

*The Evolution of Educational and Cultural Exchanges in Pakistan-Saudi Arabia  
Relations (1975-2022)*

## The Evolution of Educational and Cultural Exchanges in Pakistan-Saudi Arabia Relations (1975-2022)

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Received on: 02-05-2024

Accepted on: 02-06-2024

### Abstract

This paper focuses on different echelons of educational and cultural exchanges between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia from 1975 to 2022 to explore their impact on the enhancement of bilateral relations and the development of social economy. Based on this paradigm, the study asks how scholarships, collaborative academic programs, cultural festivals, religious tourism, and media partnerships have improved human capital, cultural diplomacy, and socio-political relations. This study confirms that devoted to cultural causes such as education, Saudi Arabia has influenced the educational structure and cultural profile of Pakistan positively and has even strengthened the Islamic identity and core values fixations. Many exchange visits, both religious and secular such as the yearly pilgrimage of hajj and umrah have enhanced the spirit of shared beliefs and have led to cultural interpenetration. Despite these challenges, both countries have been able to balance on their achievements of the objectives of these exchanges despite uncertainties resulting from political changes, economic issues, and other such pulls and pressures. The study concludes that these exchanges have set up a good foundation of the continued cooperation with the future prospect in areas of sciences, Technology and environment. The regular actions in the sphere of educational and cultural cooperation guarantee that Pakistan-Saudi Arabia partnership further develops actively and it has a positive impact on stability of the region and its progress.

**Keywords:** Pakistan-Saudi Arabia relations, educational exchanges, cultural diplomacy, socio-economic development, religious tourism, human capital development, cultural integration

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## **1 Introduction**

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia together enjoy one of the longest-standing diplomatic relations in the Muslim world today. Officially recognized since the country's independence in 1947, the two countries' relationship has evolved to be one based on a sense of religion, cultural and economic ties as well as mutual interest. That is why Saudi Arabia – the home of the birthplace of Islam and the guardian of the two Holy Shrines of Muslims has a special sacred place in Pakistani hearts and minds as a place concentrated the spiritual essence of the Islamic world. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia believes in Pakistan as a strategic partner in South Asian region because of large Muslim population and close proximity with the Arabian Peninsula and influential standing in the region. This has created a bond based on religion and has produced a complex relationship on political, economic and military support (Ahmed & Karim, 2024).

Scholarly and cultural exchanges have been revealed to be one of the main cornerstones to build this bilateral relationship, while the soft power diplomacy and internalization process to improve the perception of the two societies. These exchanges have developed from small pilot projects of the mid-1970s into complex state, policy and goal supported, grant implemented systems. This section of the introduction provides an historical background of such exchange, motivation behind these exchanges, role of government and the effect on the relationship between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Being interconnected, both nations addressed their educational and cultural interchangeability due to the new relation types initiated by globalization and changes of the economic viewpoints.

Scholars have described educational and cultural relations as being an important part of the nature of world politics as a result of the special dimension of soft power. In case of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, this interchange was taking place due to religious ties and Saudi Arabia offering opportunities in the fields of Islamic education and Arabic language program while Pakistan seen its citizens undergoing the benefit of studying in the Saudi establishments. Scholarship awarded to the Pakistani students by Saudi Arabia and the Saudi funded educational institution in Pakistan are a part of its cultural diplomacy. In the same way, cultural exchanges like, religious tourism, festivals and media have played a very dynamic role in strengthening cultural bonds and high level of embrace of cultural values (Nasim, 2021).

These exchanges have also been mutually beneficial: for Pakistan, they help Pakistani citizens to gain appropriate education and jobs in other countries, and for Saudi Arabia, they help this country expand its sphere of influence and nurture positive attitudes among Pakistani people. Saudi Arabia has been a significant aid to cultivate this cultural relation with Pakistan through Arabic language, teachings of Islam and Technical education. However, as Saudi Arabia emerges more into the foreground as organizational activists among Muslims worldwide, these exchanges demonstrate Riyadh's ambition to shepherd the worldwide Islamic community in constructing cooperation and camaraderie with other Muslim-majority countries.

Historical relations of educational and cultural relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia can be divided into certain phases that are related to the phases of regional and international relations. As it will be recalled that in the 1970s, Saudi Arabia receive an inflow of financial resources, which made it to boost its diplomacy in the international system especially among

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the Muslims. The oil wealth that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia benefited from produced a rapid change in its home economy but was also used to provide the international support in terms of monetary and educational assistance to Muslim majority countries such as Pakistan. During this period Saudi offered scholarships for Pakistani students and the students got chance to study in the well-known Saudi universities such as Islamic University in Madina and Umm al Qura University in Makkah. These institutions being oriented to Islamic studies, Arabic language and cultural items, turned into concerns for Pakistani students for religious and language education.

