Exploring External Expectations of Newly Entrants in University of the Punjab, Lahore

Muhammad Saeed[*]
Nimmi Abid[**]

Abstract

This survey-based research was carried out to identify external expectations of newly entrants in University of the Punjab (PU), Lahore. The sample comprised 50% population of PU, Quaid-e-Azam Campus, drawn randomly from seven faculties. Two departments were randomly selected from each sampled faculty. Data were collected from 630 students of sampled departments through self-developed questionnaire. Instrument's validity was ensured by experts' opinions while internal consistency was established at 0.834. Independent sample t-test and one-way ANOVA were used to analyze the data. Results revealed that there was a significant gender-wise difference in external expectations and its three sub-factors i.e. institutional reputation (IR), learning environment & study timing (LEST), and availability of resources (AR). However, there was no significant difference in the external expectations and its three sub-factors in terms of age and experience of the students who were working in any organization. Furthermore, external expectations by sub-factors i.e. LEST and AR had significant difference except sub-factor IR. The study recommends that there is a need to encourage family and personnel to attend information sessions and workshops held by the institution which may be helpful for them to understand their children's external expectations and also help children to perform their tasks effectively.

Keywords: Newly Entrants, External Expectations, institutional reputation, learning environment & study timing, availability of resources

Introduction

In today's competitive and modern society, individuals seem to be unsatisfied with their fundamental education and decide to get higher education because according to them, higher education play the significant role in providing quick responses to various societal problems, nations building (Calder, 2003) and in order to educate the individuals of society (Beringer, Malone & Wright, 2006). Howard (2005) stated that

---

[*] Associate Professor, Institute of Education and Research, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan, drsaeed1961@hotmail.com

[**] PhD Scholar, Institute of Education and Research, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan, nimmi_abid@yahoo.com

expectations are drawn from individuals' past experiences and are the dominant interpreter of their future behavior. According to Toor (2003), students are tomorrow's leader and after completion graduation, they have several expectations regarding their desired career.

Kreig (2013) demonstrated that newly enrolled students have various idealistic expectations when they enter into institution for higher education. If students' expectations are not fulfill then they feel unsatisfied and unhappy about their decision of getting higher education. Miller, Bender and Schuh (2005) found a number of few studies which are relevant to the expectations of university students. They also identified that if expectations of newly enrolled students are familiar with their previous experiences then they are more likely to continue to degree completion. But if their expectations are not satisfied then they feel regret for their choice of getting higher education.

Students enter at university level with a lot of external expectations in mind about what they should be supported by the institutions and provide the opportunities for challenging learning and nourish their all types of domain (Jackson, Pancer, Pratt, & Hunsberger, 2000; Smith & Wertlieb, 2005). Hearn (1984) found the most significant perspectives which encourage students to get higher education. Firstly, they put emphasis on how students make decision about college selection. Secondly, they emphasize on institutional characteristics i.e. distance from availability of financial aid, quality of programs, distance, distance cost, and size.

The previous researches on students' external expectations of getting higher education identified various factors such as institutional culture capital (Kahlenberg, 2004; Kirst & Venezia, 2004), financial concerns (Ellwood & Kane, 2000; Temple, 2009), institutional location, cost of education, institutional facilities, and learning environment (Baharun, Awang & Padlee, 2011), Geography constraints (Niu & Tienda, 2008), campus safety and flexibility (Espinoza, Bradshaw & Hausman, 2002) university reputation, community relationship and consistency (Punnarach, 2004), institutional location, non-academic services and scholarship (Drewes & Michael, 2006), geographical location and institutional reputation (De Jager & Du Plooy, 2006), academic facilities such as library facility (Cosser & Toit, 2002), study timing (Kuh, 2007), personal characteristics, campus surroundings, facilities, and academic quality (Sidin, Hussin, & Soon, 2003).

