

## **Impact of Commercialization on Quality Education in the Private Sector Universities**

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### **Abstract**

*Education nowadays moves towards being business-oriented, and institutions have commercialized education. So, the aim of the present study was to investigate the impact of its commercialization on quality education. A descriptive survey research design (quantitative method) was used to execute the study. The population of the study was 102 heads of departments at 12 private universities in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Census method was used to select the sample of the study. The data were collected from a total of 102 heads of departments of private universities in Rawalpindi and Islamabad with the help of a self-developed questionnaire. The collected data were analyzed through inferential statistics such as simple linear regression. The researchers concluded that the commercialization of education influences quality education. So, there may be some standard or check and balance to control the commercialization so that we can maintain quality education.*

**Keywords:** *Education, Quality, Commercialization of Education, Quality Education.*

### **Introduction**

Education is crucial for the welfare and advancement of people. The only method for eliminating poverty is through education (Camburn & Han, 2015). The nation's education is the responsibility of the state, and it can

all be arranged through the use of national resources (Avalos, 2011). Moreover, higher education is the key to development for any country's economy and has a significant impact on society and its citizens (Brennan & Teichler, 2008). The government is therefore serious about the standard of higher education. For all societal components, education is the key element. These groups get public support on an individual student basis, even though the institutions of choice may have been founded by a private corporation, a federated group of families, or an organization of educators. The legal framework permits communities and people to select a different institution from the one that their state has designated (Deka, 2014). Governments all over the world have been promoting the idea of privatization in education for the past thirty years. Additionally, there are educational institutions that fall outside of these typical categories, including those that, among other things, concentrate on business, law, medicine, agriculture, engineering, technical, vocational, information technology, and teacher education (Shah et al., 2018).

The assumption behind commercializing education is that there is a financial incentive driving the delivery of education or that funding comes primarily from the students who will be receiving it. Investments are made with the intention of making a profit in this process of private ownership and management of educational institutions. All students who receive a top-notch education are given the tools they need to create enduring livelihoods, support democratic and peaceful societies, and enhance their own well-being. To raise the bar for educators and other stakeholders at this level of education, capacity development is crucial (Enunwah & Eyam, 2018).

In general, quality education showed that the apprentice had achieved the required results as judged by outsiders. It can be easily accomplished if the teaching process is effective. Most often, in order to achieve high-quality education, the goals are set in accordance with the level of the students. Our next generation's brightest future is utterly contingent on teacher preparation. This demonstrates how crucial it is to spend money on teacher development in order to safeguard a country's future. In order to meet the demands of this competitive era, teacher education is concerned with the development of teachers' personality attributes such as extroversion, topic

mastery, and capacity to handle both expected and unexpected occurrences in the teaching profession. Sharing experiences with other colleagues might help improve teaching abilities (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005).

The objective of the study was to analyze the impact of the commercialization of education on quality education. Therefore, the hypothesis is stated as under:

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant impact of the commercialization of education on quality education.

### **Literature Review**

Education is defined as "the process of growing and training the powers and capabilities of human beings." Thus, the dissemination of education is motivated by the sale of services or the pursuit of profit, and the primary source of funding is the education recipients. The idea that education is becoming increasingly commercialized is straightforward. Due to the rapid advancement of information and communication technologies, the world has now become a global community with a global economy. As a result, our education becomes more for-profit and restricted (Borghain, 2016).

All students who receive a top-notch education are given the tools they need to create fulfilling occupations, support democratic and peaceful communities, and enhance their own wellbeing. Quality education refers to raising expectations for teachers and other education stakeholders (Enunwah & Eyam, 2018).

Quality education refers to how closely the educational system tends to reflect societal and economic needs. The highest levels of academic success or student performance in several academic areas that are acceptable to the market and other education stakeholders are considered to be quality. In any industry, quality is a complicated idea. It is complex in every way, including its nature, elements, and components. In the world of education, quality is the most defensible but also the most ambiguous concept. It can also be used in an evaluative manner, such as on a scale of goodness. Sometimes the suggestion is to search for particular characteristics. Educational quality is thought to be influenced by the standard of administration, educational facilities, curriculum, teaching methods, students, examination system, and teaching staff (Javed et al., 2016).

**Commercialization of Education**

The business of education today has major and detrimental implications for our society. Higher education is possible for those who can afford it. India has a growing population of students pursuing higher education, so there are plenty of opportunities for these universities to profit by providing these programs (Chandwani & Bhome, 2013).

Commercialization of education will likely happen at the administrative and instructional levels. An emphasis on budgetary cost-effect, resource-seeking, product evaluation and related adjustment, new employment constraints, and new teacher-student links would be necessary to operate the institute administratively in the manner of a business. The instructional level of commercialization would view instruction and learning as a whole as cost-effect driven, highlighting that instruction and learning are necessary steps for producing a product, adjusting the purposes of instruction and learning, depersonalizing the entire process of instruction and learning, and having utility-oriented curricular objectives (Tao, Berci & He, 2018).

