

## Analysis of the Initiatives taken by HEC to Implement Associate Degree Program: Opportunities and Challenges

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### Abstract

Associate Degree Program is a kind of undergraduate programme that lasts for two years and is completed in the year immediately following completion of the 12th grade. After earning an ADP 14<sup>th</sup> year education completed, students can get a job in banks, organizations, PMS, and CSS (competitive exam) require the 14<sup>th</sup> year of education, and ADP is best for this. The research aimed to explore quality assurance initiatives taken by higher education commissions and the quality standards followed by affiliated colleges to implement ADP. The study also focuses on challenges to the proper implementation of ADP. For data collection researcher selected 108 faculty members randomly from south Punjab institutions concerning ADP; data were collected through a Likert scale and interviews. There found that institutions of Multan followed maximum quality standards, which is essential to implement ADP. Students found uncertain situations for further education after ADP. In the 5<sup>th</sup> semester of BS-4 years, seats should be allocated for ADP because there were no seats. Teacher training should be conducted to meet new challenges and how to implement ADP properly. ADP should be an annual system instead of a semester one.

**Keywords:** Quality Assurance, Initiatives taken, Higher Education Commission, implement ADP, opportunities and challenges to ADP.

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**Introduction**

According to the Quality Assurance Agency of the United Kingdom, quality is "the means through which an institution can guarantee with confidence and certainty that the standards of its educational provision are being maintained and enhanced." Quality has evolved into an indispensable component of the higher education expansion strategy advocated by the Higher Education Commission (Ramzan & Khan, 2020).

By employing human and financial resources to extend access to programmes and taking all necessary steps to ensure the quality of the expanded base of higher learning programmes, the Higher Education Commission is making significant progress in the higher education sector. Using the Higher Education Commission has enabled this advancement (Usmani & Khatoon, 2016).

The quality of higher education is a constantly changing concept that results from the interaction of many different factors, including, but not limited to, leadership quality, faculty and student quality, the infrastructure facilities, the research and learning environment, governance, strategic planning, assessment procedures, and market forces. Additionally, higher education quality is a fluid concept (Rasool et al., 2019).

**Vision:**

This project aims to create an excellent higher education system that adheres to national and international quality assurance criteria. Higher education institutions should be able to demonstrate excellence in teaching, learning, and research thanks to this system (Ramzan & Khan, 2020).

**Mandate:**

According to Para 10 (The Higher Education Commission Ordinance, 2002 (Ordinance No. LIII of 2002), n.d.), the Commission has the authority to do the following to evaluate, enhance, and promote research and development in higher education:

- a. Cause an assessment of institution performance; create strategies for the growth of higher education in conjunction with institutions; and voice opinions on all issues related to these plans; determine how healthy institutions are doing; provide goals, guiding principles, and policies for institutions of higher learning to further the socio-economic growth of the nation; appraisal of institutions' performance;
- b. Provide the conditions for the establishment and operation of institutions, including those outside the state's educational system;
- c. To carry out the process of accrediting institutions, including their departments, faculties, and areas of study, by giving them the proper ratings, establishing national or regional assessment councils, or providing power to an existing council or another organization that is equivalent to this one. To increase the precision of the assessments that these councils or organizations conduct, the Commission is required to support the capacity development of existing councils or bodies;
- d. Advising the Federal Government and the Provincial Government on requests for charters to award degrees in the public and private sectors; submitting to the Federal Government the recurring and development budgets for public sector institutions; allocating funds to public sector institutions from the bulk financial provision received from the

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government and other resources based on performance and need.

e. Review and analyze the financial requirements of public sector institutions. Approve and provide funds to these institutions based on annual recurring needs and research and development projects based on specific proposals and performance. When approving funds for a public sector institution, the Commission shall ensure that a sizable portion of the institution's resources is allocated to research support and libraries. Examine and assess the institutions in the public sector's financial requirements. Authorize and provide these organizations with the money they require for development initiatives and yearly expenses.

f. Support the creation of connections between institutions and business, as well as with national and international organizations that support research and development, to enhance research; facilitate the introduction of educational programmes that meet the needs of the employment market and promote the study of basic and applied sciences in every field of national and international importance within the institutions; provide institutions with guidance in ensuring a proper balance.

g. Testing bodies should be established, and any existing body should be designated for the testing of products;

h. Ensure the comparability and acceptance of degrees, certificates, and certifications awarded by both domestic and international educational institutions;

i. Assist in the creation of instructions for utilizing the system as well as the establishment of a system for assessing the performance of institutions and faculty members;

j. Rules for minimum requirements and qualifications for hiring and promoting employees, a wage schedule developed in collaboration with the Finance Division, as well as other terms and conditions of faculty employment, for adoption by individual institutions and oversight of its implementation; provide rules for the minimal requirements and competencies for employment and advancement;

k. Take measures, such as sponsoring fellowships, scholarships, visiting professorships, or any other programme; moreover, promote greater teacher mobility via national and international contacts;

l. Encourage, support, and facilitate training programmes, workshops, and symposia; establish committees made up of national and international experts in various disciplines to advise the Commission on i. promoting formal links between institutions in the nation to make the most effective use of experience and specialized equipment; promoting national and international linkages concerning the sharing of knowledge, collaborative research, personnel exchange, and cost-sharing (The Modern University Governance Program for University Management Mission & Objectives, n.d.).

