the article, the state of TNE was reviewed starting the discussion with its origin and growth, subsequently discussing the problems and challenges faced by the TNE sector followed by the recommendations and suggestions.

### **Origins and Development of Transnational Education in Pakistan**

The origins of transnational education in Pakistan date back to the British colonial rule in South Asia which had a significant impact on developing the modern educational framework (Kanu, 2005). Introducing the British educational system was strategically designed to establish a flexible administrative class that was able to promote colonial governance. This model focused on English as a medium of instruction and launched a curriculum that was based on the methodologies and philosophies of the West (Asim & Shah, 2014). Nevertheless, the national higher education industry encountered difficulties catering to the rising demand for quality education as their resources and capacity were restricted (Ahmad, et al., 2014). This gap in the supply and demand, along with the growing motivation among Pakistani students for international education, established a solid foundation for TNE in the country. Moreover, the interest in TNE intensified as the government realised the need to improve human capital through bridging the skills gap (British Council, 2013a). Some other factors that added to the growth of TNE in Pakistan involve the 1990s economic liberalisation of policies that led to foreign investment and collaboration (Ali and Tahir, 2009) and attempts to restrict the currency outflow by facilitating students with foreign education while living in the country (British Council, 2013a).

The initial foundation of TNE in Pakistan was laid due to the ground-breaking collaborations between Pakistani and foreign institutes, often facilitated by historical relationships and shared educational models. One of the antecedents of the formal inauguration of TNE in Pakistan was the introduction of O/A Levels qualifications by Cambridge Assessment International Education in 1959, a renowned examination board in Britain (Ishfaq, 2009). Equivalent to the secondary school level of the British educational system, these qualifications allowed Pakistani students to obtain internationally recognised higher education. Through this familiarisation with the British educational standards, additional partnerships were formed between Pakistani and international institutes. One significant collaboration was the founding of the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) in 1985, as the institution promoted high-quality education and partnered with various international universities to offer joint degree and exchange programmes to reinforce academic excellence (LUMS, 2023, 2024). The TNE industry of Pakistan grew exponentially in the 21st century as it started to build upon the preliminary partnerships and collaborations. There were various elements involved in this expansion, such as growing demand for foreign education, continuous governmental support in terms of international linkages and increasing number of online learning platforms.

Once the government of Pakistan realised the potential of TNE to cater to the complexities in the higher education sector, it actively started to invest in international education. In the context of regulating and expediting the early TNE initiatives, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) played a fundamental part. As the country's educational regulatory body, it developed guidelines and policies to safeguard the students' interests, uphold quality and sustain academic standards (British Council, 2021). The Transnational Education Handbook by HEC and the British Council offers an extensive framework for international partnerships and the development of offshore university campuses in Pakistan (British Council, 2021). HEC has simplified the process of gaining approval for international collaborations by formulating quality assurance mechanisms and facilitating partnerships between the host and foreign institutes. Furthermore, the government emphasised priority areas like business, technology, science and engineering, which impacted the types of TNE qualifications that were initially offered (British Council, 2013a). Similarly, the Pak-UK Education Gateway is a joint initiative between the UK and Pakistan which was developed to bolster the TNE model through the promotion of partnerships and collaborative projects in diverse educational domains (British Council, 2022).

Pakistan's TNE environment incorporates a wide network of critical players, with foreign institutions mainly from the UK, USA and Australia being the centre of this sector (Aqib et al., 2024a). These universities usually partner up with domestic institutes and contribute their international curricula, brand recognition and expertise to offer their programmes (British Council,

2021). Moreover, Beaconhouse International College, Lahore Grammar School and Roots Ivy are some other institutes that offer degree programmes from the University of London, the University of Bedfordshire and BPP University (HEC, 2024). The number of students enrolling for TNE qualifications has continued to rise, showing that the demand for foreign education in the country has grown. Statistics indicate that the number of Pakistani students who enrolled in the UK TNE programmes escalated by a whopping 49 per cent, from 5950 in the 2018–2019 session to 8200 in the 2020–2021 session (British Council, 2022). This growth rate demonstrates that students and their parents have become increasingly aware of the importance of overseas education in their career development and in enhancing the opportunity for mobility around the world. The advancement of TNE is also associated with the broad range of programs, varying from diplomas, professional qualifications, and training courses to bachelor's and master's degrees (Faruk, 2023). Along with the increasing number of student enrolments and transnational educational institutions (TEIs), the number and diversity of programmes are helping to build the TNE industry in Pakistan. Besides the traditional academic degrees, these institutes offer vocational training and skilled-oriented courses and certifications. The movement also allowed the TEIs to expand their horizons of development to meet the growing needs of the Pakistani economy and equip the students with the demands of the ever-changing workplace. The British Council (2013a) highlights that along with the degree-accredited courses, the TNE provision should include digital and vocational learning to satisfy the dynamic market needs. HEC also pays crucial attention to technical and vocational training in its policies and guidelines (British Council, 2021).

### **Issues and Challenges in TNE Sector of Pakistan**

There is no doubt that the TNE is a valuable proposition but it has its peculiar issues and challenges that must be dealt with in an effective manner in order to ensure that the best outcomes are attained for all relevant stakeholders from the TNE sector. With reference to the matters pertinent to TNE in Pakistan and explicating the various important aspects, this section ponders upon the significant factors and also suggests a way forward in the subsequent section.