Marketing and selling educational products and services to schools by outside vendors is known as commercialization. A phrase used in the realm of commerce; commercialization frequently refers to a corporate strategy. It refers to the procedure for making a new product available on the market and bringing it into use in commerce. Literally speaking, the commercialization of education is the process of private ownership and control of educational institutions, where investments are made with the intention of making a profit. Hence, the researcher defines commercialization of education as the process of providing educational products and services to people or organizations with a view to making a profit (Anna & Greg, 2017).

Education is an important element for all socioeconomic groups. Although the institutions of choice may have been founded by a private organization or a coordinated group of parents or educators, these groups are supported by the government on a per-student basis (Deka, 2014). Gill, Khan and Karim (2014) asserts that the bulk of educational institutions are really for-profit corporations driven by the need to make more money. Numerous educational institutions, public and private, are "housed" in totally

inappropriate spaces. Aside from being of ordinary quality, the faculty is frequently overworked by "visitors." Due to their other duties, the visiting professor is unable to devote the necessary time to the students' needs. The average person cannot afford even the fees charged by private institutions. In the current atmosphere, neither the lower middle class nor the poor can even consider obtaining a standard academic degree.

Human development is the real gauge of a society's advancement, and education is a key tool for that growth. Higher education's main objectives are to improve human capital, create wealth, and create leaders in a range of fields, including business, government, and politics. Up until the early 1990s, the majority of higher education funding came from the federal and state governments. The government encouraged the private sector to enter the market, nevertheless, as demand from students for higher education increased. "Education" is no longer about instructing a student or imparting knowledge; rather, it has developed into a business, and almost every institution now demands a high fee in exchange for the amenities it offers (Deka, 2014).

### **Impact of Commercialization on Quality Education**

Many studies and observations show that the commercialization of higher education is harming how academic value is portrayed. Bok (2007) pointed out objectively that while the profit motive of higher education can create some favourable conditions for academic growth, the negative effects of this motive far outweigh the positive effects, which are primarily seen in the lowering of academic standards and the harm to academic reputation. According to Battnett (2008), although entrepreneurship is advantageous, it is filtered by unsuitable laws in entrepreneurial universities, which could lead to major academic research corruption and the loss of true academic value. The damage that this issue causes to academic value directly affects how the university operating community is seen (Gao, 2021). The commercialization of Higher Education threatens the product-base quality of education

Because commercial higher education enrolls so many students from outside, large class sizes have become necessary, which will immediately reduce educational quality. Research by Jenkins (2002) found that the lifting of enrolment limits under the new enrolment policy resulted in

decreased university expenditures but an increase in class sizes as a result of the government's cuts to the education budget.

With large courses, it can be difficult for teachers to give every student an equal opportunity to study, according to Cuseo (2004). There is also difficulty with the number of students present. Although the ideal class size for active learning is unknown, there is evidence that learning gains will decrease as class size grows. Because more pupils would become distracted if there were too many presents for them to participate in the conversation, the curriculum in large classrooms, for example, usually focuses on discussing theoretical concepts (Maringe & Sing, 2014).

The commercialization of higher education has put a significant financial strain on those with financial means. According to some observers, since 2012, a reform that increased tuition to 9,000 pounds annually and scrapped the enrolment cap has changed the higher education sector's strategy (Long, 2018). There is no denying that the expense of higher education has increased, and the rise in tuition fees has significantly strained students' financial situations. Commercialization of higher education is influenced by the growth of intermediary institutions.

According to Robinson (2018), intermediaries have been present in European nations since 1996, and since 1999, universities and intermediaries from Europe have worked together to recruit international students. It's interesting to note that more than 70% of overseas students pay up to 6,000 pounds for their university education through middlemen companies (Millington, 2016). Financial pressure on academic institutions is far greater than it is on the markets for consumer products, housing, and transportation. Families are becoming more and more reliant on loans from the government or commercial banks to pay for their children's higher education, and the predicted borrowing rate has been increasing every year (Gao, 2021).

Effect of higher education costs due to the commercialization of education. Private colleges and universities charge exorbitant entrance fees, monthly fees, development charges, semester fees, and other fees. They are unable to leave their children in an institution of that nature. A significant donation is needed when a student is accepted into a course (Rathod, 2018).

When education becomes more commoditized, grades are given more importance. It tries to encourage the complete development of the students. Students were required to focus on each subject and were encouraged to value intellectual pursuits. Constant learning is unnecessary in this type of environment. The population will normally increase annually when students do well and receive good grades, and the school will flourish and make money from their substantial sums of money. Several private universities provide reasonably priced commercial and vocational education, so parents foolishly send their children there (Borgain, 2016).

**Conceptual Framework**

Figure 1

*Impact of Commercialization on Quality Education*



**Research Methodology**

The design of the current study was descriptive in nature, and a quantitative method was used to measure the impact of commercialization on quality education in private sector universities in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The population of the study comprised all the heads of departments, i.e., 102 of the total 12 private sector universities in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The census method was used to select the sample size of the study. Choosing the entire population as a sample is called the census method, where every individual in the population is selected to be a part of the study. It is a valid approach when the population size is small and accessible.