### **Quality Assurance Agency**

According to (Quality Assurance Agency Quality Assurance Agency n.d.) Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) was established in 2005 by the Government of Pakistan through Higher Education Commission with the vision "To promote, enhance, and assure the quality of higher education across HEIs in Pakistan." QAA's mission statement reads, "To promote, enhance, and assure the quality of higher education across HEIs in Pakistan" (HEC).

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) is an agency that makes policies and monitors their implementation to improve and guarantee the quality of higher education institutions. It is

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concerned with the systematic execution of quality improvement techniques and standards to achieve increased international compatibility and competitiveness at both the institutional and programme levels.

HEC is contributing financial resources and logistical help to make QAA fully effective. The Quality Assurance Authority (QAA) manages the business in conjunction with the Quality Assurance Division of the Higher Education Commission (HEC). At the same time, the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), which is made up of prominent educationists, acts as the advisory board for the QAA. The QAA aims to protect the public interest by mandating the adoption of sound educational policies and promoting the ongoing enhancement of the level of quality offered by higher education institutions.

#### **QAA Goals:**

- They are formulating quality assurance policies and creating recommendations for using higher degree programmes.
- We are creating rules for the construction of quality enhancement cells and monitoring and evaluating the performance of such cells.
- We are building people's capabilities to raise the bar for acceptable quality assurance in higher education nationally.
- HEIs will be monitored and regulated to ensure that policies designed to increase the quality and level of higher education in Pakistan are implemented.

#### **QAA Functions:**

- We are creating workable standards and procedures for establishing Quality Enhancement Cells at public institutions to integrate quality assurance into the higher education system.
- All Quality Enhancement Cells will undergo Monitoring, Evaluation, and Capacity Building activities.
- After receiving training in quality assurance, they are strengthening the capacities of certain professional staff members working in Quality Enhancement Cells to act as Master Trainers. Enhancing one's skills in the relevant subject raises one's degree of international compatibility.
- Hiring local and foreign experts, exposure to academic quality assurance in practice, and planning training sessions, seminars, and workshops for QAA & QEC staff members are all crucial first steps.

#### **Quality Enhancement Cells in HEIs**

According to (Quality Assurance Agency Quality Enhancement Cells in HEIs, n.d.); there are 241 quality enhancement cells in Pakistan, further detailed as under;

- The W level of the Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) process has been attained by all of Pakistan's higher education institutions accredited by the HEC. They have also all established their directorates for quality improvement. To achieve this, the section is responsible for building new Quality Enhancement Cells (QEC) and IQA processes in HEIs. IQA conducts monitoring visits and holds regular progress review meetings to bolster its commitment to the goal it has set for itself. Scorecards are used on an annual basis to conduct

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quantitative evaluations of the quality of the IQA mechanism housed inside an HEI. Every year, the evaluation period begins on July 1 and continues through June 30 of the following year. The evaluation is given a numerical value as a percentage and is expressed in terms of four quality levels or grades: W, X, Y, and Z. The most important result of an effective IQA system is a higher education institution that is prepared for assessments conducted by the QAA-HEC (or any other third party) and those conducted by accrediting boards.

- The Quality Enhancement Cells (QEC) set up at Pakistan's universities, and other higher education institutions are the vehicles through which the Internal Quality Assurance Division puts its policies into action. The origins of the Quality Enhancement Cells may be traced back to the formation of the Quality Assurance Agency (May 2005). DDWP authorized the PC-I of QECs in August 2006 and was put into action beginning in September 2006. Consequently, the phase-wise establishment of QECs began Listed below.
- In addition to implementing a wide variety of additional strategies for improving the academic quality of HEIs, these QECs also put into place a method for evaluating the quality of academic programmes known as the Self-Assessment Process. The Self-Assessment Report (often abbreviated as SAR) is what the procedure ultimately results in. The main objectives of preparing SAR are:
  - By giving feedback to teachers and administration so that they may launch an action plan for improvement, the goal is to enhance academic programmes and guarantee that high academic standards are maintained.
  - The goal of this course is to equip students with the necessary skills to enable them to enter the workforce with the necessary level of preparation in the following core competencies: the ability to solve problems, experimental and data analysis techniques, experience working in teams, interpersonal skills, and primary and advanced IT skills.

#### **Institutional Performance Evaluation**

According to (Quality Assurance Agency Institutional Performance Evaluation, n.d.), the HEC Medium Term Development Framework outlines a five-year (2002-2007) programme for changes, and the Higher Education Commission is now in the process of methodically putting that agenda into action (MTDF). Accessibility, quality, and relevance are singled out as being the most critical aspects of the MTDF.