There are the most five elements which encourage students for the selection of higher education institutions such as personnel cooperation and awareness, economic considerations, social opportunities, research activities, and institutional size (Bajsh & Hoyt, 2001; Espinoza et al., 2001). There are three important elements which inspire students to be enrolled at university level such as news coverage and university

rating/reputation (Arpan, Raney & Zivnuska, 2003). De Jager and Du Plooy (2006) stated that an institution academic reputation affect the prospective pupils' attitude and the image that will influence pupils' readiness to take decision about getting admission in university. They also found that institutional decision for higher education of undergraduate students influence by institutional reputation. In other word, an institutional reputation is more important than institutional actual quality.

Pithers and Holland (2006) stated that students' expectations have significant difference with their experiences. As students spend time at university, unrealistic expectations of students have been developed. Their unrealistic expectations may also arise because institutions more care about institutional expectations rather than students' expectations. According to Mbawuni and Nimako (2015), there are several factors that underpin students' choices of higher education institutions such as institutional characteristics such as educational policies and school location, curiosity and aspirations, student background characteristics, social environment, finance of education, educational achievement, reputation and climate of institution.

The above literature identifies that external expectations play to vital role in making decision about getting admission for higher education at university level. The purpose of the current study was to identify the newly entrants' external expectations in University of the Punjab Lahore. The current study was helpful in developing staff-students and teacher-students relationship, improving the ratios degree completion, improving undergraduate students/university GPA and improving enrollment rates of undergraduate students.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

After reviewing the existing literature, the researcher developed a conceptual framework in order to understand the most relevant external factors which might influence the preferences of new students in getting admission at higher education institutions. Furthermore, combining the findings from existing literature and collected data through questionnaire, few factors of external expectations were initially obtained. These factors are described in the conceptual framework for this study, which are institutional location, net cost of education, institutional support student support, learning facilities of the institution and quality of lecture, quality of teaching, attachment to the institution, reputation of the institution, uniqueness of the programmes offered, attitude towards the institution as a whole, and curiosity to school in different environments to pursue further studies in the institution. The researchers considered two research objectives in order to achieve the desired purpose of the present study which are given below:

1. To investigate the newly entrants' external expectations (EE) on the basis of demographic variables (gender, age, experience and socio-economic status).

2. To investigate the (EE) by factors (institutional reputation, learning environment and availability of resources) of newly entrants on the basis of demographic variables.

Research Questions of the Study

To fulfill the above objective, following research questions were formulated:

1. Is there any significant difference between external expectations (EE) and gender?
2. Is there any significant difference between external expectations (EE) and age?
3. Is there any significant difference between IR, LEST, AR and gender?
4. Is there any significant difference between IR, LEST, AR and age?
5. Is there any significant mean difference and variation between newly entrants' external expectations (EE) and experience?
6. Is there any significant mean difference and variation between newly entrants' external expectations (EE) and socio-economic status?
7. Is there any significant mean difference and variation between newly entrants' external expectations by factors (IR, LEST & AR) and experience?
8. Is there any significant mean difference and variation between newly entrants' external expectations by factors (IR, LEST & AR) and socio-economic status?

Delimitation and Limitations of the Study

Due to time and financial constraints, the current study was delimited to the newly enrolled students at University of the Punjab, Lahore. Since the age level of all the students at undergraduate level is nearly the same and majority of them join public sector universities belong to average socio-economic status, therefore the results of the study can be generalized at higher education level, especially in the public sector HEIs.

As regards the limitation, the researchers faced difficulty to seek permission from the sampled heads of departments for data collection from their students. Furthermore, since undergraduate students were not exposed to importance of the research, so that they were not inclined to respond to the questionnaire; to many the researchers approached many times to fill in the questionnaires. Those who filled in the questionnaire; might be there the question of reliability of information they provided.

Methodology

This survey-based research study was designed to identify the external expectations (EE) of newly entrants at University of the Punjab (PU) of district Lahore. Faculties, departments and students from PU were selected by the researchers with the using multi-stage sampling technique. First of all, the researchers selected seven faculties from Quaid-e-Azam Campus of the University by using stratified random sampling technique which was comprised of 50% of the whole population. Secondly,

two departments were drawn randomly from each faculty and then 30 students from each morning and evening programmes were selected. Faculty of Commerce had only one department of commerce, therefore, the researchers selected 13 departments, 630 students in total, as shown in table 1.

