

## INVESTIGATING THE FUTURE PERSPECTIVES OF PH.D STUDENTS AT PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR UNIVERSITIES

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### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this study was to assess the mindset of the male and female, employed and unemployed and married and unmarried students regarding the future perspectives of the Ph.D students in Lahore. Literature review was completed for the purpose of clearing the future perspectives of the Ph.D program. The sample of the study was selected by using purposive sampling technique that was comprised of 14 Ph. D students of the university of Punjab. The study was delimited to the university of Punjab and Lahore lead university, Lahore. The in-depth interviews were used for the purpose of data collection as an instrument. Semi-structured questions were asked to the participants. Themes were made by using the transcribed data. After developing themes, it was changed into categories. Then, these were coded to meet the purpose. The results of the study revealed that the students of Ph. D program were not curious about making their future perspectives before taking the admission in Ph.D. program. They just want incentive, social status and recognition after completing the PhD.*

**Key Words:** Perspectives, Investigate, Future perspectives, Doctoral

### Introduction

Education plays a vital role in future building. It paces side by side with the future and gives sense to plan for the betterment of the society, self, future and status (Szpunar, 2010). It is the part and parcel of every society for its development that shows practical demonstration of the achieved education. Quality of HR (human resources) depends upon it (Mohanthy, 2000). It gives insight to develop the future perspectives. Every person has some intentions, objectives, aims and goals of education in his life to brighten his future (Haider, 2011) as Ph.D students desire. They have future perspectives and want to meet them after the completion of Ph.D. They are the asset of any nation for the development and recognition of their country nationally and internationally (Raddon & Sung, 2009). Therefore, it is necessary to be aware of them with future perspectives very clearly. The study will be helpful to give insight about clearing and developing future perspectives which will promote and give them sense to think about their future targets and placement.

Future is very precious for every person. Every individual or learner wants success and respect that is given due to some personal trait, uniqueness or any distinguished quality (Slaughter, 2004). A person who is performing his role in any program or giving his services in any organization, he wants its output at the end of the duration of the process. Successful achievement of the output depends upon the clear setting of the future perspectives (Ellyard, 2009). The students of the Ph.D are the most senior ones as compared to other students. They seem serious about their future perspectives. They are seen very straightforward about their wanting after the completion of Ph.D program and they do not feel any doubt about either they want to be educationists, researchers, want job, promotion, allowance, serve their homeland or international recognition (Gidley & Inayatullah, 2002). It is their clarity about future perspectives which shows their dedication for effective application of doctorate degree which makes them effective performer of academic responsibilities and achievements (Wade-Benzoni, Sondak. & Galinsky, 2010).

Ph. D. program is a higher level of education which constructs future concerns and takes (Lieberman, Trope & Yaacov, 1998). Mostly students remain unaware of their future plans are seen less motivated. Thoughts about future spirit up and motivate to be more efficient (Milojevic, 2005) which reflect someone's missions and future targets that

shows how he will prove himself through his higher learning. This study will be beneficial to investigate their future perspectives and will be helpful to clear and guide them about their future intentions. It will also be helpful for future Ph.D students, teachers and researchers.

Future perspectives prove as a source to our cravings, mission, setting goals, and achieving education. Setting them makes any process feasible in achievement. So, realizing them makes our live active and keeps it in zeal of meeting already determined goals of our education at doctoral level. Perspective means viewpoint, angle of thinking and thought (Dator, 2005). In addition, what is planned for coming days is called future perspective (Oxford Dictionary, 2010). It is a source to save time and energy to achieve our missions and gives insight to develop future plans. Without setting educational targets, it is impossible to meet its end because every starting point is set keeping an eye on its end which measures our progress being in the process in the set interval. For this purpose, there is set benchmarks and standards to assess and compare the process progression (Slaughter, 2004). This enlightens our mental boundaries to save it from distraction and wasting resources. To build a house, there is need of having a plan. Same is the case with meeting future, quality of life and professional life base the future perspectives and plans (Zmas, 2015).