A thorough plan was developed to deal with these problems. The following were the main strategic targets for change as indicated in this strategy: Improvement of access, Faculty Development, Excellence in Learning and Research, and Relevance to National Priorities are the four criteria.

The HEC has begun with the main stage of describing the Performance Evaluation Standards for the HEIs so that they may be utilized to improve the performance of higher education institutions (HEIs).

Eleven requirements are defined in this document, all of which must be met by HEIs to get accreditation for high-quality higher education offerings, global recognition, and a prominent position in regional and global HEI rankings. Additionally, for the HEIs to get the necessary accreditation, each of the eleven requirements must be satisfied.

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According to ([https://www.hec.gov.pk /QAA/Documents](https://www.hec.gov.pk/QAA/Documents), n.d.) The following is a list of standards for performance assessment, each of which outlines the main areas that the HEIs should concentrate on to evaluate their efficiency and plan for their future development, according to HEC manual Minimum National Standards for Quality Education (MNSQE) should be followed at the minimum percentage as follows;

Standard 1: Mission Statement and Goals.

Standard 2: Planning and Evaluation.

Standard 3: Organization and Governance.

Standard 4: Integrity.

Standard 5: Faculty.

Standard 6: Students.

Standard 7: Institutional Resources.

Standard 8: Academic Programmes and Curricula.

Standard 9: Public Disclosure and Transparency.

Standard 10: Assessment & Quality Assurance.

Standard 11: Student Support Service.

**Degree Programmes by Higher Education Commission**

The third and last degree of education following high school is higher education, according to (Undergraduate Education n.d.). Undergraduate and graduate coursework at colleges and universities often make up this kind of education. You may pursue a subject of interest via further education, which can also enhance your chances for employment and financial success. The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) describes the most critical qualifications. Levels 4 through 8 of the FHEQ correspond to most higher education credentials. The primary credentials are Higher National Certificates (HNC) and Higher National Diplomas (HND), certificates for Foundation degree courses, and other academic prizes from a university or higher education institution. Some other credentials include postgraduate degrees, bachelor's degrees, higher national certificates and diplomas, and certificates from foundation degree courses.

**Associate Degree Program in Pakistan**

According to (What Is Associate Degree in Pakistan? 2021), the Higher Education Commission (HEC) defines an Associate Degree Program as a kind of undergraduate programme that lasts for two years and is completed in the year immediately following completion of the 12th grade.

In Pakistan, students often enroll in a four-semester or two-year-long Associate Degree Program immediately after receiving their intermediate or secondary school certificates. ADP is an abbreviation for Associate Degree Program. Various educational institutions in the United States, including public and private colleges and universities, confers the associate degree.

According to (Associate Degree Programme – IQRA, 2021), after finishing the 12th grade such as FSc Pre-Medical and Pre-Engineering, ICS, ICOM, and FA, students in Pakistan have the opportunity to enroll in a post-intermediate academic degree programme called ADP. This programme prepares students for careers in fields. The Advanced Diploma in Programming

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(ADP) is a graduate degree on par with a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree. It is now being provided by almost every university, institution, and academy in Pakistan.

In light of recent developments and a statement made by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC), the BA programmes that take just two years to complete would be phased out in favour of BA programmes that take four years to complete. Because of the large number of young people in Pakistan who used to enroll in BA (Bachelor of Arts) programmes, which have an abysmal reputation and value in the market, the Associate Degree Program was introduced as a new addition to the Pakistani Education System as a way to replace traditional and antiquated BA degrees. This was done because BA degrees had become obsolete.

The Community College Model, which effectively supplies higher education in the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and other developed countries with promising steady career development, is the inspiration for the ADP.

According to (Associate Degree Program in Pakistan, Should You Do It? 2021), ADP is a skill-oriented programme specifically planned to make the young group of Pakistan gain applied knowledge of marketplace strategies and practices in the shortest time possible. This will help early entry into a specialized environment and support fresh graduates to become industrialists.

In addition, the ADP will assist Pakistan in producing a highly trained labour force according to the criteria of the model used by worldwide community colleges in the shortest possible amount of time.

#### **Difference between ADP and BS Four Year Degrees**

##### **ADP**

- The Associate's Degree Program (ADP) is a degree that takes two years to complete and is divided into four semesters
- You will be able to study the fundamentals of the chosen area in a shorter amount of time, allowing you to begin making money sooner.

