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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Cultural Identity and Social Integration: Exploration of Baloch Students at the University of Sargodha

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Abstract: Students' well-being and academic achievement greatly depend on social integration, which encompasses academic engagement, social relationships, and personal growth inside the educational institution. The Baloch students in University of Sargodha face cultural diversity. Exploring their cultural identity, which is strongly influenced by their ethnic origin, language, rituals, and traditions, presents a clear contrast to the largely Punjab culture at the University of Sargodha. The study examined how the Baloch students navigate and preserve their cultural authenticity and adjust to the prevailing culture of the educational environment. The study adopted a qualitative approach with an ethnomethodological research design, which focuses on how people make sense of their everyday social interactions and practices. The study used in-depth interviews to collect data from Baloch students at the University of Sargodha. The study utilized a purposive sample strategy to recruit participants. Analysis showed that the Baloch students have a strong sense of cultural identity and pride, which is deeply rooted in their heritage and history. They face challenges such as cultural discrimination, language barriers, stereotypes, and misconceptions, but they also find ways to overcome these challenges and foster understanding about their culture. Through socialization they can deal with their challenges because socialization is significant tool to enhance the cultural harmony.

Keywords: Baloch Student, Cultural Identity, Social Integration, Ethnomethodology

Introduction

The dynamic between cultural identification and social integration inside instructional settings offers a rich environment for comprehending the varied experiences of university students, in particular those belonging to underrepresented groups (Enríquez Hernández et al., 2025; Pervaiz & Tatlah, 2025). The current study is on Cultural identity and social integration: an exploration of Baloch university students at the University of Sargodha. This explored the complex and varied stories that Baloch university students have even as pursuing their education in locations which are far away from their domestic cultures. Cultural identification is a concept that has been thoroughly studied in sociological and mental literature. It is essential in determining how human beings understand the world and the way their experiences are formed (Alshammari et al., 2023; Côté & Levine, 2014). This idea implies a strong bond with one's ethnic history, language, rituals, and traditions among Baloch university students, which unites them beyond the University of Sargodha's predominantly Punjabi tradition. The primary question of this study is how those youngsters maintain their cultural integrity, manipulate their identities in this new environment, and adapt to the mainstream way of life (Anwar et al., 2026).

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Students' overall academic performance and general well-being in faculty environments rely closely on their social integration. It covers the method by which students are included into the university's social fabric, taking into account their involvement in the classroom, relationships with other students, and personal growth there. Gaining knowledge of the challenges, opportunities, and social integration dynamics of Baloch students can help create an inclusive and encouraging learning environment (Razzaq et al., 2023). Since 2010, scholars have been interested in and involved in the social integration patterns of Baloch pupils residing in Pakistan's Punjab province. An exquisite cultural dynamic exists within the academic landscape because of the unique cultural and linguistic heritage of Baloch students, which is often distinct from that of the majority population of Punjab (Khurram et al., 2025).

The Balochistan Bahali Tehreek promises changes in the admission criteria of Baloch students in the Universities of Punjab, especially the University of Sargodha, by about 20 times more. Balanced rights and illustration demands, as well as a greater level of politicization, have been hallmarks of this change. Since 2010, when students of the University of Balochistan initiated mass protests, the students of this university have become more aware and competitive, especially in 2020. The activism is derived from the overall socio-political issues of the Baloch people, and it seems that there is a lack of equality in the field of education. The move to Lahore to demand rights and recognition from Bahauddin Zakariya University (BZU) Multan is significant as it involves around 36 students who came out of the university and reached out for recognition (ALI & Yamaner, 2026; Razzaq et al., 2023). They demanded a number of things, such as the withdrawal of scholarships, price increments on public transportation, expedient investments into various departments, in addition to the restoration of reserved seats for fans in major universities like Islamia University Bahawalpur and Punjab University Lahore (Javid, 2019).

The protest added attention to a bigger tale of systematic discrimination and indifference faced by Baloch university students in Punjabi universities. Their demands placed pressure on the desire for institutional reforms along with financial support to provide the university's students fair access to and benefits of a better education. The programme received praise for drawing attention to the specific demanding situations confronted by Baloch students, including language barriers, cultural incompatibility, and a sense of alienation in educational settings that are predominantly non-Baloch. Through the persistence and militancy all of the children displayed, a strong desire for changes in the educational system and a greater acceptance of neighbourhood and cultural identities was identified (Wahid et al., 2025).