Life is rare and demands quality. Illusions are distractions and against of quality of life and future missions. One thinks that he is stepping forward for study at higher order of learning for bright perspectives in future. But, later, he comes to know about not having clear destination of his education. All his energy and time go to waste which becomes source of depression and realization of failure (Gidley, Smith & Bateman, 2004). It refers to have pre-determined targets in clear and written statements. The degree of Ph.D is the highest degree in Pakistan. Ph.D degree holders are considered more responsible having very clear vision about their future academic practices. This clarity drives them forward to perform their roles and manifest their future perspectives (Hicks, 2006) which show their inner desires and they feel some accountability regarding their profession. Future cannot be predicted, but, future perspectives make it predictable (Saiti & Prkopiadou, 2008).

Future perspectives are developed on keeping an eye on the past experiences, present scenario and future cravings. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the relationship between past, present and future. It gives the view point about local, national and international needs (Hutchinson, 1996). When a person develops his future perspectives and targets, he wants to meet them in the context of his own interest area and his future fall. It leads him toward the development of his nation and homeland covering international trends (Hicks, 2012). This provokes his motivation to develop himself by covering academic competencies for performing according to his set vision and standards of doctorate program. This process develops seriousness in him in order to avoid meaningless practice while reaching set perspectives (McElrath, 1992). This spirit makes him competent and efficient. A study investigated that it was important for children to understand the relationship between past, present and future. There was created linkage between past, present and future for the development of future perspectives (Hicks, 2006).

Future education enables learners to think creatively and critically about the future. They become able to comprehend link between their lives in the present day and those of the past days as well as in future days (Lieberman, Trope & Yaacov, 1998). Personal views create by understanding the cultural, social, educational, political and economic influences in future that prove helpful in developing future perspectives (Dator, 2005). Future studies, projects and researches are conducted for understanding future trends and requirements before the time. These are academic enquiry. There is discussed about knowledge based future (Bell, 2010). It promotes future subjects for studies, new disciplines and areas to meet the needs of the time. For the first time, there was paid attention to draw future perspectives in 1974 by Toffler. Future plays a crucial role in education. It depends upon our own determination. A person succeeds when he plans his learning and education for tomorrow (Barnatt, 2012). Images from the future direct learners for success and motivate and give ways to keep the foundation of the sound and valid education by which future becomes sustainable (Kiprianos, 2016).

Learning brings permanent change in attitude and behavior that affects the future. Discussion about future stimulates students. This stimulation directs them to have clear perspectives to achieve their desired targets and goals. If, they achieve them, they are able to contribute socially, economically, professionally and educationally (Bussey, 2008). They transform their views to achieve something with the passage of time to some consequence. Future consequences can be shaped by our present actions and future perspectives (Slaughter, 2008). This is all done only for the sake of future. Learning is for sustaining the future that depends upon setting the future targets.

Future perspectives play an important role in achieving desired targets. They blink before learners for the sake of guidance. They are like stars in the dark deserts to show the directions to the travelers. They instigate the learners to be efficient to get reach their destination. Educational success depends upon them as a whole (Livanos, 2010). Every person in the society wants recognition and have some plans for it. Different individuals have different views, traits and features to lead and see the life in coming days. The ability of anticipation and to foresee to meet future possibilities is an outstanding trait of learners that is rare (Gerard, 2010). Such persons make well plans and can manage future possibilities easily by remaining in academic process. Future possibilities create link between activities, goals, desires and future perspectives. Failure to develop them makes future academic success ambiguous that goes against to doctorate program prospective.

Setting of goals and future perspectives give internal satisfaction. A learner remains out of the illusion and mental clashes. Because, he knows what he wants to do in future and why he wants Ph.D program completion. All his expectations rely upon seeing the quality of life seeping into the future (Moller, 1996). Clear setting of future perspectives reveals satisfaction that motivates to achieve future goals and targets which make any person more confident to achieve his targets and future perspectives

### Methodology

The present study was conducted to investigate the future perspectives of PHD students. The qualitative research methodology was adopted to meet the purpose. Phenomenology research method was used, which is under the parasol of qualitative research approach. The aim of this present study was to explore the phenomena of future perspective of PhD students. The sample of the study was selected from the PhD students, who were studying at the Institute of Education and Research, Lahore. Purposive sampling technique was used for this purpose. The in-depth interviews were used for the purpose of data collection as an instrument. Semi-structured questions were asked from the participants. After collecting data through in-depth interview, it was transcribed. Themes were made by using the transcribed data. After developing themes, it was changed into categories. Then, these were coded. Data was analyzed through themes and codes. After the analysis and interpretation of data, it was presented in discussion. Findings were made and conclusions were drawn on the basis of findings.