##### **BS Four Year**

- The Bachelor of Science Four-Year Degree consists of a total of eight semesters of study.
- The curriculum contains knowledge ranging from fundamentals to advanced topics.
- Offers employment with pay that is comparable to those of similar jobs in the market

#### **ADP Areas of Studies**

The following subject areas have been added to the Associate Degree Programs by the infrastructure and resources that are now accessible throughout the nation:

- Mass Communication, i.e., Specialization in Media Studies
- Technologies Relating to Networking and the Internet
- Particularization in Financial and Accounting Matters
- Fine art, including but not limited to specialization in textile design and graphic design
- Activities of Sport and Physical Education

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- Physiotherapy, as well as Medical Laboratory Science
- Theater, Music, and Various Art Studios

**ADP Subjects in Pakistan**

The courses that make up an Associate's Degree vary according to the concentration of the student's studies; for instance, if they choose to major in social science, they are required to complete the courses listed below.

- Economics\seduction\entrepreneurship Studies on Women and Men in History Education
- Relations Internationals Library and Information Science Journalism and Mass Communication
- The Study of Politics and Psychology
- Administration of Public Affairs Social Work Sociology

**Current Study**

The said research work aimed to explore quality assurance initiatives the higher education commission took to implement ADP and found the opportunities and challenges for students and teachers. The associate degree programme is a new initiative from HEC to facilitate students. It is two years program but distributed in a semester system; it is a competitive program with a BS for four years. After ADP, students also join the BS program in the 5<sup>th</sup> semester. So, it is an excellent opportunity for students to continue their education; it is a short-term program with many benefits and short-term education aims. There was no single study about quality assurance towards ADP implementation, opportunities and challenges. This research work will be beneficial for stakeholders and policymakers. It will be fruitful for students to choose the correct career direction. It provides a brief evaluation to HEC about ADP implementation and institutions which are following how much quality standards; this research will provide an evaluation of ADP to modify or continue the curriculum, and assessment system, increase students' interest and behaviour and meet the challenges of ADP.

**Objectives of Study**

The following were the objectives of the study;

- To explore Quality Assurance Initiatives taken by Higher Education Commission to implement ADP.
- To investigate how much quality standards are followed by affiliated colleges and universities to implement ADP.
- To find which district followed maximum and which district followed minimum quality standards.
- To explore the opportunities and challenges of ADP for students and teachers.

**Research Questions**

1. Is any significant difference between affiliated colleges and universities of different districts in following quality standards to implement ADP?
2. What is the ratio of mean differences of each quality standard followed by institutions



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in each district?

3. Which district followed maximum and which district followed minimum quality standards?
4. What are the opportunities and challenges of ADP for students and teachers?

**Methods and Procedures**

The study was exploratory and survey-type; a questionnaire and interviews collected data. Higher Education Commission developed a questionnaire on Quality Standards to implement ADP to collect the data; further interviews were conducted on Opportunities and Challenges for ADP.

The study was delimited to South Punjab Universities and Affiliated Colleges; three Districts were chosen randomly, District Bahawalpur, District Multan and District Dera Ghazi Khan. Three universities and six affiliated colleges were chosen randomly for the sample from these three districts. There was a total of 162 faculty members for ADP classes in these institutions. According to suggestions by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), 108 participants were chosen from the concerned department (ADP) through a stratified random sampling technique; 12 participants from each institution table no. 1 show the sample selection procedure.

Table 1 Sample of the Study

The first stage for the selection of sample institutions		
Districts	Universities	Colleges
Bahawalpur	1	2
Multan	1	2
D.G. Khan	1	2
Total	3	6
In the second stage, faculty members were selected through a random sampling method		
Faculty Members		108
Total Sample		108

A Likert scale was used to collect the data, and questionnaires were distributed through google Forms and WhatsApp; in some accessible institutions, the researcher collected the data personally. Data were categorized and analyzed through SPSS.

**Results of the Study**

**Data analysis of minimum quality standards followed by universities and colleges for ADP**

Every standard was evaluated with eight questions on a Likert scale; data were collected from faculty members. Regarding the mission statement and goals, the researcher asked about fundamental elements of the mission and goals, guide management, governing bodies, decision-making about resources allocation, implementation, evidence of the fulfilment of the mission, analysis of reports, IPE reports, and institutional effectiveness. About planning and evaluation asked questions about institutional planning, what it does and why it does it, academic progress, qualitative manner, institutional challenges, future engagements and future results. Regarding organization and governance researcher asked questions about the optimum use of available resources, developing a suitable environment towards research and development, quality improvement, governance structure and responsibilities of governing

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bodies. Regarding integrity, the researcher asked questions about management affairs, programmes and dealings, academic freedom, institutional practice, student admissions, safeguards of students, sensitivity to equity and diversity issues, and mutual trust and confidence.

