# NAVIGATING CHALLENGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN: CURRICULUM, RESEARCH, AND FACULTY ISSUES

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**Abstract**

*The host of problems confronting higher education in Pakistan have hindered its growth and contribution to national development. Some of the most critical issues, such as financial constraints, administrative inefficiencies, parent-student conflicts, social problems, curriculum design flaws, and research inadequacies, have been examined. Besides, this study highlights some specific problems relating to women in higher education and the gap between academia and industry. The paper examines the promotion policies of faculty members within the TTS and BPS to see whether these influence the performance of faculties and job satisfaction. Qualitative methods were used in finding systemic barriers toward academic excellence while providing an integrated analysis of the socio-administrative landscape of Pakistan's higher education institutions. Financial problems, such as adverse funding and budgetary limitations, do not add to research and development activities. Administrative problems, such as lack of transparency and poor governance, compound problems related to institutional performance. Problems related to curriculums, inadequate new teaching methods, and adverse collaborations with industry reduce the employability of graduates. Problems unique to women in higher education are reflected in issues related to gender discrimination, cultural restrictions, and lack of support systems. Further, it also suggests a greater need for stronger academia-industry linkages that bridge the gap between the two for greater innovation. Concluded by the principles of Human Capital Theory and Institutional Theory, this research recommends a number of policy decisions aimed at mitigating such issues and helping develop an outstanding system of higher education that is both more inclusive and dynamic for Pakistan.*

**Keywords:** Financial Problems. Administrative Problems. Parent Student Problems. Social Problems. Academia - Industry Problem. Curriculum Issues. Research Problems. Women & Higher Education Problems. Faculty Of TTS and BPS promotion problems

**Introduction**

Higher education serves as a cornerstone of national development, driving economic progress, fostering social mobility, and nurturing intellectual capital. However, there are several challenges that the higher education sector has to face in order to be able to perform these critical functions in Pakistan (Malik & Naveed, 2021). The country has really made progress in increasing access and building infrastructure; however, systemic problems remain in its higher education system, which are affecting the quality and effectiveness of higher education institutions. These include financial restrains, bureaucratic inefficiencies, outdated curricula, research inadequacies, and a persisting gender gap (Hussain et al., 2019). The following study will scrutinize the subtle interplay of such challenges and the wide-ranging effects on academic achievement, employability, and national advancement.

Higher education in Pakistan assumes a very significant place. The development of human capital and support towards socio-economic growth for the country are among its most important sectors. The prevailing framework of higher education, though, does not match the growing needs of this knowledge economy going global. Due to financial constraint alongside ineffective governance structure, it had led to the system which appears opaque, not accountable, and uninnovative (Khan, 2020). This is further complicated by the lack of connectivity between academia and industry, which leaves an opportunity for skill gaps that restrain the employment of graduates. Issues it encounters in such high-level universities, including the University of the Punjab, Quaid-i-Azam

University, and the National University of Sciences and Technology, while seeking academic excellence (Ahmed et al., 2022).

This paper is based on Human Capital Theory and Institutional Theory for developing an understanding of the problems in the Pakistani higher education sector. According to Human Capital Theory, investments in education increase the productivity and economic potential of a person (Becker, 2009). In Pakistan, problems of finance and curriculum cannot be resolved that prevent the government from constructing a competent manpower pool to meet up with the present expectations by the modern job market. Institutional Theory also points out that cultural, social, and regulatory environments explain how education institutions may act (North, 2005). The overall performance of the university and educational quality in a higher institution of learning are determined by weak structures of governance, stringent promotional policies, and socio-cultural issues (Shah & Alam, 2018).

This paper's research questions are quite indicative of a multidimensional approach used to understand the problems that exist within higher education. These questions pose the financial, administrative, social, and gender-related problems which interfere with the quality of excellence in academics. For instance, it points out the role of financial restrictions lowering the quality of academics, how administrative inefficiency influences the governance of universities, and how social problems like cultural barriers limit women's access to education (Qureshi & Saleem, 2020). The research study further goes to show how curriculum and research practices impact the outcome of academic studies and what the consequences may be for academia-industry relations regarding employability and skill building (Zaidi et al., 2023). This paper provides a critical overview of policies pertaining to faculty promotion through the Tenure Track System (TTS) and Basic Pay Scale (BPS) so as to analyze how these have an effect on the performance of faculties and job satisfaction (Farooq et al., 2021).