### Results

The most significant future perspective was allowance provision by the Government of the Punjab. Allowances attracted the students for Ph.D and it stimulated them to improve their skills and studies to complete the process of Ph.D program. The Ph.D. S. 1 reported as *“He wants to have ten thousand allowances just. Rather more, he does not want to have anything.”* Furthermore, the S. 2 also showed the same response and added *“It will be a great addition in my salary to meet my basic needs. It will be a source of meeting my basic needs.”*

S.4 said to have job with the Ph.D. allowance. S. 7, 8, 11 and 14 also reported the same statements. But, S.13 gave an astonish statement, *“I want to have laptop and other facilities provided by the Government of the Punjab. Government should award free internet facility and international visits to all PhDs to have an international view about other countries educational set-up.”* It was right to say that these features played a crucial role in research promotion to solve the educational problems in any country.

Every person wanted reputation in his area. It enhanced worth of them in the eyes of other that exalted him from others. It was also necessary for social status. PhD gave feeling of honor. S.1 said, *“I am seeking reputation. I’m doing PhD to be popular in education sector. This will protect my future.”* Here, everyone wants reputation. Same was the case with S. 7. He said, *“Social status matters a lot in lives. After PhD, I’ll be able to protect my social status. Nobody can steal it from me. It will be a great symbol of my respect.”* S.5, 6, 13 and 14 say, *“There is just status is considered, nothing else.”*

Education brought change in thinking patterns. It enhanced the ability to grip the gap. It educared and educered our hidden competency. S.1 said, *“I want to be an educationist after completing PhD. I want to play a vital role nationally and internationally. PhD is the sole source to prove myself as a reformer and educationist.”* S.3-14 gave favor to this future perspective with other perspectives. S.3 said, *“To be n pure educationist is the main target of PhD.”*

Educationists were keen observers of the current changes, demands and society because of being change agent. These agents could get success easily by planning and PhD makes it feasible in all respect. Educationists had a sharp eye upon all issues in education, research, society and economics etc. It meant researchers and educationists

perform an important role. S.6 said, *“My objective of PhD is only to be a researcher.”* S.7 and S.8 said, *“My prior mission of doing PhD is to prove myself as a researcher and educationist. By this, I’ll be keen observer of all sensitive issues. So, this future perspective is at the top of all others. In our society, just researcher tries to solve all issues, but government is seen dam non-serious.”*

S.11 was also in favor of S7 and S8. He said, *“No change and theory can be brought without researchers. Since my childhood, I want to research on educational issues and problems and want to bring innovation in educational fields. Therefore, I am doing PhD to achieve my future perspective. I want to show my expertise in the field of education.”*

Recognition was the wish of every person. This was an important future perspective of education. S.9 said, *“My aim of doing PhD is only to be recognized personality nationally and internationally.”* S.4 said, *“I just want to earn by using the degree of PhD. This is my future perspective of coming here in I.E.R and doing PhD.”*

Earning was necessary for living with status. Education met the requirements of economical foundation too. S.12 said, *“If, education does not give money, then there is no need of it. I live in society and there are my needs to fulfill. I’m getting education only for the purpose of earning.”* Moreover, S.13 and S.14 said, *“PhD will enhance our earning. We are spending money to get money. There are our relatives to support. We eat and meet others there we have to spend upon them at any cost. Therefore, my future perspective is to earn respectfully.”*

Education developed personality. It made us multidimensional personalities meet our all needs. By this, we will be able to prove and utilize our personality at all forums of our routine life. S.5 said, *“My future perspective is to develop myself by achieving education. PhD is the climax of it.”* S.8 said, *“Education and personality walk side by side.”*

Life was not easy to spend if it is without any future perspective. Education gave sense to develop them carefully keeping eye upon coming days. It guided to utilize our life in a best way by giving us a broader view of life. S.10 said, *“My future perspective of doing PhD is to utilize my life in a well way. There are some standards set by me to lead my life. I want to achieve them after doing PhD. It is a best way to develop myself going through the process of PhD.”*

Future perspectives motivated and spirited us up to lead the life with some aim. In this way, life remained active. Person wanted to do something if he had some target to meet. Purposeless life was not beneficial for others. If, students took admission without any future perspective or view point, they will not be much motivated. Their performance will not be so effective in different situations. Prominent future perspective was allowance and job. There might be any future perspectives, but, they could be to keep us in movement.

