

Gallup Pakistan Analysis of Visa Issuance Statistics



PRESS RELEASE

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Annual immigrant visas issued to Pakistan by the United States increased by 61.4% (from 10,114 in 2018 to 16,320 in 2023) while according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the Pakistani population in the United States numbered 554,000 in 2019, a 171% increase from the 204,000 recorded in 2000– **USA Visa Issuance Statistics**

Islamabad, November 18th, 2024

Gallup Pakistan, as part of its Big Data Analysis initiative, is looking at USA Visa Issuance Statistics, which can be found [HERE](#).

What is the Big Data Analysis Series by Gallup?

Gallup Pakistan's Big Data series was started by Bilal I Gilani, Executive Director of Gallup Pakistan. Bilal explains the rationale of the series: *"The usual complaint from academics and policy makers is that Pakistan does not have data availability. Our experience negates that. Pakistan has lots of data, but it is not available in a usable form and not widely accessible. At Gallup we plan to bridge this gap in terms of accessibility and use of data. The Gallup Big Data series has earlier worked with data sets such as [PSLM](#), [Labour Force Survey](#), and [Economic Survey reports](#) as well as [National Census Reports](#) and [Election Commission Data sets](#). The current series is using the [Visa Issuance Statistics Dashboard](#), which provides a variety of visa-related statistics. We hope that these series are useful, and we welcome both feedback as well as possible collaborations as we create a public good in the form of useful data sets in Pakistan."*

For more reports and dashboards on Pakistan please visit our dedicated website:

<https://www.galluppakistan.digitalanalytics.com/>

What data points this current edition covers:

This series aims to present the important learnings from the Visa Issuance Statistics Dashboard, for policy makers, the public, as well as for marketers in an easy and understandable way. This edition looks at USA Visa Issuance Statistics. The series' main aim is to provide data. Implications of these data points for development sector as well as wider socio-political ramifications is something we would like to trigger in relevant circles.

USA Visa Issuance Statistics (2018-2024)

Annual immigrant visas issued to Pakistan by the United States increased by 61.4% (from 10,114 in 2018 to 16,320 in 2023), while according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the Pakistani population in the United States numbered 554,000 in 2019, a 171% increase from the 204,000 recorded in 2000.

OVERALL U.S. VISA ISSUANCE (2018-2024):

Between 2018 and mid-2024, the U.S. issued a total of 51,099,498 visas. Of these, 2,985,455 (5.9%) were immigrant visas, while 48,114,043 (94.1%) were non-immigrant visas.

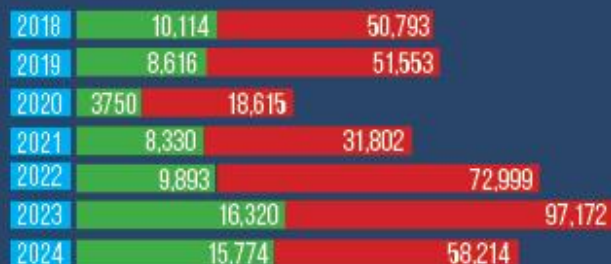


IMMIGRANT
NON-IMMIGRANT



VISA ISSUANCE TO PAKISTAN (2018-2024):

Annual immigrant visas issued to Pakistan increased from 10,114 in 2018 to 16,320 in 2023, a figure that almost doubled by 2023. In 2018, 50,793 non-immigrant visas were issued to Pakistani citizens, a figure that almost doubled by 2023.

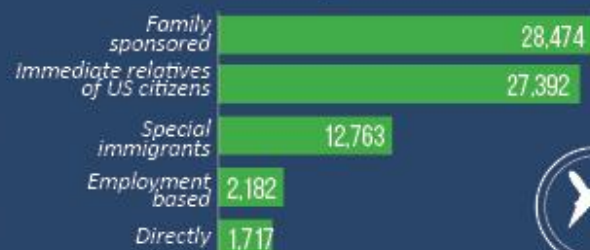


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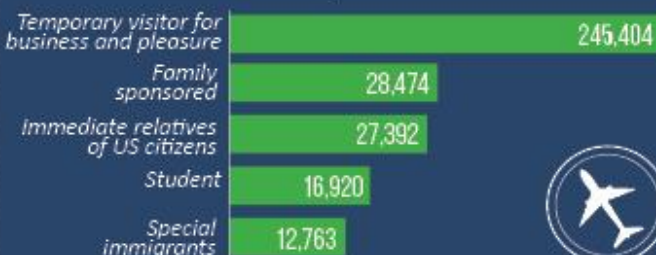
IMMIGRANT VISA ISSUANCE TO PAKISTAN (BY PURPOSE):

Family-sponsored visas mark the largest purpose of issuance for Pakistan – representing 28,474 or 39.1% of the total immigrant visas issued.



