

PalArch's Journal of Archaeology  
of Egypt / Egyptology

A STUDY OF PARENTS SATISFACTION REGARDING CORPORATE  
CULTURE AT UNIVERSITIES IN PUNJAB

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**Muhammad Tahir Zubair, Khalid Rashid. A Study Of Parents Satisfaction Regarding Corporate Culture At Universities In Punjab-- Palarch's Journal Of Archaeology Of Egypt/Egyptology 18(9), 1593-1606. ISSN 1567-214x**

**Keywords: Parents Satisfaction, Educational Institutions, Corporate Culture.**

### ABSTRACT

Parent satisfaction is worth consideration, because it divulges the gap between the aspired and being practiced by the universities, for the students as clientele. Parents' look for the intuition with reference to offerings their market value and opportunities that could be embarked upon after graduating. Quality assurance and other ranking developing agencies frequently utilize parents' satisfaction and students' happiness as an indicator of the quality. Parents' dissatisfaction results in lower enrolment at the institutions. The current study aims to explore the factors associated with corporate culture and heaving a bearing on parent satisfaction towards their children's education. The study was qualitative in nature for which the mode of data collection remained the Focus group discussion. Four Focus groups comprising twenty parents; with equal distribution, having high qualification; working in organizations of repute, and zeal to be the participants of the focus group interview, were picked up. Qualitative content analysis was used to analyze the data. Findings suggested that the university process is a bit complex, currently online arrangement is equally a major problem, mode of payments is lengthy by the students' and to experts, students portals are not operative to the extent needed, student teachers' relationships are a bit derogatory. The study recommends a change in the mode of payment, the process is required to be made easy, vocational training should form a part of degree program, and University norms must be aligned with the societal norms, the curricula should be saleable. This may elevate the level of parents' satisfaction with the corporate culture of universities.

### INTRODUCTION

Higher education plays a multifaceted part in the development of the economy, politics, and society at large. Higher education transmits knowledge, values, skills and culture through education. The diversified role is played by different sources for financing from the families of the students and from the national and

local governments as well (Chapleo, 2010; Pokrovskaja, Ababkova, & Fedorov, 2019). Universities as economic agents and social institutions nurture the skills of the graduates, develop the intellectual capital for any society to use it in a variety of positions (Cricelli, Greco, Grimaldi, & Dueñas, 2018; Pokrovskaja et al., 2019).

They vary in functions of selling, tenability to retain, and capability to adapt to the situations students may come across during the work span, it is actually the personality grooming with which the students come up and try to seek for fortune to help out with a balanced personality but with different perspectives. This leads to several broad range questions about analysis of the goal setting, those are to be followed by a review of consumer satisfaction and also university marketing activity (Newell, Wu, Leingpibul, & Jiang, 2016).

Customer satisfaction has long been acknowledged as a key component of all corporate operations. Satisfaction can be used as a measure of an organizations' past and present success, and even a predictor of future results. Maintaining competitiveness in the higher education industry necessitates providing high-quality service to students. The relationship that is generated for the parents of the students and their satisfaction with the level of service provided by educational institutions has a significant impact on academic institutions' reputations. Academic institutions realize the value of parents' satisfaction regarding their children because it influences their intention to enhance the services as well as the positive recommendations that attract new applicants. Parents' satisfaction has an impact on the students' motivation and, resultantly, their performance.

Parent satisfaction covers the overall attitude and the demonstrative reaction to the gap between what they imagine and what they acquire (Kunanusorn & Puttawong, 2015). Parents are bearing elevated costs of education, so their satisfaction and happiness has become a key notion to be addressed and revisited time and again in higher education institutions. Quality assurance agencies and others who construct rankings frequently utilize parents' satisfaction and students' happiness as an indicator of the quality (Xiao & Wilkins, 2015). Parents' dissatisfaction results in a lower number of student enrolment in the institutions. So, it can be said that parents' satisfaction and student happiness is a significant factor in the learning process at higher education institutions. Student happiness is engaged by institutions or universities of higher education as an sign of student development, according to (Belyukova and Fox (2002)) but a general understanding of this concept has yet to be established.