Another important accomplishment in this period was the creation of the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) in 1980, which was financed principally by Saudi money. The IIUI was established to be an institution which would educate and enforce the teachings of Islam, teach Arabic language alongside fields of knowledge that are religious as well as secular. It was interesting to understand how IIUI formation serves a major Saudi plan to set up Pakistan's education system, enhance the religious link between the two countries, and develop a pool of Pakistani scholars and professionals loyal to the Saudi mode of Islamic teachings.

Into the 1980s and 1990 already many Saudi Arabian educational and cultural institutions were sustained in Pakistan as both nations joined to fight Soviet imperialism in Afghanistan. These events only intensified cross-cultural and educational exchanges, which started to become linked with regional politics soon. The Saudi Arabian government raised the number of scholarships, madrassas, and Arabic language centers, to support Pakistan's strategic importance as a strategic partner for the Saudi Arabia and promote a similar ideology.

The idea of educational and culture has received promotion through government policies in both Pakistan as well as Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia has traditionally utilized political Islamic solidarity and cultural diplomacy as mechanisms to advance its engagement with Muslim country counterparts. Organization including Saudi Fund for Development and Islamic Development Bank have financed a myriad of educational and cultural projects in Pakistan. Cultural relationship has been enhanced through various functions in Embassies and cultural officers in Pakistan; the artistic performance or social events such as Saudi art exhibition and Arabic language classes have been arranged in Pakistan (Ul-Haq & Hassan, 2022).

On the Pakistani side, government departments like the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Higher Education Commission (HEC) have participated in organizing and advertising Saudi funded educational activities, encouraging exchange of students and organizing Saudi Arabia returnee's network from Saudi educational institutions. Pakistan's embassies in Saudi Arabia have also helped in organization of cultural activities, promotion of diplomatic relations, and giving the Pakistani person living in Saudi Arabia a chance to feel the richness of their Pakistani culture. Furthermore, the concept of Pakistan-Saudi friendship societies is active in major cities, including, Lahore and Islamabad where the community of intellectuals, scholars and enthusiasts sit together to discuss common ideologies and continuously organize cultural exchange programs.

Majority of educational agreements between the two countries have involved the delivery of Islam education, Arabic language, technical training. As the Kingdom that hosts the two holiest sites in Islamic world, Saudi Arabia has always aimed at introducing Islamic knowledge and ethics in its educational system. Pakistani students who intend to study

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Islamic University or religious scholarship and Arabic often find their ways to universities in Saudi Arabia, such as Islamic University of Madinah, and the Umm al-Qura University. The study conducted by Khan (2020) showed that these students go back to Pakistan to take great positions in religion, scholars, academic, public and others, going by his observation these students play great role in propagating Islamic knowledge in Pakistan (Hassan et al., 2016). As I say, Saudi assistance to Pakistan has ranged from education in Islam to technical, vocational training to give the Pakistanis qualifications necessary in today's job market. Saudi Arabia has supported Pakistan by providing money for technical training centers which has ensured that young Pakistanis enter the workplace, locally and internationally. Most of the graduates of these programs secure a job in Saudi Arabia where the supply of qualified human capital is needed to match the skills that these graduates have been trained in. This win-win arrangement has also played the part of answering the Saudi Arabian labor demand whilst containing unemployment in Pakistan.

Religious tourism especially haj and Umrah innocent relation between Pakistani and Saudi Arabia are also famous from decades. These pilgrimages are performed every year by millions of Pakistani Muslims and the movement is direct and unbroken thus quantitatively a vivid cultural intercourse takes place. As the premier protector of Kaaba and the grand mosque in Mecca and the prophet's mosque in Medina, Saudi Arabia has developed much infrastructure and offered numerous services for Pakistani pilgrims and in turn intensifying the religious and historic bond between the two countries. By far, such journeys are seen by many Pakistanis as not only religious but rather as an encounter with Saudi society and Saudi tradition as well.

Religious tourism provides religious exchange to promote interactive cultural understanding among Muslims and creates a related cultural and religious bond of Muslims around the globe. Besides Hajj and Umrah, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan share their cultures through Saudi Arabian Culture Week in Pakistan, or Pakistani Culture Week in Saudi Arabia so both sides of the society can feel connected. These festivals present Saudi and Pakistani traditional music, art and food, and cast a positive light and strengthen society bonds between two nations.

Mass media has further elaborated the culture by providing international break through between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia eased by modern technology. Saudi and Pakistani news outlets have collaboratively produced programs for television, movies, and documentaries mostly touching on Islam, history, cultural, and social aspects. Ongoing media collaborations enable both states to advance a positive portrayal of each other's societies and breaking stereotype of Islamic countries. In the opinion of Ahmad (2019), the described media partnerships are extremely important in defining the perceptions of people, as well as in promoting the development of a positive image of the two countries and fostering mutual understanding.