Among the wide-ranging aspects, a crucial and rather foremost issue regarding TNE provision in Pakistan is to decide the mode of TNE that best suits the students and TNE providers in the context of country's environmental and societal dynamics (Abbasi, 2014). TNE is delivered through several different modes in the country, and each has certain benefits and drawbacks within the Pakistani system. The first mode of delivery is a branch campus. The University of Bolton has expanded its branch campus model in Pakistan with the help of the Corniche International group of companies and has set up a well-established campus in Islamabad (University of Bolton, 2024). The University of Bolton International Campus is one of the famous institutions for offering undergraduate and postgraduate courses in business, computing, engineering, and law and allowing Pakistanis to acquire a British degree without moving out of their home country. This campus has been one of the latest and most important developments in Pakistan's TNE industry, as it will provide more opportunities for nationals who want to get international qualifications and more diversity for higher education in the country. However, establishing university campuses is costly, needs major infrastructural development, and may often encounter adaptability challenges with local environments (Alam et al., 2013). Secondly, joint degree programmes involve partnerships between international and Pakistani institutions to provide a single degree. They offer an affordable means of acquiring global qualifications in a local setting. The dual-degree model offered by the University of Lancaster for students from Pakistan and COMSATS is one of the primary examples of successful joint degree models (COMSATS, 2021; British Council, 2013a). Nevertheless, these programmes need a strong cooperation between the collaborating institutions, and their adherence to the quality requirements of one another may also pose a challenge (Knight & Lee, 2021). Another TNE delivery model in Pakistan is distance learning and online programmes. These allow for flexibility for working professionals or students residing in outlying areas. A prominent example is the University of London, which has been providing distance learning programmes to Pakistani students since 2001; since then, there has been a considerable addition to the number of students enrolling in distance learning programmes in Pakistan (British Council, 2013a). However, there are certain challenges involved in the execution of distance learning programmes, such as optimizing the quality and effectiveness of online programmes for students, considering students' technological capabilities, and providing students with appropriate support (Ahmad et al., 2014). Lastly, franchising and twinning

programmes are where a foreign university gives power to a local university to deliver the programme. Twinning programmes require students to undertake a part of their studies in Pakistan and the other half abroad (British Council, 2013a). These models can be affordable and enable personalization to the local context. (British Council, 2021). However, this mode of delivery is not without its challenges. Concerns have been raised regarding the qualifications of local tutors and the quality of the education that would be achieved via franchising and twinning programmes (British Council, 2013a). The best way to proceed may be a blend of two or more delivery modes which might maximize the benefits for the stakeholders including the students, TNE providers, and governance institutions for ensuring the collective interests as well as upholding the academic and quality standards.

The aspect of Quality Assurance (QA) in the case of TNEs is also among the major challenges facing the TNE sector. Quality assurance in education is defined as the set of processes that aim at achieving certain specified standards in various areas of educational institutions and academic programs. QA entails the persistent evaluation and enhancement of processes in education to meet the needs and expectations of the learners, the employers, the accrediting bodies and the society in general. Harvey & Green (1993) have classified the ways of seeing QA in education along various dimensions. The main element of QA as an activity in the field of education is making requirements and standards. These standards act as the yardstick by which the quality of educational practices is relative. They include curriculum content, teaching learning process, evaluation and assessment, student affairs, and organizational management. Stating these standards guarantees that all the educational activities fall in line with the mission and objectives of the institution (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2015). One more significant aspect is the use of internal quality assurance (IQA) systems. IQA includes the overall process and structures that institutions undertake to assess their performance. This includes self-checks, internal control, and views from the students and the staff member. IQA assists institutions to discover areas of quality deficiencies and transform these aspects to improve quality in education (Sursock & Smidt, 2010). Another significant type of QA in education is external quality assurance (EQA). EQA stands for External Quality Assurance of educational institutions where the assessment can be done by accrediting organizations or governmental entities. Most of these evaluations encompass evaluation of institutional practices, physical inspections, and/or assessment of conformity with specific guidelines. EQA adds extra safeguards and can guarantee that these institutions meet certain quality level (Martin & Stella, 2007). The importance of stakeholder involvement in QA beyond any doubt cannot be overemphasized. Involving the stakeholders such as student, faculty, employer, and members of the society in the QA process is important so as to ensure that the kind of education provided is one that is required by the society. Students and teachers being the beneficiaries of educational practices can provide constructive feedback regarding the functionality of educational activities and assist institutions in identifying approaches to enhance their educational practices (Lim, 2021). This should be done in a systematic way and this is well in consonance with one of the main principles of ongoing improvement – underlying quality assurance work in education. This principle states that learning education is a cumulative process of constantly looking at the process used with intention improving it to get better results. Pursuing an ongoing improvement at models at or below par, means not only trying to solve the problems of poor practice at present but also looking for how to do things better on how to deliver and or participate in various aspects of the educational process. It is voluntary in terms of changing and development; nevertheless, much attention should be paid to monitoring and its subsequent development (Imai, 1986). Last but not the least, according to which concepts should be introduced to the system of QA in sphere of education: transparency, accountability. Most institutions should ensure that the information on QA and the outcome which it has produced is public. This transparency makes individuals to have confidence on the Institution with qualities of quality commitment. While leadership entails charge of organizations in charging them certain goals and directing them to deliver on their educational missions, accountability holds that institutional responsibility of demanding performance and ensuring that institutions align with their missions and goals as charged (Harvey & Williams, 2010).

