

## **Qualitative study of Ph.D. student scholarship systems in developing and developed countries**

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**Background:** From two centuries ago, scholarship systems in many countries have supported postgraduate students to continue their studies abroad. Nonetheless, due to the fundamental revolution in the concepts of scientific development in last decades, scholarship systems have modified their missions particularly in developed countries.

**Objective:** To express some practical guidelines to improve the scholarship system in Iran, this study compared scholarship systems in developed and developing countries in terms of their rules and regulations. The main questions were about the objectives of scholarship systems, the selection methods of eligible students, and how they encourage students to come back their home countries.

**Methods:** This was a qualitative study; data were collected by exploring written documents, websites, and interviewing 40 PhD students from 16 countries who were studying in UK universities.

**Results:** Obtaining certificate to get higher academic position was the main objective of developing country students; however, scholarship systems in developed countries were aimed to push students to understand others' cultures and scientific styles, and address research questions during their studies. In addition, there were well established collaborations between developed countries and their organization in supporting students. These types of collaborations were not seen developing countries.

**Conclusion:** By looking at the advantages of scholarship systems in developed countries, it is suggested that we need to amend the objectives of scholarship system in Iran and formulate a new plan to optimize the method in selecting students, decreasing brain drain, and activating private section and NGOs.

**Key words:** PhD students, higher education, scholarship system, brain drain, development

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