The researcher asked questions about faculty on merit hires professional qualifications, age and experience, results, teacher-student rapport, student-teacher ratio, training, faculty satisfaction and professional development. Researchers asked questions about students, such as admissions, interests, potentials, abilities, integrity, beneficiaries, self-finance for additional support, admission criteria and academic success. Regarding institutional resources, the researcher asked questions such as; financial resources, human resources, information resources, planning, proper utilization, output, equipment and supplies. Regarding academic programs and curricula, the researcher asked questions such as; whether programmes offered by the institution are relevant to the mission and goals, whether programs are unique and according to area benefits, whether evaluate and improve academic quality, complete credit hours teachings, acceptable contents, learning activities, library facility, relevant books in library and effectiveness students learning. The researcher asked questions about public disclosure and transparency as; the institution provides adequate information to students, public information like student fees, refund policies, charges, student conduct rules, courses offered with future benefits, institutional website, information through print media and parent-teacher meetings. Regarding assessment and quality, the assurance researcher asked questions such as; the internal quality assurance process, self-assessment, quality assurance standards, performance evaluation standards, quality assurance framework, quality enhancement cell, and availability of written statement about goals and mission. The researcher asked questions about student support services such as; fulfilling learning environment needs, students' mental and physical health care, counselling and guidance, the environment of the institution, cafeteria, greenery and grounds, cultural diversity management, hostels, cultural programmes, supports and co-curricular activities, stationery shop and printing machines, notes and handbooks access.

Table 1 Analysis of 88 Questions About 11 Quality Standards Implementations to ADP (Research Question no. 1)

Standards	Districts	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mission Statement and Goals	Bahawalpur	36	3.9375	.55057
	Multan	36	3.9688	.26622
	D.G. Khan	36	3.4618	.55406
	Total	108	3.7894	.52636
Planning and Evaluation	Bahawalpur	36	3.5972	.49109
	Multan	36	3.7153	.24751
	D.G. Khan	36	3.1250	.65055
	Total	108	3.4792	.55046
Organization and Governance	Bahawalpur	36	3.8299	.43007
	Multan	36	3.9653	.24204
	D.G. Khan	36	3.3056	.68949
	Total	108	3.7002	.56291

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	Bahawalpur	36	3.7639	.66264
	Multan	36	3.9479	.36151
Integrity	D.G. Khan	36	3.3264	.77303
	Total	108	3.6794	.67114
	Bahawalpur	36	3.5590	.49325
Faculty	Multan	36	3.5868	.28002
	D.G. Khan	36	3.1632	.61005
	Total	108	3.4363	.51454
	Bahawalpur	36	3.6250	.45904
Students	Multan	36	3.9826	.27895
	D.G. Khan	36	3.4896	.56803
	Total	108	3.6991	.49354
	Bahawalpur	36	3.7049	.49655
Institutional Resources	Multan	36	3.7361	.24049
	D.G. Khan	36	3.2326	.72774
	Total	108	3.5579	.57127
	Bahawalpur	36	3.5764	.46893
Academic Programmes and Curricula	Multan	36	3.8194	.24173
	D.G. Khan	36	3.1806	.57744
	Total	108	3.5255	.51969
	Bahawalpur	36	3.6181	.79952
Public Disclosure and Transparency	Multan	36	3.9653	.30120
	D.G. Khan	36	3.3507	.66401
	Total	108	3.6447	.66850
	Bahawalpur	36	3.2326	1.01205
Assessment Quality Assurance	Multan	36	3.8299	.42694
	D.G. Khan	36	3.1458	.72611
	Total	108	3.4028	.81267
	Bahawalpur	36	3.1667	.96548
Student Support Service	Multan	36	3.7118	.30003
	D.G. Khan	36	3.3993	.61224
	Total	108	3.4259	.71226

Table 1 shows the results of standards, about standard Mission Statement and Goals; Multan ranked high compared to Bahawalpur and D.G. Khan, although D.G. Khan followed the said standard. Regarding the standard Planning and Evaluation, Multan followed the maximum, and D.G. Khan followed the minimum; regarding the standard Organization and Governance, Multan had a high mean, and D.G. Khan had a low mean. Regarding the standard Integrity, Multan ranked high mean, and D.G. Khan has a low mean. Regarding the standard Faculty, Multan has a high mean as compared to others; about standards Students, Multan ranked first, and D.G. Khan ranked last; about standard Institutional Resources, Multan has a high mean, and Bahawalpur also has a high mean, but D.G. Khan has a low mean, about the standard Academic Programmes and Curricula, Multan ranked first. D.G. Khan ranked last on the standard Public Disclosure and Transparency, Multan has a high mean, and D.G. Khan has a low mean; about the standard Assessment Quality Assurance, Multan ranked first. D.G. Khan

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ranked last in the standard Student Support Service, Multan has a high mean, and Bahawalpur has a low mean.

