



CPEC AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF PUBLIC DISCOURSE IN PAKISTAN: A DEMOGRAPHIC, SOCIOECONOMIC, AND CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

CPEC, which stands for China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, is a mega project that combines both infrastructure and economic development. The project aims to connect the Gawadar Port in Pakistan with Xinjiang in China by building a network of highways, railways and pipelines. This is the signature undertaking under China's mega BRI (Belt and Road Initiative), which seeks to maximize regional connectivity and China-Pakistan economic ties. CPEC focused on improving the economy of both countries through social change in society. Culture is the way of living in society which includes both the tangible culture (buildings, technology etc.) and intangible culture (language, beliefs, ideas, knowledge and customs). When China and Pakistan collaborated with each other, their culture also diffused from one country to another. This study aims to know about the perceptions and opinions of common people about CPEC and its impacts on the socio-economic transformation of country. Cultural diversity affects positively or negatively the culture of native country. This socio-cultural transformation can lead to many social changes. The study was carried out in three districts of province Punjab, Sahiwal, Multan and Bahawalpur. Qualitative method was used for the collection of data. A sample of 480 respondents was selected randomly from three districts of selected regions of Punjab for getting quantitative data. Quantitative Data was analyzed through SPSS (statistical packages for social sciences). More than half of the respondents said that CPEC is a source of gradual cultural change in society. The majority of the respondents agreed that CPEC brings socio-economic transformation in all aspects of society like language, culture, food, work ethics, security, GDP improvement and rural development. The partnership with Chinese firms on the project of CPEC is a vehicle for technology transfer, knowledge sharing, and innovation-driven growth in Punjab. One of the major suggestions were that we should work together with Chinese to get maximum benefits of CPEC but at the same time we should take steps to keep our culture safe in its original form. By leveraging the opportunities presented by CPEC and addressing its challenges, Punjab is poised to emerge as a dynamic and prosperous province, contributing to Pakistan's overall development and regional integration.

Keywords: CPEC, Transformation, Demographic, Socioeconomic, Cultural Perspective

Introduction:

CPEC is a set of projects which connect China with Pakistan, Arabian Sea and Middle East. The project is of equal benefits for both China and Pakistan as it's not only the package of roads and rail but is development of industries and energy projects. Fifty-one MoUs were signed during Xi's visit to Islamabad; about twenty-three of these were related to CPEC and associated projects (Ali, 2015). The stress of both sides stakeholders shows that CPEC isn't only the name of roads, but comprehensive improvement in various fields, i.e. public service projects, gas pipelines, industrial units, energy production, and Gwadar port development. The estimated cost of the project is about \$ 46 billion (Hussain *et al.*, 2021).

The CPEC is a development hub and an improvement belt including reciprocal benefits, joint effort, shared benefits and normal flourishing. With the thorough transportation hall and modern participation among China and Pakistan as the fundamental pivot, and with concrete monetary and exchange collaboration, and individuals to-individuals trade and social correspondences as the motor, CPEC depends on major community projects for framework development, mechanical turn of events and vocation improvement, focused on financial turn of events, success and security in locales along it (Sial, 2014).

The Chinese side vision: to accelerate Belt and Road development, assist China in capitalizing on its potential advantages in innovation, production limit, and design activity, speed up the western development process, promote financial and social advancement in Western China, and advance the establishment of another open monetary framework (Hillman *et al.*, 2021).

The Pakistani side vision: in order to provide the segment and normal gift of the nation with all of the necessary equipment by raising its modern limit through the establishment of new mechanical groups, while also correcting the local economic tide, increasing individual prosperity, and advancing domestic harmony and stability (Gul *et al.*, 2021).

In order to remove fundamental impediments to Pakistan's 2020 economic and social development, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will begin to promote both countries' economic growth (Siddiqui *et al.*, 2023). When the construction project is completed, the modern framework will be in place, the CPEC will be nearly completed, major financial capacities will be put into play globally, people's jobs along the CPEC will be significantly improved, provincial financial advancement will be more adjusted, and all of Vision 2025's goals will be met (Duan *et al.*, 2022). The route will begin in Pakistan and travel via Gwadar Balochistan, Northern Pakistan, Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces, and Gilgit-Baltistan before reaching Khujrab Pass and continuing on to China. It will end in Kashgar, in western China (Abid & Ashfaq, 2015).