However, aside from these frameworks, there are many global models of QA adapted to the particular educational systems. For instance; The United Kingdom's Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) developed a QA framework that defines the expectations of the academic standards and

Quality in the higher learning institutions. The mentioned QAA framework contains internal reviews, accreditation, and consultation, which are conducted recurrently or when necessary to inform institutions of quality standards (QAA, 2018). In general, these QA frameworks offer institutions a clear and documented path to instituting and improving their quality assurance practices. Through embracing such frameworks, institutions can be sure to meet the client's expectations, have a consistent engagement in the improvement of the various processes, and, in the long run, end up being excellent. QA, particularly in TNE, is an emerging and significant subject since ensuring standard quality of education is strategic in the global learning environment. The body of the existing literature covers several areas of focus based on the following objectives: Overarching concern – the mechanism of QA; Concern one – the issues faced by TNEs; Concern two – the effects of QA on education outcomes and organisational image. Some of the big concerns of research within this area include the development and monitoring of quality assurance measures that are useful in determining the quality of programs offered in TNEs. Knight (2016) observed the right move in observing a common approach in QA in TNE due to difference practices and standards per country. This framework has also been developed to ensure that there are more alignments of the quality measures and to embed 'the quality assurance within a more consistent approach, which has the further potential to increase the validity and reliability of TNE programmes. The objectives of QA in TNE, the obstacles which hinder the QA of programs offered in TNE, and the strategies which can be applied to implement QA measures in TNE are also widely discussed in the existing literature. The attested environment as described above and the increasing regulation of TNE students demand understanding of intercultural relationships and differences according to Smith and Jarvis (2007). From here they assert that QA processes must be flexible enough to fit into the cultural and or regulatory indices of host countries. This flexibility is important in order to pave way for the achievement of the TNE programs in their mission of producing program graduates that conforms to local educational requirements; and at the same time, protecting the quality of the qualification of the institution offering the transnational education program. QA is also directed to the evaluation of strong effects on students' success and satisfaction in the TNE programs. Heffernan and Poole found that enhancing the rigour of the QA procedures has the potential of enhancing the quality of the students' learning experience and the achievements. Increasing high quality teaching instruction as well as curriculum and support service is significantly realized through QA mechanisms that enhance the student's positive outcomes thus supporting the sustainability of TNE institutions. Other key areas of focus are about how QA is used as a tool to establish and consolidate trust and institutional reputation. As Lim (2021) pointed out in his work that proper QA models lead to trust among the various stakeholders such as students, parents, employers, and external assessment bodies. This is about earning the trust of the students, as well as their loyalty in their pursuit of education, and for the institution to receive international acknowledgment and acceptance in the global education sphere. Moreover, it is widely documented that organizations cannot afford to standstill but must evolve over time and this can be achieved through the help of QA. Thus, Capacity, quality and improvement reviews make it easier for TNE providers to understand areas that require improvement and valuable innovation. Therefore, according to Knight (2016), an organizational culture aimed at sustainable enhancement is vital to keep institutions agile and able to operate within the established context of the internationalization of education. Last of all, equity and access are the two issues that have been brought up time and time again while addressing the topic of QA within TNE. It is an extensive strategy shared by QA to avoid creating a situation in which students in different location types are provided with inferior schooling. As stated by Heffernan & Poole (2005), there is a need for this equity so as to maintain value of the institutional qualifications as well as for social justice in the teaching arena.

The regulatory aspects are also crucial in relation to the functioning and effectiveness of TNE sector in the county. Several regulatory bodies in Pakistan exist to assist in transnational education and oversee TNE across various professional areas to ensure high standards are upheld. Such bodies are Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC), Pakistan Bar Council (PBC), Pakistan council for Architects & Town Planner (PCATP), Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC), Pakistan Nursing Council (PNC), Pakistan Pharmacy Council (PCP), Pakistan Veterinary Medical Council (PVMC). These prospective regulatory organisations have different tasks and objectives established according to their sphere of operation. In a TNE context, the main