Table 2 Analysis of 88 Questions About 11 Quality Standards Implementations to ADP, ANOVA Post Hoc (Games-Howell) Test (Research Question no. 1)

Dependent Variable	(I) Districts	(J) Districts	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Mission Statement and Goals	Bahawalpur	Multan	-.03125	.10193	.950
		D.G. Khan	.47569*	.13018	.001
	Multan	Bahawalpur	.03125	.10193	.950
		D.G. Khan	.50694*	.10245	.000
	D.G. Khan	Bahawalpur	-.47569*	.13018	.001
		Multan	-.50694*	.10245	.000
Planning and Evaluation	Bahawalpur	Multan	-.11806	.09166	.408
		D.G. Khan	.47222*	.13585	.003
	Multan	Bahawalpur	.11806	.09166	.408
		D.G. Khan	.59028*	.11601	.000
	D.G. Khan	Bahawalpur	-.47222*	.13585	.003
		Multan	-.59028*	.11601	.000
Organization and Governance	Bahawalpur	Multan	-.13542	.08225	.235
		D.G. Khan	.52431*	.13544	.001
	Multan	Bahawalpur	.13542	.08225	.235
		D.G. Khan	.65972*	.12179	.000
	D.G. Khan	Bahawalpur	-.52431*	.13544	.001
		Multan	-.65972*	.12179	.000
Integrity	Bahawalpur	Multan	-.18403	.12581	.317
		D.G. Khan	.43750*	.16969	.032
	Multan	Bahawalpur	.18403	.12581	.317
		D.G. Khan	.62153*	.14223	.000
	D.G. Khan	Bahawalpur	-.43750*	.16969	.032
		Multan	-.62153*	.14223	.000
Faculty	Bahawalpur	Multan	-.02778	.09453	.954
		D.G. Khan	.39583*	.13075	.010
	Multan	Bahawalpur	.02778	.09453	.954
		D.G. Khan	.42361*	.11187	.001
	D.G. Khan	Bahawalpur	-.39583*	.13075	.010
		Multan	-.42361*	.11187	.001
Students	Bahawalpur	Multan	-.35764*	.08952	.001
		D.G. Khan	.13542	.12172	.510
	Multan	Bahawalpur	.35764*	.08952	.001
		D.G. Khan	.49306*	.10547	.000
	D.G. Khan	Bahawalpur	-.13542	.12172	.510
		Multan	-.49306*	.10547	.000
Institutional Resources	Bahawalpur	Multan	-.03125	.09195	.938

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Academic Programmes and Curricula	Multan	D.G. Khan	.47222*	.14683	.006
		Bahawalpur	.03125	.09195	.938
	D.G. Khan	D.G. Khan	.50347*	.12774	.001
		Bahawalpur	-.47222*	.14683	.006
	Bahawalpur	Multan	-.50347*	.12774	.001
		Multan	-.24306*	.08793	.021
	Multan	D.G. Khan	.39583*	.12398	.006
		Bahawalpur	.24306*	.08793	.021
	D.G. Khan	D.G. Khan	.63889*	.10433	.000
		Bahawalpur	-.39583*	.12398	.006
	Bahawalpur	Multan	-.63889*	.10433	.000
		Multan	-.34722*	.14240	.048
Public Disclosure and Transparency	Multan	D.G. Khan	.26736	.17322	.277
		Bahawalpur	.34722*	.14240	.048
	D.G. Khan	D.G. Khan	.61458*	.12152	.000
		Bahawalpur	-.26736	.17322	.277
	Bahawalpur	Multan	-.61458*	.12152	.000
		Multan	-.59722*	.18307	.006
Assessment Quality Assurance	Multan	D.G. Khan	.08681	.20760	.908
		Bahawalpur	.59722*	.18307	.006
	D.G. Khan	D.G. Khan	.68403*	.14039	.000
		Bahawalpur	-.08681	.20760	.908
	Bahawalpur	Multan	-.68403*	.14039	.000
		Multan	-.54514*	.16850	.007
Student Support Service	Multan	D.G. Khan	-.23264	.19054	.446
		Bahawalpur	.54514*	.16850	.007
	D.G. Khan	D.G. Khan	.31250*	.11363	.022
		Bahawalpur	.23264	.19054	.446
		Multan	-.31250*	.11363	.022

\*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 2 shows the mean differences in districts to follow the standards. Regarding standard Mission Statements and Goals, district Multan had an excellent mean difference (.50694) from D.G. Khan and was significant (.000), but Multan had a low mean difference (.03125) from Bahawalpur. Regarding the standard Planning and Evaluation, Multan had an excellent mean difference (.59028) from D.G. Khan and was significant (.000) but had less mean difference (.11806) from Bahawalpur. Regarding the standard Organization and Governance, Multan had a high mean difference (.65972) from D.G. Khan and was significant (.000) but had a low mean difference (.13542) from Bahawalpur. About the standard Integrity, Multan had a high mean difference (.62153) from D.G. Khan and was significant (.000) but had a low mean difference (.18403) from Bahawalpur. About the standard Faculty, Multan had a high mean difference (.42361) from D.G. Khan and was significant (.001) and had a low mean

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difference (.02778) from Bahawalpur. About standards Students, Multan had a high mean difference (.49306) from D.G. Khan and was significant (.000) and also had an excellent mean difference from (.35764) Bahawalpur and was significant (.001). Regarding standard Institutional Resources, Multan had a high mean difference from D.G. Khan (.50347) and was significant (.001) but had a meagre mean difference (.03125) from Bahawalpur about the standard Academic Programmes and Curricula; Multan had a high mean difference (.63889) from D.G. Khan and was significant (.000) and had low mean difference (.24306) from Bahawalpur. Regarding the standard Public Disclosure and Transparency, Multan had a high mean difference (.61458) from D.G. Khan and was significant (.000) but had a low mean difference (.34722) from Bahawalpur, about the standard Assessment Quality Assurance, Multan had a high mean difference (.68403) from D.G. Khan. He was significant (.000) and had a high mean difference (.59722) from Bahawalpur. About the standard Student Support Service, Multan had a high mean (.54514) from Bahawalpur and had less mean difference from D.G. Khan (.31250).