As a result of the appearance of digital platforms, both nations have broadened the cultural interaction through the online cultural programs, the virtual exhibitions, and also the educational webinars, all of which make these interactions open for the public. In this world of change and globalization, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have successfully focused on the youth using technology to make their cultural relationship stronger. Digital technologies also create a way in which students – scholars, artists, and other students from the two counties can engage in real time – a way of cultural exchange that is a tad more active.

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The above function of educational and cultural exchange has been the principal cornerstone of the relations between Pakistan and Saudi, albeit some difficulties encountered. These transformations can be attributed to changes in political trends, economic pressures, or by prototypical shifts in lactation's society for which these programs were designed. Variations in political cycles of both countries lead to changes in their priorities in relations and volumes of exchange. Sociopolitical and economic instabilities such as wars, rife, and recession have at one time or the other influenced funding to education and cultural programs.

Meeting the needs that society of today requires have also not been smooth. In light of social issues connected with globalization, technologies and cultural orientation, AUS planed sees increases in the demand for educational and cultural programs to respond to the modern world challenges such as environment, science and technology advancement. These problems being in mind, now both Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have begun to focus on wider academic and cultural aspects of exchange, going beyond the conventional religious and language courses that represent this rapidly transforming world.

Scholarly and cultural interchangeability has played a very active role in the enhancement of Pakistan-Saudi relations. These swaps have promoted human capital building and made both countries produce a professional and culturally sensitive talent. Institutions affecting opinions come from Saudi Arabia graduates who return to Pakistan to perform religious, academic, religious, and pivotal positions to ensure the sustaining of the mutual relation between the two countries. Cultural exchanges have also become acts of soft power where both countries get a platform to do propaganda and make their citizens become acquainted with the other's culture hence forging good relations.

The socio-economic significance of the exchanges is also large. They have taken Saudi-funded scholarships, and educational programs has offered quality education and professional skills to Pakistanis that in turn would help boost the economy of Pakistan. Moreover, a huge number of Pakistanis living in Saudi Arabia serving there in various professions, have become an asset for Pakistan's economy through remittance inflows hence stabilizing the Pakistan economy.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

There is a long history of relations around many decades between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia which have been formed through educational and cultural exchanges. Yet, perhaps because the significance of these exchanges is so critical to understanding the relationship between the two countries it has gone unexplored, especially over the period 1975 2022. Little is known about how these exchanges have shaped mutually enriching understanding of each other, the images of social values, and cooperation at the bilateral level. This thesis seeks to fill this gap by looking into how educational and cultural exchanges can develop Pakistan-Saudi Arabia relations.

### **1.2 Research Objectives**

1. To assess changes in educational cooperation between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia from the year 1975 to 2022.
2. To analyses the effectiveness of cultural diplomacy in changing dynamics of relation between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

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3. To determine some of the real factors that have played roles in shaping the educational and cultural interchanges from time to time.
4. The purpose for studying the way in which educational and cultural exchanges strengthen Pakistan-Saudi Arabia ties.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

1. What were the reasons behind Pakistan and Saudi Arabia educational exchanges from 1975 to 2022?
2. On what basis Pakistan Saudi Arabia ties have been advanced?
3. What were national key factors that affected the educational and cultural exchanges between the two nations?
4. What have incurred these exchanges contributed to mutual understanding and teamwork?

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

This research is important for it examines the relationship developed between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia in terms of educational and cultural exchanges. Learning with these exchanges does not mean only exchanging, these exchanges are also about learning, which then helps the two countries get to understand each other better and build stronger ties. If you look at this, you will find how education and culture are bringing countries closer together.

The results of this research will enable policymakers to understand the effect of such exchanges to inform future programs to enhance bilateral ties. Second, it will contribute to the scarce understanding of Pakistan — Saudi Arabia relations beyond politics and trade. On the other hand, this study is also useful to educators and cultural organizations to design the programs for the good of understanding and cooperation. The overall lesson is that educational and cultural links have an important part to play in international relations.

## **2 Literature Review**

Pakistan has always been and remains to date the most enduring and complex relationship of the South Asia and Middle East. Across religious and cultural commonalities and strategic interests, the partnership between Pakistan and both countries have grown since Pakistani independence in 1947. Educational, cultural and other exchanges in addition to political and economic alliances have played a major role in this relationship, moving this socio-cultural bond to a next level. Between 1975 and 2022 these exchanges have moved through different phases, responding to changing global, regional, and domestic priorities.