The government was also reported as being slow, and this caused a long wait and disappointment for some academics in getting media attention over their problems and the urgent need for their demands. The state of affairs dealing with Baloch students in Punjabi universities, mainly at the University of Sargodha, is a prime instance of the complicated interplay that exists in Pakistan between cultural identification, local politics, and educational policy. This emphasizes how crucial it is to have inclusive and equitable academic institutions that consider the diverse needs of all university students, especially those who come from underrepresented ethnic backgrounds. In addition to scholarships and special seats, the Baloch university students continue to fight for more recognition and inclusion in their cultural, social, and intellectual goals in Pakistan's higher education system (Khan et al., 2023; Razzaq et al., 2023). A radical research of the ethnomethodological technique, which is available as software, would enable a radical investigation of the university students' methods of building and maintaining their social realities in their daily lives. This assessment shows how they use strategies and patterns in order to cope with their complex social situation. This study aims to see what the most important patterns and processes Baloch children have while they are thrashing through complex social negotiations as they seek to target their everyday activities, conversations and social cues (Adnan et al., 2020).

This examination will play a crucial role in contributing to the broader dialogue surrounding academic inclusion, cultural difference, and challenges and opportunities faced by minority group students in postsecondary education. This project intends to make all the students' instructional materials and social studies beautiful by exploring the unique experiences of Baloch students from the University of Sargodha. It

does this through the selling of additional, more inclusive, and culturally responsive teaching practices and guidelines.

Social integration and cultural identity in higher education are contextually addressed at the level of minority Baloch students in Pakistan, where the subject of specialization is explored. This analysis was crucial as Baloch students are an ethnic minority group who have special stressors within the educational environment, often where the staff and teachers are not Baloch. The need for this study arose in the absence of research studies on different reports of Baloch university students. Their cultural identity is also significantly influenced by their language, ethnic background, traditions and customs, which contrasts with the overall culture of the University of Sargodha. The observation was on the transition of the Baloch university students to this new educational system, maintaining cultural authenticity and adapting to the dominant culture.

Social integration (including in-lesson engagement, social bonds and personal “boom” in the schooling environment) plays a crucial role in students' education and wellbeing. It is important to understand the social integration of Baloch students, as it is constrained by limitations, facilitated by facilitators and interacts with other elements, which in turn makes the development of an inclusive understanding environment (Wulandari & McKeown, 2022).

Literature Review

Historical Context

One instance of this is the University of Sargodha, which is located in Punjab. For a long time, teachers have been learning and researching the social interaction styles of Baloch University students who live in Pakistan's Punjab province (Wahid et al., 2025). The unique language and cultural heritage of Baloch students, which differs greatly from that of the dominant Punjabi population, brings a fascinating aspect to the learning environment. The present study establishes the framework for an ethnomethodological case study, an ethnographic study venture that seeks to discover the complicated network of social contacts that Baloch university students at the University of Sargodha stumble upon (Razzaq et al., 2023).

Baloch University students from the province of Balochistan regularly discover themselves in surroundings mainly formed by the Punjabi language and tradition. Differentiating oneself in terms of language and lifestyle may have effective and negative outcomes on social interactions, affecting coaching, relationships, and identity formation (Fatima & Akram, 2025)

This ethnomethodological study aims to address these challenges with the aid of using qualitative procedures to analyze the underlying mechanisms influencing social interactions among Baloch university students. Harold Garfinkel developed ethnomethodology, which is concerned with the study of customs and the way in which humans make sense in their social surroundings. We shall gain a radical grasp of the social interactions, cultural sensitivity, and social identity creation of Baloch university students at the University of Sargodha by means of making use of this methodology in their environment (Shukla & Srivastava, 2025).

It is crucial to remember the evaluation's wider effects for Pakistani education, intercultural family members, and social brotherhood whilst analysing it. In order to increase inclusive and encouraging learning settings that foster greater expertise and togetherness among many ethnic groups, our study aims to analyze the experiences of Baloch university students in Punjab (Ahmed et al., 2025).

Expand Pakistan's linguistic and cultural range. When students from Balochistani universities enroll at Punjab province universities, they often face many difficulties with language, cultural acculturation, and social integration. These tough situations may also have an effect on their overall well-being and academic performance (Bethel et al., 2020).

The majority of humans residing in Balochistan, the most important province in Pakistan by geographical area, are individuals of the Baloch ethnic group, who are distinguished by their unique language, culture,

and customs. In contrast, Punjab, the most populous province in Pakistan, has a distinct culture from Balochistan and is particularly home to Punjabi-speaking people (Iqbal et al., 2025).