Table 3 Analysis Summary of Standards Followed by Institutions to Implement ADP (Research Question 3)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
					Bahawalpur	36
Multan	36	3.8390	.15646	.02608	3.7861	3.8920
D.G. Khan	36	3.2891	.58004	.09667	3.0929	3.4854
Total	108	3.5764	.48661	.04682	3.4836	3.6692

Table 3 describes the results that Multan had a high mean compared to Bahawalpur and D.G. Khan; according to the mean, Bahawalpur had a meagre mean Difference with Multan, but D.G. Khan ranked very low in this regard. The institutions of D.G. Khan followed less standards in ADP programs.

Table 4 Analysis of Summary of Standards Followed by Institutions ANOVA Post Hoc (Games-Howell) Test (Research Question 2)

(I) Districts	(J) Districts	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Bahawalpur	Multan	-.23801*	.08011	.013	-.4324	-.0436
	D.G. Khan	.31187*	.12281	.035	.0174	.6063
Multan	Bahawalpur	.23801*	.08011	.013	.0436	.4324
	D.G. Khan	.54987*	.10013	.000	.3062	.7936
D.G. Khan	Bahawalpur	-.31187*	.12281	.035	-.6063	-.0174
	Multan	-.54987*	.10013	.000	-.7936	-.3062

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 4 shows that according to the Games-Howell test Multan had a high mean difference (.54987) from D.G. Khan and was significant (.000) but had some high mean difference

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(.23801) from Bahawalpur.

**On The Bases of Interviews Analyses Following Results Were Drawn about Opportunities and Challenges of ADP for Students and Teachers; (Research Question 5) qualitative**

1. Having established an associate degree programme, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) has not followed through on implementing it, resulting in higher education institutions finding loopholes in the system and students feeling uncertain about their future.
2. Giving in to the HEC's pressure, most institutions eliminated their early graduation programmes. They replaced them with two-year associate degrees after being informed that the two-year diploma's credentials would no longer be verified.
3. Consequently, a degree programme, 'Associate with an Advanced Curriculum of Graduation', was launched.
4. Under the HEC guidelines, it was also mandatory to have a semester system for associate degrees and a new curriculum. Still, higher education institutions have continued with the system already in place.
5. Therefore, only the degree's title has changed, and students are still studying the same curriculum as the one from the scrapped early graduation programme.
6. Resultantly, they will not graduate as they need to complete a further two years of university education.
7. The student populace of Multan, D.G. Khan and Bahawalpur higher education institutions are being taught the syllabus of B.com, BSc, and BA in an associate degree.
8. Numerous challenges with the semester system's implementation in colleges, out of which training professors to implement it "is a primary issue."
9. Students are confused about their future.
10. Less than 50% of students enrolled for the associate degree compared to past enrollment rates of the two-year degree programme. Even the number of students giving private B.com and BA exams has decreased.
11. The institutions have the poorest infrastructure. There is a teacher shortage; the labs and libraries are outdated.
12. Students cannot quickly enroll in the 5<sup>th</sup> semester after completion of ADP because, in the semester system student dropout ratio is significantly less. In the 5<sup>th</sup> semester, there is no gap for new enrolment.
13. After ADP, there is much more difficult for students to switch to a BS-4-year program; the curriculum and system are highly different.
14. The trends of students are much less towards ADP because the BS-4-year program is newly launched and attracts high student interest.
15. Students are not motivated towards ADP.
16. Two-year ADP as a semester system gives no adequate knowledge to students because of the shortage of time; students learn less due to late admission and registration process, and they give mid-exams without preparation; after that result declaration, there is no time for the final exam. It is much time wasted. It should be an annual system.
17. The programs are not so charming as students earn the degree and have no job in the

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fields, so it is less charming compared to the BS-4-year program.