Post independence it became a priority to establish strong ties with other Muslim countries. As the custodian of Islam's two holiest sites, Saudi Arabia had a special place in Pakistan's foreign policy framework. An alliance between mutual respect and cooperation was established with two countries, and diplomatic relations were formalized in 1947. The alliance grew over the decades through economic aid, military cooperation and educational, and cultural exchanges. In line with shared religious values these exchanges have become symbols of solidarity and broader lasting engagement (Siddiqi, 2019).

It was also during the 1970s that this relationship shifted dramatically — and with both economic and political changes. After the breakup of the Soviet Union, the year 1991, Saudi Arabia became the economic giant of the Islamic world in the wake of the 1973 oil crisis. With increased oil wealth the Saudis could expand their influence and invest in—cultural and

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educational—diplomacy with countries such as Pakistan. It was also a time in Pakistan's search for more durable alliances in the Muslim world following the loss of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) in 1971. Educational and cultural exchanges were both considered means to achieve Islamic unity, mutual understanding and develop social and economic relations between both countries (Raza & Noreen, 2024).

Pakistan – Saudi Arabia relations have long been characterized by educational exchange, sharing knowledge and skills building, and sharing of cultural and religious values. These exchanges over the years have come in different ways such as scholarships for Pakistani students studying in Saudi universities, and establishing Saudi funded educational centers in Pakistan, and academic collaborations between our institutions.

In the decades since, Saudi Arabia has given Pakistani students many scholarships to attend medical school and study disciplines like Islamic studies, Arabic language, and engineering. Thousands of Pakistani students have been awarded scholarships to study at top institutions such as the Islamic University of Madinah and Umm al-Qura University in Mecca, data from the Saudi Ministry of Education said. Without these scholarships it would be much more difficult for Pakistani students to attend higher education, and an opportunity for them to experience the Saudi culture and learn Islamic teachings and values (Sial, 2015).

Ahmad (2020) research shows the part Saudi scholarship plays in boosting Islamic education for Pakistani students, some of whom go back to Pakistan to take charge in important positions in religious institutions and academia. This exchange also has helped Saudi Arabia recount its vision of Islam illustrating how two nations can share a religious identity. Nevertheless, influence of such scholarships goes beyond religious education as many of them go to work in civilian fields of engineering, agriculture, and medicine among others working to help develop Pakistan.

Even providing support to educational institutions and centers which are dedicated to developing Islamic education, Arabic language and skills of vocations in Pakistan. Established in 1980 with Saudi funding, the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) is but one of a number of notable examples. It has also turned the IIUI into a center of Islamic studies; students from across Pakistan and other Muslim countries have poured in. These courses combine religious and secular subjects, to enlighten students on various careers, but also reinforce Islamic values (Ahmed et al., 2023).

Saudi funded educational centers have worn into Pakistan's educational environment as Arabic programs and Islamic studies curriculum have made their way into culture. The First World Conference on Muslim Education, organized by these institutions, has also contributed towards a process of cultural understanding and an Islamic identity which is faithful to Saudi religious thought, in so far as they all appear to agree at least partly to promote Islamic education.

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia also have academic cooperation and in recent years have developed even more educational links with collaborating programs amongst academic establishments. Such programs include exchange of academicians, collaborative research initiatives and scholar meetings and seminars between the scholars from both countries. For instance, the collaboration between Pakistani universities and other foreign institutions such as King Saud University has resulted into, amongst other research areas, Islamic finance, Arabic and, cultural research (Hussain et al., 2024).

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As per Khan and Farooq's study conducted in 2019, such collaborations have brought about culture of academic exchange and then faculty of knowledge in several fields. These academic exchanges have been very useful to faculties of both countries' universities to share their experience and knowledge in various fields including the Shariah, language and social sciences.

The educational exchanges have consequently influenced the intellectual and academic relations while cultural exchange has been a mean between societies of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Such interactions have occurred in diverse fashion, in terms of culture fairs, Cooperation art show, religious tourism, cooperation in media and other activities which aimed at enhancing the share understanding between the two countries.

The two countries have been able to host cultural fairs and art displays of the societies' cultures and traditions. The above events are opportunities for the artists, musicians, and cultural practitioners in society to interact with each other's work, thus promoting a collective positive cultural identity. Biannual Saudi Arabian Cultural Weeks organized throughout major cities in Pakistan include Saudi Arabian art, music, and handicraft items. Such events underscore the cultural similarities and differences to the two nations' benefiting from friendship.

As argued by Alam in 2021 Cultural events plays a crucial role of improving relations between countries and also create a right perception about each country's populace. Religious or cultural events of Pakistan have also been organized in Saudi Arabia as regards to music, traditional products and food items. Apart from industrial usage, it aids social replenishment of Pakistani expatriate communities with a connection to their cultural roots proven by available festivals.