In the present, as the population size is 102, selecting the entire population as a sample is a feasible approach. All the heads of departments, i.e., 102 in total, of all the private sector universities in Rawalpindi and Islamabad were selected as a sample. As the population size was 102. Therefore, all the population was selected as a sample for the present study using the census method. The researcher used a census method to select the sample, as the population size was small and accessible.

The instrument of the present study was a self-designed questionnaire. The questionnaire for the study was based on two sections. Section I was related

to the independent variable of the study, i.e., causes of the commercialization of education, and Section II was about the dependent variable of the study, i.e., quality education. The questionnaire constituted 31 items based on a five-point Likert scale, i.e., strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), neutral (N), agree (A), strongly agree (SA).

The content validity of the self-developed questionnaire was validated by three professional experts. Moreover, the reliability of the self-designed questionnaire was also checked by using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient. The value of Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was 0.924. Which shows that the developed tool was reliable to collect the final data. The researcher personally collected the information through a self-generated questionnaire after taking permission from the administration of the concerned universities and then from the heads of departments.

**Results and Discussion**

The data were analyzed using inferential statistics, i.e., simple linear regression, with the help of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 25. It is the assumption of parametric testing that data should be normally distributed. Therefore, before applying the parametric test, i.e., simple linear regression, the normality of the data was checked.

**Table 1**

*Normality Test on Variable Commercialization and Quality Education*

Variable	Commercialization	Quality Education
Mean	55.0490	58.9902
Median	55.0000	60.0000
Mode	53.00	66.00
Skewness	-0.240	0.079
Kurtosis	-0.498	1.512

**Figure 1**

*Normality Test on Variable Commercialization and Quality Education*

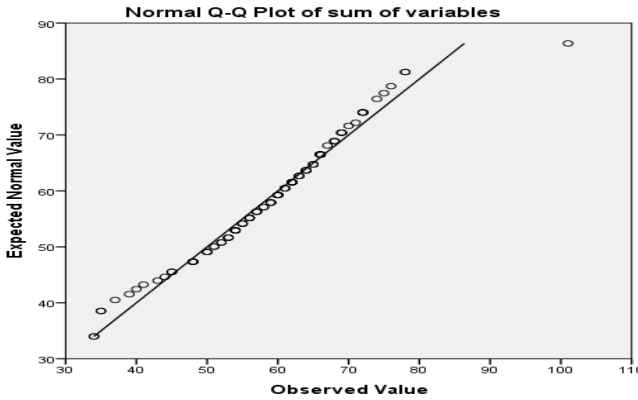


Table 1 demonstrated that the data on commercialization of education and quality education were normally distributed, as the mean and median values were almost equal and the skewness and kurtosis values were close to zero. Moreover, figure 2, i.e., the Q-Q plot, also met the criteria for normality.

**Table 2**

*Model Summary of Impact of Commercialization on Quality Education*

Model	R1	R2	Adjusted R Square	SEE
1	0.657	0.431	0.425	8.27548

Table 2 presents the results of the model summary of the influence of commercialization on quality education. The value of R2 is 0.431, which denotes a 43.1% variation in the quality of education due to the commercialization of education in private sector universities. It means that there are 56.9% other causes of commercialization that influence quality education as well.

**Table 3**  
*Value of ANOVA*

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	5188.638	1	5188.638	75.765	0.000
1	Residual	6848.352	100	68.484		
	Total	12036.990	101			

Table 3 presents the value of the ANOVA, such as  $F(1, 100) = 75.765$ ,  $p(0.000) < 0.01$  that is significant. It showed that the causes of the commercialization of education have a significant impact on quality education.

**Table 4**  
*Coefficients*

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	13.903	5.244		2.651	0.009
	Commercialization	0.819	0.094	0.657	8.704	0.000

The model achieved in this study was:  $Y = 13.903 + 0.819X$

Table 4 shows that the model acquired indicates that the causes of commercialization have a significant impact on quality education. The value of the constant in beta is 13.903, and the sum of the variable value is 0.819 in unstandardized coefficients, denoting that there is a positive and significant impact of the causes of the commercialization of education on the quality of education in private sector universities. In Table 4, the value of the t-test is 2.651, and the p-value is 0.009. This shows that both

values are significant. And  $H_1$  accepts that there is a significant impact of commercialization on quality education.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The researcher concluded that commercialization influences quality education through academic value, financial burden, product-based quality education, and more emphasis on marks. Private sector universities meet their expenses on their own, with no government support. That's why the majority of respondents agreed that private sector universities give priority to increasing the number of students instead of quality education. Almost every private university is now commercial due to the commercialization of education. The commercialization of education has completely altered the purpose of education. The primary purpose of education has changed. The primary purpose of commercialised universities is profit-making, and quality education is secondary. To restore education's true significance, it is imperative to overhaul the foundation of the educational system rather than just its structure. Private universities that depart from permitted fees and teaching standards should be subject to sanctions. Private sector universities should routinely be under the government's watchful eye in order to streamline and appropriately alter their operations.

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