Table 1

Population and sample of the study

Category	Population	Sample
Faculties (PU)	13	7
Departments	71	13
Students	20,745	630

Source: Fact book of University of the Punjab, 2015

Table 1 represents that at the time of study, there were 13 faculties in the University of Punjab, out of which seven faculties were selected at random. A total of 20,745 students were studying in various departments of the seven sampled faculties in New Campus (Quaid-e-Azam campus) at the time of data collection, bu out of which 630 students (189 boys & 441 girls) were selected on the basis of willingness and availability to participate in the research study.

The researchers developed a questionnaire for sampled students. This questionnaire comprised two sections i.e. demographic information, and 22 closed-ended items which were developed at 5 point Likert type scale ranging for strongly agree (SA) to strongly disagree (DA) by reviewing the relevant literature. This instrument was based on three indictors such as IR (Institutional Reputation), LEST (Learning Environment and Study Timing) and AR (Availability of Resources). In the light of six experts' comments instrument was validated and improved in terms of format, style and language. 70 students were selected for piloting to ensure instrument's reliability which was Cronbach Alpha 0.834. Mean scores of respondents were calculated using descriptive statistics. Inferential statistics (independent-sample t-test and one-way ANOVA) were used to determine external expectations of the newly entrants of University of the Punjab, Lahore.

Data Analysis and Results

Descriptive and inferential statistics were applied to analyze students' questionnaire. According to the research hypotheses, the analysis of the study is presented below:

RQ1: Is there any significant difference between external expectations (EE) and gender?

Table 1

Comparison of newly entrants' EE regarding gender

Variables	Gender	N	M	SD	t-value	df	sig(2- tailed)
External Expectations	Female	441	85.69	11.65	-2.838	628	.005
	Male	189	82.65	12.62			

Independent samples t-test was applied to explore the external expectations (EE) of newly entrants regarding gender. The scores of female (M=85.69, SD=11.65) and male (M=82.65, SD=12.62); t (628) =-2.838, p = .005 have significant difference with EE at p≤0.05 level of significance. Hence, it is revealed that gender has significant difference with EE towards getting admission for higher education at PU, Lahore.

RQ2: Is there any significant difference between IR, LEST, AR and gender?

Table 2

Comparison of newly entrants' EE by factors regarding gender

Variables	Gender	N	M	SD	t-value	df	sig(2-tailed)
IR	Female	441	15.69	2.879	-2.242	628	.025
	Male	189	15.12	3.038			
LEST	Female	441	34.19	5.022	-2.906	628	.004
	Male	189	32.87	5.666			
AR	Female	441	35.81	5.322	-2.434	628	.015
	Male	189	34.66	5.731			

An independent-samples t-test was applied to explore the institutional reputation (IR), learning environment & study timing (LEST) and availability of resources (AR) of newly entrants (NE) regarding gender. The scores of male and female at p≤0.05 level of significance have statistically significant difference with all three factors (IR, LEST and AR) of EE at p≤0.05 level of significance. Hence, it is revealed that gender has significant difference with IR, LEST & AR towards getting admission for higher education at PU.

RQ3: Is there any significant difference between external expectations (EE) and age?

Table 3

Comparison of Newly Entrants' EE Regarding Age

Variables	Employment Status	N	M	SD	t-value	Df	sig(2-tailed)
External Expectations	20 or Less	560	84.92	12.00	.798	628	.425
	21-25	70	83.70	12.26			

Independent samples t-test was applied to explore the external expectations (EE) of newly entrants regarding age. The scores of 21-25 years students (M=83.70, SD=12.26) and 20 or less years students (M=84.92, SD=12.00); t (628) =-.798, p = .425 have no significant difference with EE at p≥0.05 level of significance. Hence, it is revealed that 21-25 and 20 or less NE has no significant mean difference with EE of newly entrants in deciding to get admission for higher education at PU.

RQ4: Is there any significant difference between IR, LEST, AR and age?