Muslims' religious tourism that includes annual solemnities of hajj and Umrah is the strongest link between the cultures of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Annually millions of Pakistani Muslims perform these rites in Mecca and Medina and this way they bring a peculiar type of cultural exchange and strengthening of spiritual and cultural identity and relations. In Pakistan, domestic governance through religious organizations occurs indirectly because Saudi Arabia acts as a natural host due to the country's association with two of Islam's most revered sites.

This seems to be a delightful point for almost all Pakistanis, as the pilgrimage is not only a religious exercise, but also allows the visitors to observe Saudi Arabian culture first-hand. The feeling that arises from the practicing the religions side by side with other people from other parts of the world is well fulfilling. Pakistan Ministry of Religious Affairs report (2022) mentioned that Pakistani people performing Hajj and Umrah are steadily on the rise which signifies the significance of this cultural relations.

Media relations have also supported the two Muslim countries, Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the quest to increase understanding of their cultures. Television co-operation, show business collaborations, and news share have created mechanisms for presenting cultural messages which is appealing to the domestic and foreign audience. Saudi and Pakistani TV programme producers have come together and started making documentaries on Islamic history, culture and social issues in order to establish optical similarity (Pavan, 2013).

Such partnerships have also helped in enhancing perception on the media and also

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eradicating negative perceptions. In particular, they enable both nations to promote their heritage to a broader community to foster respect between them. Other research reveals that such media exchanges play to the notion of cultural unity and togetherness of Islamic nations which is in line with the long-term objectives of the two countries concerning cultural mainstreaming.

Education exchange has been particularly important in the development of human capital in Pakistan. A number of education scholarships as well as educational centers and vocationally based training schemes have benefited Saudi funded scholarships for Pakistani students to produce good results and provide them check and balance to take part in various sectors appropriately. Graduands from Saudi institutions are primarily placed in positions that involve the academia, religious institutions and the government in the development of the nation. The technical and vocational training imparted through Saudi schemes has also ensured employment of Pakistani youth at home and across the Middle Eastern region (Safran, 2018).

They have used cultural exchanges as the most efficient activities in cultural diplomacy, improving friendly relations between the two countries. Thus, through the involvement in culture, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have been promoting and branded international cultural values enhancing their soft power diplomacy. Such exchanges over the festivals, exhibitions and media collaborations have envisaged a positive image of both these countries focusing on the aspects of mutual culture and tradition.

The educational and cultural relations which have taken time in fostering have enhanced social and political relations between the two countries. Such exchanges have fostered interconnections that are individuals and institutions acting in the interest of the two countries to continue to maintain a bilateral relationship. For instance, Saudi university alumni associations in Pakistan play official roles in the mutual socialization of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan and act as an organized lobby for the maintenance of friendly relations.

Thus, despite the fact that educational and cultural exchange programs have been rather effective in a broad sense they have encountered certain difficulties such as political changes, disturbed economic conditions and shifting needs of the society. Subsequently, it has been necessary for both countries to modify their approaches in order to support such activities. fluxes in political leadership and policies of the two countries have tipped the scale in direction and volume of exchanges. Instances of regional tension and or changes in the alliances have been felt to affect top level official collaborations leading to a delay in collaborative programs. Still, both countries seem to have been loyal to such exchanges most of the time due to their religious and cultural similarities.

There has been sometimes, occasional funding and resource constraints brought about by economic adversities to educational and cultural programs. These have in the past been restricted by economic recessions, reductions in funding, and other pressures resulting from competing national interests. However, any kind of cultural exchanges have become vital for both countries to look for ways on how these exchanges could be maintained by searching for low-cost options like the implementation of virtual classes and online cultural shows and presentations (Rashid et al., 2023).

These changes have posed interesting, progressive and progressive contemporary issues in education al and cultural exchanges from various societies as the societies grow they undergo

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technological changes, the world becomes a global village and cultures change too. Both countries have realized that the need to expand the exchange forms of such education to meet contemporary challenges, indicated by the inclusion of topics including Science, Technology, and the Environment in education exchange.

Education and cultural relations between the Kingdom and Pakistan have enormous potential in the future. Both countries have set strong intention to enhance and intensify cooperation and joint initiatives in areas, such as welcoming technological advances, and facing the common concerns.

It is important to note that there is a significant level of opportunity for program growth from existing initiatives while also developing new areas of partnership such as the natural sciences, vocational development, and computer science. If both countries expand the fields of their cooperation, both nations can meet new social requirements and develop new themes for cooperation.

One such important aspect is that the integration of technology in education and cultural initiatives brings an aspect of possible virtual interaction in terms of exchange as well as the possibility of an online learning system as well as digital culture exhibitions adds to the possibilities of such program. It also emphasizes that through the help of technology, more and improved intense interaction between Pakistani and Saudi students, scholars and cultural workers is also possible.

