



EXAMINING KIU STUDENTS' INTERACTIONS WITH INTER-DISTRICTS STUDENTS

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Abstract

This mixed-method study investigates Karakoram International University students' social and academic interactions with inter-district students. Data from a survey and in-depth interviews were collected. The study found that most students felt good when interacting with non-local students, with seven having exceptional views. Communication barriers were a major issue, with many first-year students struggling to communicate with local students due to their lack of proficiency in the local language. However, quantitative data revealed positive views of inter-district student interactions, with some feeling close to each other and learning each other's culture and language. The study emphasizes the importance of understanding and embracing cultural differences in interactions and fostering positive interactions between students. To improve cross-cultural interaction, respondents recommended providing more opportunities for communication, taking intercultural communication classes, and sharing class notes and assignments. Practical and theoretical consequences are presented to enhance



social and academic interactions and improve intercultural communication on campus.

Keywords: Intercultural Communication, Cross-cultural Communication, University Students, Social and Academic Interaction.

1. Introduction

In recent years, Karakoram International University (KIU) has seen a significant increase in students from various districts, seeking higher studies at the institution as it is the only one offering such opportunities. Students came to study at KIU because this is the only university where students pursue their higher studies in this institution. Recently there are 7,443 students were studying Males (3,751 Females: 3,692) but this number increasing year by year. According to the admission office of KIU, over the past 3 years, inter-district students' enrollment at Karakoram International University has increased (University, 2023). These inter-district students have different cultural backgrounds such as different languages, norms, values, and different traditions. Moreover, inter-district students from Gilgit Baltistan studying at Karakoram International University are striving to increase diversity among them. In addition, many students from different districts of Gilgit Baltistan students have sought higher education at Karakoram International University for its practicality and affordable standard of living.

KIU yields the bulks of different cultural backgrounds students from different districts which are followed by a large number of students from Gilgit, Ghizer, Nagar, Hunza, Skardu, Astore, and Chilas districts. Although inter-district students from Gilgit Baltistan attending universities in Gilgit have reported While some report learning from their experiences and having trouble fitting in with their interdistrict counterparts, others express having trouble integrating into the educational system. Putting various students together does not necessarily result in productive engagement. (Wessel, 2009). Implementing strategies to improve cross-cultural interactions through integration, academic engagement, and social interaction among campus student groups.

The purpose of this research is to look at the Karakoram International University (KIU) students' academic and social exchanges between inter-district students from Gilgit Baltistan who are currently studying at Karakoram International University. This study also sought opinions on how interactions between local and inter-district students from Karakoram International University (KIU) students could be improved in Gilgit. Although there are no academic and empirical studies on this topic in Gilgit Baltistan. To overcome this research and knowledge gap, the study was directed by the following research questions:

1. How do Gilgit City University students describe their cross-cultural interactions with different districts students from Gilgit Baltistan at Karakoram International University?
2. How do university students perceive their interactions with different district students from Gilgit Baltistan?



3. How may inter-district students from Gilgit Baltistan strengthen their contacts with students from other districts?

2. Literate Review

The present literature review explores the dynamics of interactions between Karakoram International University (KIU) students and students from other districts, focusing on social integration and the factors influencing meaningful interaction. The theoretical framework guiding this research is based on Social Integration and Interaction (Young, 2014) and Berry's Model of Mutual Adjustment (Berry, 1997) which provide insights into promoting intercultural communication and fostering successful integration among diverse student populations. Creating a community through ongoing observations that are marked by respect, responsibility, action, and commitment is known as social integration. (Young, 2014), is a fundamental aspect of global education. Although local and non-local students may be close to one another, this does not guarantee significant contact. (Amos & Rehorst, 2018). To achieve successful integration, it is essential to facilitate meaningful interactions between Karakoram International University (KIU) students and students from other districts (Spencer-Oatey, Dauber, & Williams, 2014).