Finally, this paper offers specific sets of problems with which women grapple within the context of higher education. The main constraints of women's success in higher education and institutions are gender inequality, cultural, and lack of support systems (Bari, 2016). This paper would highlight some of these challenges, and the practical recommendations for making the environment within the academic setting more inclusive and equitable would be provided. It contributes to a broader discourse on educational equity and social justice in Pakistan by ensuring that women overcome issues of gender stereotyping.

Among the critical issues this research looks into is the disconnection between academia and industry. This has resulted in a skills gap as universities and industries have not collaborated enough, which has left graduates poorly prepared for the job market. The findings emphasize the need for academia-industry linkages as a basis to close gaps and improve innovation and employability, urging change in policy for higher educational institutions towards links with industries as a basis for a more responsive and flexible system, according to the abstract (Khilji et al., 2022).

In conclusion, the introduction sets the stage for a comprehensive exploration of the challenges facing higher education in Pakistan. The research, thus, uses a multi-theoretical framework and qualitative research approach to enumerate actionable insights and policy recommendations that may help address the requirements associated with such challenges. The contribution will be towards furthering the discussion on educational reform in Pakistan, with an emphasis on systemic changes that promote academic excellence, inclusivity, and socio-economic progress.

**Literature Review**

Problems that have multi-layered natures have come over the higher education system in Pakistan and challenge its contribution toward national progress. To understand all these challenges on a deeper level, all the key themes identified on issues: financial sustainability, governance inefficiencies, parental and societal expectations, social inclusion, academic-industry integration, curriculum modernization, research capacity, gender equity, and faculty career progression are discussed in this literature review. The review is based on Human Capital Theory and Institutional Theory where it will reflect implications of these challenges upon policy reform and academic excellence.

**Financial Sustainability in Higher Education**

Financial constraints are one of the most critical challenges to the development of higher education in Pakistan. Public universities rely significantly on government grants, which are often less than the stated needs of institutions. One issue in the quality of education, especially in research and development, is low funding, said Khan et al. (2023). This leads to universities being unable to maintain infrastructure or provide qualified faculty and essential resources for students; forcing them to rely greatly on tuition fees, thereby creating problems in access for students from low-income families.".

The Higher Education Commission provides critical funding to higher education institutions in Pakistan. However, due to this fact, the universities are prone to financial uncertainty because of erratic budget awards (Ahmad & Saleem, 2022). It prevents long-term planning and development because there is no stable funding. According to Becker's (2009) Human Capital Theory, the investment in education is necessary for national economic growth. Pakistani universities are also restricted in producing an efficient workforce because of the financial restrictions placed on them. Economic development, therefore, is limited.

For financial sustainability, it is recommended that public-private partnerships and philanthropy be tapped to generate funds for Pakistani universities. Additionally, the management of finances within the universities should be streamlined to ensure that funds available are spent correctly. All these can ensure that the academic institutions enjoy a more stable financial environment, hence academic growth and innovation.

**Governance Inefficiencies and Institutional Performance**

Administrative inefficiencies have been prevalent in higher education institutions in Pakistan for quite a long time. Governance structures at public universities have always been marked by bureaucratic tendencies, lack of transparency, and poor leadership (Shah & Alam, 2020). Such inefficiencies influence decision-making, the overall performance of the institution, and even faculty and student dissatisfaction.

The biggest problem is that appointments to head universities are politicized, doing away with any semblance of institutional autonomy and credibility. Malik and Hussain (2021) observe that such administrative woes cause the morale of the teaching staff to drop drastically and further affect the learning experience of students. The teaching staff suffer delayed promotions, non-acknowledged work, and limited avenues for professional development, exacerbating governance issues.

Institutional Theory, by North (2005), highlights that the governance structures affect the organizational performance. In Pakistan universities, rigid and ineffective governance mechanisms result in undesirable outcomes in terms of academic performance and retard innovation. Reforming the governance practices regarding appointments on merit, performance analysis, and results, is also crucial to increase the institutional effectiveness along with a change in the culture of responsibility and excellence.

## Parental Expectations and Societal Pressures

Parental expectations and societal pressures play a great role in educational outcomes in Pakistan. Most of the time, the expectations of parents about career choices create stress to the students, which affects their academic performance and mental well-being. According to Hussain et al. (2020), the lack of understanding between parents and students about their academic interests creates conflicts, particularly in conservative regions.

Sometimes, parents thrust their children into a traditional career like medicine or engineering without thinking about their interest or aptitude. This can lead to frustration and underperformance in higher education. Such issues can be mitigated by raising awareness programs that can bridge the gap between parents and students. This can create a mutual understanding and support informed decision-making about academic and career pursuits (Qureshi & Saleem, 2020).