institutional supervisory body within Pakistan is the Higher Education Commission (HEC) that oversees the general functioning of higher learning institutions in the country. As the policy-making and accrediting body created in 2002, it guides higher learning institutions by offering accreditation, certifying quality assurance in courses, and distributing funds towards research and development (Higher Education Commission, 2021). In Pakistan, the National Auditor General is responsible for providing academic equivalence of the TNE programs provided by the foreign institution as per HEC's guidelines. It also opens up the collaboration between local and international university, therefore enhancing interaction cordiality. New regulations have over time been developed by the HEC in a bid to address some of the dynamics identified in TNE. The HEC in 2020 has formulated "Policy for Transnational Education" that gives a distinct appraisal system for accreditation of TNE programmes. This policy also describes the measures that should be taken to register the foreign institutions, assess the programs offered by the institutions and supervise the practices that are undertaken by these institutions. Another is on branch campus and joint degree where quality assurance standards were prescribed and the students' interests protected and the similar on establishment of branch campuses and joint degree programs where guidelines such as quality assurance and student's interests were highlighted (Higher Education Commission, 2020). The DPI also contributes to the realization of the HEC's mission to promote the quality and excellence of TNE in Pakistan. According to the accreditation and recognitions in Pakistan the Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) is responsible to ensure the accreditation the engineering programs and institutions including the mandate for the council to proactively standardize the education and professional practice of engineers (Pakistan Engineering Council, 2021). In applying the TNE of programs in engineering, the PEC plays the role of overseeing the consistency of the curricula and other forms of educational practices within the country. This encompasses normal assessment and appraising of the engineering programs offered by the foreign academic institutions in Pakistan to the standards of those provided at home. PBC's formation lays down the benchmark of legal education and laws practitioners in the country of Pakistan. Pakistan Bar Council is the regulatory authority of the country and it has powers to selectively recognized the law colleges and observing the educational norms through Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils Act, 1973 (Pakistan Bar Council, 2021). In the context of TNE legal education, the PBC monitors and enforces that foreign law programs meet the local legal education standards. This involves critically analyzing the curricula, the human resource or faculty and examinations, in an effort to ensure that the graduates produced meet the requisite standard expected of legal professionals in Pakistan. PMDC is a premier institution in Pakistan for regulating the medical and dental education. PMDC was established under the PM and DC ordinance of 1962, and its prime function is to regulate the educational standard in medical, dental colleges, accredit the sea programs, and controls and registers the medical practitioners (Pakistan Medical & Dental Council, 2021). Concerning TNE, through accreditation, PMDC makes sure that the medical and dental programmes from overseas accredited universities that are being offered in Pakistan are in conformity with the national education and professional requirements including the clinical training and examination standards. Majority of the TNE programmes which are being offered in Pakistan currently fall under the review of the HEC, PBA and PEC. There aren't any programmes which fall under the review and approval of other regulatory bodies and therefore their names are mentioned but further details have not been discussed.

Furthermore, there are many issues and challenges from academic and administrative contexts in addition to the above regulatory, governance and delivery-level matters, these must also to be managed and addressed aptly to ensure a sustainable TNE sector in the country. The challenges in terms of academic sphere are multifaceted and multifarious (Tsiligkiris, 2022). With reference to the academic degree options, there are aspects of limited qualification programs being offered, constricting academic choices for the students. For instance, students are generally keen to study trending subjects; for example, from technology-oriented degrees and qualifications including Artificial Intelligence (AI), internet of things (IOT), robotics to name a few; in business discipline subjects like business analytics, accountancy, digital marketing, entrepreneurship; in social sciences individual and social psychology, psychoanalytic techniques, developmental and sustainability studies etc are sought after courses. However, only limited ones are on offer including laws, accounting, marketing, HR, finance, economics, business management and administration, psychology and social science degrees. Besides limited academic categories, most Transnational Education Institutions

(TEIs) are capable of meeting the career preferences of an expanded range of students, thereby increasing the number of enrollments. For example, the University of London offers multiple degree programmes in various disciplines – e.g., social sciences, economics, finance, management, and law (British Council, 2013a). Also, partnerships like the North Consortium UK-Pakistan (NCUK) introduced 2+2 opportunities for study, according to which the candidates can initiate their study in Pakistan and finish it in the UK (British Council, 2013a). The middle-class population in Pakistan is also becoming increasingly affluent; therefore, the demand for TNE qualifications is growing since there are fewer opportunities for obtaining degrees in the Pakistani higher education system due to its limited capacity (British Council, 2013a). The development of TNE has also facilitated new modalities of delivery, including online and blended learning, making global learning feasible and affordable for an increased target audience (Abidi, 2018). The COVID-19 pandemic positively impacted the TEIs in Pakistan, as many of these institutes shifted to virtual classrooms and offered online programs. This adoption of blended or online instruction modes has also presented TEIs with various improved opportunities, such as greater access to learning by students residing in outlying or remote areas and those who cannot attend traditional brick-and-mortar institutes due to jobs. The use of technology in education has also created new opportunities for international and institutional partnerships. Likewise, knowledge transfer from Pakistani and foreign institutions has further intensified the growth of the TNE landscape in Pakistan. This is evident from the increasing research collaborations and joint research projects between Pakistani and international universities (British Council, 2013b). Nevertheless, there is still a lot of room to expand the academic program base to capture a larger market of students wishing to acquire foreign degrees staying in the country and studying transnational qualifications. Another important aspect with reference to TNE provision is the limited competence of staff and faculty at TNE provider institutions. This is stark reality that besides having a sound infrastructure and lush campuses, TNE setups lack potent and experienced faculty which is an integral component of the system to ensure quality and impact that is expected of TNE programs. There is a greater need to ensure the capacity-building initiatives and honing the skill sets of teachers and academics at TNE centers of learning and teaching to provide a true spirit of world-class education in these TNE institutions.