NON-IMMIGRANT VISA ISSUANCE TO PAKISTAN (BY PURPOSE):

Family-sponsored visas mark the largest purpose of issuance for Pakistan – representing 28,474 or 39.1% of the total immigrant visas issued.



Gallup Pakistan Digital Analytics Report on Immigration and Non Immigration Visas to US from Pakistan
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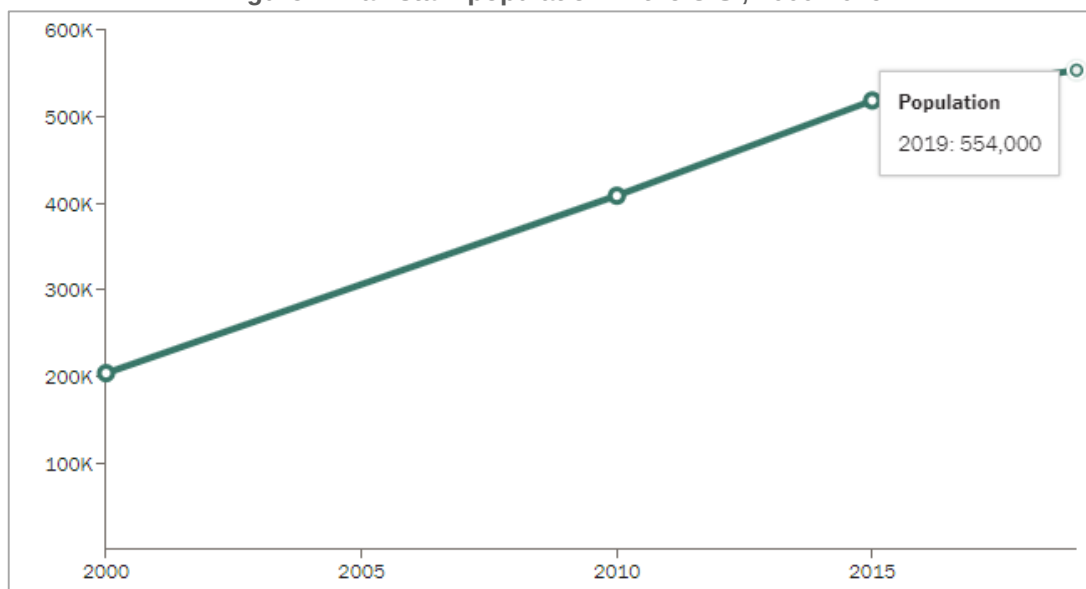
Key Findings:

1. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the Pakistani population in the United States numbered **554,000 in 2019**, a **171% increase** from the 204,000 recorded in 2000.
2. **Overall U.S. Visa Issuance (2018-2024):** Between 2018 and mid-2024, the U.S. issued a total of 51,099,498 visas. Of these, 2,985,455 (5.9%) were immigrant visas, while 48,114,043 (94.1%) were non-immigrant visas
3. **Immigrant Visa Issuance to Pakistan (2018-2024):** Annual immigrant visas issued to Pakistan increased from 10,114 in 2018 to 16,320 in 2023, marking a 61.4% increase.
4. **Family-sponsored visas mark the largest purpose of issuance for Pakistan – representing 28,474 or 39.1% of the total immigrant visas issued**, followed by “Immediate relatives of US Citizens” (27,392 or 37.6%) and special immigrants (12,763 or 17.5%).
5. **Non-Immigrant Visa Issuance to Pakistan (2018-2024):** In 2018, 50,793 non-immigrant visas were issued to Pakistani citizens, a figure that almost doubled by 2023, when 97,172 such visas were granted, representing a substantial 91.3% increase in annual issuances.
6. **64.4% of the non-immigrant visas issued to Pakistanis were for "temporary visitors for business or pleasure," amounting to 245,404 visas.** This category is followed by "family-sponsored" (7.5%), "immediate relatives of U.S. citizens" (7.2%), and "student" visas (4.4%).

1. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the Pakistani population in the United States numbered 554,000 in 2019, a 171% increase from the 204,000 recorded in 2000.

This sharp rise in the Pakistani diaspora reflects growing migration patterns, driven by educational, economic, and social factors. Each year, hundreds of Pakistanis apply for U.S. visas for a variety of reasons, including travel, education, tourism, and seeking opportunities to improve their standard of living. This report delves into the visa issuance statistics in detail, breaking down the trends in both immigrant and non-immigrant visa categories to provide a comprehensive overview of Pakistani migration to the United States.

Figure 1: Pakistani population in the U.S., 2000-2019



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, PEW Research Center¹

2. Overall U.S. Visa Issuance (2018-2024)

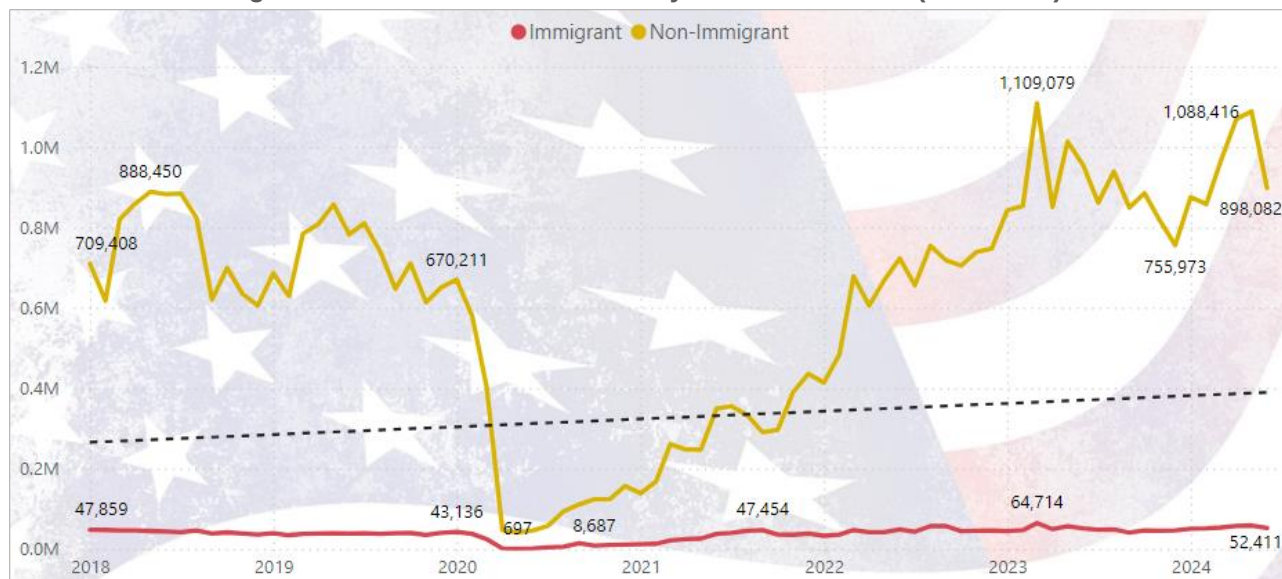
The United States, often referred to as the "Land of Opportunity," continues to be a top destination for people worldwide. **Between 2018 and mid-2024, the U.S. issued a total of 51,099,498 visas. Of these, 2,985,455 (5.9%) were immigrant visas, while 48,114,043 (94.1%) were non-immigrant visas**, highlighting the overwhelming demand for temporary entry into the country.

A closer look at the data reveals an upward trend in visa issuance over the years. Between January 1, 2018, and June 1, 2024, immigrant visa issuance grew by 9.5%, from 47,859 to 52,411 annually. Non-immigrant visas saw an even more substantial increase, rising by 26.6%, from 709,408 in 2018 to 898,082 in 2024. Both categories of visas experienced a significant decline in 2020 due to the global Covid-19 pandemic, with widespread travel restrictions, embassy closures, and delays in processing. However, as travel restrictions eased and global mobility resumed, visa issuance rebounded sharply. By 2023, the U.S. issued the highest number of visas recorded during the review period: 591,326 immigrant visas and 10,730,998

¹ <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/fact-sheet/asian-americans-pakistanis-in-the-u-s/#english-proficiency-of-pakistani-population-in-the-u-s-2019>

non-immigrant visas (Figure 2). This growth not only underscores the increasing interest in the U.S. as a destination but also signals a post-pandemic recovery in global mobility trends.