Socio-cultural Cooperation

Socio-social participation involves a somewhat important place in local collaboration. Social is the result of connections in the public eye while the most well-known kind of relationship is collaboration. According to Eagleton, 2016 culture is the lifestyle in the public arena which incorporates information, thoughts, convictions, customs, customs, dialects, structures, and innovation and so forth shared by nearly everybody in a specific culture. In spite of the fact that, culture and society are interlinked and firmly related ideas that can never be entirely isolated. Moreover, social change is exceptionally wide term it remembers every one of the human wonders for a general public which prompts social change and brought improvement. One might say that for supported connection among China and Pakistan requires a common comprehension of one another societies, customs and language, which can occur just through socio-social ties.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has provided a 'distinct advantage' in Pakistan's social and political developments (Makhdoom *et al.*, 2017). Former Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao launched the Pakistan-China Friendship Centre during a visit to Islamabad in December 2010. At four

separate Pakistan Study Centers, 8,000 Pakistani undergraduates are enrolled in Chinese universities (Khalid 2013).

The chances presented by the CPEC project are certain and show yet would we be able to overlook its socio-social effect? The impact of Eurocentric ideas on our general public is obvious today, which is an aftereffect of a period of expansionism and racial oppression. Globalization has effectively brought about the dispersion of societies somewhat. The new Chinese way of talking is the streamlined commerce and globalization. Additionally, social rubbing because of Chinese flood in Pakistan may happen because of the CPEC Project. We see that step by step the Chinese public is seen all the more frequently in shopping centers, eateries and different spots (Small, 2015).

This is only the start of a great social change. As of now, English seems, by all accounts, to be the prevailing language with regards to obtaining steady employments. One must be capable in this language to adapt to the general public, and we have as of now seen Urdu losing its importance. Before long, the Chinese language would additionally decrease the worth of Urdu (Khan and Huraira, 2024). We, as understudies, are regularly informed that we would need to be acceptable at Chinese to impart and arrive at higher status positions as new organizations and firms would be opened because of the venture. Head Li Keqiang likewise made the guarantee to send 1000 educators to Pakistan to show the Chinese language in 2013 and today there are bountiful Chinese instructors in Pakistan. In terms of faith, Chinese and Pakistani customs are extremely different (Firdous, 2020). In contrast to China's suspicious public, our society is defined by exceedingly rigid rules and values. Along the CPEC routes, social customs, languages, and beliefs will be shared in addition to goods and other resources. More people would have one-on-one interactions (Wazir, 2018).

Religions like Islam, Christianity, Manichaeism, and Buddhism spread along the historic Silk Road. The Silk Road was the actual route via which Buddhism reached China. After learning about many faiths, the explorers used what they had learned in their own communities. Throughout Eurasia, numerous social orders emerged. The new Silk Road aims to resurrect the ancient path. The significant transmitter of culture is the media.

According to Mujtabat and Khan CPEC end-all strategy uncovered the arrangement to communicate Chinese substance on Pakistani TVs through Digital Television Terrestrial Multimedia Broadcasting (DTMB). It was even announced that these administrations would be stretched out to the rugged spaces of Pakistan where you actually discover individuals carrying on with the conventional life. In any case, there is no mischief in embracing important morals. For example, Chinese hard-working attitudes are significantly more attractive than our own. They emphatically trust in the significance of difficult work, devotion and responsibility and this is one reason for China's quick financial development. While various individuals here have helpless hard-working attitudes especially an absence of responsibility which frustrates the nation's advancement. Also, solid participation can guarantee the achievement of the task. If not, Chinese and Pakistanis, in their work to contend and dominate against each other, could welcome on bothersome competition but with this our own way of life must be protected and preserved (Zahra, 2017).

Objectives:

The overall objective of the study is to identify challenges and opportunities of CPEC and its impact on socio-cultural transformation. However, the specific objectives of the study are as follow:

- Socio-cultural characteristics of Respondents
- To probe the socio-cultural and political challenges in the way of CPEC
- To investigate the effects of CPEC projects on the socio-cultural transformation
- To suggest some measures for positive socio-cultural transformation of the local community through CPEC

Review of Literature:

As stated by Hussain (2017), to understand the CPEC one must first understand the connection between Pakistan and China. Pakistan was the first Islamic state to recognize the People's Republic of China (PRC) when the two countries established relations in 1950.