In addition to the aforementioned issues, another much important and rather pressing aspect is the element of upholding academic integrity within and outside the TNE domain. This is incumbent upon the academics, administration as well as students to meet the standards of academic integrity by avoiding any malpractices including contract cheating, plagiarism, collusion and cheating by any means. The TNE provision, operations and practices are to be designed and deployed in such a manner as to guarantee the factor of academic integrity to eventually warrant quality assurance and academic compliance for the TNE programs. There have been many instances wherein the students and learners at various levels have indulged in wrongful conduct to secure academic gains by utilizing unfair means in order to attain academic grades. There is a rise in the tendency to adopt the academic shenanigans to acquire academic credentials by resorting to academically unethical practices. The issue of plagiarism and collusion tops the list among the activities that violate the standards of academic integrity and utilizing the work outsourced from essay mills and ghost writers is also alarmingly increasing. The use of online applications and artificial intelligence (AI) chat-bots like Chat GPT emerged as the latest challenge with regards to academic integrity aspects (Huallpa, 2023). The use of plagiarism and AI detection software are assisting to mitigate the effects of this emerging issue among the TNE sector but the software and utilities to check the originality of work is not available to all TNE providers owing to costly prices to avail these services which eventually compromises the integrity of academic work of their students.

Rijst van der et al. (2023) has described the trichotomy of challenges for TNEs including the pedagogical, linguistic and cultural challenges. The same sorts of challenges are faced by TNE sector in Pakistan. The cultural challenges in Pakistan's context includes the socio-cultural dynamics relevant to the TNE sector. For example, the demographics and cultural variables of Pakistani society are both favorable factors when considered in TNE background as people in the upper and middle class are in a position to afford the TNE offerings as well as the young population also holds positive prospects and presents a promising scenario for the TNE sector. Apart from this, linguistically there is also conducive environment as English is the formal language of the state and also medium of instruction in most schools and educational institutions, hence making it easier for Pakistani students



to adjust in the TNE setup. Besides the encouraging demographical and cultural factors, higher cost based on foreign currency conversion rates, mostly middle and lower class segments of Pakistan are the ones who are interested in education of their children and families but they face difficulties to afford the same especially in the aftermath of deteriorating economy and worsening local currency devaluation in relation to other international currencies like US dollar and UK pounds. Additionally, there are issues of social acceptance and cultural friction in TNE establishments where mostly children from elite and affluent class study and therefore they have altogether different frame of reference when it comes to cultural perspective which presents the TNE setups with another unique challenge to counter and manage cultural conflicts and cultural friction in addition to managing other aspects of academic and administrative nature. After the elaboration of the major challenges and issues facing the TNE sector, we will now suggest the way forward by making some propositions in the following section.

### **Way Forward and Recommendations**

The varied challenges and diverse issues of importance require a comprehensive and coordinated effort of all stakeholders including foreign educational partners, TNE provider, HEC, students, academics, administrators, regulators, and QA agencies in host and parent country from where the academic qualifications are based. The integrated approach shall warrant best outcomes to achieve the promising future prospects in Pakistan's TNE sector. The way forward is expounded hereunder discussing the suggestions and measures to attain the true potential and sustainable success for TNE in Pakistan:

### **Strengthening Regulatory Framework**

There must be a coordinated and comprehensive approach to ensure seamless deployment of regulatory regimes which is only possible by enacting and implementing a potent and clear TNE policy framework. There has been a history of close collaboration of HEC and British Council to ensure an effective regulatory regime in TNE sector of Pakistan. Similarly, with reference to UK qualifications offered in Pakistan's TNE sector, in particular, The Quality Assurance Agency understands and bestows a great deal of investment on its part and that of HEC in the capacity of its regulatory body. The QAA undertakes its audits and reviews new Scott (2013) in a systematic manner, using risk-based models that allows the identification of areas that deserve more attention (Quality Assurance Agency, 2018). Likewise, by engaging in comprehensive evaluation and ongoing monitoring, the HEC verifies that the education is of sufficient quality (Higher Education Commission, 2021). In this respect, the HEC and other institutions responsible for the regulation of TNE should be provided with sufficient funding and technical support in order to strengthen their institutional capacity for monitoring and evaluating those programs. This entails that knowledge on QA processes should be enhanced and that more use of technology should be made in the conduction of audits and assessments. In the best practices of the QA process, two elements that are fundamental include issues to do with transparency and stakeholder involvement. The QA in QAA will engage all the stakeholders such as students, faculties, and even employers to ensure that the programs developed meet the expected need (Lim, 2021). The HEC also actively encourages the public's participation in accreditation and quality assurance processes to confirm relevancy and compliance to market demands (Higher Education Commission, 2021). Similarly, Pakistan can work with these international techniques to enhance its Quality Assurance. This encompasses enhancing accreditation policy and procedures and ensuring information is easily available to the public and effective engagement of stakeholders through surveys, forums, or accreditation advisory committees. This ensures that the QA frameworks developed by the QAA and HEC provide the best guidance possible by incorporating local as well as international benchmarks in curriculum and educational practices. The guidelines set by the QAA manifests accurately in its Quality Code where it compels TNE programs to guarantee that its curriculum in the host country is equivalent to the ones taught locally (Quality Assurance Agency, 2018). The HEC also monitors factors that enhance the quality and recognition of TNE programs while respecting the programs and courses of the foreign institution (Higher Education Commission, 2021). It is high time for the Pakistan to follow similar factors in order to encourage the credit exchange for the curriculum development and to ensure that TNE programs should be vying for the local rules and regulation for higher education and at the same time it should also vying for international standard. The recent moot on 22<sup>nd</sup> of April 2024 at Islamabad in which TNE champions and senior UK educationists participated also emphasised the need for a

strengthened and well-implemented policy framework to warrant TNE in Pakistan complies with world-class standards in academia.