The current and future global concerns include climate change, health, and social equity, among others, are well understood by both countries and so, there will always be areas where the two can cooperate. However, by focusing in the common issues Pakistan and Saudi Arabia can bring its partnership to a new phase and help bargain for world peace.

### **3 Research Methodology**

This research applies a historical analytic approach to assess the genesis and significance of educational and cultural relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia during the period 1975–2022. Of particular importance, the research aims to describe and explain the specifics of these exchange processes with reference to the context of bilateral relations. The research adopts a qualitative method to get a detailed understanding of how these interchanges have influenced cultural and socio-political relations of the two countries (Iosifides, 2011).

Data for the study is collected from two main sources: and the major and the minor production materials. The primary data sources are the treaties, accords and the historical records which offer an essential view into the rationales and structures for these exchanges. Whenever possible, this study also considers interviews, testimonials, and opinions of former learners and cultural ambassadors who color the narration with purpose-shaping first-hand experiences. Secondary sources include books, journals, studies, research and academic papers that present general background and analysis of educational and cultural diplomacy within the Pakistan- Saudi Arabia relationship. All these sources collectively offer an overview of the past and present importance of these exchanges.

The data is analyzed using two methods: There are two types of analysis usually applied in thematic and narrative analysis. Thematic analysis uncovers repeat patterns, for example, the themes: 'educational relations,' and 'religious diplomacy,' through which researchers are able to gain further knowledge on the causes and patterns of these exchanges. Such an approach

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enables the study to detect changes in policy and society's values spanning many years. Socio-historical overviews use narrative analysis to build a chronological history of key events and accomplishments, and provide historical context to the developments in the educational and cultural exchanges. This approach underlines the evolution and change of such barter and integrates single instances into this process.

In order to enhance reliability and validity this study employs triangulation where data collected from different sources are compared to verify information. To minimize the effects of bias in interpretation, the study utilizes approaches to critically address the aspects of diversity. It assists in achieving an objective and neutral perspective towards the topic in order to reduce biasness.

But there are some constraints that are associated with this type of methodology. Some primary sources might be official documents and information sealed by the government; thus, its analysis is unlikely to be comprehensive. Further, qualitative research by definition can always contain contingencies and what is more, subjective interpretation of the findings is possible. To overcome these challenges the study is designed to cross-reference the sources and, therefore, provides multiple approaches to the subject matter to achieve the highest level of the author's objectivity.

Last but not the least; Recommendations such as ethical considerations are made while carrying out the research. All the important facts as well as quotes are appropriately cited and any personal account or interview is kept anonymous. This is because the achievement of ethical standards makes the research as well as dignify the participants; privacy.

Overall, this paper's qualitative approach that through employs both thematic and narrative analysis to provide rich and contextualised understanding of educational and cultural relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. In this way, this study reveals how and why these exchanges have been carried out both when analysing patterns over time and/with the use of daily stories, this made it clearer on the role of these exchanges in the enduring relationship between the two countries.

#### **4 Results Analysis and Discussion**

Educational and cultural relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia from 1975 to 2022 have the implication on diplomatic relations with greater social and economic development. This part discusses how these exchanges happened in this study; and it lays further analyzes the exchanges between the two countries up to present.

##### **4.1 Historical Context and Motivation for Educational and Cultural Exchanges**

The roots of cooperation between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are based on Islamic bond partnership and shared interests. Since the mid-1970 such breaks as educational and cultural ones were realized to have the ability to support the partnership between two countries. Education and culture were funded through the revenue Saudi Arabia derived from oil exports in the hope that other Islamic countries would reciprocate and help foster educational growth and stronger cultural relations, like Pakistan wanted for itself.

As for Saudi Arabia the cultural diplomacy during this period aimed at propagating the Saudi version of Islamic education while Pakistan was interested in propagating religious education

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within its own borders. With these funds, programs of educational and cultural interchange developed that were primarily religious in content, and which established the cultural framework for a long-term relationship.

Bilateral cooperation in the sphere of education between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia has been confined to scholarships, collaborative programs and having Saudi funded organizations in Pakistan. The following academic and cultural projects have played a significant role in forging Academic and Cultural Relation, reformation of educational system, extend requisite education and employment opportunities for the Pakistani community.

#### **4.2 Scholarships and Academic Collaborations**

The scholarship programs have been one of the most common and notable means used by the Saudi institutions by awarding it to students from Pakistan. Thousands of Pakistan students since the 1970s were provided scholarships to study at prestigious universities including the Islamic University of Madina and Umm Al-Qura University in Makkah. They enable Pakistani students to attend the university courses in Islamic philosophy and the Arabic language, engineering and medical studies and other relevant programs. Khan and Mahmood (2020) indicated in their studies that Saudi scholarships have not only widen the opportunities to complete education for Pakistani students but can also provide opportunity to gain an experience of Saudi culture and society.