According to Riaz Muhammad Khan (2011), Beijing was involved in a wide range of projects, including the Karakoram Highway (KKH), the Machine Tool Plant in Karachi, the Heavy Forge and Foundry (HFF) and Heavy Mechanical Complex (HMC) in Taxila, and the Gwadar port in Baluchistan. The two states established a free trade agreement to improve the flow of products and services, decrease taxes, and strengthen monetary participation, therefore reducing the exchange barrier.

To address Pakistan's energy issue, Ali et al. (2018) suggested focusing on industrial and development as well. The previous gap cost Pakistan's GDP Rs.14 billion, but this will benefit business owners who have moved their operations to other nations. The material enterprises will grow by 60% and produce critical items to achieve the primary goal of the CPEC project, which is to introduce energy activities to address the energy shortage. According to the World Bank, the CPEC project has increased Pakistan's monetary development from 5.4% in 2017 to 5.4% in 2018.

Sun and Jing (20) discovered that a country's economic growth is linked to its age structure; a younger population equals a faster economy, but an older population slows it down. They arrived at this result after collecting data from 78 various countries around the world, both Asian and Non-Asian. Economic development occurs quickly in areas where a substantial proportion of the population is of working age.

Mayer (2023) included gender and age when assessing youth health and survival prospects. After conducting Granger-type and causality tests, researchers in Latin America, Brazil, and Mexico concluded that economic expansion has an impact on country health outcomes. Promoting healthy youth, especially among females, can increase a country's GDP by 0.8% to 1.5% each year.

King (2021) found that one strategy to accelerate economic development is to apply various population control measures that reduce fertility rates. In addition to strengthening national economies, these steps increase the availability of trained personnel, which benefits firms due to the demographic dividend. Reduced birth and mortality rates have shifted the age distribution in various Asian countries, including South Korea, Japan, Singapore, Thailand, and Indonesia. Between 1960 and 1990, these six Asian countries' per capita income increased by up to 25%, while the proportion of working-age individuals increased relative to both adults and children.

Akhtar et al., (2021) concluded that countries can increase their savings and investments for economic growth by capitalizing on demographic benefits. This is corroborated by the fact that, between 1965 and 1990, the per capita rate climbed by 8% in South Korea and Taiwan, 8% in Japan, and 6% in Thailand. The population's age distribution, fertility rates, and life expectancy all contributed to the 1980s and 1990s economic boom, during which saving and investment more than doubled from 1970 levels. Having fewer children allows you to save more money. A country's investment in human capital may have an impact on its educational demographics. Some studies have revealed an inverse relationship between family size and educational attainment, thus parents with fewer children may be able to invest more money in their children's education.

Ziberi et al., (2022) analyzed criminal records from 120 countries between 1975 and 2000. After doing so, they discovered that investments in health and education had a direct association with economic growth, implying that these areas should get additional public financing in the future. They investigated how spending on healthcare and education can have a positive impact on economic growth. Reducing inflation and raising social expenditure are two policy aims that work together to foster economic growth and alleviate poverty. Simultaneously, a society's economic development is dependent on decreasing corruption and increasing accountability. Furthermore, the researchers underlined the importance of conducting additional study in order to establish more successful economic development programmes.

Rahman et al., (2020) found a substantial correlation between population changes in East Asian countries and increased macroeconomic activity. They claim that the significant and positive relationship between demographic dividend and economic success implies that the latter is primarily responsible for the former. Jobs that are well-suited to employees' abilities improve their performance, which in turn increases the firm's output and leads to success.

According to their analysis of the 2012 Population Bulletin, Finlay (2021) arrived at the following conclusions on the causes of these shifts in reproductive behavior: greater economic development, which has created more career opportunities for women; an increase in educational chances, which has pushed back the age of marriage and first pregnancy; and a growing number of women who prefer to stay single.