The complicated relationship that exists between Punjab and Balochistan has existed throughout history. Alongside the hard and urgent guarantees and demands for autonomy, development, and cultural historical past maintenance came Balochistan's 1947 admission into Pakistan. Balochistani resentment has resulted from political and economic marginalization that the area has experienced through the years.

The University of Sargodha, located in Punjab, exemplifies the wide-ranging cultural and linguistic variety within Pakistan. Students from Baloch University who participate in this group frequently encounter a multitude of obstacles pertaining to language, cultural adaptation, and social assimilation. These issues can impact their academic achievement and overall well-being (Razzaq et al., 2023).

Language Dynamics

Language plays an important role in creating social interaction among the Baloch students of the University of Sargodha. The university's main language is Punjabi/Urdu for all activities, including preparation, administration and regular communication purposes. This language move can be daunting and hugely impactful on the learning experience for Baloch university students whose primary language is Balochi or any other language in the vicinity (Bhutta et al., 2026).

Language barriers can lead to a sense of isolation and hinder effective communication with fellow students and faculty members. Furthermore, it can help prevent children from going into extra-curricular sports and from joining the neighborhood network. The language barrier problem is not exclusive to Pakistan but a common problem faced in the sound system of minority languages all over the world (Khan et al., 2023).

To overcome this linguistic gap, the students of Baloch universities are adopting different ways on a regular basis. While a few people opt for comprehensive language learning courses, others rely upon bilingual or multilingual peers to assist them overcome language limitations. These strategies not only function as coping mechanisms but also display the perseverance and flexibility of Baloch university students in their pursuit of education (Al Homoud & Ibrahim, 2023; Saleem et al., 2023).

Cultural Identity and Adaptation

Cultural identification significantly influences the social interactions of Baloch students, besides language. Balochistan has a rich cultural history of wonderful traditions, clothing and customs (Razzaq et al., 2023). When the students of Baloch University get into the academic environment of the University of Sargodha, they often face problems adjusting to the different culture.

The process of assimilating into a new subculture while maintaining one's own cultural identity is usually referred to as acculturation. Baloch pupils skillfully manage the complex process of balancing their Baloch cultural identity with the dominant lifestyle. This balance can be maintained with some difficulty because people might also experience cultural incongruity (Razzaq et al., 2023).

In order to have a deeper understanding of the process of acculturation, it is crucial to examine the elements that influence the way Baloch students perceive and navigate their cultural identity. Family support, social interactions, and exposure to cultural events in the university can greatly influence their experiences (Altugan, 2015). These factors influence the decision of Baloch university students to assimilate into Punjabi subculture, integrate elements from both cultures, or maintain a strong connection to their Baloch heritage (Razzaq et al., 2023).

Academic Challenges and Support Systems

The challenges confronted by Baloch students go beyond linguistic and cultural factors and also include instructional limitations. The University of Sargodha, like other educational institutions, adheres to favourable instructional requirements and expectations (Khan et al., 2023). Students at Baloch University can also come across challenges in conforming to these norms because of factors that include disparities in academic backgrounds and learning patterns.

In particular, students of first-generation Baloch universities might experience difficulties in accessing the educational system due to their lack of guidance and support networks, which are common among the more well-connected students. The university administration, institutions, and scholar aid services are playing a pivotal role in the academic journey of Baloch students in facing such challenging situations.

University applications aimed at promoting the mixing of minority university students and leveraging their educational achievements should have a huge influence. Mentoring programmes, language support and workshops on cultural consciousness are features of these programs on a regular basis. These steps are meant to set up more comprehensive and encouraging surroundings for Baloch university students, thereby improving their typical university experience (Razzaq et al., 2023).

Social Integration and Identity Formation

Social integration is a complex process and does not only involve education but also social bonds as well as identity formation. Baloch University students face the risk of getting involved with a mix of students from other cultural backgrounds, such as Punjabis from Baloch and other universities. These interactions have an impact on how individuals understand themselves and others, as a result playing a role in the formation of their social identities (Altugan, 2015).

The University environment is so unique, and it's a place where people of different ethnicities can come together. In this culturally diverse environment, Baloch students feel like outsiders. Baloch people could have a "dual identity" in terms of being Baloch and also a part of the Punjabi culture and also the global identities (Ahmed et al., 2025; Kakar & Kakar, 2025).

So let's reveal a little more about the social dynamic prevailing amongst the students of the University of Sargodha and its effect on the phenomenon of their identity building and socialization.