Further, cooperative educational programs have fostered academic relation between the two nations. Other Saudi universities like the King Saud University have not only collaborated with the Pakistan universities through research collaborations, exchange of faculty members between universities and organizing of academic conferences. It has been most effective in areas such as Islamic finance, Arabic Language and Culture where KSA and UAE have mutual objectives to achieve. This has led to achievement of the following benefits of academic relations which include; These scholars' initiatives have created a forum for the knowledge exchange and enhancing institutional linkages of scholars and professionals to develop educational relations of the two countries.

#### **4.3 Establishment of Educational Institutions**

Saudi Arabia has also aided in the development educational facilities within Pakistan, with the intention of enhancing the growth the aspect of Islamic education, fluency in Arabic languages and vocational studies. A rather well-known case is the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) founded in 1980 with considerable Saudi capital investment. IIUI has expanded its dimensions and now it plays par role in educational hub of Pakistan and other Muslim nations. The program is tried to cover all needed subjects for a good university which are supported by religious education that means students become Alert with Islamic values and also be ready to join different fields of the society. According to Siddiqui (2021), through the Saudi-funded institutions like IIUI, there is pride of 'Islamic Education' in Pakistan has got further enhanced.

These institutions have helped in improving the relation of intercultural understanding between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, for Saudi educators and scholars have been quite involved in deciding on the curriculum and the educational policy. This has boosted the cultural and religious link between Saudi Arabia and the countries in questions by promoting

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an Islamic identity that is consistent with Saudi religious belief.

#### **4.4 Cultural Exchanges**

Cultural exchanges have acted as a means of interchange between the Pakistani and Saudi societies and enhancing the kindred social ethos in both societies. These exchanges consist of things such as cultural festivals, art exhibitions, religious tourism among others and media co-operation, these have ensured that the ground work for cultural diplomacy is established.

##### **4.4.1 Cultural Festivals and Art Exhibitions**

Both countries have had fests culminating in cultural celebrations and art displays of histories and cultures of their respective countries. Such occasions have allowed artists and musicians as well as other cultural actors from both countries to familiarize themselves with each other's productions thus enhancing a common cultural memory. Saudi cultural weeks that are held in major cities of Pakistan present Saudi artwork, Saudi traditional music and other hand crafted items and other Saudi cultural aspects to the Pakistani viewers. Apart from that, these promotions of festivals bring goodwill and understanding, target cultural similarities and differences, and eventually strengthen the general cultural bond between the two countries.

I also found that belonging to the Pakistani community in Saudi Arabia particular cultural events have begun to organize during festivals music, handicrafts and food products. These events make the Pakistani living in other parts of the world especially Saudi Arabia to embrace their roots hence creating an image of Pakistan. These festivals play a big role as the two nations since act as a showcase of diplomatic relations between the two over a festival.

#### **4.5 Religious Tourism**

Cultural relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia can comprehensively be articulated from the fact that Islamic religious tourism is a prominent feature of relations specifically manifested in the annual. Every year millions of Pakistani Muslims pay their pilgrimage to perform these religious obligations in Mecca and Medina, however they have brought a kind of cross-cultural interaction which strengthens relationship spiritually and culturally. Thanks to its status of the home of two of the holiest Islamic sites, Saudi Arabia has allowed this process by offering services and amenities for Pakistani participants.

It is an act of faith and devotion for the Pakistani pilgrims but combined with the social experience of Saudi Arabia. This experience also gives Muslims a common culture to help bond with one another as it works to help enforce the bonds of the relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. The continuity of Pilgrimage between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia is proved by the fact that a Pakistan Ministry of religious Affairs report in 2022 shows that the number of Pakistani Pilgrims performing Hajj and Umrah has been gradually rising.

#### **4.6 Media Collaborations**

Communications with media houses have also been instrumental in the two nations, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, understanding these cultures. Through joint television programs, documentaries, and news exchange, cultural story saying that captures the cultural imaginations of the people in both countries have been achieved. Majority of united Pakistan

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and Saudi Arabia media houses has made joint productions for conveying films and documentaries on history, culture and social aspects of Islamic world. These media projects are very useful in helping to paint a picture of a united Islamic bloc and a preparedness to work together thereby serving the best interest of both countries and the stated culture. It has been possible through these media collaborations to change perceptive and get rid of some myths, to enable these two countries to portray good image on the interdependent worlds. As Ahmed (2020) has pointed it out, such media exchanges are important in the formation of the sentiments of the population of the two countries and forging of a common culture of the two nations.