According to Rahman et al., (2020), there are 52 million Pakistanis in the labor force, defined as those aged 15 to 29, and this figure is only likely to rise. A nation can attain social, economic, and political stability by emphasizing its youth's health and educational opportunities. Pakistan has one of the worst crime rates in the world, and the alarming rise in juvenile crime, particularly in the province of Punjab, is bringing national attention to the urgent need to reduce this rate. Because young people are a nation's most valuable resource, the government is making significant efforts to alleviate this toxic environment. People are more willing to invest in the market when they feel secure about their lives and money, which benefits the economy, increases family prestige, and ensures national security.

Ahmad et al., (2021) said health and economic growth are inversely related: higher incomes result in better health facilities, and vice versa; enhanced health ensures economic growth. Improvements in health and other kinds of human capital enable more people to engage in economic activities, resulting in increased per capita incomes.

Howell, et. al., (2020) stated that education is critical for economic development, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Graduating students' contributions to society can be measured by their levels of health improvement, gender equality, and political participation. Educational institutions are key drivers of economic development in any country; in order to achieve the desired results, these institutions can be supported by rich infrastructure, developed faculty, and research and development activities that foster an innovative environment.

Todaro and Smith (2020) found that economic development is not a one-way track. Rather, it is dependent on a variety of circumstances, including societal developments, modifications in mindsets, efforts to alleviate poverty, efforts to eliminate inequality across all sectors of society, and the assurance of justice. Youth turn to crime because they lack access to education, healthcare, and justice. Using ordinary least squares (OLS) to analyze time series data, Nowak and Dahal (2016) compared Nepal to other Asian countries to examine how education affected the country's socioeconomic progress. They maintained that health, education, and economic growth form a triangle; all three are critical to a country's socioeconomic development, with education being especially important in low- and middle-income areas.

Nowak and Dahal (2020) looked at data from Nepal and Bangladesh to see how women's education and empowerment affected their countries' economic and social progress. The researchers revealed a positive and significant association between the two variables.

Adriansen et al., in 2016 study looked into how specific places and linkages contribute to the generation of new knowledge. Investigations into the geographical dispersion of scientific information open up new opportunities for teaching and research, while disputes concerning what constitutes genuine scientific knowledge give fertile ground for debate.

Xie and Chen (2018) explored the most recent issue related to housing and shelter. According to him, housing is the most striking indicator of how much poverty exists. He explored the relationship between housing and quality of life in Malaysia, discovering that housing had a direct impact on people's health and quality of life, as well as substantial positive connections between housing conditions and health and safety. Improved housing amenities boost social assistance, safety, and societal growth.

In a similar vein, Alim (2020) explored the unknown region of a constantly developing universe. He says that people want to appear wealthy and live comfortably. Appropriate housing attracts people and elevates their social position, so contributing to the country's socioeconomic development.

Hodgetts et al. (2006) defined culture as the knowledge gained through experiences that people use to make sense of their surroundings and interact with others. The information gathered helps shape values, determine disposition, and impact behavior.

Ward *et al.*, 2020, claimed that the change in culture is positive or negative relying upon one's own psyche and is a topic. For example, the strength of ladies and visit where she was not normal before decisively of being pestered is positive or negative is an abstract matter. We and the remainder of world or partner have eyes on CPEC as it is enormous energy and foundation project going through and tremendous measure of cash is included is the piece of one belt one street however, we are overlooking social effect of Chinese on Pakistan.

Research Methodology

In the social sciences, it is extremely difficult to conduct research and collect data from the entire population. In the social sciences, the only research unit is a sample, which is a subset of a population. To ensure that a sample accurately represents the community as a whole, researchers choose a subset of the population to draw from.

The research was conducted in Punjab. A multiphase sampling strategy was used to select samples. The first stage was to deliberately select three districts from the state of Punjab—Sahiwal, Multan, and Bahawalpur. The reason behind the selected areas is “the study was about the ‘challenges and opportunities of CPEC and its Impact on socio-cultural transformation in Punjab Pakistan’” so those areas where districts were selected in which CPEC projects are working or under construction. The villages were selected which are in the surrounding or near any CPEC project”. The second phase in the sampling procedure was to select one tehsil from each of the previously selected districts. The final phase involved deliberately selecting two villages from the previously designated targeted tehsils. To complete the sampling process, 480 participants were picked at random for the quantitative data collection step.