In the context of South Korean universities, international students often encounter challenges when adjusting to life in a new culture (Lee, Jon, & Byun, 2017). Language proficiency, particularly in Korean, poses a significant barrier to effective interaction (Lin & Gao, 2013). Additionally, the overemphasis on English as the medium of instruction may create difficulties for students who lack proficiency, hindering their social integration (Jon, Lee, & Byun, 2014). These challenges are not exclusive to South Korea but are well-documented globally (Education., 2015). Non-local students face internal barriers, such as a preference for interactions within their cultural groups and unfamiliarity with the local language and traditions (Arkoudis & Baik, 2014). On an institutional level, domestic students may exhibit apathy or lack interest in engaging with non-local peers (Wright & Schartner, 2013).

To overcome these barriers and promote meaningful interaction, universities play a crucial role in creating inclusive learning environments and providing opportunities for local and non-local students to interact (Deardorff, 2011). Inclusive environments fostered by professors and involvement in extracurricular activities contribute to successful integration (Education., 2015). Additionally, invitations to social events from domestic students have been found to enhance inclusivity and interaction (Education., 2015).

Berry's Model of Mutual Adjustment emphasizes having conversations with others and acknowledging cultural differences to promote cross-cultural communication (Berry, 1997). Both local and non-local students should commit to increasing intercultural competence, supported by the institution, to foster dialogue and personal development (Spencer-Oatey et al., 2014).



International students' ability to preserve their indigenous culture while participating with inter-district students is vital for successful integration (Rivas, Hale, & Burke, 2019).

Overall, this literature review highlights the importance of meaningful interactions for social integration and the successful integration of Karakoram International University (KIU) students with students from other districts. By considering the factors influencing interactions and drawing upon theories such as Social Integration and Interaction and Berry's Model of Mutual Adjustment, this research aims to gain deeper insights into the dynamics of inter-district student interactions at Gilgit Baltistan University.

3. Methodology

This study was conducted at Karakoram International University in Gilgit Baltistan Province, Pakistan. A mixed-method qualitative design including in-depth interviews, observations, and surveys was chosen for this research study. Qualitative research, which primarily focuses on cause and effect, provides knowledge of a situation or event that tells the story (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012).

Qualitative research methods involve observations, interviews, and document analysis. Triangulation combines various information for better analysis and interpretation of situations. According to Patton, "Studies that use only one method are more vulnerable to errors linked to that particular method than studies that use multiple methods in which different types of data provide cross-data validity checks" Only two components of that procedure are interviews and observations (Patton, 1990). Although it is preferable, it is not required to add further data to what was learned from observations and interviews (Stake, 1995). Structured and unstructured interviews, observations, and documentation were the methods used in this study's data gathering.

The quantitative data includes a survey that looked at how KIU students interacted with students from various districts. The survey instrument was a modified version of the Ward, Masgoret, Newton, and Crabbe survey on domestic student contacts with local and non-local Students perceptions of international students in New Zealand (see Appendix) (Ward, Masgoret, Newton, & Crabbe, 2005). The survey has been modified to ensure that the questions concentrated on the environment and academic culture of Karakoram International University. The survey asked questions on background knowledge, classroom cultural inclusivity, opinions of various district pupils, and viewpoints of outsider students. Figure 1 lists the categories of the survey and the reliability coefficients. The range and wording of each category's Likert scale were identical to those in Ward's original survey. (Ward et al., 2005), To compare real interactions with desired interactions, section 6 was further divided into two components.

First, a closed-ended survey was given out. In addition to holding a focus group and distributing an open-ended survey, held, to glean more information about the overall experiences



and perspectives of students at Karakoram International University. In the focus group and closed-ended survey, 10 out of 176 participants, participated in in-depth interview discussions. The open-ended survey was completed by the participants before the focus group so they would have time to think about their responses. 1) were among the closed-ended survey questions. How would you sum up your interactions with students from outside the area? 2). What suggestions do you have to enhance interactions in the classroom between local and foreign students? and 3). What suggestions do you have to enhance contact between students from the local community and those from other districts on campus? During the focus group, additional questions were posed to elicit more information from responses from the respondents and to discover more about their perspectives and experiences.