Social Interaction and Peer Networks

Baloch students' social involvement and friends' network are important in determining their university experience, sense of belonging and psychological health. Peer relationships can offer emotional security, ease the transition process, and help students deal with academic and social challenges while transitioning to college. University students' psychological health and adjustment are indicated by their social support and adaptability (Maymon et al., 2019). Students can have close friendships with other students of the same cultural and linguistic background, and this can lead to familiarity, comfort and emotional stability. It is equally important to have intercultural relationships with students from different ethnic and regional backgrounds, as they facilitate intercultural understanding, social integration and increased belongingness to campus. Research has shown that exposure to cultural diversity and engaging in positive interaction with diverse peers has a positive impact on students' perceptions of belonging and inclusion in post-secondary settings. Social networks can also shape identity negotiation for Baloch students, who may be negotiating their identity between their own culture and an involvement in the wider university community. Intercultural relationships can be a link between cultural identity and academic integration, leading to increased acceptance, confidence and belonging in the multicultural environment of the University (Cena et al., 2021).

Challenges and Resilience

The Baloch students' studies at the University of Sargodha are not free from issues. Often, the preconceptions, biases, or prejudice that minority individuals experience may hinder their ability to integrate into society and earn an education (Iqbal et al., 2025; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). These can be encountered as

microaggressions or exclusionary actions by peers in the classroom, as well as, in positive situations, instructors who contribute to the classroom.

However, it is important to be aware of the resilience of Baloch university students to face those barriers (Sattar et al., 2025). Some Baloch students apply their own cultural values, their family support and a strong sense of desire to overcome obstacles. This resilience empowers them not only to adapt to the university environment but also to make a positive impact on the social fabric of the university.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is based on the concept of cultural integration, which refers to the process of mutual adaptation and exchange between different cultural groups. Cultural integration can be influenced by various factors, such as language, religion, education, values, norms, and identity (Kuran & Sandholm, 2008; Soomro, 2023). The study aims to explore how Baloch students, who belong to a distinct ethnic and linguistic minority in Pakistan, integrate into the dominant culture of the University of Sargodha, which is located in a different cultural region. The study adopts a qualitative approach with an ethnomethodological research design, which focuses on how people make sense of their everyday social interactions and practices. The study will use in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis to collect data from Baloch students at the University of Sargodha. The data will be analyzed using thematic analysis and discourse analysis to identify the patterns, themes, and discourses of cultural integration among Baloch students.

Research Methodology

The present study used an ethnomethodological research design and a qualitative research approach to investigate how Baloch students make, negotiate, and sustain social interactions in the university environment. Ethnomethodology was deemed suitable for the study of the "usual" activities, interpretations, and social interactions in which students negotiated relationships, negotiated cultural identities and negotiated social integration in school (Huang, 2024).

The participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, which enabled the researcher to identify participants who would provide rich and relevant information for the study's objectives. The participants were students of the Baloch community from the University of Sargodha who belonged to various backgrounds and views on the issue of University life and integration in society.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data. The semi-structured interviews gave a detailed picture of students' experiences and perceptions, cultural identities, relationship with others, difficulties encountered, and adaptation to the university environment. Interviews were conducted, audio-recorded, and transcribed with the participants' consent for further analysis.

Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach to thematic analysis was followed to analyse the collected data. The transcripts from the interviews were systematically coded to look for common themes and patterns associated with social integration, cultural adaptation, language barriers, identity negotiation, friendship networks and institutional support. The identified themes were interpreted to form a general perspective of the social integration experiences of Baloch students at the University of Sargodha.

Result and analysis

Each interview was audio-recorded by the researcher, and the data was then transcribed. After transcribing the data, themes and subthemes were identified through in-depth study of responses. Emerging themes are detailed below.

Baloch Culture and Identity

The first major theme was Baloch students' cultural identity with subthemes: Language and communication, Dress and attire, Heritage and history, Traditions and values, Arts and crafts. To explore the views of Baloch culture and identity as a Baloch student, the respondents were asked to explain their views on it. One respondent stated, "My cultural background is deeply rooted in Baloch heritage and history. Being part of the Baloch community shapes my identity, fostering a profound connection with the rich traditions and values. There was a profound sense of pride and resilience ingrained in Baloch culture, as they expressed their sentiments of the rich heritage and traditions they had inherited. In a similar vein, another respondent responded, "Balochi is my mother tongue and Bravhi as well; I agree." The other respondent added that Balochi language and clothes are special to the Baloch way of life. The responses reflect the diversity and richness of Baloch culture and identity, and participants' pride and satisfaction. They talk about their culture, including language, clothing, culture, history, traditions, values, arts and crafts. These also include how their Baloch identity has shaped their academic trajectory, as well as their worldview. The responses demonstrate a clear sense of belonging, connection and bonding to the Baloch community and culture.