On the basis of data analysis, following findings were drawn to meet the research questions of the study.

1. It was found that the incentive was the major future perspective in the narration of the participants of the research.
2. From the text, it was found out that a number of students favored to earn the status and finance after the PhD degree.
3. It was inferred that the job was also a salient objective of doing the PhD.
4. It was found that students had taken admission just for the reputation.
5. The responses of the participants showed that the important future perspective of PhD students was to be educationist to serve the nation.
6. It was found that everyone wanted recognition nationally and internationally.
7. The responses of the participants showed that there should be broader point of you after PhD.
8. Interviewees’ responses showed the personality development as a future perspective after the completion of the PhD.
9. Best utilization of life time was also found as an important finding after the PhD.
10. It was found that students wanted to be experts in a specific area for living hood. PhD. It is a great honor for students.

## Discussion

Future perspectives were the motivators for giving success to any program. Setting targets before enrolling in any program of any discipline counted a lot to be successful. A thought of future targets raises a spirit to meet the future ((Caplan, 1992). This eradicated laziness and kept HR in acting. Nobody could succeed without setting future targets. PhD program also referred future perspectives i.e. point of view about having the degree of PhD. No student

took admission in PhD program without setting them. They had something in minds to do after having the degree of PhD. This was the highest degree of education in Pakistan that demands the highest future perspectives.

Education was achieved to earn respectfully. It gave direction to the life toward quality. Every student wanted to do something after the completion of the education. He set his future targets before taking admission in any program (Holden, 1995). These were valuable and worthy according to the level of degree. PhD was the highest degree of education. Therefore, there could be its higher future perspectives. Students could plan before enrolling in this program and think that there are supreme requirements of this degree (McElrath, 1992). But, they did not think about it. They set target being at lower level. They did not want to meet the true spirit of this degree. They just wanted to have allowance, incentives, job, reputation and laptop after getting the degree of PhD. This was the basic reason to be low standard of PhD program.

Future perspectives should not be vague in respect of PhD program. They are designed for clarity in future profession and PhD is done to furnish it (Moller, 1996). Every student wants to be successes in their life after getting education. They desire for success, but, they do not want to be clear in their objectives and point of views. Future demands clarity for making it successful (Gerard, 2010). This success demands planning before doing or adopting any field, area, discipline or profession. It includes the interest of the concerned person (Barnatt, 2012). If, he is very clear and confident about their future concerns, then, he can make future perspectives very easily, otherwise, it is very hard for him to be successful in the future life.

Students adopt any discipline without keeping an eye on future. They take admission in PhD program without any planning and developing future perspectives. They remain ambiguous being in the process of learning (Hicks, 2012). They start to take pace and plane according to other class mates. They lose their destination. It is not their fault. Major role of their distraction is their teachers who do not provide proper guidance according to their interest (Milojevic, 2005). They do not do counseling and do not want to listen them individually. This proves very dangerous for students. They do PhD, but remain disturbed about their future and profession.

PhD degree wanted to make us true researchers, educationists, experts, develop our broader perspectives and personality. It was not more that it. Earning comes because of these qualities. At this level, there could be serious attitude toward PhD. It did not refer low level of thinking. Mostly students wanted to adopt practical approach at this level. PhD students wanted to be exempted from paper pencil exams. They liked practical work at this level to be expert in all procedures of writing articles and dissertation.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

1. It was concluded that allowance, incentives, earning, having laptop and availing of job opportunity were major future perspectives of PhD students.
2. It was concluded that social status, self-recognition, best utilization of time, reputation and personality development were developed effectively by the PhD degree holders.
3. It was concluded that to be an educationist, researcher, honorability, expert in education and having a broader point of view nationally and internationally were the necessary part and output of having PhD.

Based on these conclusions, the researcher presented following recommendations:

1. It is recommended that allowance, incentives, earning and availability of job opportunity should be increased for PhD holders.
2. It is recommended that social status, self-recognition, best utilization of time and personality development should be effectively enhanced and developed for PhD degree holders.
3. It is recommended that there should be designed the PhD program in an effective way to develop educationists, researchers, experts, to have honor in society and broader point of view in all respect to meet the current challenges.

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