Figure 1 Description of survey categories

Category Name	Scale
Part 1 Demographic Information	-
Part 2 Academic Assistance by the University	SD (1) to SA (5)
Part 3 Academic Assistance by Local Students	Never (1) to Always (4)
Part 4 Intercultural Activities	Never (1) to Always (4)
Part 5 Barriers	SD (1) to SA (5)
Part 6a Actual Contact	Never (1) to Always (4)
Part 6b Desired Contact	Never (1) to Always (4)
Part 7 Willingness to Interact	SD (1) to SA (5)

Note: Strongly Disagree, SD; Strongly Agree, SA.

Thematic coding was used to assess qualitative data. The researchers analyzed the participants' main claims and recurrent themes. (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The researchers collected notes on significant concepts, ideas, and statements after initially performing a preliminary analysis of the data. (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). After classifying these important concepts, ideas, and quotes, coding was carried out. The units that were created from these categories correspond to the five main themes covered in the findings. The usage of a peer reviewer helped to increase credibility. Three participants in the focus group underwent member checking.

To investigate quantitative data, IBM SPSS Statistics 26 (version 26.0) was used. The first phase was applying mean score analysis to explain the student-to-student interaction variables (parts two through seven). A series of univariate studies were then used to evaluate the interaction factors with demographic data to identify any significant relationships. A paired-sample t-test was used to analyze the difference between actual and desired interactions with interdistrict pupils (i.e., Parts 6A and 6B). Two separate t-tests were run to determine the importance of the variances in favorability scores. The first involved students who had previously studied other districts (or hadn't), and the second featured students who had previously pursued a second major (or hadn't).



4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Feeling Exceptional Views

The main qualitative theme of the study emerged that most students reported feeling good when they are interacting with Non-local students. Seven of the ten participants in the focus groups—Shahab, Sajjad, Shakeel, Azmat, Sehnaz, Sehzadi, Sehrish, and Fatima—made statements that suggested they had unusual viewpoints. Several arguments can be offered to back this up. For example, according to Sehnaz and Fatima a female student, in Media and Communication/ Environmental Sciences major, “I have Good friends from other districts of Gilgit in my University, they are communicating in a good manner. I would say that my interactions have been so good. I don’t think there are any bad habits in their culture. I would love to interact with non-local students and they are also helping and carrying” Another student, Shahab, a male, Food Science and Technology major, repeated this point by stating, “I feel good whenever I talk to different students from different districts. I just talk to different distracted students every day because I have been involved in different student societies on campus.” Sehrish a female, Media and Communication major, Said that interacting with district students feels good and would be a good way to learn about them i.e. their culture, language, norms, and values, She has been too busy with different cultural and local and national level youth summits, she has interacted more inter districts students. She said “She said, “Obviously, it sounds exciting to hang out with diverse and different cultural backgrounds students, but I try to keep up with everything I need to do since I am so busy. I would like to spend more time with them if I had more time, but that isn't the case in reality.” These assertions reveal that the majority of focus group participants have unusual perceptions of kids from other districts, and some students have provided justifications for their remarks.

4.2 Communication Barrier

Another significant finding from the research is that communication with local students was difficult for non-local students. Five focus group respondents Fatima, Sehzadi, Mehnaz, Measum, and Azmat, indicated that was difficult to have conversations with non-local first-year since many do not speak the language well, and three students Azmat Ullah, Shakeel, and Fatima mentioned that lots others districts students shy to communicate with other students in their first year and also they faced challenges because in KIU majority of students speaks local leagues “Shina” because of this barrier they hesitate to communicate with local students. For example, Sehzadi a female student, said “Most of the time in my class and group discussion, I couldn’t communicate because local students discuss in their language which is difficult to understand.” According to Shakeel, a male student media and communication major, “It’s amazing to talk with other district students but it’s often difficult to communicate because of their mother tongue and another reason is that they also don’t know about our local language.” Measum a male student, Political Science major, explained this by saying, “I think it’s amazing to interact with local students, but I have a hard time talking to local students because many cannot speak “Burushaski” my mother tongue. We



used a third language to communicate with each other and we don't understand each other's culture." Lack of skill in a second language can make it challenging to support students' fruitful mutual integration into the university. Communication is a primary and fundamental element of interpersonal engagement, it is more challenging to urge students to engage in meaningful interpersonal relationships, which distracts them. Several focus group participants noted specific instances of communication hurdles in class discussions, presentations, and assignments, even though the majority of them did not address this issue.