Perceive your Cultural Identity in the Context of the University of Sargodha

Understand the cultural identity as Baloch students with Sub-themes, Challenges and discrimination faced by the Baloch students, ways of promoting and preserving Baloch culture and language, interactions and perceptions of other cultural groups. To explore the cultural identity in the context of the University of Sargodha, one of the respondents said that it is through the exploration of the cultural identity in the context of the University of Sargodha. "My Baloch cultural identity at the University of Sargodha is significant." Almost all of the respondents share the same view that they perceive their own culture at the university; they feel satisfied with it, and their cultural identity is common due to a lot of students from Balochistan province. One other respondent also stated that "unfortunately at university I have faced many challenges due to cultural discrimination." Some respondents faced cultural discrimination due to perceiving their culture; they agree with the same answers shared, but one of the respondents also shared that "Questions arise in my mind that they don't know us even sometimes." The cultural discrimination occurred because other students didn't know much about Baloch students. The answers show that there is a high level of awareness about cultural identity among Baloch students, and they seem to have a high level of cultural pride, but there are some difficulties and barriers for them to integrate with the dominant Punjabi culture at the University of Sargodha. Some of the issues are miscommunications, stereotypes, not being recognized and language barriers. Baloch students respond to these pressures by expressing their cultural differences, donning cultural attire, speaking their mother tongue, and raising awareness of other cultures. The responses also reveal that Baloch students happen to have different levels of engagement and perception of other cultures, from curiosity to friendship, to isolation to resentment.

Language Barrier Impacted Your Academic and Social Experiences

The theme language barrier affected your academic and social experiences, which means adapting and interacting with people in a society with different cultures. The sub-themes are: language barrier, academic experience, and social experience. Prompt: How has the language barrier affected your studies and life on campus? Respondents were asked about the effects of the language barrier on their academic and social experiences; the respondent said, "There were impacts of the language barrier in my academic and social experience, because we did not understand the accent of teachers while they were giving lecture. Mostly students speak Panjabi but we speak our mother tongue Balochi, therefore, social distance has created." Almost all respondents said that the language barrier impacted their academic and social life. There are some students who find difficulty in understanding the Urdu and English languages in which lectures are conducted, and communication takes place. Accent or pronunciation problems may also impact some students in their ability to communicate their ideas and engage in classroom discussions. Other children feel isolated and discriminated against by other children who speak the local language, Punjabi. However, some students like their culture and identity as Balochi speakers and make efforts to learn the language by

participating in language learning activities and availing help from available resources. One of the problems for Balochi students in the university is the language barrier, which is affecting the students' academic and social life in different aspects. Some of the effects are negative, and they manifest in difficulty with comprehension, expression, participation and integration. Some of the effects are positive (cultural pride, resilience and motivation). The students cope with the language barrier by actively learning Urdu and English, and seeking support from language resources at the university.

Strategies Have You Used to Overcome Linguistic Challenges

To overcome linguistic challenges, they used different strategies, as respondent R3 said: “I started to communicate with friends and Social gatherings that improved my language challenge; sometimes take guide from my teachers.” Most respondents said the same thing. One Respondent added more: “I’ve actively engaged in language learning,” and some respondents said that they engaged in language learning programs and also practiced through speeches and stories. The majority of the respondents have used language practice, exchange or tutoring as a solution to their language issues. Some have also done language immersion programs or sought help from the language resources available at the university. The respondents have highlighted three aspects that have been found to be significant for enhancing language skills through socialization – consistency, immersion and communication.

Experiences of Cultural Adaptation

University of Sargodha has a dominant Punjab culture; in this dominancy when asked of Baloch students about cultural adaptation, they said they preferred to adapt their own Balochi culture in the university, as one respondent said that “I adapted my culture in the university. I celebrate Balochi culture day, Balochi Chap, wear Balochi dress, and listen to some Balochi songs.” Most of the respondents said that they preferred their own culture in university. Some respondents said they sometimes navigate between Baloch and Punjabi cultures, as one of the respondents said, “Navigating between Baloch and Punjabi cultures”. Some respondents have shared the same views too. The Baloch students mostly said that they adapted their own culture in a university setting. Some of them said that they also navigated between Punjabi culture and Baloch culture.