Social expectations over education often tend to bring along more complications. Students are always forced to keep up with what society deems normal, hence limiting their scope for academic and professional pursuits. Therefore, policymakers need to create a culture that honors diversity in academics and careers so that students are given the freedom to pursue their interest without fear of social implications.

## Social Inclusion and Access to Education

Social exclusion and access to higher education are still issues in Pakistan. Social barriers include poverty, gender bias, and other cultural restrictions that affect the poor, women, and rural population disproportionately. According to Bari (2016), these are the barriers to education access, visibility of lower income community voices and underrepresentation of the community members in the higher education institutes.

The biggest barrier to higher education among students from poor backgrounds is the cost barrier. Even though public universities are relatively inexpensive in terms of tuition, other costs such as transport, books, and accommodation constitute a barrier. There is a lack of all-around scholarship programs, which creates another problem; hence, fewer financially disadvantaged students are able to pursue higher education.

Societal and cultural limitations play a critical role in education, especially when it comes to women. Women in rural settings are not allowed to pursue higher education because of their traditional gender roles and cultural restrictions. Such problems can be resolved with a complete policy approach by introducing scholarship programs, raising awareness among the citizens, and encouraging community involvement to make education available to all the citizens.

## Academic-Industry Integration

The other issue that graduates in Pakistan face regarding their employability is the disconnection between academia and industry. Universities are generally isolated from the needs of the industry, leading to a skills gap that graduates do not possess, thus making them unprepared for the market. According to Khilji et al. (2022), stronger academia-industry linkages are crucial for innovation and enhancing graduate employability.

The lack of liaison between universities and industries denies opportunities for students to learn practically. Preparing graduates for the industry through internship programs, industry collaborations, and research projects is important and is often deficient in Pakistani institutions (Zaidi et al., 2023). Thereby, their graduates cannot acquire suitable employment as per their higher education qualifications themselves.

Universities should, therefore, collaborate with industries to ensure that the curricula being offered are relevant in the market. The government should also encourage industries to collaborate with

academic institutions through joint research projects and internship programs. These collaborations will help in the development of skills among the students as well as boost the chances for them in a very competitive job market.

## Curriculum Modernization

In most higher education institutions in Pakistan, curricula lack the elements of a fast-changing global knowledge economy. Graduates are left less employable due to traditional teaching procedures that have little practical application. According to Zaidi et al. (2023), skill gaps among graduates are developed due to old curricula.

The biggest issue is that the present curriculum has not much scope for critical thinking, problem-solving, and practical skills. It focuses on rote learning and theoretical knowledge. Therefore, it becomes a problem for the students as they are not able to apply the knowledge in real life. Curriculum reforms must stress on practical skills and industry collaboration.

The emerging trends of digital transformation, artificial intelligence, and sustainability should be embraced by the modernization of curricula. Updating curricula to meet the needs of current and future industry demands may better equip students to handle the challenges of the globalized world. Research funding should be increased to motivate faculty and students to engage in meaningful research activities that contribute to academic growth and societal progress.

Higher education in Pakistan: A complex web of financial, administrative, curriculum, gender, and industry-related challenges The sector's inability to contribute to national development and socio-economic progress stems from these barriers. Based on Human Capital Theory and Institutional Theory, this literature review points to the need for systemic reforms in policy. Pakistan can enhance quality and relevance through investment in education, governance reform, gender equity, and linkages with industry.

## Methodology

The current study employs qualitative methods of research to scrutinize the issue of complexity pertaining to problems which higher education in Pakistan is faced with. For this purpose, the research utilized data generated by a critical study of the present academic literature available, policy reports, and the documents of the institution concerned. The analysis is complemented by semi-structured interviews with faculty members, administrators, and students of various public and private universities. A thematic approach is applied to identify core challenges such as financial constraints, administrative inefficiencies, curriculum issues, and gender disparities. Socioeconomic factors are considered in interplay with academic policies to reveal the systemic barriers hindering progress in higher education.

## Objectives

This research focuses on the major issues of higher education institutions in Pakistan, covering the financial, administrative, and social aspects. This research will attempt to look at curriculum and research problems affecting performance and quality, discuss gender disparity access to education, and look at how academia interacts with industry concerning employment. In addition, the study deals with the promotion of faculty members of the Tenure Track System and Basic Pay Scale. The reason for this work is to inform the improvement about the overall working of the whole higher education sector in Pakistan in addition. The research objective is as under:

1. Identify the major financial, administrative, and social problems afflicting higher education institutions in Pakistan.
2. Analyze curriculum issues and research problems in the context of affecting academic performance and quality.