According to Murphy (Murphy (2000)) Student employment is a crucial component after the degree completion from the institutions. (Elsharnouby (2015)) has explored that parents satisfaction has a direct role if students get jobs and involved to assist the financial management of their families setups. Because universities remain under obligation to supports or guide the students to pursue their career goals. There are career counseling departments in the higher education institutions but those need further strengthening to familiarize the students with the up to date job market. Universities organize the activities

like open houses, walk ins in the form of information events so that the potential students are given the proper guidance to find avenues of their choice (Ali, Zhou, Hussain, Nair, & Ragavan, 2016; Bini & Masserini, 2016; Chen, 2017).

Universities also provide vocational guidance to the students which contributes towards the parents' satisfaction pertaining to the higher education institutions (Latif, Latif, Farooq Sahibzada, & Ullah, 2019). The old version of vocational guidance was to fit an individual in the place of a square hole. The concept was only that individuals are born to fit in any profession But in the current scenario, there is a need to understand that every person possesses specific abilities for specific jobs. Guidance is a continuous process that helps the students to adjust and prosper in the positions deemed fit for them in organizations of liking and fitness (Jo, Yu, Lee, & Kim, 2015)

Parents' satisfaction increases competition in the higher education industry, and even more, universities' are engaged in the administrative processes of the students, who are key stakeholders in these institutes. By offering effective and enjoyable services to higher education students, an institution might encourage these students to keep positive behavioral intentions, which boosts the institution's long-term viability. Because student enrollment generates the majority of an institution's revenue, bad recruitment may threaten the institution's competitive edge. As a result, it is critical for higher education institutions to keep track of service quality and identify the demands of the students and the parents (Pedro, Mendes, & Lourenço, 2018)

Higher Education (HE) is indisputably one of the most significant service industries in today's economy. In Higher Education, quality management refers to the entire set of qualities and attributes that affect a product's capacity to meet stakeholder expectations movement has grown across a wide range of service industries, "including investment or banking sector, assurance, non-profits organizations, healthcare, government, and education (Carter & Wilson, 1997). Teamwork, top management leadership, customer focus, employee involvement, constant improvement tools, and training are all required, regardless of the type of institution" (Murad & Rajesh, 2010). We in the education industry are bound to think. Is there any place where implementing quality is more critical than at any educational organization? Our customers are youngsters, whom we must serve to the best of our facilities and their abilities, to do so the entire organizational structure is to be involved. All participants in the pursuit of quality performance include the "President, Vice-President, Provost, Deans, Directors, Chairpersons, Advisors, Faculty, and Staff. Effectiveness (doing the right thing) and efficiency" will arise through collaboration among all players (doing things right). Participative management should be considered if higher education institutions seek to use total quality management (TQM) to improve productivity. The performance will be improved with the help of a clear mission defined by aims/objectives, a well-structured plan, diverse job descriptions (JDs), open communication, resource distribution for the implementation, and top-management support. As a result, quality products increases over the levels snugly aligned with each other (Venkatraman, 2007).

Because of rising competition, globalization, and government funding cuts, higher education institutions must place a greater emphasis on quality. The education industry provides services to students at various stages of their education. As a result, education service quality is vital not just in elementary and secondary school, but also, and perhaps more importantly, in university education. In certain nations, foreign university branch campuses have been developed to draw students' attention from the nearby pool. All the campuses are frequently anticipated to provide students with the same level of learning opportunities and service as in the main branches. However, according to (Bhuiyan, 2016) the perception of education and service quality at the main institution and the branch campus mostly differ. The goals of universities are to produce quality graduates; hence service quality management critically questionable.

Due to the outcomes of rising globalization, competitiveness, reforms, and funding constraints, the higher education (HE) industry is still facing marketization issues. Since then, marketplace demands and converging EU rules on quality assurance have impacted the ongoing marketization of higher education. To answer to the known challenges and imperatives, higher education institutions are increasingly rely on various quality assurance methods, career counseling, plan co-curricular activities, adopt the latest facilities, ease the process to apply for admission, etc (Watt, Faulkner, Bustillos, & Madden, 2019)

Parental involvement in their children's education has long been documented as an important feature of their education. Parental participation is described as parents' interaction with their children to boost their children's educational progress in the institution and with their children. (J. Hill, Walkington, & France, 2016) Academic outcomes like academic achievement and engagement are experimentally linked to parental participation across their children education.(N. E. Hill & Tyson, 2009). Parents' involvement has been documented as predictor of children's success and readiness toward education.