#### **Maintaining Higher Academic Standards and Integrity**

The central aim of all concerned stakeholders especially the TNE providers and TEIs in the country must be to emphasize on enhancing academic standards and fostering innovation on the academic front. The market offering of TNE is principally based on the premise that TNE qualifications are pinned upon global standards and best practices in academia which is the unique selling proposition (USP) of TNE, therefore to conform to the higher standards offering the world-class education in the localized context should be main agenda point and chief strategy for the parties concerned including the regulators i.e. HEC, QA departments as well as the TNE centers' administration and decision makers. The TNE centers must strive to refine their curriculum design, adopt innovative teaching methodologies in the light of the partner institution in the countries from where the TNE qualifications are originating and ensure conformity to the processes and policies of host-country universities to achieve success in the context of meeting higher academic standards. There must be no stone unturned to guarantee superior academic provision and fulfilment to global standards and best practices with regards to maintaining the academic benchmarks to warrant a sustainable and longer run success to eventually build and fortify the image and reputation to distinguish the TNE programs from the domestic academic qualifications (Aqib et al., 2024b). In addition to fulfilment of academic quality benchmarks, another important aspect to be taken very seriously is to uphold the academic integrity among the students and faculty. There are certain TNE qualifications for which there are no examinations and students tend to outsource the assignments and coursework assessments by hiring ghost writers and getting their work done from essay-mills and using AI tools such as Chat GPT. All these practices must be discouraged and penalized by ensuring stringent measures to warrant quality assessments and grading policies to uphold and maintain the principles of academic integrity.

#### **Enhancing Foreign Degree Recognition and Acceptance**

The steps and measures to increase the acceptability and recognition of foreign qualifications in Pakistan is the need of the hour. The recognition and equivalence of qualifications are key factors in TNE and they are of great importance. The process of comparing and evaluating foreign qualification with the local one has also been standardised by the QAA so as to be in a position to accept the equivalencies (Quality Assurance Agency, 2018). Likewise, under the HEC, further specifications are offered regarding the accreditation of degree qualifications from overseas countries to enable the graduates a smooth transition (Higher Education Commission, 2021). For, instance, there is a need for clear policies for accreditation of the foreign degrees in Pakistani system to eliminate confusion in equivalences and ensure that TNE graduates are recognised as per their areas of specialty. There must be a special initiative to make sure that the students acquiring TNE qualifications are provided with the equivalence and affirmation of their academic credentials by the concerned organizations including the educational boards, HEC, and other concerned departments and ministries.

#### **Improving Quality Assurance in Pakistan's TNE Sector**

To enhance the Quality Assurance (QA) of TNE in Pakistan, it is expedient to embrace best practices which are implemented in countries that offer quality TNE services. The QAA in the UK and HEC are the right models that Pakistan can emulate to improve on the existing QA arrangements. This critical evaluation focuses on how the above models can be used in addressing the TNE conditions facing Pakistan. The adoption of a unified and comprehensive QA regime entailing a comprehensive approach to enact a framework which will ensure that TEIs have a complete and systematic approach to improving the quality of their QA processes. The QAA in the of the UK has developed its Criteria and Quality Code for Higher Education, guideline that outline the necessary standards of quality and benchmarks for all higher education institutions, including TNE programmes (Quality Assurance Agency, 2018). Likewise, the HEC in Pakistan was formed with clear accreditation and quality assurance procedures that are adopted with equal force in domestic and TNE programs (Higher Education Commission, 2021). It may be highly beneficial for Pakistan to follow a similar framework that consolidates the demands of these different professional councils and HEC. These aspects should be spelled out clearly within this framework regarding accreditation, curriculum as well as quality assurance for all TNE programs. It is feasible to identify that the use of technology in the processes of QA is expanding constantly. As for the use of digital technologies, both the QAA and HEC use them as an effective instrument for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of their activities in terms of

QA. These are virtual platforms, used for reporting quality assurance, online site visits, and electronic feedback (Lim, 2021). Nowadays Pakistan can go for implementing the technology in QA processes to gain more benefits. The technologies include identifying reporting and monitoring and data analytics systems for use in decision making, conducting virtual audits and also designing more effective QA approaches.