4.3 Positive Views

Five students commented on having positive views of inter-district student interactions and provided numerous examples, According to Mehnaz a female student, International Relations major, "When I first came to university, I was nervous at first, but as soon as I met my classmates, I felt great. We became friends very quickly, their language is different but we are very close to each other. My friends are also learning my language, we respect each other. We want to learn each other's culture and language." Shahab, a male, Food Science and Technology major said "Most of my time is spent with students from other districts. And it depends on their character. I mostly like to meet good people and personalities and that's what gives me happiness." These five focus group participants offered sufficient specifics about the beneficial contacts and friendships they formed with inter-district students, even though the majority of kids expressed favorable views about engaging with such classmates.

4.4 Lack of contributions to Group Work

Six Students, Sajjad, Azmat Ullah, Sehnaz, Sehzadi, Shahab, and Fatima, commented that they may not deliberately have negative views against inter-district students and positively participate in group projects and assignments. Moreover, students provided examples including local and inter-district students avoiding to present himself or herself for group presentations. In addition during group projects and assignments, some students not actively participating, and local students and some other district students avoided being a part of group discussions and helping the group to fulfill the requirements of the assignment. Lack of communication and differences in cultural background and language make students difficult to work in groups some students also assign their part of the project work to other students and this is the reason why some students do not prefer group assignments. According to Sehnaz "My local friends are passionate about their studies, but most other districts do not contribute to peer group projects. Azmat Ullah also expanded on this by stating, "Some of the local and other district students are good with each other, I have experienced including local and non-local students avoided to help other students for their assignments and presentations because if they help them then the students convincing him or her to complete entire assignments." Additionally, all respondents agreed that the lack of contributions led students to communication barriers, meanwhile, first-year students were shy to interact with other students as compared to senior students. Language barriers and lack of local and English proficiency led students to problems since students could not actively participate in group work.



Moreover, some local and other district students were blamed for being lazy and did not wish to learn and hard work on class assignments and projects.

5. Research Question 2

A survey analysis conducted was to better understand how KIU students perceive their interactions with other district students. Figure 2 displays mean scores for parts two to seven from the survey. Academic assistance by the university revealed a mean score of 21.85 (SD = 5.91), indicating most students agreed or strongly agreed that their university was conducive to the needs of inter-district students. Students reported the highest agreement to item 6 (M = 3.32, SD = 1.18) from part 2 (i.e. my classmates are accepting of cultural differences). Participants, on average, expressed moderate agreement with academic assistance provided by local students, with a mean score of 15.52 on a scale of 1 to 4. The standard deviation of 3.96 suggests variability in responses. The positive skewness (0.212) suggests a slight right skew, indicating that a few participants might have given higher ratings. The negative kurtosis (-0.690) suggests a distribution with slightly lighter tails compared to a normal distribution.

In the "Intercultural Activities" category, the mean score of 15.56 (with a standard deviation of 3.81) suggests that participants reported a relatively low frequency of engaging in intercultural activities. Academic Assistance by Local Students" sections are around 2 to 3, which corresponds to response options like "Rarely" or "Sometimes." This indicates that, on average, participants reported a low to moderate frequency of local students engaging in activities like proofreading, explaining class materials, and providing assistance with assignments. This suggests that student-led academic assistance might not be very common or frequent, based on the participants' perceptions.

Part 5 assessed potential difficulties that would serve as obstacles to interactions with other district students. The mean score of 14.38 suggests that, on average, participants perceived moderate barriers. The standard deviation of 3.87 implies variability in responses. The near-zero skewness (-0.085) suggests a distribution close to symmetry. When compared to a normal distribution, a distribution with a negative kurtosis (-0.709) has slightly lighter tails.