Figure 2: Number of Visas Issues by the United States (2018-2024)



Year	Immigrant	Non-Immigrant
2018	521,270	9,044,597
2019	461,589	8,721,517
2020	164,426	2,453,006
2021	378,968	3,514,073
2022	543,591	7,895,021
2023	591,326	10,730,998
2024	324,285	5,754,831
Total	2,985,455	48,114,043

Source: U.S. Department of State, visualization by Gallup Pakistan²

3. Immigrant Visa Issuance to Pakistan (2018-2024)

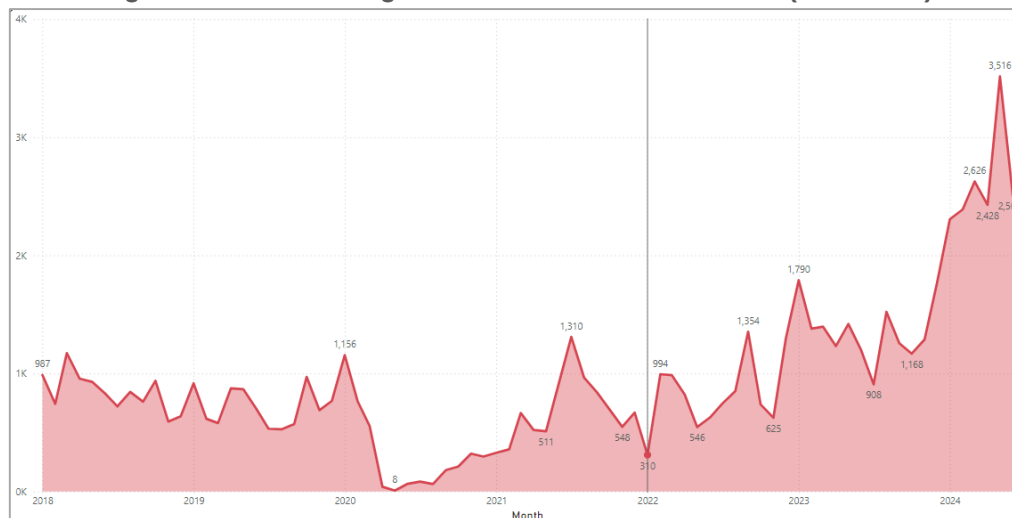
U.S visas issued to Pakistan between 2018 and 2024 follow similar trends as discussed above, albeit more pronounced. Isolating Immigrant visas shows a consistently steep increase in visas issued 2023 and onwards, with the first six months of 2024 breaking all previous records. This rise is indicative of broader trends in migration and may reflect changing economic or social factors both in Pakistan and the U.S.

Annual immigrant visas issued to Pakistan increased from 10,114 in 2018 to 16,320 in 2023, marking a 61.4% increase. However, the pandemic year of 2020 represented a significant anomaly in this upward trajectory, as visa issuance dropped dramatically. Only 3,750 immigrant visas were issued during that year, the lowest annual total on record for the period under review. This sharp decline can be attributed to the global effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, which resulted in widespread travel restrictions, embassy closures, and a general slowdown in visa processing. Nevertheless, once restrictions eased in the following years, the

² <https://www.gallupkistandigitalanalytics.com/us-visa-issuance-statistics-dashboard/>

number of visas issued quickly rebounded, and the increase in 2023 and 2024 suggests a heightened demand that could set the tone for future migration trends.