Table 1: Distribution of the Respondents according to their age

According to their age	Frequency	Percent
20-30	199	41.5
31-40	189	39.4
41-50	70	14.6
51-60	22	4.6
Total	480	100.00

Age Demographics: The majority of respondents (41.5%) fall within the 20-30 age group, followed by the 31-40 age group (39.4%). **Consistency with Bloom and Canning:** The age distribution aligns with Bloom and Canning's (2014) research, suggesting a potential demographic dividend due to a decreasing dependency ratio and increasing labor force participation. **Positive Implications:** This demographic shift presents opportunities for increased per capita productivity and economic growth. The age distribution of respondents in this study is consistent with the demographic trends identified by Bloom and Canning. This suggests that Pakistan may be poised to benefit from a demographic dividend, characterized by a growing working-age population and a declining dependency ratio. Such a demographic shift can create favorable conditions for economic growth and development.

Table 2. Distribution of the Respondents according to their educational level

Educational level	Frequency	Percent
Never attended school	81	16.9
Primary	108	22.5
Middle	119	24.8
Metric	74	15.4
Secondary school	57	11.9
Graduation	41	8.5
Total	480	100.0

Table 2 indicates that 81 (16.9%) of the respondents were belonged to a group who never attended school, 108 (22.5%) of the respondents got education to the primary level, 119 (24.8%) of the respondents were educated to the middle level, 74 (15.4%) of the respondents of the respondents attained metric school, 57 (11.9%) of the respondents got education to the secondary level and 41 (8.5%) of the respondents were graduated.

This suggests that higher education is becoming more popular in Pakistan than it was previously. Respondents' greater levels of education compared to their dads lead the researcher to conclude that Pakistan is now more invested in education than it was previously. People are beginning to recognize the value of education, and for good reason: by investing in our students' college degrees, we are creating a pool of human capital that will serve us well in the future. According to Malik 2018, education has a profound effect on people. As a result, people are more equipped to think critically and make ethical decisions.

Table 3. Distribution of the Respondents according to their Monthly income

Monthly income	Frequency	Percent
up to25000	168	35.0
25,100-50,000	184	38.3
50,100-75,000	89	18.5
Above	39	8.1
Total	480	100.0

Table 3 indicates that 168 (35.0%) of the respondents were having up to (25000) monthly income, 184 (38.3%) majority were having (25,100-50,000) monthly income, 89 (18.5%) of the respondents were having (50,100-75,000) and 39 (8.1%) were having monthly income above than (75,000).

Nearly same findings to Bloom and Canning (2005) found a substantial correlation between population changes in East Asian countries and increased macroeconomic activity. They claim that the significant and positive relationship between demographic dividend and economic success implies that the latter is primarily responsible for the former. Jobs that are well-suited to employees' abilities improve their performance, which in turn increases the firm's output and leads to success. Salary adjustments and increases in household income coincide with improvements to the firm's bottom line. The findings show a link between a state's socioeconomic development and its residents' levels of education, employment, and income (Batoola & Liu, 2021).

Table 4. Distribution of the respondents according to their opinion about CPEC project will bring any kind of change in your area

Any kind of change	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	138	28.8
Agree	293	61.0
strongly disagree	28	5.8
Disagree	16	3.3
Not at all	5	1.0
Total	480	100.0

Table 4 indicates that 138(28.8%) of the respondents were strongly agreed, 293(61.0%) were agreed, 28(5.8%) were strongly disagreed, 16(3.3%) were disagreed and 5(1.0%) were not at all agreed that CPEC will bring any kind of change in their area. Iqbal and Anwar (2015) recognized the importance of the relationship between China and Pakistan as two Asian countries. One of Pakistan's long-term priorities has been to improve relations with its neighbors. Pakistan and China have had a long-standing relationship. The Silk Road is the oldest commercial route in the world. As stated by Javed and Ismail in 2021, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) would help Pakistan become a regional powerhouse. China can strengthen its regional influence by building a naval facility at the Gwadar port.