### ***Method and Procedure of Research***

A qualitative multiple case study design was chosen for the research. "It is the deep explanation and analysis regarding a bounded system to explore a single or more cases with in-depth data collection methods like interviews, observation, and document analysis, etc"(Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The rationale of the study was to explore the features and factors of corporate culture that affect parent satisfaction towards their children's education. After reviewing relevant literature, a semi-structured focused group interview protocol was constructed as a data collection tool for this study. It was ensured that the interview questions in most parts remained flexible and open-ended, thus, allowing the participants to express their perceptions and views.

The population of the study was comprised of parents whose children were studying in private sector universities. These corporate cultured Private Sector Universities situated in Lahore, offering education as an area of study in higher education were the points of concern of the researcher. The parents of the

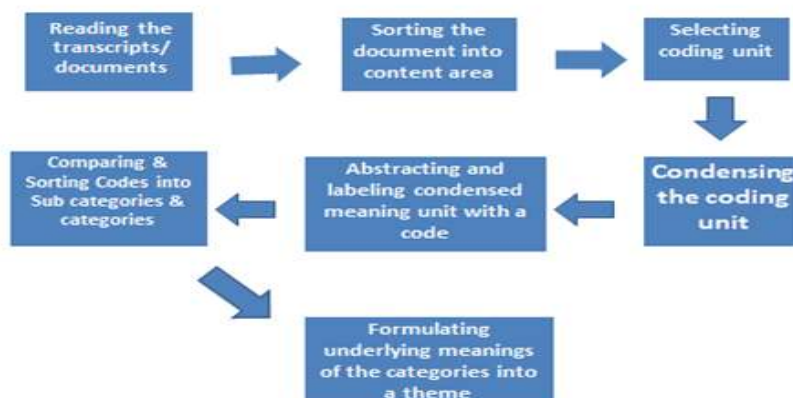
students whose children were studying in the private sector those universities which are offering education as a subject in higher education situated in Lahore hence served as the basis of sample spots. Four focus group interview consisted of five participants in each group were conducted with the parents, whose children were studying in the universities offering education as a subject. To locate the participants' management of private universities were contacted by the researcher. Initially, the researcher contacted them telephonically. They were introduced to the study and got the consent of the participants for participation in the focus group. These four focus groups comprising twenty parents having higher qualifications, working in different organizations of repute, and having shown an inclination to be the participants of the focus group were picked up.

For the study focus group interview was devised by the researcher i.e. related literature was skimmed and scanned to find out the essential elements that could form the footing for the items that could be placed to be addressing corporate culture and parent satisfaction. Their headings were broken into subheads and the items were added in an order to reflect indicators of the corporate culture. They were put before the experts to get their valued opinion about the sequence, continuity, and relevance to the topic. It was open-ended in nature to raise the relevant questions. Subsequently, it was explored as the factor of corporate culture that affects parent satisfaction towards their children's education.

A schedule of activities has been made which included approaching the respondents in the first place. The parents who consented to be the participants of the research were ascertained through their e-mail and phone numbers. On the day respondents were facilitated to answer the questions. The researcher conducted four focus group discussions on four different dates. The reason for the selection of focus group discussion was to gauge the answer to the small number of participants in a very flexible but controlled environment. It was helpful to gather a variety of information from the participants about the parents' satisfaction with the corporate culture. It helped the researcher to know the facts and the first-hand information with relevance of the topic. A schedule of focus group discussions was prepared and communicated to the selected parents to minimize the research mortality. It was reconfirmed before the stipulated dates and time with the respondents.

The focus group interview created a large amount of data. The main challenge was to transcribe the large data in a meaningful way. Keeping in view that the data of focused group interviews helped to understand the parents' satisfaction and concerns about their children enrolled in private universities of Lahore city. After the transcription of the large date, a copy was sent back to the participants so that they may check, verify and modify the responses provided by them and understood by the researchers as per their intents.

*The following steps has been followed as the process.*



**Figure 1;** Process of qualitative content analysis (Muhammad & Brett, 2017)

The qualitative content analysis was used to reach the findings. Data was processed after reading transcription thoroughly into seven sequential steps. After reading the data was sorted into different content areas and represented into coding units. In the fourth step, data was condensed and the condensed meanings were labeled. The sixth step was followed to generate codes into categories, and the seventh and last step was to formulate the themes from categories. All the ethical protocols were observed while conducting the research. The participants were told about the harm and benefits of the study and also told that they will not share any reward interim to publications. Participants of the study were not revealed in written or any other form. The recorded sessions were kept confidential and will be discarded after five years of conduct of study, only the researcher can approach the collected data.