Table 4

Comparison of Newly Entrants' EE by Factors Regarding Age

DV	Age	N	M	SD	t-value	df	sig(2-tailed)
IR	20 or Less	560	15.56	2.900	.954	628	.340
	21-25	70	15.20	3.224			
LEST	20 or Less	560	33.83	5.241	.453	628	.651
	21-25	70	33.53	5.391			
AR	20 or Less	560	35.53	5.498	.806	628	.421
	21-25	70	34.97	5.245			

An independent-samples t-test was applied to explore the institutional reputation (IR), learning environment & study timing (LEST) and availability of resources (AR) of female and male newly entrants (NE). The scores of 20 or less age group and 21-25 age group had significant difference with all three factors (IR, LEST and AR) of EE at p≤0.05 level of significance. Hence, it is revealed that 20 or less and 21-25 years students who are newly enrolled at University of the Punjab had statistically no significant mean difference with IR, LEST and AR towards getting admission.

RQ5: Is there any significant mean difference and variation between newly entrants' external expectations by factors (IR, LEST & AR) and experience?

Table 5

One- way ANOVA Summary Table for NE Regarding Experience about EE by Factor

	Variables	Groups	df	F	Sig.
	IR	Between	2	2.170	.115
		Within	627		
		Total	629		
Experience	LEST	Between	2	.834	.435
		Within	627		
		Total	629		
	AR	Between	2	.630	.533
		Within	627		
		Total	629		

A One-way ANOVA was applied to explore newly entrants' external expectations, as measured by institutional reputation (IR), learning environment and study timing (LEST) and availability of resources (AR) in deciding to get admission at University of the Punjab. Experience had no significant difference with IR, LEST and AR [F (12, 629) = 2.170, p = .115], [F (12, 629) = .834, p = .435] and [F (12, 629) = .630, p = .533] at p≤0.05 level of significance in terms of experience. Hence, it is revealed that experience has no significant mean difference with IR, LEST and AR of newly entrants.

RQ6: Is there any significant mean difference and variation between newly entrants' external expectations by factors (IR, LEST & AR) and socio-economic status?

Table 6 (a)

One way ANOVA Summary Table for NE Regarding Socio-economic Status about EE by Factor

	Variables	Groups	df	F	Sig
	IR	Between	3	.518	.670
		Within	626		
		Total	629		
SES	LEST	Between	3	3.951	.008
		Within	626		
		Total	629		
	AR	Between	3	4.610	.003
		Within	626		
		Total	629		

A One-way ANOVA was applied to explore newly entrants' external expectations, as measured by institutional reputation (IR), learning environment and study timing (LEST) and availability of resources (AR) in getting admission at PU. Socio-economic status had significant difference with LEST and AR [F (12, 629) = 3.951, p = .008] and [F (12, 629) = 4.610, p = .003] instead of IR [F (12, 629) = .518, p = .670] at p≤0.05 level of significance in terms of socio-economic status. Hence, it was concluded that income has statistically significant difference with AR and LEAST instead IR of newly entrants.

Table 6 (b)

Post- hoc Test of Difference among Socio-economic Status (SES) of PU by Factor LEST and AR

SES	SES (a)	SES (b)	Mean Difference	P
LEST	25,000 or less	56,000 to 85,000	1.58452*	.038
		86,000 or more than	1.95980*	.019
AR	26,000 to 55,000	86,000 or more than	1.92721*	.030

Post- hoc test (Tukey HSD) was applied to explore the mean difference with LEST and AR of newly entrants to get admission at PU in terms of socio-economic status. Thus, the results of post-hoc test revealed that LEST of NE who belongs to 25 or less has significant difference with those students who belong to 56,000 to 85,000 & 86,000 or above socio-economic status at p≤0.05 level of significance. However, the result of post-hoc test revealed that AR of NEUS who belonged to 26,000 to 55,000 has significant difference at p≤0.05 level of significance with those students who belonged to above 86,000 socio-economic statuses.

Discussion

The present study showed that gender has significant difference regarding institutional reputation (security and culture), learning atmosphere and financial aid availability. Similar finding was also revealed in a study conducted by Mansfield (2005). Another finding of the present study was that availability of resources influence female students more than male students and hence gender-wise significant difference was found at 0.05 level of significance regarding availability of resources. The present study is also related to the study of De Jager and Du Plooy (2006) which indicates that majority of female students give emphasis on institutional reputation/security.