Cultural adaptation at the University

Cultural adaptation at the university, and the sub-themes are the ways, challenges, and benefits of adapting one's culture in a diverse environment. As said by a respondent, “Balancing my Baloch culture while adapting to the dominant Punjabi culture involves embracing diversity and finding common ground. I actively participate in cultural exchange events, fostering mutual understanding. While respecting and preserving my Baloch traditions, I appreciate the richness of Punjabi culture, creating a harmonious blend in my daily interactions. It's a delicate balance that enriches my overall cultural experience at the university. The same was said by most of the respondents. One respondent said something different from others: “If you enter any strange society, you have to accept their norms and values. As a Baloch Student, I myself adopt some Punjabi culture in the form of Dress. So in this way, I always try to maintain a balanced relationship with dominant Punjabi culture.” The responses vary in their degree of adaptation, from fully embracing their own culture to learning from others' cultures. A few of the responses also allude to discrimination or appreciation that they experienced due to their cultural identity. A few respondents created programs or events to promote their culture and celebrate their heritage. Several respondents used cultural clothes, cultural songs and/or cultural dances as a means of adopting their culture. Responses captured a range of experiences where parity between people of different cultural backgrounds was achieved and learning about the other cultures, but without loss of identity. Some respondents were discriminated against or excluded due to their culture; others were applauded or supported. Some respondents did not adapt to any other culture and preferred to stick to their own culture. Some of the respondents lived between two or more cultures and managed their identities.

Hence, it is suggested that there is no one right way or single strategy to balance the two cultures, but rather a range of options and approaches that are indicative of the personal and social identity of the respondent.

Peer and Social Networks Formation

The theme of the question is about the experiences of forming Peer and social networks at the university. The sub-themes are the challenges, benefits, and strategies of doing so. The responses vary in their perspectives, emotions, and language skills. The Baloch students shared experiences regarding forming peer and social networks at the university. As said by one respondent, "Participate in university-organized social events. These settings provide opportunities to meet new people who share similar interests. The library is the best place where you meet different cultural friends. You can make a social gathering." Almost similar views were shared by most of the respondents. One other respondent said, "I got a lot of information about their behaviour and misconceptions that were developed by the state. They think wrongly about us even they didn't consider us human beings. They think we the Baloch are cannibal. We didn't have friendship feelings but unlucky they don't know we are loyal people we are brave and honorable. I tried my best to make them clear about my holy culture." Most respondents expressed positive or mixed feelings about forming friendships and social networks at the university. They mentioned the rewards of blending their Baloch and diverse cultural backgrounds, the support they received from their communities, and the opportunities to participate in social events. However, some also faced difficulties due to language barriers, cultural discrimination, and misconceptions about their identity. They tried to overcome these challenges by interacting with others, understanding their cultures, and clarifying their misconceptions. Some also suggested that the library was a good place to meet friends. All respondents agreed that forming friendships and social networks was crucial for a sense of belonging at the university.

Influences of Social Relationships on Sense of Belonging and Identity

The theme of the question is how different relationships have influenced one's sense of belonging and identity. The sub-themes are the diversity of perspectives, the cultural enrichment, the social skills, and the community building. As said by one respondent, "These relationships have strengthened my sense of belonging and enriched my cultural identity." Almost the same was said by most respondents. One respondent said differently, "These relationships not influenced my sense of belonging, but helped me to understand different people and their Culture". Similar was said by one more respondent. Most of the respondents reported that their relationships with others have strengthened their sense of belonging and enriched their cultural identity by integrating diverse perspectives into their own worldview and learning from different cultures. Some also mentioned that their relationships have improved their social skills and fostered a sense of community.

Specific Challenges Faced by Baloch Students

The theme of the question is the challenges faced by Baloch students in higher education. The sub-themes are cultural discrimination, language barriers, stereotypes and misconceptions, and hostel issues. One respondent said, "Navigating occasional stereotypes and misconceptions has been a challenge, but it's an opportunity to educate and foster understanding about Baloch culture and identity." Very nearly the same was said by most respondents. They thought it was an opportunity to clear misconceptions about their culture spread by the media, etc. In another challenge, they faced a residential challenge, as one respondent said, "we faced the problem of hostel that we didn't get in university." The responses vary in the degree and nature of the challenges they faced, as well as their coping strategies. Some responses mention educating others about Baloch culture and identity, while others express frustration and anger at the discrimination and stereotyping. Baloch students face various challenges in higher education, such as cultural discrimination, language barriers, stereotypes and misconceptions, and hostel issues. These challenges affect their academic

performance, social relationships, and self-esteem. Some Baloch students try to overcome these challenges by educating others about their culture and identity, while others feel marginalized and isolated.