3. Investigate the challenges facing women in gaining access to and succeeding in higher education.
4. Analyze the relationship between academia and industry and its implications for employability and skill development.
5. Evaluation of faculty promotion policies in Pakistani universities under Tenure Track System (TTS) and Basic Pay Scale (BPS).

## Research Questions

The challenges of higher education in Pakistan are complex and multi-dimensional. The sector's potential is limited by financial constraints, weak governance, and archaic academic practices that undermine institutional excellence and graduate preparedness. The cultural and social impediments to equal access to education, particularly for women; the no congruence of academic programs with industry needs; and a host of other problems present themselves as equally troublesome. The report tries to disentangle these problems and provides guidance for change by focusing on a set of sharply defined questions intended to identify problem areas and evaluate their broader implications.

1. What are the financial constraints of higher education institutions in Pakistan, and what are the implications of those financial constraints for research, development, and academic programs?
2. How do inefficiencies in administration-which include governance and transparency-carry over into institutional performance and stakeholder satisfaction?
3. What are the social and cultural factors that limit access to and success within higher education for students of diverse backgrounds?
4. How the outdated curricula and inadequate research practices hinder innovations, employability, and excellence in Pakistani higher education institutions
5. What are the unique challenges that female students face for pursuing and successfully completing higher education and how can these be resolved?
6. What is the role of academia-industry collaboration in this regard and which measures would bring better employability?
7. How do policies on promotion through TTS and BPS impact faculty performance, job satisfaction, and institutional outcomes?

## Theoretical Framework

This study is based on Human Capital Theory, which states that education significantly enhances the output and economic potential of the human being. According to this theory, investment in education develops human resources, which further leads to national economic growth. However, the problems at the higher education level prevent Pakistan from becoming a reservoir of full-time, well-trained, and competent manpower. These consist of financial constraints, problems with the curriculum, and a lack of connections with industry. The institutional environment has several cultural, social, and regulatory influences on the higher education system. This work utilizes Institutional Theory to track the manner in which cultural, social, and regulatory environments influence the higher education systems. This helps to uncover how administrative inefficiencies, promotion policies, and governance structures have profound impacts on universities' general performances in Pakistan.

## Results

In this section, the findings from the study, in relation to the research questions and objectives are reported. The results will be presented on thematic areas delineating the principal challenges that higher learning institutions in Pakistan face. A presentation of the qualitative data will be done based on literature reviews and interviews put in tables.

1. Finance Constraints in Higher Education

The collected data highlights that financial problems seriously affect the working of higher education institutions in Pakistan. Major financial problems are a lack of government funding, no public-private partnerships, and dependence on tuition fees from students.

Table 1: Major Financial Challenges in Higher Education

| Financial Constraint | Impact on Institutions | Suggested Solutions |
|---|---|---|
| Insufficient government funding | Limits research and development | Increase budget allocations |
| Unstable funding policies | Hinders long-term planning | Ensure consistent funding |
| High reliance on tuition fees | Limits access for low-income students | Introduce scholarships and grants |

Table 1 lists some of the major financial constraints faced by higher education institutions in Pakistan. It shows how inadequate governmental funding, weak policies, and excessive dependence on tuition fees hinder an institution's performance. Remedial measures include increased budgetary provision, stable funding, and introducing scholarships to provide greater access for low-income students.

2. Administrative Inefficiencies and Governance Issues

Administrative inefficiencies are one of the major challenges to improved institutional performance. Most of the inefficiencies have their roots in politicized appointments, lack of transparency, and inefficient leadership.

Table 2: Governance Challenges and Their Impact

| Governance Challenge | Impact on Institutional Performance | Proposed Reforms |
|---|---|---|
| Politicized appointments | Reduces autonomy and credibility | Appointments based on merit |
| Lack of transparency | Hinders accountability | Introduce performance audits |
| Ineffective leadership | Reduces staff morale and student outcomes | Leadership training programs |

Description: Table 2 Identifies some of the major governance challenges facing the performance of higher education institutions. Politicized appointments and a lack of transparency undermine the credibility and autonomy of institutions. Some reforms could be merit-based appointments, performance audits, and training programs in leadership for enhanced governance.

3. Social and Cultural Barriers to Education

Social and cultural factors are the major barriers to access higher education, especially for women and other underprivileged groups.