**Managing the Faculty Related Aspects to Ensure Superior Academic Provision**

There is a famous assertion that educational institutions are what their students and faculty is, implying that the educational institutions are not known for their facilities, infrastructure, logistics or technologies but chiefly for the quality and competence of their faculty and students. The TNE entities must ensure that the faculty is aptly qualified, experienced and academically sound in order to ensure quality course delivery and desired academic outcomes. There must be a resolve to undertake initiatives for faculty development and capacity-building by delivering technical and pedagogical trainings and workshops to upskill and hone the skills of TNE faculty. There must also be a clear divide between the academic and non-academic staff of the TNEs. The faculty in TNE sector must be offered proper career progression roadmap and service structure like the one offered in other Pakistani and the UK universities e.g., the career ladder starting from Lecturer, to Assistant Professor, to Associate Professor, and finally to be promoted as Professor. HEC maintains a list of HEC approved PhD supervisors, HEC should also maintain a list of HEC's approved TNE Staff, which should be available in the public domain for stakeholders e.g. students, parents, foreign educational institutions etc to evaluate and verify. The faculty must be urged to work around key academic aspects of research, development and pragmatic hand-on knowledge delivery to warrant a superior academic provision.

**Focusing the Three Is (Infrastructure, Internationalization, and Inclusion)**

The transnational educational institutions (TEIs) in Pakistan must strive to build, develop 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 etc. The tangible and non-tangible infrastructure needs to be impressive to blend with other aspect to warrant a quality TNE proposition. Internationalization entails strengthening and expanding international partnerships and collaborations by increasing number of degree offerings, expanding subject and course choices, adding new and emerging areas of study for more specialized and hands-on academic experience which serves as a tool and a means to fortify the students position in the global job market. Through more cross-border partnerships, both the QAA and HEC have affirmed their roles in the improvement of the quality of TNE programmes (Knight, 2016; Lim, 2021). It is suggested that the arrangements for university partnership in Pakistan should be more result-oriented, and should promote and encourage local institutions to develop and sustain strategic partnership with internationally recognized foreign universities for mutual gains. Finally, the aspect of academic inclusion is to be addressed by offering fee concessions, discounts, and scholarships to deserving students. The uniform fee reduction should also be deliberated to enhance the affordability aspect keeping in context the Pakistan's middle class financial difficulties owing to testing economic situation. The people at the helm should endeavour to provide TNE offerings to the less-fortunate students by giving fee waivers, instalment payment options, and student loans etc to maximize the impact of TNE and to make sure that all segments of Pakistanis society have opportunities to avails global-educational qualifications without being discriminated for their weak financial status. This is imperative to adopt an integrated approach to promote and strengthen the TNE setup in the country by addressing the diverse challenges in an effective and appropriate manner. There should be a serious resolve to work towards achieving the desired academic and non-academic objectives for the mutual interests and benefits of concerned stakeholders. TNE must not be perceived as a niche for only the elite in the country rather it must be positioned as an attractive and affordable academic proposition for the majority of segments in the society who are interested to avail the TNE qualifications without leaving their country and that too at an affordable fee.

**Conclusion**

The TNE sector in Pakistan has grown progressively over the last two decades. The steady and consistent progress of TNE system omens positive prospects from the perspective of Pakistan's higher education landscape. Transnational Educational institutions (TEIs) play a significant role in Pakistan's higher education sector, mainly by enhancing the opportunities for gaining a variety of high-quality

overseas education previously unavailable in the country. As a result, the number of educational opportunities available for students have increased, thereby improving their competitiveness and employability at the global level. Furthermore, these institutes have implemented new forms of teaching and learning that focus on problem-solving, analytical and critical thinking and practical skills, further aligning the standards of these institutes with international benchmarks. TEIs also need to work on vital areas in order to ensure faculty development and research through the promotion of capacity building, facilitating workshop training and sessions, and penetrating the global research networks. Additionally, these institutions should facilitate the development of the knowledge economy in Pakistan by reinforcing the students' skills to increase their adaptability to modern workforce requirements. The stable progress of TNE establishments and players in the country have both offered opportunities as well as posed various challenges which are to be aptly addressed and countered in order to unlock the potential of TNE sector of Pakistan. The need is to enact a potent regulatory framework to ensure academic compliance and assure quality education by upholding academic integrity and quality benchmarks as well as enhancing the acceptance and recognition of TNE qualifications at national scale by expediting and facilitating the equivalence processes. Finally the TNE sector is needed to divert attention towards three key aspects; first is to develop and expand the infrastructure entailing physical facilities, logistics and technology; secondly the TNE must strive to increase the number of subjects/courses and specializations to offer diversity and provide more academic choices to Pakistani students to study; finally there must also be a focus on the aspect of lowering the fee structures and offering more scholarships so the element of academic inclusion is also fulfilled, making world-class quality education within the reach of under-privileged Pakistani students. The coordinated and integrated approach to reform and rejuvenate the TNE sector shall surely lead to a promising future for the TNE setup in Pakistan.