Coping with Challenges, and Helpful Support Systems

Cope with Baloch identity and cultural challenges. Sub themes are: educating others about Baloch culture and history, seeking support from cultural affinity groups and senior students, inviting others to visit Balochistan and learn about its issues, facing misconceptions and discrimination from non-Baloch people, and communicating proactively and participating in cultural exchange. Most of the respondents coped with the challenges of being Baloch in a non-Baloch environment by seeking support from fellow Baloch students, cultural groups, or senior students who shared their background. Some of them also tried to educate others about their culture and history, and invited them to visit their province and learn about its problems. A few of them faced misconceptions and discrimination from non-Baloch people, and tried to clear them or handle them by themselves. One of them mentioned proactive communication and participation in cultural exchange as a way of coping.

Cultural and Linguistic Differences Affect Academic Performance and Participation in University Life

The main theme is that cultural and linguistic differences affect academic performance and participation in university life. The sub-themes are the challenges, the benefits, the strategies, and the emotions associated with these differences. The answers are not all detailed, clear and positive. Some respondents note that cultural and linguistic differences have affected their academic achievement and involvement and that issues include language barriers, social isolation, fear of getting things wrong, and being excluded from some activities. Others have noted that these disparities have been the source of learning, adaptation, and individual contributions to the university community as well. The respondents suggest some strategies to overcome the challenges, such as active participation, seeking assistance, and improving language skills. They emphasized the importance of increased inclusiveness and support to overcome these challenges.

Support Needed from University to Better Assist Baloch Students

The main theme is the need for support to better assist Baloch students. Language assistance: There may be students of the Baloch community who can struggle with communication in the official languages of Pakistan: Urdu and English. The university might provide language classes or tutoring to assist them in building their language skills and confidence. Cultural awareness: Some Baloch students may face discrimination and/or isolation as a result of their cultural and traditional differences. The university could organize events, programs and initiatives to promote cultural diversity and respect, such as cultural days, panels, discussions and societies. Basic facilities: In some cases, the students of Baloch may be limited in their ability to avail hostel, library, sports, and academic facilities. The university could have offered them adequate and equal facilities for better learning and good health. These sub-themes are echoed to various extents and degrees of specificity and clarity in the students' answers. The majority of Baloch students demanded language support, cultural awareness and some basic amenities of the University. They also recommended how they could be better cared for and supported in an inclusive and supportive way; to validate their culture, eliminate discrimination and offer opportunities for participation and achievement. They stressed the importance of recognition and support to do their hobbies well.

University of Sargodha Influenced Baloch Students' Future Goals and Aspirations

The main theme is that the University of Sargodha has influenced the Baloch students' future goals and aspirations. The sub-themes are: The University has provided a broader perspective and a commitment to inclusivity and diversity. The university has motivated the students to set and achieve their goals. The university has helped the students to improve their skills and competencies. The university has inspired a

commitment to bridge cultural gaps and foster community development. The students have expressed that their experience at the University of Sargodha has positively shaped their future goals and aspirations in various ways. They have gained a broader perspective and commitment to inclusivity and diversity, which they plan to apply in their future endeavors. They have also been motivated by the teachers and the environment to set and achieve their goals, both academic and personal. They have improved their skills and competencies, especially their communication skills, which will help them in their future careers. Moreover, they have been inspired by the university to bridge cultural gaps and foster community development, which reflects their aspirations for cultural advocacy and social change.

Suggestions to Improve the Experience of Baloch Students in Higher Education

The main theme is suggestions to improve the experience of Baloch students in higher education. The sub-themes are: language support and proficiency, cultural awareness and inclusion, curriculum diversity and relevance, scholarship and resource opportunities and harassment and abduction prevention. The answers are broad-based and focused on different aspects, but they all signify a few approaches to solve the problems and concerns of Baloch students. Language support and language proficiency programs, cultural awareness and cultural inclusion of students and faculty, integration of Baloch history, Baloch literature, and Baloch contributions in the curriculum, provision of scholarships and resources, and prevention of harassment and abduction of Baloch students are essential steps to improve the experience of Baloch students in higher education.

Discussion

Seminal and current literature is used to interlace the ethnomethodological standards and qualitative findings from the study to give a comprehensive picture of the Baloch university students' report on their social integration at the University of Sargodha. The elaborate social tapestry of the university provides a unique perspective on the everyday practices and methods through which people engage and manage linguistic and cultural differences, in order to create a coherent educational network.