With a mean score of 5.63, the data analysis for Part 6 assumed moderate levels of real intercultural engagement. The 1.62 standard deviation indicates that the replies were consistent. A somewhat left-skewed distribution is indicated by the negative skewness (-0.198). In contrast to a normal distribution, a distribution with a negative kurtosis (-0.801) is likely to have smaller tails.

An independent-sample t-test revealed that the difference was statistically significant; $t(174) = -1.445$, $p = .150$. Although the desire outweighed the encounters, both fell into the Never (1) to Always (4) range, indicating a lack of true desire to interact with other kids in the neighborhood.



Figure 2 Descriptive statistics

		Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Part 2	Academic Assistance by the University	21.85	5.91	-.391	-.525
Part 3	Academic Assistance by Local Students	15.52	3.96	.212	-.690
Part 4	Intercultural Activities	15.56	3.81	-.034	-.711
Part 5	Barriers	14.38	3.87	-.085	-.709
Part 6a	Actual Contact	5.63	1.62	-.198	-.801
Part 6b	Desired Contact	5.78	1.80	-.317	-.941
Part 7	Willingness to Interact	18.36	4.59	-.331	.205

Note. "P2, Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5); P3 and P4, Never (1) to Always (4); P5, Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5); P6A, Never (1) to Always (4); P6B, Never (1) to Always (4); P7 SD (1) to SA (5)"

With a mean score of 18.36 (SD = 4.59) in the last category, which examined students' willingness to interact with peers in the district, it can be concluded that students are open to participating in activities with peers in the district and have a favorable attitude toward cross-cultural relationships. In contrast to their actual contacts, which were recorded in parts 4 and 6A, this somewhat high mean score of tendencies.

6. Recommendations

Three major suggestions were offered for ways to improve the learning environment in the classroom, including giving international and South Korean students greater chances to communicate and enrolling in intercultural communication courses.

Six students in the focus group, Itrat Zehra, Faizana Batoool, Mehnaz, Sajjad, Shahab, and Fatima, discussed the importance of communication among local and other districts students in class discussions, projects, and assignments they said: "Teachers should provide more opportunities to the students. Encourage students to communicate with other students to overcome the intercultural barriers among us". 3 more students Mehnaz, Sajjad, and Shahab stated that teachers should provide a friendly environment to interact students with within the classroom and that they need to play an active role in promoting intercultural interaction with inter-district students. For instance, student 1 said, "All teachers should provide equal opportunities to all students, but I have seen some teachers are not encouraging students to communicate with inter-district students. Teachers also need to give group tasks and projects where students can their equally participations with other district students". This was echoed by Itrat Zehra a female English literature and linguistics major who said, "I believe it is easy to communicate with culturally different students, but the problem we have faced here is due to shyness and our cultural differences prevent us from communication with other districts students. I think we need more



active and friendly assistance from our teachers. I believe teachers' encouragement is too important". Faizana Batool mentioned, "I know many students who came from having different cultural differences, if they came to communication skills class, we can interact more than before the class". The seven responders listed above emphasized the value of giving more possibilities and encouragement for communication in class were addressed by two students, who also suggested that the teachers need more assistance to make this happen.

3 more respondents in in-depth interviews, Azmat Ullah, Shehnaz, and Sibtain Abbas, discuss the importance of cross-cultural interactions, which the media and communication studies department presently offers at KIU. According to Azmat Ullah "I think all students should be taught intercultural communication class, it is very helpful for all students" Another female student Sibtain Abbas stated that "Intercultural Communication subject is one of the favorite subjects, the teacher is good, he has completed his Ph.D. from China. We have a lot of Q&A about inter-district students' intercultural differences and how they overcome intercultural barriers. The teachers teach us deeply theoretically and practically in class. I think having differences with each other can be a good way to learn about other district cultures".

There were several endorsements for improving intercultural interactions between local and other district students such as sharing class notes and assignments, communicating and cross-cultural activities for interaction, and culture and overcoming language barriers. The most common response discussed by six students, Azmat Ullah, Shehnaz, Sibtain Abbas, Itrat Zehra, Faizana Batool, and Fatima, indicated the importance of communicating with other district students (including notes sharing, helping in making assignments and projects, spending time with non-local students, study tours, and better experience with a local student) to encourage intercultural interactions.