The present study concluded that both male and female students put more emphasize on academic reputation of an institution. Institutional reputation has a huge

influence on the attitudes of potential students and the image that will impact on a student's willingness to apply to that institution for enrolment to get higher education. It has been said that an institution's actual quality is often less important than its reputation for quality, because it is their perceived excellence which guides the decisions of prospective students. This finding of the present research study supports to the study conducted by De Jager and Du Plooy (2006).

The present study showed that female students have higher mean values in the factor of Institutional Reputation than male students. On the other hand, the researchers of the present study found that both male and female students put emphasis on flexible study timing and academic reputation. The present study investigated that male give preference to availability of resources such as scholarship and instructional expenses. The researchers in the present study identified the factors that students should keep in mind when they decide to get higher education at university level. So, both male and female students mostly prefer those higher education institutions which are situated nearer to their home because this might be the reason of increasing additional cost of traveling, living and so on. The same findings were also revealed by Wiese, Van Heerden and Jordaan (2010).

The present study found that newly entrants' external expectations have no significant relationship with economic status. Similar findings were also revealed that external expectations have a powerful influence on newly entrants towards getting admission at university level to get higher education. The same findings were also drawn in the previous research studies of Litten (1982), Manski (1983) and Jackson (1986). Students' attitudes towards institutions, type of institution they attended, motivation (hours expected to study) and economical status differences accounted for little variance in expectations. The same findings were also found in a study conducted by Kuh, Gonyea and Williams (2005).

The newly entrants who experienced have higher expectations regarding institutional experience and environment. The researchers also investigated that study timing (mode of study) has no significant difference with newly entrants' external expectations. They also indicated that mode of study (study timing) influence newly entrants external expectations. This finding of the present research study contradicts to the study conducted by Stevenson and Sander (1998).

Conclusion and Implications

The purpose of the present study was to identify the external expectations of newly entrants in University of the Punjab, Lahore. Findings of the study revealed that there was a significant gender-wise difference in overall external expectations and its sub-factors three factors i.e. institutional reputation, learning environment, and availability of resources. However, there was no significant difference in the overall

external expectations and its three sub-factors on the basis of age and experience of the students who were also working in any organization. Furthermore, external expectations by factors i.e. LEST and AR had significant difference except sub-factor IR. This study recommends that there is a need to encourage family and personnel to attend information sessions and workshops held by the institution which may be helpful for them to understand their children's internal expectations and also help their children to perform their tasks effectively.

Data were collected from newly entrants of one Public Sector University to fulfill the purpose of the study. It is suggested that the same study may be conducted in Private Sector University and on a large scale in future. The current study consists of some of the demographic variables such as day scholar and hostelite, morning/regular and replica/self-supporting programmes, students' socio-economic background etc. In future, the same research study may be conducted on other demographic variables.

References

Arpan, L. M., Raney, A. A., & Zivnuska, S. (2003). A cognitive approach to understanding university image. *Corporate Communications, 8*(2), 97-113.

Baharun, R., Awang, Z., & Padlee, S. F. (2011). International students' choice criteria for selection of higher learning in Malaysian private universities. *African Journal of Business Management, 5*(12), 4704-4714.

Bajsh, A., & Hoyt, J. E. (2001). The effect of academic scholarship on college attendance. *College and University, 76*(4), 3-8.

Beringer, A., Malone, L., & Wright, T. (2006). Sustainability in higher education. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education, 9*(1), 48-66.

Calder, W., & Clugston, R. M. (2003). Progress toward sustainability in higher education. ELR: News & Analysis, Environmental Law Institute, Washington, DC. Reprinted with permission from ELR, http://www.eli.org, 1-800-433-5120.

Cosser, M., & Toit, J. D. (2002). *From school to higher education? Factors affecting the choices of grade 12 learners; the student choice behaviour project, phase 1*. Cape Town: HSRC Publ.

De Jager, J. W., & Du Plooy, A. T. (2006). Student's expectations of service quality in tertiary education: A comparison between prospective and current students. *Acta Commercii*, *6*(1), 10-19.