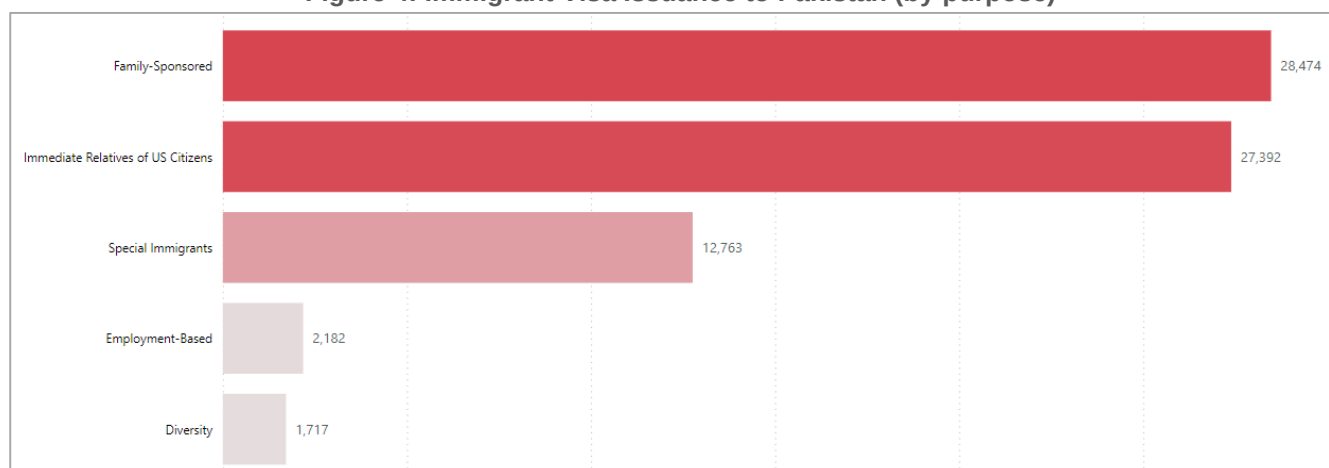
Figure 3: Trend - Immigrant Visa Issuance to Pakistan (2018-2024)



Source: U.S. Department of State, visualization by Gallup Pakistan

Family-sponsored visas mark the largest purpose of issuance for Pakistan – representing 28,474 or 39.1% of the total immigrant visas issued, followed by “Immediate relatives of US Citizens” (27,392 or 37.6%) and special immigrants (12,763 or 17.5%). At 2,182 visas issued, employment-based reasons are fourth on the list.

Figure 4: Immigrant Visa Issuance to Pakistan (by purpose)



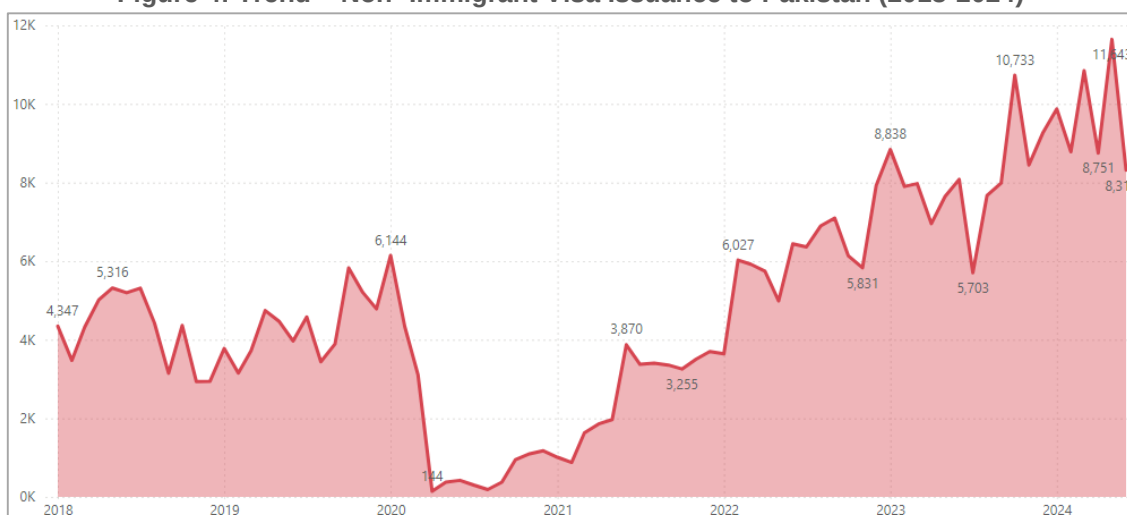
Source: U.S. Department of State, visualization by Gallup Pakistan