## **FINDING/RESULTS**

An interview protocol was developed to conduct the focus group discussion was open-ended in nature to raise the relevant questions. A Focus group interview was conducted with the parents whose children were studying in the universities offering education as a subject in an area of study in higher education. The Focus group was comprised of four focus groups, each group comprising five members with tentatively similar nature of qualification and experience, the total count of parents remained twenty, having higher qualification working and showing an inclination to be the participants of a focus group. The following questions were posed to the parents during the discussion:

### ***University processes are easy and clear***

As for as universities processes for parents and students are concerned, university processes are easy. “Some of the parents thought that they don't get an easy reach to the advertisements for admission they get these through the students of the area studying in some university or through the alumni of the universities”. Currently, the online arrangement is equally a problem as either the internet is not available in the area or the speed is too slow to capture or pass

on the information. Admissions are made for face-to-face teaching but the teaching is made online for which the parents from outside of Lahore have to make the necessary arrangements. The fees told by the informers to them get elevated for every session to come. Although the processes are easy, a collaboration of the university with other institutes and Research & Development organizations does not exist for both parents and children particularly where research work is involved. Parents speak about the process of clearance as “courses come to an end at the due time but the acquisition of degrees takes a lot of time. In this age of touch button era, the formalities could have to be completed to the possible extent in the beginning”.

### ***Mode of payments***

Parents are agreed that the mode of payment is comfortable but at the beginning of the semester there is a too-long queue of students and guardians to pay the fees and for the verification of documents for admission. In parents' opinion, the mode of fee payment could be made online than it would be comfortable for students and their guardians. Sometimes there are some hidden payments which the parents are bound to pay which shakes them badly. The fee is being elevated day by day; “the elevation of fees is most frequent which disturbs the budget and management of parents a lot. At the end of the educational session, universities demand the original fee slips. If someone misses the slips, students are held responsible and they have to pay these fees again to get the degree.

“It is the need of the hour to maintain the record online and all the paid slips must be on students’ portal. It will help to decrease the paper consumption developing paper free and up to date information system for all the stake holders and society at large”.

### ***Courses are updated***

The courses are content-based taught usually for knowledge purposes. It is suggested by some parents that these courses should be partially market-oriented and saleable so that the student should have know-how which would be at least sufficient to apply in practical fields. Some of the programs are considered professional degrees but lack in-field knowledge. Students have to work in the field mostly for less than one semester which is not enough to prepare them for the field realities. This is necessary for a knowledge-based economy that making of personal profile, university calendar, and university profile, writing of reflective journal, critical reviews on the article can make the human resource worthwhile bestowed with sealable skills. The students cannot make the lesson plans to the satisfaction of students and other stakeholders.

### ***University guide the students for the job avenues***

It is the opinion of parents that now a day's mostly universities guide their students to get jobs in their relevant field through open houses, speeches of MDs, and other employees. According to the parents more needs to be done to enable the students to the job avenues. Medium is told to be English but the teaching takes place in Urdu. Students are not equipped with the knowledge

matched with the job and workplace realities. Teaching takes place according to the ideal situations not the realities on the ground. One of the parents stated that:

"Universities are unable to prepare the students for the competitive exams like PPSC and FPSC. Because these types of exams are mostly MCQs based but the universities take exams in subjective manners, so the students are inexperienced to prepare or clearing these exams. This becomes one of the reasons for students to enter into the public sector".

### ***University provides vocational guidance***

Parents referred to some steps which could be followed in Vocational Guidance Process at the universities; information may be collected from the candidate and their parents regarding the achievement, students may be given tests to know them objectively such as "interest test, aptitude test, personality tests students health tests, etc" and these tests should be given due weightage. Vocational Guidance may be based on persuasive facts, and students are informed about the alternative jobs and the final selection of the job may be left to the students. Students after selection of the job should feel satisfied with the job; the student may be enabled to create better social and work relations through efficiency and productivity.

"One of the participants asserted that the course work is only based on bookish knowledge and is unable to fully prepare the students for the work market needs".