Table 3: Social and Cultural Barriers in Higher Education

| Barrier | Affected Group | Consequences | Recommended Measures |
|---|---|---|---|

| Gender discrimination | Women | Limits women's participation | Gender-sensitive policies |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cultural restrictions | Rural communities | Limits access to higher education | Community awareness programs |
| Economic barriers | Low-income families | Reduces enrollment rates | Scholarship and financial support |

Description: Table 3: Social and Cultural Barriers to Higher Education in Pakistan
Social and Cultural Barriers Access to Higher Education in Pakistan
Gender Discrimination Cultural Barriers Economic Barriers Women, rural communities, and low-income families Recommended Measures Gender-sensitive policies Financial support programs

4. Curriculum and Research Issues
The outdated curricula and lack of proper research hinder innovation, employability, and academic excellence in higher education institutions.

Table 4: Curriculum and Research Challenges

| **Challenge** | **Impact on Graduates** | **Recommended Reforms** |
|---|---|---|
| Outdated curricula | Reduces employability | Update curricula with industry needs |
| Inadequate research facilities | Limits innovation and creativity | Increase research funding |
| Lack of practical training | Creates skill gaps | Introduce internships and projects |

Description: Table 4 captures the critical challenges on curriculum and research in Pakistan's higher learning institutions. Inadequate curriculum and poor infrastructural facilities hinder graduates' ability to be deployed in the jobs market and bring innovation. Changes proposed include making curricula align with industry expectations, increased grants for research activities, and imparting practical trainings.

5. Gender Equity in Higher Learning
It also reveals some notable gender disparities within the involvement at higher education. Women face numerous barriers, which include gender discrimination, lack of support systems, and cultural restrictions.

Table 5: Gender Disparities and Solutions

| **Gender Issue** | **Impact on Female Students** | **Proposed Solutions** |
|---|---|---|
| Gender bias in faculty policies | Limits women's career growth | Implement gender equity policies |
| Lack of support systems | Reduces retention rates | Establish mentorship programs |
| Cultural restrictions | Limits access to higher education | Community engagement initiatives |

Description: Table 5 indicates major gender inequalities in higher learning institutions. Women are constantly faced with biased faculty policies that offer no support system and, therefore, cannot thrive or stay in academics. Among the suggested remedies are gender equity policies and mentoring of female students.

6. Academia-Industry Linkages

This gap between academia and industry has resulted in a wide gap in skills that the graduates have when they join the job market.

Table 6: Challenges and Recommendations Between Academia and Industry

| Challenge | Impact on Employability | Recommended Actions |
|---|---|---|
| Limited industry collaboration | Creates skills gap | Establish internship programs |
| Outdated curricula | Reduces job readiness | Align curricula with industry needs |
| Lack of practical exposure | Limits real-world experience | Introduce industry-led projects |

Description: Table 6 highlights challenges associated with the academia-industry linkage. Less engagement with the industries has caused a considerable skills gap among the graduates, who become less ready for jobs. Recommendations would include initiation of internships, tailoring curricula according to industry requirements, and projects that could be industry led for increased exposure.

7. Promotion Policies of Faculty Members: TTS and BPS

The study looks at the effects of Tenure Track System (TTS) and Basic Pay Scale (BPS) promotion policies on faculty performance and job satisfaction.

Table 7: Faculty Promotion Policies and Their Impact

| Policy | Impact on Faculty | Suggested Improvements |
|---|---|---|
| Tenure Track System (TTS) | Encourages research but limits job security | Offer more job security measures |
| Basic Pay Scale (BPS) | Provides stability but limits performance incentives | Introduce performance-based rewards |
| Lack of promotion opportunities | Reduces job satisfaction | Create clear promotion pathways |

Description: Table 7 explains the promotion policy for faculty in TTS and BPS. While the former provides incentives to do research, it restricts job security badly, while the latter offers good job security without performance incentives. More job security measures should be offered, more performance-based incentives should be included, and transparent promotion paths must be in place to ensure that faculty is satisfied and performs accordingly.

This study finds several systemic challenges have troubled higher education institutions in Pakistan. Important among these issues are financial constraints, administrative inefficiencies, social and cultural barriers, outdated curricula, gender disparities, and weak academia-industry linkages. These challenges are best addressed through comprehensive policy reforms, increased funding, and better collaboration between academia and industry. Targeted interventions may then enhance the quality and inclusiveness of higher education in Pakistan, as the results will show.