4. Non-Immigrant Visa Issuance to Pakistan (2018-2024)

The issuance of non-immigrant visas to Pakistan has witnessed an even more dramatic increase compared to immigrant visas, highlighting Pakistan's growing engagement with the United States for short-term stays. Whether for education, work, travel, or other purposes, the demand for non-immigrant visas has surged over the years. **In 2018, 50,793 non-immigrant visas were issued to Pakistani citizens, a figure that almost doubled by 2023, when 97,172 such visas were granted. This represents a substantial 91.3% increase in annual issuances, indicating a sharp rise in Pakistani nationals seeking temporary entry to the U.S.**

The upward trajectory continues into 2024, with more than 58,000 non-immigrant visas issued in just the first six months (Figure 4). If this trend holds, 2024 could set a new record for non-immigrant visa issuance, potentially surpassing previous years. Several factors could explain this surge, including expanded educational opportunities in the U.S., growth in employment visa programs, strengthening business ties between the two nations, and an increasing number of Pakistanis traveling for tourism or family reunions.

Figure 4: Trend – Non- Immigrant Visa Issuance to Pakistan (2018-2024)



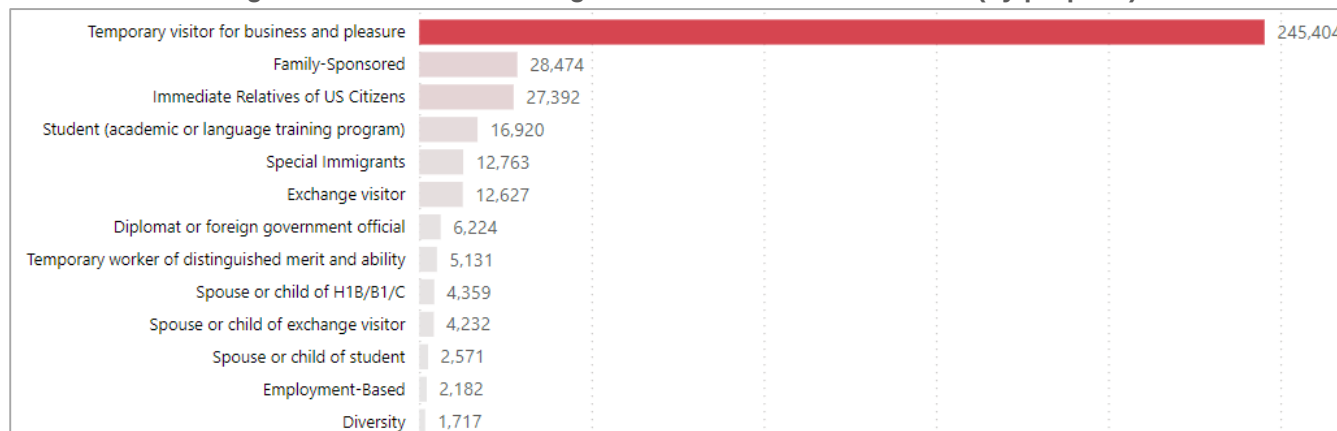
Month	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
January	4,347	3,776	6,144	1,009	3,641	8,838	9,873
February	3,474	3,150	4,334	878	6,027	7,900	8,784
March	4,319	3,719	3,114	1,629	5,921	7,972	10,847
April	5,017	4,742	144	1,856	5,746	6,955	8,751
May	5,316	4,472	372	1,968	4,990	7,645	11,643
June	5,195	3,969	422	3,870	6,438	8,080	8,316
July	5,311	4,580	302	3,374	6,360	5,703	
August	4,428	3,441	187	3,404	6,893	7,667	
September	3,147	3,890	375	3,356	7,096	7,984	
October	4,363	5,826	950	3,255	6,132	10,733	
November	2,932	5,203	1,097	3,504	5,831	8,446	
December	2,944	4,785	1,174	3,699	7,924	9,249	
Total	50,793	51,553	18,615	31,802	72,999	97,172	58,214

Source: U.S. Department of State, visualization by Gallup Pakistan

In terms of visa categories, **64.4% of the non-immigrant visas issued to Pakistanis were for "temporary visitors for business or pleasure," amounting to 245,404 visas. This category is followed by "family-sponsored" (7.5%), "immediate relatives of U.S. citizens" (7.2%),**

and "student" visas (4.4%). The high number of temporary visitor visas underscores the strong interest among Pakistanis in traveling to the U.S.