#### **References**

- 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>
- 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>
- 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>
- 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. <https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v3i2.1805>
- 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. <https://doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.101089>
- Alam, F., Alam, Q., Chowdhury, H., & Steiner, T. (2013). Transnational Education: Benefits, Threats and Challenges. *Procedia Engineering*, 56, 870–874. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.proeng.2013.03.209>
- Ali, S., & Tahir, M. S. A. (2009). Reforming education in Pakistan – tracing global links. *Journal of Research and Reflections in Education*, 3(1).
- Aqib Ali, M., Verda, Y.B., Shabbir, S. and Khalid, U. (2024a), The Trichotomy of Pakistan's Education System: Problems and Prospects, *International Journal of Contemporary Issues in Social Sciences (IJCISS)* Volume 3 Issue 2.
- 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.
- Asim, M., & Shah, S. R. A. (2014). Educational System in British India and its Socio-Political Impacts on Pakistani Society. 7(1).
- British Council. (2013a). Gearing up for Growth: Transnational education in Pakistan.
- 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](https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/the_shape_of_things_to_come_2.pdf)

- British Council. (2021). Transnational Education Handbook Pakistan. Retrieved from [https://www.britishcouncil.pk/sites/default/files/transnational\\_education\\_handbook\\_pakistan.pdf](https://www.britishcouncil.pk/sites/default/files/transnational_education_handbook_pakistan.pdf)
- 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](https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/bc_environment_for_tne_partnerships_in_pakistan.pdf)
- COMSATS Institute of Information Technology (2021) International Collaboration. Available at: <https://www.comsats.edu.pk/international.aspx> (Accessed: 25 May 2024).
- 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](https://enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf) (Accessed: 25 May 2024).
- 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/>
- Francois, E. J., Mejai B.M. Avoseh, and Wendy Griswold (Eds.). (2016) *Perspectives in Transnational Higher Education*, Rotterdam: SensePublishers.
- 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).
- 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).
- 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>
- 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. Available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1028315305277681> (Accessed: 25 May 2024).
- Higher Education Commission (2020) Policy for Transnational Education. Available at: [https://www.hec.gov.pk/english/services/students/TNE/Documents/TNE\\_Policy\\_2020.pdf](https://www.hec.gov.pk/english/services/students/TNE/Documents/TNE_Policy_2020.pdf) (Accessed: 25 May 2024).
- Higher Education Commission (2021) About Us. Available at: <https://www.hec.gov.pk/english/aboutus/Pages/default.aspx> (Accessed: 25 May 2024)
- Hill, C., Lamie, J., & Gore, T. (2021). *The Evolution of Transnational Education: Pathways, Globalisation and Emerging Trends* (1st ed.). London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003225386>
- 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.
- Imai, M. (1986) *Kaizen: The Key to Japan's Competitive Success*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- 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. <https://doi.org/10.19030/cier.v2i1.1107>
- Jamil, S. (2021). From digital divide to digital inclusion: Challenges for wide-ranging digitalization in Pakistan. *Telecommunications Policy*, 45(8), 102206. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.telpol.2021.102206>
- 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. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2005.01.002>
- 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).

- Knight, J., & Lee, J. (2021). International joint, double, and consecutive degree programs: New developments, issues, and challenges. In *The Handbook of International Higher Education* (pp. 415-428). Routledge.
- Lahore University of Management Sciences (2021) Global Partnerships. Available at: <https://lums.edu.pk/global-partnerships> (Accessed: 25 May 2024).
- 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. Available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1028315320906171> (Accessed: 25 May 2024).
- LUMS. (2023). Welcome to OIA | OIA. Retrieved May 20, 2024, from LUMS website: <https://oia.lums.edu.pk/>
- LUMS. (2024). About LUMS | Welcome to LUMS. Retrieved May 20, 2024, from LUMS website: <https://lums.edu.pk/aboutlums>
- 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> (Accessed: 25 May 2024).
- Pakistan Bar Council (2021) *Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils Act, 1973*. Available at: <http://pakistanbarcouncil.org/legal-practitioners-and-bar-councils-act-1973/> (Accessed: 25 May 2024)
- Pakistan Engineering Council (2021) *PEC Act*. Available at: [https://www.pec.org.pk/pec\\_act.aspx](https://www.pec.org.pk/pec_act.aspx) (Accessed: 25 May 2024)
- Pakistan Medical & Dental Council (2021) *Overview*. Available at: <https://pmdc.org.pk/> (Accessed: 25 May 2024).
- Quality Assurance Agency (2018) *UK Quality Code for Higher Education*. Available at: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code> (Accessed: 25 May 2024).
- Rijst van der, R. M., Lamers, A. M., & Admiraal, W. F. (2023). 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.
- Smith, K. & Jarvis, J. (2007) 'Transnational Education: An Intercultural Flow of Higher Education', *International Journal of Educational Development*, 27(5), pp. 527-536. Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S073805930700016X> (Accessed: 25 May 2024).
- Sursock, A. & Smidt, H. (2010) *Trends 2010: A Decade of Change in European Higher Education*. Brussels: European University Association. Available at: <https://eua.eu/downloads/publications/trends%202010%20a%20decade%20of%20change%20in%20european%20higher%20education.pdf> (Accessed: 25 May 2024).
- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (2017) *TEQSA's Risk Assessment Framework*. Available at: <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/risk-assessment-framework> (Accessed: 25 May 2024).
- Tsiligkiris, V. (2022). Environment for transnational education partnerships and UK qualifications: challenges and opportunities: Pakistan and the UK.
- University of Bolton. (2024). About Us. Retrieved May 21, 2024, from UOB Islamabad website: <https://uobislamabad.com/about-us/>
- 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.