Table 5. Distribution of the respondents according to their perception about Challenges faced by CPEC

Challenges	Strongly agree		agree		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Not at all	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>F</i>	%	<i>F</i>	%	<i>F</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Security issues	57	11.9	193	40.2	60	12.5	136	28.3	34	7.1
Political instability	95	19.8	241	50.2	40	8.3	71	14.8	33	6.9
Language barrier	142	29.6	237	49.4	22	4.6	38	7.9	41	8.5
Unfavorable working environment	119	24.8	204	42.5	44	9.2	67	14.0	46	9.6
Strategic instability	105	21.9	175	36.5	35	7.3	90	18.8	75	15.6
Incompletion of policies	98	20.4	195	40.6	36	7.5	76	15.8	75	15.6

N=480

Based on the survey data, the majority of respondents (62.1%) believe that CPEC is facing security issues in Pakistan. While a significant minority (31.8%) disagree or strongly disagree, a substantial portion (11.9%) strongly agrees with this assessment.

Political instability is another major concern. Nearly 70% of respondents agree or strongly agree that political instability poses a challenge to CPEC's success. However, a notable 23.1% either disagree or strongly disagree with this sentiment. **Language barriers are also perceived as a significant issue.** Almost 80% of respondents acknowledge the challenges posed by language barriers, with over half (74%) agreeing or strongly agreeing.

An unfavorable working environment is another obstacle identified by respondents. Over 60% agree or strongly agree that this is a challenge, highlighting the need for improvements in working conditions. **Finally, the incompleteness of policies is seen as a significant hurdle.** Nearly 61% of respondents agree or strongly agree that this is a challenge, indicating the importance of policy development and implementation for CPEC's success. As reported by Wolf in 2020, to address the participating countries' cultural, economic, and security concerns, China has designed the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in an accommodating manner.

Table 6. Association among respondents' age and their perception about the CPEC impact on Socio-cultural transformation

Age groups (in years)	Socio-cultural transformation			Total
	Low	Medium	High	
20-30	22	107	70	199
	11.1%	53.8%	35.2%	100.0%
31-40	23	105	61	189
	12.2%	55.6%	32.3%	100.0%
41-50	8	39	23	70
	11.4%	55.7%	32.9%	100.0%
51-60	1	12	9	22
	4.5%	54.5%	40.9%	100.0%
Total	54	263	163	480
	11.3%	54.8%	34.0%	100.0%

Chi-square = 1.68 d.f. = 6
Gamma (λ) = -0.007

P-value = .947^{NS}
P-value = .915^{NS}

Above table 4.34 displays a non-significant ($\chi^2 = 1.68, p = .947$) association among respondents' age and e impact of CPEC on socio-cultural transformation. Gamma statistic ($\lambda = 0.007, p = .9159$) also showed a non-significant relation among the variables. It means, age of the respondents had not associated with their perception about the impact of CPEC on socio-cultural and economic transformation. It means, all age groups had almost same perception about the impact of CPEC on socio-economic transformation of community. Consequently, the hypothesis "Age of the respondents will be associated with their perception about the impact of CPEC on socio-cultural transformation" is rejected.

This study concluded that the CPEC has three important components; first component is that it connects development with security; developed economic drivers, such as better trade opportunities and better infrastructure investment are deeply linked to political stability and peace in the region. Second, the belt and road initiative will promote cultural and educational exchanges for both countries as indicator of its developmental strategy (Xu, B. 2021)

Table 7. Association among respondents' education and their perception about the CPEC impact on socio-cultural transformation

Education	Socio-cultural transformation			Total
	Low	Medium	High	
Never attended school	10	51	20	81
	12.3%	63.0%	24.7%	100.0%
Primary	10	59	39	108
	9.3%	54.6%	36.1%	100.0%
Middle	14	75	30	119
	11.8%	63.0%	25.2%	100.0%
Metric	8	39	27	74
	10.8%	52.7%	36.5%	100.0%
Secondary school	7	24	26	57
	12.3%	42.1%	45.6%	100.0%
Graduation	5	15	21	41
	12.2%	36.6%	51.2%	100.0%
Total	54	263	163	480
	11.3%	54.8%	34.0%	100.0%

Chi-square = 21.64

d.f. = 10

P-value = .017*

Gamma (λ) = 0.131

P-value = .024*

Significant Association: There is a statistically significant relationship between respondents' education levels and their perceptions of CPEC's impact on socio-cultural transformation. **Positive Correlation:** The gamma value indicates a positive correlation between education level and perceived impact, suggesting that higher education levels are associated with more positive views of CPEC's influence. **Educational Disparity:** Respondents with lower levels of education are more likely to perceive a lower impact of CPEC on socioeconomic transformation compared to those with higher levels of education.