Drewes, T., & Michael, C. (2006). How do students choose a university?: An analysis of application to universities in Ontario, Canada. *Research in Higher Education, 47*(7), 781-800. doi: 10.1007/s11162-006-9015-6

Ellwood, D., & Kane, T. J. (2000). Who is getting a college education: Family background and the growing gaps in enrollment. In S. Danzigar & J. Waldfogel (Eds.), *Securing the future: Investing in children from birth to college* (pp. 283-324). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Espinoza, S., Bradshaw, G., & Hausman C. (2002). The importance of college factors from the perspective of high school counselors. *College and University, 77*(4), 19–24.

Hearn, J. (1984). The relative roles of academic ascribed and socioeconomic characteristics in college destinations. *Sociology of Education, 57*(1), 22–30.

Howard, J. A. (2005). Why should we care about student expectations. In T. Miller, B. Bender & J. Schuh (Eds.), *Promoting reasonable expectations: Aligning student and institutional views of the college experience.* San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Jackson, L. M., Pancer, S. M., Pratt, M. W., & Hunsberger, B. E. (2000). Great expectations: The relation between expectancies and adjustment during the transition to university. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 30*(10), 2100-2125. doi: 10.1111/j.1559-1816.2000.tb02427.x

Kahlenberg, R. D. (Ed). (2004). *America's untapped resource: Low-income students in higher education.* New York: The Century Foundation.

Kirst, M. W., & Venezia, A. (Eds.). (2004). *From high school to college: Improving opportunities for success in postsecondary education.* San Francisco, Caliornia: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Kreig, D. B. (2013). High expectations for higher education: Perceptions of college and experiences of stress prior to and through the college career. *College Student Journal. 47*(4), 635-643.

Kuh, G. D. (2007). What student engagement data tell us about college readiness? *Peer Review*, *9*(1), 4-8.

Kuh, G., Gonyea, R. M., & Williams, J. M. (2005). What students expect from college and what they get. In T. E. Miller, B. Bender & J. H. Schuh (Eds.), *Promoting reasonable expectations: Aligning student and institutional views of the college experience*, (pp. 34-64). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mansfield, P. M. (2005). Gender differences in students' and parents' evaluative criteria when selecting a college. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education, 15*(2), 47-80.

Mbawuni, J., & Nimako, S. G. (2015). Critical factors underlying students' choice of institution for graduate programmes: Empirical evidence from Ghana. *International Journal of Higher Education, 4*(1), 120-135.

Miller, T. E., Bender, B. E., & Schuh, J. H. (2005). *Promoting reasonable expectations: Aligning student and institutional views of the college experience.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Niu, S. X., & Tienda, M. (2008). Choosing college: Identifying and modeling choice sets. *Social Science Research, 37*(2), 416-433.

Pithers, B., & Holland, T. (2006). *Student expectations and the effect of experience.* Australian Association for Research in Education Conference, Adelaide, Australia. http://www.aare.edu.au/06pap/pit06290.pdf

Punnarach, S. (2004). *The image of private universities from high school students' and occupational students' viewpoint* (Unpublished doctoral thesis). Kasem Bundit University, Bangkok.

Sidin, S. M., Hussin, S. R., & Soon, T. H. (2003). An exploratory study of factors influencing the college choice decision of undergraduate students in Malaysia. *Asia Pacific Management Review, 8*(3), 259-280.

Smith, J. S., & Wertlieb, E. C. (2005). Do first-year college students' expectations align with their first-year experiences? *NASPA Journal, 42*(2), 153-174.

Stevenson, K., & Sander, P. (1998). How do Open University students, expect to be taught at tutorials? *Open Learning, 13*(2), 42-46.

Temple, S. L. (2009). *Factors that influence students' desires to attend higher education* (Published Ed. D. Dissertation). Seton Hall University, *South Orange*, New Jersey.

Toor, W. (2003). The road less traveled: Sustainable transportation for campus. *Planning for Higher Education, 31*(3), 137-140.

Wiese, M. C., Van Heerden, H., & Jordaan Y. (2010). The role of demographics in students' selection of higher education institutions. *Acta Commercii*, *10*(1), 150-163. doi: 10.4102/ac.v10i1.124