


# Lack of Academia- Industry Linkages in Pakistan

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Pakistan faces a significant challenge of unemployment despite the large number of graduates entering the workforce annually.

**Objective:** To explore the gap between academia and industry in Pakistan and its impact on employment and research innovation.

**Methods:** Analysis of current industry-academia linkage practices and identification of gaps hindering collaboration.

**Results:** The disconnection between academic knowledge and industrial needs results in limited research applications and fewer employment opportunities for graduates.

**Conclusion:** Strengthening academia-industry linkages through collaborative research, knowledge transfer, and IP protection is vital for economic growth and innovation.

## EDITORIAL

Even with the ultimate yearly influx of fresh graduates into different professions and fields, Pakistani society cannot get rid of the mounting problem of unemployment. One of the main causes of this situation is the huge gap between industry and academia, an enormous gulf between the requirements of the industries and the available knowledge and expertise among the fresh graduates, which, in turn, causes a lag in innovative and research work in the country. Industrial collaboration will push research in directions that are more relevant and applicable to real-life situations. Such exposure further provides hands-on experience to students, eventually making them more employable and helping in smoother transitions into the workforce. Industry partnerships allow for opportunities related to the commercialization of academic research. A new process might result in products, technologies, or services that benefit both academia and industries. In general,

enhancement of collaboration and protection of IP rights are major steps toward closing existing gaps in academia-industry partnerships and therefore building a more solid and fruitful relationship between the two. These measures should not be limited to certain universities or provinces rather these should be practiced throughout the country. Pakistan's academia needs to get tuned to the dynamics of the continuously changing world and provide an enabling environment for growth and development (1). The industry-academia linkage (IAL) can be defined as interactive, mutually inclusive goals and objectives oriented between the industry and the academic world. Creativity, philosophy, and theory are the pillars on which the academic world stands, while the industry exists because of prevalent commercially feasible ideas. Alternatively, academia is software, and industry is hardware. To understand the gap still better, imagine a professor who has delivered thousands of lectures on swimming but never put his feet in the water till his retirement; he will always remain

introverted and incomplete. So it's a question of the demand and supply gap between the industry and the academic world (2).

The universities should encourage interdisciplinary research and cross-disciplinary approaches that can help provide new knowledge and innovative solutions. These platforms could train a new generation of scientists and researchers who will drive innovation in the future and help solve problems in society. The simplest definition of the university job in research and development is the production of new knowledge, the development of original ideas, and the education of new generations of scientists and researchers who will advance human progress in most diverse academic subjects. The collaborative partnership between universities and industries or "industrial linkage" has the following objectives: advancing knowledge transmission, technology transfer, and research & development. This is the combination of efforts between researchers in universities and industry heads to solve pertinent problems in society, come up with new technologies, or provide innovative ideas for society. Among the great benefits of industrial linking with the university include access to knowledge, resources, and experience from the industry that they may utilize in expanding their research and development efforts. This kind of collaboration can also initiate new research and, simultaneously, useful products and solutions that are ready for the market (3).

Reforms at the university level should be done to empower them to partner with the private sector. The role of AI linkage has been endowed to HEC since its inception. It can play a vital role in funding marketable research and commercial projects. The budget for higher education should be increased to at least 6% of its GDP because in Pakistan the access to higher education is only 7.8%, which ranks it at the bottom 6th position concerning its spending on education. Business incubation centers and technology parks should be encouraged in their development (4).

These centers of excellence should act as the key hub in providing solutions to customized industrial problems.

Knowledge transfer and sharing of information are cornerstones of knowledge-based economies. Such culture can be developed by promoting research activities and holding seminars, conferences, and workshops that eventually open up opportunities for young scientists to discuss the latest trends in innovation of S&T products. Interaction of industry with academia will lead to a better understanding of research projects in process within the universities and possible future collaborations for funding. Another solution for AI linkage is the strengthening of universities by the industrial sector (5).

Graduate students in the universities are given access to industries under the industry attachment component of their industrial internship programs for practical hands-on experience, that is building the capacity for knowledge, skills, and abilities needed by the market. The industries should be encouraged to establish R&D units within their premises. The industry may share information with academicians regarding real-time industrial problems. Academicians may be hired as consultants to train the people at these R&D centers. The industry should fund highly skilled young and motivated undergrads for their further studies while they work on industry projects (6).

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