The data presented support that respondents' education levels are associated with their perceptions of CPEC's impact on socio-cultural transformation. Specifically, individuals with higher levels of education are more likely to view CPEC positively in terms of its influence on socioeconomic development. This suggests that education plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and understanding of the project's implications. Multiple studies have demonstrated a strong association between educational attainment and personal income because higher-quality education increases people's ability to gain knowledge and skills, which improves their quality of life (Kanwal *et al.*, 2019b; Makhdoom *et al.*, 2018).

Education can increase the living standards of the local community while also reducing societal inequality and discrimination (Kudasheva *et al.* 2015). Melguizo *et al.* (2016) underlined the considerable association between education and income and predicted that boosting people's levels of

education will raise their income. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) comprises a number of programmes targeted at increasing people's access to the quality of higher education and professional skill sets (Kanwal et al. 2019).

Table 8. Relationship between CPEC and Demographic, Socioeconomic, and Cultural transformations.

Independent Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Significance
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.756	.262		2.881	.004**
Age	-.081	.030	-.109	-2.730	.007**
Education	.072	.017	.172	4.109	.000**
Income	.099	.029	.145	3.409	.001**
Challenges	.136	.036	.150	3.770	.000**
Cultural Change	-.003	.036	-.004	-.086	.931 ^{NS}
Adjusted R²= 0.592 F=18.854 Significance=0.000					
Predictors: Age, Education, Income, Challenges, cultural change due to CPEC.					
Dependent Variable: Socio-economic Transformation					

R-squared: The adjusted R-squared of 0.592 indicates that approximately 59.2% of the variation in socio-economic transformation can be explained by the included variables. This is a relatively high value, suggesting a strong model fit. **F-test:** The significant F-test value of 18.854 confirms the overall significance of the model, indicating that at least one independent variable is significantly related to the dependent variable.

Positive Effects: Age, education, income, challenges, and evolving norms due to Chinese culture have positive relationships with socio-economic transformation. This suggests that older respondents, those with higher education and income, those facing challenges, and those experiencing cultural shifts are more likely to perceive a positive impact from CPEC. **Positive Influence:** While CPEC has had a generally positive impact on socio-economic transformation, factors such as age, language barriers, and challenges have limited its influence.

The regression analysis demonstrates that socio-cultural attributes play a significant role in shaping perceptions of CPEC's impact on socio-economic transformation. While the model explains a substantial portion of the variation, further research is needed to explore the complex interplay of these factors and their potential moderating effects.

Irshad (2015) concluded that everyone, from farmers and traders to exporters and the government, stands to benefit from the CPEC route, which would streamline and lower the cost of commerce and exports compared to previous methods. Local trade is likely to expand after the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects are completed, offering an excellent chance for businesses to enhance their profit ratio (Mumtaz, 2015). Wolf (2016): The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) initiatives would help to reduce poverty and improve the socioeconomic situation in both nations.

Melguizo et al. (2016) found a strong link between educational attainment and financial well-being, and they predicted that boosting people's levels of education will raise their income. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) comprises a number of programs targeted at increasing people's access to the quality of higher education and professional skill sets (Kanwal et al. 2019).

Conclusion:

The study examined the challenges and opportunities of CPEC and its impact on socio-cultural transformation in Punjab, Pakistan. CPEC is a mega project in which China and Pakistan are involved. Through project Pakistan will have many energy plants, coal power plants, better infrastructure and many more. This project is going to boost the economy of Pakistan and it will also provide better living standards to the people of Pakistan. Pakistan is developing country with a huge number of populations and Pakistan is at 6th number among the most populous countries of world. But the

economic situation of Pakistan is not as good as it should be, employment opportunities are not sufficient for the people of Pakistan and many people are living down the poverty line. So, through this project Pakistan will get a chance to provide better life standards to their people, to minimize the shortfall of energy, easy access to cities, better roads and educational facilities. In this study the areas nearby the projects of CPEC were studied and the respondents were common community of those areas, a significant number of respondents said that cultural change can be expected with the passage of time. Perceptions of people were studied during this study. So, it is concluded that CPEC will not impact the economic situation of Pakistan but also the cultural values too because according to the theory of globalization cultural activities also move from one side to another when different cultures interact around the globe.

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