18. Students feel inferior in ADP, and BS-4 years students feel inferior, so students are less motivated in ADP and work less, learn less, committed less.
19. HEC is charging high fees, and due to this, many students are out of higher education.
20. Traditional courses were added in ADP, so they lost the modern charm.
21. After ADP, there is no job, and further education is necessary for a job, so students are less motivated towards ADP; they prefer BS-4 years.
22. In universities, the registration ratio is meagre because it is a regular and formal program compared to BA. After all, there was an opportunity for registration for private students, but it's a regular and semester system, and one cannot earn a degree as a private candidate.
23. Teachers have difficulty completing the syllabus in time and conducting mid and final-term exams in ADP. From the viewpoint of teachers, the annual system was much better compared to the semester system.
24. In the same institution, there are several programs for the same subject, like BS-4 year, ADA (Bachelor of Arts), Associate Degree Program (ADP), and The Associate Degree Program in Commerce (ADC), so students are in an uncertain situation about which program is better.
25. In ADP, students secure their two years and earn a degree within two years, compared to BS-4 years; if students drop in any semester, then all program is wasted, and students cannot earn any degree, even if students complete all eight semesters of the program.
26. After ADP, you can earn a job in the bank; PMS and CSS (competition exams) also require 14 years of education, so ADP is a blessing for those students.
27. It is an opportunity for students to earn a degree in their homes as a private student because some institutions offer ADA as an annual system.

**Conclusions**

1. It was concluded that district Multan ranked first in quality standards to implement ADP, and district D.G. Khan ranked last. The overall mean of district Bahawalpur was better than district D.G. Khan.
2. It was observed that standard students ranked high in standards following, and Multan was first in this regard. The formal mission statement and goals also ranked high, and district Multan followed this.
3. Quality standard planning and evaluation ranked last, and the lowest mean was district D.G. Khan. It was concluded that standard assessment quality assurance also ranked very lowest mean, and the district D.G. Khan followed this very little.
4. It concluded that in ADP, students secure their two years and earn a degree, but on the other hand, in BS4 years, if a student drop in any semester, he gets no degree; for a degree, four4 years is compulsory.
5. After ADP, you can earn a job in banks; PMS and CSS (competition exams) also require 14-year education, so ADP is a blessing for those students. It is an opportunity for students to earn a degree in their homes as private students because some institutions offer ADA as an annual system.
6. It was concluded that institutions did not fully follow the higher education



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commission's instructions and standards for implementing ADP. It showed the system's loopholes and students' uncertainty about their future.

7. Almost all institutions only changed the name of the degree under the pressure of HEC; no new initiatives were taken for innovating. It was concluded that according to HEC guidelines, it was mandatory to have a semester system and launch a new curriculum. However, institutions only changed the existing two years BA program to ADP. No, change physically exists.

8. It was concluded that after earning ADP, students would not graduate; they need to complete a further two years of education for graduation.

9. It was concluded that teachers had many challenges in implementing the semester system because they had no special training.

10. It was concluded that due to the uncertain situation, student enrollment decreased by about 50% in ADP because BS-4 years is currently viral. It was concluded that institutions had the poorest infrastructure, a high teacher shortage, and outdated labs and libraries. No relevant books about ADP were available in libraries.

11. It was found that students had difficulty enrolling in the 5<sup>th</sup> semester of the BS-4-year program after ADP because there found two main problems, first was that in the semester system, the dropout ratio counted significantly and in the 5<sup>th</sup> semester, there was no space for new students, and second, was about master two years students were not satisfied because after few months HEC issue a notification to close master two years program.

12. It was concluded that students' interest was less towards ADP because BS-4 years are viral in this system.

13. From the viewpoint of teachers, two years of ADP gave fewer learning opportunities to students due to a shortage of time; untrained teachers and students face a shortage of time; they have no teaching time after admission, and mid-exams are ready after mid the final exam is ready, the student has no time for learning, they gave only papers without any preparation.

14. Students feel inferior in ADP compared to BS-4 years; in ADP, they work less, learn less, and commit less. Teachers feel difficulty completing the syllabus in time due to the short time. In the same institution, the same subject had different modes like BS-4 years, ADP, ADA, and ADC, so students were confused about which was better, but they preferred BS-4 years due to its continuous mode with eight semesters.

### **Recommendations**

On the bases of the conclusion following recommendations were made;

1. For proper implementation of ADP, all institutions should follow all quality standards equally.

2. Quality standard planning and evaluation ranked last in institutions; this standard should be followed correctly.

3. There was found to be a lack of motivation towards ADP; there should be guidance and counselling for students to get admission in ADP with its benefits because all competitive exams, including PMS and CSS, only require 14 years of education, and ADP is fit for this.

4. According to HEC guidelines, it was mandatory to have a semester system and launch a new curriculum. Still, institutions only changed the old existed two years BA program as ADP no change physically exists. It is recommended that there should be innovation and

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newly updated advanced curriculums for ADP.

5. It is recommended that there should be appropriate training for ADP teachers.
6. It is recommended that laboratories be upgraded and ADP concern books and materials should be provided.
7. It is recommended that there should be a clear plan for ADP students to get admission in BS-4 years 5<sup>th</sup> semester without any difficulty, and extra space should be provided.
8. Compared to the semester system, ADP should be an annual system; in this way, students learn correctly and quickly.

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