### ***Universities conduct co-curricular activities***

According to the participant "Students of all age groups are guided to shine in the classroom as much as external, through being engaged and active in a wide spectrum of creative, physical, social, and community activities".

The major factors of over-centralization and lack of public contribution kill initiative and spontaneity spirit of CCAs (co-curricular activities) activities participation. Unless teachers and students are motivated and the department functions as a facilitator, a culture of such activities cannot be fostered in the campuses. "In every institution, there are a few people who are eager to contribute to their institution. However, they also become part of a dull campus routine or switch over to personal pursuits". Some steps can be taken to unleash this very creative core i.e identifying creative core, establishing societies, developing principles for participation in the activities, restoring tutorial periods, introducing career counseling, initiating inter-institutional connectivity and finally the official support for making the universities turnover physically, mentally and morally healthy.

According to the parent, co-curricular activities are partially taking place in the universities but, unfortunately, "CCAs are not being taken seriously in most of our academic institutions in Pakistan. A vast majority of them have no facilities



for such activities when they have a huge responsibility on their shoulders to help students develop their characters and personalities”.

“According to the parents the universities well conduct academic activities to the course designed but the co-academic activities are partially against the norms of code and mode of life”.

Co-curricular activities mostly take place outdoor to support or enhancement the classroom or program of study in some way. They are ungraded and do provide complementary learning in some form.

### ***University equipped with latest facilities***

In parents' view, universities are equipped with the facilities which are essential for designed curricula. But, this is not sufficient to have a competitive international role. The universities should converge diversity and manage the complexities of a globalized society, multiculturalism and autonomy should go hand in hand, and universal values for social change need to be promoted.

“Parents stated that the target should be for sustainable development, preparation for life as active citizens, personal development through teaching-learning and research and all such facilities need to be provided to strengthen the earlier said to address cause”.

### ***Interactive teaching***

According to the participant Teachers need to acquire active and interactive forms and technologies of teaching like games, training sessions, case studies, games design, creative techniques, and many other tricks purposefully and proactively because it is then who develop basic competencies and meta-competencies in students, form of skills, and abilities required for a good professional, and create prerequisites for students to become psychologically ready to apply the skills and abilities they have mastered.

At the same time, as practice shows, current informative equipment have become widespread not at certified educational institutes, but within the scheme of further educational organizations, in which “corporate universities, training courses, assessment centers, etc. were created for this purpose (Norin, Norina, & Pukharenko, 2018). That is why developing new type of classes or blended learning approach according to active and interactive methods of studying for intramural and extramural students at higher educational institutions become quite a challenge”.

“In parents view there is a strong interaction with teacher and students through nowadays used ICT, but required more to build a strong relationship of teacher and student. Teachers may make their classes more interactive by; integrating real-time interaction, getting creative with discussion boards, maximizing engagement with non-task interaction, using multiple communications tools”.

Teachers may enhance the discussion groups, project groups, knowledge management systems, learner-centered projects, and blogs that may be used for active learning, authentic learning, constructive learning, cooperative learning, journaling, and portfolios. What is urged from the parents' end is the development of a community of practice and students enabled to enter into a debate rather than remaining passive.

### ***Academic calendar***

The academic calendar is a schedule of all of the events that occur in an academic year and it plays a critical role in university life because all the activities and events are organized by following the calendar. These events may include “examination dates, spring break or reading week, and the last day of the semester”. Academic calendars and the dates included can be presented at the semester level or as part of an academic year-long calendar. Academic calendar refers to dates and events that a postsecondary institution operates around. Sometimes students feel difficulty following the calendar. The academic calendar must be flexible to accommodate the students learning engagements.

One of the participant reported that some will have to make much larger changes than those of the traditional students. In their everyday engagement with students, teachers are primarily involved with these changes and ideally, they should guide the design of the educational experience yet, traditionally, universities design their programs according to terms, semesters and years: the students' conform to the dictates of the academic year and the interests of the institution.

“Parents discussed that universities mostly follow their academic calendar in true letter and spirit even in COVID-19 and the same is shared with the parents and students. But it makes disturbance when universities mend academic calendar's dates and events. It became commotion both for parents and students when universities add withdraw and drop deadlines for each session within each semester or term”.