The results of this research align with the results obtained by Wahid et al. (2025); they revealed that Baloch students have to tackle immense issues in this regard in adapting to the environment of Punjabi as the dominant language. Similarly, Khan et al. (2023) emphasize the role of language barriers in achieving academic success, which is the language barrier that Baloch university students are facing in Punjab. This work is an extension of these observations and provides an understanding of the coping strategies and adaptive strategies that university students use.

The ethnomethodological approach used in this project is in line with the approach of Balsiger & Lambelet (2014). Huang used these fundamental concepts and tried to analyse the small, recurring interactions that constitute the social fabric of the university (Huang, 2025; Anjum et al., 2025). Convergence in methodology allows for an analysis of how cultural and linguistic diversity is discussed and handled in pedagogical spaces, which allows for the progress of the discussion around social integration and concord in a multicultural classroom.

Zhang et al. (2026) have highlighted how inclusive educational spaces can help to improve know-how and team spirit among cultural businesses from diverse cultures. This is the message of today's test - of cultural sensitivity and adaptations to create a more inclusive and supportive teaching space. Moreover, Wahid et al. (2025) provide an exploratory study of the challenging situations that Baloch university students encounter, such as cultural identity and social integration, which can be critical themes in this study.

In the broad field of identity and cultural dynamics, understanding issues of identity formation and understanding of ethnic identity is important (De Coninck et al., 2026; Razzaq et al., 2023). These theoretical discussions are considered in the context of Baloch students' experiences of negotiating their culture in a multicultural classroom environment. The results of the 'take a look' provided by the authors, analyzing the

process of identity formation, social integration, and friendship network in higher education, enrich the knowledge of the complex mechanisms of cultural adaptation and cultural integration in higher education.

The research methodology and insights accrued from this study contribute to the ongoing discourse about cultural diversity, academic inclusivity, and the challenges and opportunities that minority university students encounter in higher education. This discussion highlights the importance of recognising and addressing the complexity of social integration within educational contexts through connecting the specific narratives of students' experiences with the broader literature.

Conclusion

This study's social integration experiences with Baloch students and instructors at the University of Sargodha draw from ethnomethodological and qualitative findings obtained throughout the study, and from the literature. This perspective illuminates the complex and nuanced nature of cultural and linguistic navigation in a better education context, underscores the resilience, adaptability, and community-building of university students and faculty, and emphasizes the importance of an inclusive education context.

The research has found that knowledge of the social dynamics in the educational environment is of paramount significance, particularly for minority communities like Baloch students in a university where the majority population is from Punjab culture. The ethnomethodological technique provided a window to observe and understand the regular and nuanced interactions and practices that enable or hinder social integration. The results of this research indicate that despite the challenges faced, such as language barriers, cultural differences and feeling othered, there are also effective coping mechanisms and a strong sense of community and belonging among many of the university students. Information about the scholars' studies and teachers' learning enriches and interprets the content on the role of schools in driving diversity and inclusion. Putting is not just for academic learning; it's an essential cultural space for cultural transformation, cultural identity formation and social learning too. The encounters between the Baloch and other University students provide insights into the potential of higher education as a space for promoting cross-cultural mutual recognition, understanding and unity.

The research also highlights the significance of institutional guidance and culturally sensitive guidelines in the teaching of the stories of minority students. Language support provision, cultural focus programmes and inclusive curricula are essential components of education that can help alleviate the difficulties faced by students with diverse backgrounds. Moreover, the encouragement of cultural societies and creation of help networks can be effective in the social integration and welfare of minority students in universities. Moreover, the studies highlight the continuing need for communication and research into the experiences of minority agencies in higher education. The world's classroom is a patchwork of diverse learning environments, with each unique group of students having its own set of challenges and opportunities, and it is increasingly important to better understand these challenges and opportunities to foster more inclusive and supportive learning environments. The observation is an important component of this vital conversation as it offers a detailed depth of the perspectives of the Baloch university students and offers valuable insights for policymakers, teachers and researchers interested in inclusive education.

Overall, the current snapshot of research is a detailed and unique depiction of cultural identity, social integration and learning of Baloch students at the University of Sargodha. It highlights the significance of the role of experts and the need to integrate the aspirations and issues of the minorities (University students) in higher education. These findings indicate ongoing work to create schools that are inclusive, supportive and culturally responsive to promote and celebrate difference as a strength. It is far more important to keep such discussions alive and constantly work to make the academic world as diverse as it is in its thinking and tradition, as it is ambitious and in the quest for education. Socialization is an important tool to improve cultural harmony because, by socializing, they are able to solve their problems.

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