#### **4.7 Impact on Bilateral Relations**

Introducing education and culture has played a significant role for improving diplomatic relations, social, economic and culture relationship between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

##### **4.7.1 Strengthening Diplomatic Ties**

The exchanges have thus turn to be very useful uses of cultural diplomacy and have helped in creating goodwill between the parties. The Muslims of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia extended their values to the international communities by performing cultural and educational activities, ultimately; they have made a positive image and improved the authority. These exchanges have created a good ground in improving diplomatic relations by the respect for the other parties civilization which can be of much importance in dealing with the nations.

##### **4.7.2 Socio-Economic Development**

In this case, the flow of students for educational exchanges has left a significant impact on human capital of Pakistan. Saudi scholarships, educational centres and CT training programmes have helped to give the Pakistani students abilities & knowledge to support different areas. Unfortunately, Saudi graduates who graduate from Saudi interstice prefer to work in academia and religious institutions in addition to holding high ranking positions in the government to contribute towards the Saudi development. Saudi interventions have also seen Pakistani youth access employment both in their home country and other countries particularly in the Middle east through vocational training acquired through the various Saudi backed interventions.

These educational programs have promoted economic entanglement with a substantial Pakistani community living in Saudi Arabia and remitting money to Pakistan. It would be important reminiscing that this has helped in enhancing the economic stability in Pakistan and the two countries' bilateral relations.

##### **4.7.3 Cultural Integration**

Trade and tourism have also played a decisive role causing social assimilation where people want to sustain the Pakistani-Saudi relationship. The Saudi universities alumni in Pakistan act as a social which influence and encourages for more closeness between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. This integration has strengthened socio -political relations in addition to carving a previous social relation between the two nations.

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#### **4.8 Challenges and Adaptations**

Pakistan and KSA educational and cultural exchange programs have not been devoid of difficulties; these include changes in political relations, financial difficulties, and emerging social and cultural necessities both in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia country.

These social factors imply that the nature and range of exchanges have been shaped by changes in political leadership and policy over a given period of time. Fluctuating regional relations and cooperation have influenced the constructive programs execution in the region. However, due to similar religious and cultural origin of the two countries, these relations have, in general, maintained a stable group for these exchanges.

Once in while Oil prices has influenced budgets, alongside other economic factors that occasionally threatens educational and cultural funding and hence resources. Both have opted to seek cheaper means of continuing on the interactions, for instance, continuing use of online classes and cultural activities.

In the process of development of these two societies, priorities of educational and cultural activities have changed to correspond to the existing necessities. Technological developments, globalization and change of cultural expectations have seen both countries diversify the content of these exchanges including, environment, science and technology.

#### **4.9 Future Prospects**

The prospects for cooperation in the sphere of education and cultural relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia seem favorable as the sides announced their desire to enhance the relations. Some of the opportunities for growth are; development of joint programmes with other university faculties particularly science and business, social sciences, environment, and information technology. Incorporating technology in teaching and learning and culture enhancement presents a chance to share ideas online, engage in online courses and hold online cultural fairs thus provide a wider reach. The two brotherly countries of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia could expand their cooperation spectrum and work together for the welfare and stability for their region and the world by joining hands in the common cause of issues such as climate change and public health.

#### **5 Conclusion**

The use of Education and Culture as tool to enhance Pakistan-Saudi Arabia bilateral relation has been discussed in this study from 1975 to 2022. Unlike barter, these relations have graduated to cultural and social relations that are religious as well as strategic in accordance with both Muslim countries. This has clearly show that by spending scholarships, Joint academic programmes, establishment of institution, cultural fairs, religious tourism and media cooperation two countries have increased their appreciation about each other value system, as well as influenced their socio-economic development.

Scholarships facilitated by Saudi Arabia and Saudis institutions in Pakistan have gone a long way in availing Knowledge to Pakistani students and in the process as they conveyed the gained knowledge various sectors of Saudi Arabian funded in the economic sector in Pakistan. They have social relation opened up through religious tour and religious related events and festivals hence offering a connection among people in the society. Hence, the foregoing exchanges have impacts on human capital development and cultural diplomacy as well as

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socio-political relationship between Uganda and America.

These challenges are; Political change economics and; social needs all have been a challenge to the two countries to align their exchange as follows... Therefore, there are possibilities for further evolution of this relationship in the future, as well as willingness to step up cooperation in the sphere of science, technologies, environment and ecology to counter the current or emerging challenges with joint measures.

Therefore, the educational and cultural relation between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia has set the foundation of a balance relationship that is still developing. Therefore, when both countries progress these exchanges, they also promote stability in the area, but at the same time offer a story of cooperation and shared identities, values, and diplomacy.

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