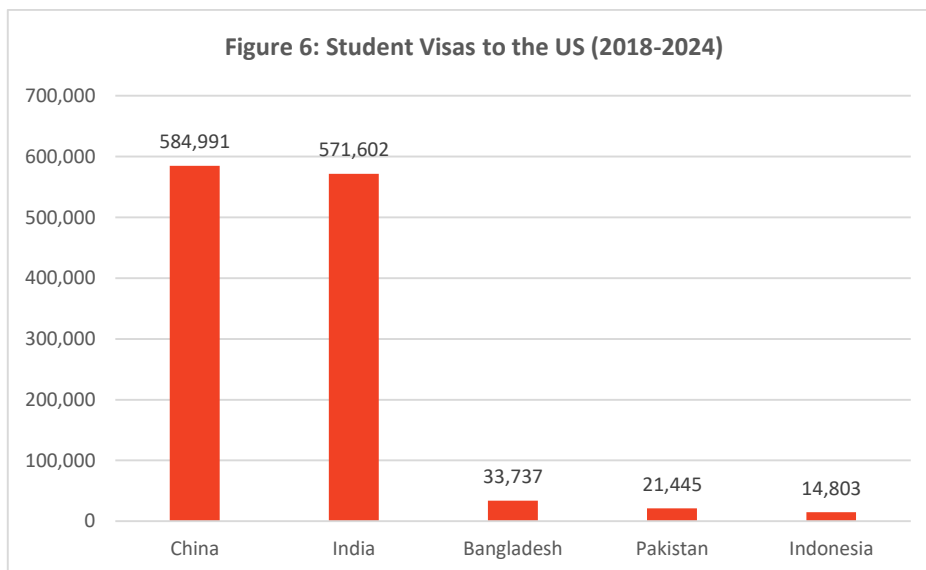
Figure 5: Trend – Non-Immigrant Visa Issuance to Pakistan (by purpose)



Source: U.S. Department of State, visualization by Gallup Pakistan

Analyzing student visa numbers for Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi, Chinese, and Indonesian nationals provides an interesting view of educational migration to the United States. **While the raw figures of student visas granted may initially suggest a significant gap between countries, converting these figures to a percentage of each country's population reveals a trend that is far less steep.** The percentage approach provides context on the broader impact and relative access to U.S. education, showing that the difference in absolute numbers, while notable, is not as large when adjusted for population size.

Figure 6: Student Visas to the US (2018-2024)