According to Itrat Zehra, a female student, in English literature and linguistic major stated that "local students and non-local students should arrange extra circular activities such as study trips, language exchange sessions for understanding each other's language, and interact more with students to overcome intercultural barriers." She also stated, "We should have to make intercultural students' groups, teachers should encourage them to communicate with other students, and have a regular class discussion between local and non-local students." Four students, Azmat Ullah, Shehnaz, Sibtain Abbas, and Fatima, discussed the need to have different cultural shows and programs that aims to raise awareness among other students with totally different cultural background. According to Faizana Batool, "Students should teach their language to other classmates, it's more interesting and fun to learn the new local language to interact with local and non-local students." Itrat Zehra added,

"Students should respect each other cultural differences, giving more importance to non-local students led students towards more interactions between us. Teachers should provide



equal opportunities to both local and non-local students. There also should be more intercultural programs for understanding each other languages, culture, norms, and values.”

Faizana Batool also provided suggestions. She stated that,

“We need more encouraging teachers for equal opportunities to interact with each other in the classroom. The department and University should introduce special intercultural communication subjects for all students to know more about intercultural issues and overcome their barriers. Teachers should encourage students for class group discussions and group assignments for equal participation. Finally, we should also have events such as cultural events, food contests, and sharing cultural differences and uniqueness with other students.”

The in-depth focus group respondents provided comprehensive recommendations to improve intercultural interactions on campus between inter-district students and in-classroom and inter-district students.

7. Discussion

The majority of focus group members revealed that they felt ambivalent about engaging with inter-district students, which further demonstrated the general lack of enthusiasm for inter-district students. The quantitative results also demonstrate that students hardly ever engage in peer interaction and that only a small proportion of them actively seek out social connections. In-depth group respondents stressed that the teachers should take action and provide equal opportunities to improve the intercultural interactions between local and non-local students in the classrooms and peer groups.

Respondents also discussed communication and language barriers, Since some students came from Urdu medium institutions they can't able to understand notes and lectures because all the classes are held in English medium, furthermore students may face communication barriers when they interact with local students due to language and cultural differences. Moreover, numerous students stated that some local competent students do not contribute to class assignments even though someone asks for help, which can obstruct interactions between local and other district students. This is consistent with Korean students (Lin & Gao, 2013) which highlights the integration difficulties faced by non-local students, including communication difficulties and class participation.

There were several recommendations to improve intercultural interaction in class discussions and the outside-of-class interactions between inter-district students. Quantitative data showed that few language and cultural barriers prevented interaction with inter-district students and most of the first-year non-local students did not interact with their classmates and other students. The



respondents suggested increasing opportunities for equal interaction with students from other districts in the classroom, encouraging students to participate in class discussions, and enrolling in more intercultural communication classes to break down these communication barriers. Additionally, the respondents claimed that they had a hard time connecting with out-of-district students on campus.

However, given the variety of backgrounds and cultures, improving contact can be challenging (Arkoudis & Baik, 2014). Both cultural and language barriers can make it difficult to encourage intercultural interaction between local and other district students. Unfortunately, a lot of local universities in other countries are struggling financially and depend a lot on foreign students (Chung, 2016). As stated by Chung, “Education experts observe that educational institutions have resorted to enrolling as many Chinese students as possible in their heedless pursuit of financial gain, without having the necessary programs to meet their needs and offer high-quality education” (Chung, 2016). Gilgit Baltistan is a backward area and local and non-local students from Gilgit Baltistan face financial problems, Students must meet basic educational standards, including quality of education, English language, and access to information and knowledge. Administrators must design curricula and a learning environment that encourages cross-cultural contact and fosters sincere interactions between students from different backgrounds (Arkoudis, Baik, Marginson, & Cassidy, 2012). In-depth interviews showed that students agreed to intercultural communication among local and other district students they agreed to support non-local students to overcome intercultural communication barriers, however, Examining the students from different districts who experience the same discrimination would be more intriguing.