### ***The teaching learning environment is reflective of values and norms***

Parents told that the indispensable Islamic or cultural values can dis-cooing down, language, dress derogatory. Reflection brings learning to life, it helps learners find relevancy and meaning in a lesson and make connections between educational experiences and real-life situations. It increases insight and creates pathways to future learning. Reflection is called by many different names in the education field including processing, reviewing, and debriefing. Parents personally want to move towards referring to this key ingredient in teaching and group facilitation as reflection or reflective practice. In the case of assessment, we differentiate among many mentions of reflection. Perspective-taking on our learning achievements like in the process of assessment of learning could be on what we want maximum possible dimensions to be attended to by teaching.

In the participant opinion effective learning may be a way to allow students to step from learning experience to help them develop critical thinking skills and improve on future performance by analyzing their experience. This type of learning, which helps move the student from surface to deep learning, can include a range of activities, including self-review, peer review, and personal development planning. The modern-day field of educational neuroscience reinforces Dewey's view should be shown to us that we may shape our experiences and continue it throughout our lives. Educational neuroscientists should emphasize intentional engagement in reflective practice as key to "cementing" learning.

Reflection should create multiple pathways to learning; facilitate "patterning" and meaning-making. Well facilitated reflection should provide a forum for learners to give and receive feedback and enhance application, transfer, retention, and recall. It is expected that the development of students' language should cater for the applicability in multiple disciplines with competence within the periphery of prevalent norms. Dress code most of the time is observed to be digressive which is also urged to be within set limits designed for a common man. Parents believed that they should leave living in the past, forget using negative talk and following negative approach, accept their mistakes before their children, preserve their image while talking to their children, speak with consideration and submissiveness, respect others nature and identity, explain clearly to the children while communicating, accept the children contribution and don't go for high expectations.

## **DISCUSSION**

The focus of the study was to explore the factors of corporate culture that affect parent satisfaction towards their children's education. The organizations should always try to monitor the service quality and be devoted to measure and progress them continuously (Brochado, 2009). The main themes which were discussed during the focus group discussions were processes in university, mode of payments, updated courses, vocational guidance, co-curricular activities latest facilities, interactive teaching, academic calendar, and the teaching-learning environment. The Students satisfactions an extremely important matter for university education management (Douglas et al., 2008). In parents view the process is easy but that they don't get an easy reach to the advertisements for admission, fees get elevated day by day, acquisition of degrees takes a lot of time due to unnecessary formalities, too long queue of students and guardians to pay the fees is troubling, hidden payments shake the parents badly, most of the courses are not market-oriented. Parents expressed that universities guide their students to get jobs in their relevant field through open houses, but it is not sufficient more needs to be done to open new job avenues. Basically vocational guidance and education is a facilitative procedure, a service rendered to the individuals to aid them in selection and adjustment to an occupation." (Mayes, Crites, Bixler, Humphrey, & Maltison, 1994).

Students may inform about the alternative jobs to satisfy them. Co-curricular activities have partially taken place in the universities. Partially these are against the norms of our society Parents stated for sustainable development, preparation

for life as active citizens, personal development through teaching-learning and research, and all such facilities need to be provided to students. Teachers and students through ICT required more strong relationships to make their classes more interactive. Parents discussed that universities mostly following their academic calendar but it is problematic for parents and students when universities add withdrawal and drop deadlines. In parents' view, the indispensable Islamic or cultural values can be disconcerting, language, and dress derogatory.

### **CONCLUSION**

The current qualitative study aimed to explore the factors of corporate culture that affect parent satisfaction towards their children's education. Parents and students don't get an easy reach to the advertisements for admission. There is too long a queue to pay the fees at the beginning of the session, an online payment system could be introduced. Acquisition of degrees take a lot of time, elevation of fees and hidden payments badly affect the parents. The courses being taught should be market-oriented and saleable. More needed to be done to enable the students to approach the job avenues. Steps may be taken in the Vocational Guidance Process at the universities which are not sufficient currently. Students should be guided about the different type of jobs so after selection of the job they should feel satisfied with it.

Students should enable to create better social and work relations and efficiency. It is the responsibility of Universities to guide the students for the development their characters and personalities. Co-curricular activities in the universities are partially against the norms and modes of life. Indispensable Islamic or cultural values, language, dress derogatory disconcerting day by day. Teacher-student relationships require more strong interaction, especially in the covid-19 pandemic tenure.

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