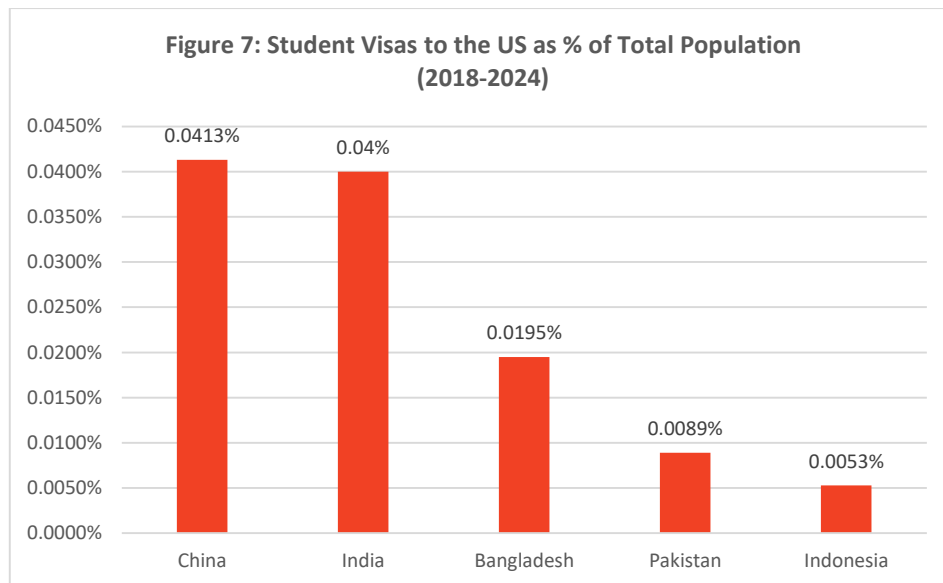


Source: U.S. Department of State, visualization by Gallup Pakistan

For instance, India and China lead in absolute student visa numbers, with 571,602 and 584,991 visas, respectively. This large intake aligns with their size and established patterns of U.S.-bound student migration. When considered as a percentage of each country's population, however, these figures translate to approximately 0.04% and 0.0413%, only marginally different. Similarly, Bangladesh, with 33,737 student visas, shows a relatively close rate of 0.0195% when considered per capita, though its raw visa count is far lower than India and China. This approach contextualizes Bangladesh's demand for U.S. education, showing that

while absolute numbers are smaller, its relative interest in U.S. education is proportionally similar.

Pakistan and Indonesia represent cases where absolute visa counts are significantly lower, at 21,445 and 14,803, respectively. Yet, when viewed as a percentage, Pakistan's rate of 0.0089% and Indonesia's 0.0053% remain relatively close to the higher-visa countries, suggesting that population size heavily influences absolute numbers. While fewer Pakistani and Indonesian students pursue studies in the U.S., the percentage of the population shows that demand exists, just on a somewhat smaller relative scale.



Source: U.S. Department of State, visualization by Gallup Pakistan

The steady increase in both immigrant and non-immigrant visas issued to Pakistanis between 2018 and 2024 highlights the deepening relationship between Pakistan and the United States, not only at the individual level but also in terms of bilateral ties. The sharp rise in immigrant visas, especially post-2023, could be linked to changing socio-economic conditions in Pakistan, such as the search for better employment opportunities abroad, as well as family reunifications. The surge in non-immigrant visas, on the other hand, underscores Pakistan's growing middle class, which has greater access to travel, education, and global mobility.

Moreover, the substantial increase in student visas points to the rising appeal of U.S. educational institutions for Pakistani students, as they seek quality higher education and career opportunities in the global market. The growth in business and employment-related visas reflects strengthening economic ties between the two countries, with more Pakistanis looking to engage in U.S. markets and companies.

The post-pandemic recovery also plays a crucial role in explaining the steep increases in visa issuance. As global travel restrictions eased, many individuals who had deferred their plans during the pandemic rushed to fulfill them, contributing to the sharp rebound in 2023 and beyond. This pent-up demand may have long-lasting effects, setting the stage for sustained high visa issuance rates in the coming years.

That being said, it can be understood that the average Pakistani may not be as inclined to migrate to the United States as commonly perceived. A 2023 opinion poll conducted by

Gallup International Association³ sheds light on this sentiment. When asked, “Some people believe that the current law and order situation in Pakistan is very bad, so they would leave Pakistan for another country if they had the opportunity. Others believe that no matter how bad the situation in Pakistan is, they will not leave. In your opinion, what would you do in this situation?” 25% of respondents indicated they would leave Pakistan, while a significant majority, 71%, stated they would remain.

Overall, these trends suggest a complex interplay of economic aspirations, educational pursuits, familial ties, and business opportunities driving the surge in visa applications from Pakistan. As the relationship between the two nations evolves, these migration patterns will likely continue to reflect broader geopolitical and economic shifts, potentially influencing future U.S. immigration and visa policies towards Pakistan.

³ <https://gallup.com.pk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/18.12.23-eng-merged.pdf>

Wish to Contribute to Gallup Big Data Analysis?

Gallup Pakistan is looking for collaboration with researchers to expand both the Big Data Analysis project as well as this study of Health in Pakistan. If you have any ideas, please write to Bilal I Gilani, Project Director, Big Data Analysis at Gallup Pakistan.

Wish to know more about the US Visa Statistics Dashboard?

The US Visa Statistics Dashboard unravels the complexities of immigration through data-driven insights. Whether you are interested in immigrant or non-immigrant visas, our dashboard provides a comprehensive overview of issuances by types, passport analysis, embassy statistics, and emerging trends. The dashboard allows users to discover key trends in country of origin data and understand the evolving patterns of immigration to the United States.

You can find more information on Visa Issuances on

<https://www.galluppakistandigitalanalytics.com/>

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