Respondents from both local and non-local claimed they had concerns about obtaining students to contribute to their projects, class presentations, and assignments. In focus group interviews the respondents stated that there is less interaction between inter-district students. According to Leask’s study, it claimed that “University professors at an Australian university have trouble getting both native and non-local students to collaborate on class tasks” (Leask, 2009). Local students were “not prepared to engage with non-local students in or out of the classroom” (Leask, 2009). Leask also highlights the significance of creating a campus atmosphere and culture that overtly supports and stimulates cross-cultural interaction among local and non-local students both inside and outside of the classroom. This suggests that internationalism requires the participation of a diversity of people from different institutions.

Educational institutions and authorities should provide equal opportunities for both local and non-local students to participate in better intercultural communication. Universities must offer more structured and unstructured opportunities for inter-district students to take part in valuable communication (Quaye & Education, 2012; Rivas et al., 2019). Universities should execute interaction efforts that encompass I) planning, II) creating better environments for communication, III) supportive interaction, IV) demonstrating subject expertise, V) creating reflective practices



and VI) promoting learning communities (Arkoudis & Baik, 2014). Many classrooms will remain stagnant if proactive measures to encourage fruitful student interactions and effective integration are not taken.

Recommendations made by respondents for improving intercultural communication within and outside of the classroom include helping in group work, encouraging more interaction between local and non-local students, creating more extra circular activities, study trips, and sharing cultural and language differences. Students debated the need to develop additional social interactional opportunities for both local and non-local students (Thomson & Esses, 2016). Even though adopting these suggestions might result in deeper conversations, it's equally important that they don't solely serve to make the non-local student feel more at home. These events ought to incorporate substantive cultural interchange, especially because many colleges aim to advance cross-cultural understanding and global consciousness. (Arkoudis & Baik, 2014).

8. Conclusion

The interactions between non-local and domestic students are not fully explored in scholarly study, which instead concentrates on the function of the inter-district student in assimilating to the local university culture (Smart, Volet, & Ang, 2000). Knowledge of the difficulties of integration is greatly improved by gaining a deeper understanding of domestic students' perspectives and contacts with non-local students (Arkoudis & Baik, 2014; Dunne, 2009). According to the findings of the study question, respondents expressed their dislike for out-of-district students who might not actively and favorably contribute to group projects and class assignments. Additionally, students gave examples of local and inter-district students who refused to participate in group presentations. In addition, the respondents claimed that interactions between foreign students and local students were hampered by communication gaps.

This research contributes to the body of literature by offering. University courses are conducted in English most local and non-local students come from Urdu medium colleges, and English is more challenging for them to understand, speak, write, and read. According to new students, speaking with both local and non-local students is more challenging, particularly when speaking with their seniors owing to shyness. Students struggled with assignments, projects, and group presentations due to collaboration among classmates. Focus group interviews revealed that competent students from both local and non-local backgrounds did not always contribute to projects and assignments. International students also struggled with motivation and communication issues, while local students needed to be proficient in cross-cultural communication and aware of various cultures. (Leask, 2009).

The qualitative and quantitative data provided in this research contributes to the body of literature by offering further evidence on how students from Karakorum International University interact with students from other districts. Additionally, it offers suggestions to promote greater



communication among university students from different districts. Universities must implement efficient cross-cultural interaction tactics to improve interactions between students from varied cultural backgrounds (Leask, 2009). Furthermore, it is crucial to routinely assess the effectiveness of any school initiatives designed to encourage greater interaction among nearby and remote students. Effective engagement between local and non-local students is required both within and outside of the classroom if good change is to take place at the university. Administrators and teachers must make sure that they are working to create a culturally responsive and inclusive learning environment to meet the needs of diverse learners and to guarantee that the campus promotes mutual adjustment of inter-district students through cross-cultural communication activities and shared understanding.

The sample size for this study is modest, coming from just one university in Gilgit Baltistan. The study's findings cannot be applied to all Pakistani universities. A broader spectrum of students from Karakorum International University should participate in future studies. Further research on the perspectives of students who are studying at different universities in Pakistan. Additionally, studies might look at why inter-district students engage with other students from other districts of Gilgit Baltistan.



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