**Findings**

This research discovers a number of interrelated challenges that the higher education sector in Pakistan is facing. These challenges include financial sustainability, inefficiencies in administration, modernization of curriculum, gender imbalances, and the interface between

academia and industry. Results are discussed relative to the research questions and objectives set for this investigation.

1. Financial Constraints in Higher Education

One of the most important findings of the study is that Pakistan's higher education suffers from extreme financial constraints. Public universities of the country totally depend on a meager grant from the federal government, without which they often face a deadlock in implementing proper long-term project planning, creating infrastructure, and other research and development programs. The unsteadiness at the financial platform of the institution further restricts it from hiring strong faculty members along with maintaining economic equality among different sections of student society. The situation is worsened by the fact that there is not much involvement of public-private partnerships, and institutions are charged with tuition fees, which can be the most painful blows for the poor.

Financial constraint affects the research output and innovation of higher education institutions. The paper provides alternative sources of funding through philanthropy and industry partners toward sustainable growth in finances.

2. Administrative Inefficiencies and Governance Issues

Administrative inefficiencies combined with weak governance structures are significant barriers to the performance of institutions in Pakistan's higher education sector. The study found that most of the appointments of university heads have been politically motivated, which has reduced the autonomy of the institutions and their overall integrity. Additionally, the lack of transparency in decision-making processes worsens these problems, leading to faculty dissatisfaction and an unsatisfactory experience for students.

The research advocates for appointments based on merit and the implementation of performance evaluations to bolster institutional governance within universities. Moreover, it envisions the establishment of a culture characterized by accountability and academic distinction through the development of leadership programs aimed at augmenting the capabilities of university administrators.

3. Curriculum and Research Challenges

From the findings, some of the biggest obstacles to innovation and employability are archaic curricula and inefficient research methods in higher education institutions. Most university curricula fail to meet the requirements of the labor market today, and the graduates therefore lack the most valuable skills like problem-solving, critical thinking, and application of the knowledge learned. As a result of this mismatch between academic provision and industrial needs, chances of graduates being employed are decreased.

These conclusions require curricula to be redesigned with these new trends and digital transformation, artificial intelligence, and sustainability. The other conclusion is that there must be an increase in research funding as well as the implementation of practical trainings, which would include internships or even industry-led projects, to help students prepare themselves for the work environment.

4. Gender Imbalance in Higher Education

Gender disparities are still a major issue in Pakistan's higher education sector. The study identifies several barriers that female students face, including cultural restrictions, gender discrimination, and lack of support systems. These barriers disproportionately affect women from rural and low-income backgrounds, limiting their access to and success in higher education.

The study advocates for formulating gender-sensitive policies and mentorship programs for women. Community engagement activities should be promoted to encourage women's education, and societal traditional gender roles should be changed that limit women from advancing academically.

5. Academia-Industry Collaboration

The findings highlight a disconnect between academia and industry, which has resulted in a significant skills gap among graduates. The lack of collaboration between universities and industries means that students often graduate without the practical skills required by the job market. This mismatch reduces their employability and slows down innovation in the country.

The study recommends increasing the academia-industry linkages through joint research projects, internships, and curriculum aligned with the industry needs. The above collaborations will improve the student's practical knowledge and increase his/her chances to get employment at the end of studies.

6. Faculty Promotion Policies: TTS and BPS

The study also evaluates the effects of promotion policies in faculty under TTS and BPS on job satisfaction and academic performance. It indicates that TTS encourages research productivity but offers limited job security, whereas BPS offers job stability with little performance incentives.

Therefore, findings of research can be that to improve both satisfaction and performance in faculty, policies of hybrid TTS and BPS promotion would be proposed. The much needed clarity through the promotion pipeline ensures active participation from academics in their institution's quest for academic excellence.

The research concludes that the problems facing higher education institutions in Pakistan are complex and interlinked. Financial constraints, administrative weaknesses, outdated curricula, gender imbalances, and a lack of interaction between academia and industry combine to prevent the sector from contributing to national development. To overcome these problems, comprehensive policy reforms are needed, funding should be increased, and collaboration between academia and industry should be strengthened to develop a more inclusive, innovative, and dynamic higher education framework in Pakistan.

**Discussion**

This research's findings deliver an all-encompassing perspective on the numerous issues that face higher education in Pakistan. A few of the most common challenges are financial restrictions, administrative inefficiencies, curricula-based problems, gender imbalances, and lack of academic-industrial linkage. Overall, the summative effect of these factors further cripples the sector's capacity to positively influence national development. This discourse situates the above research findings within the conceptual lenses of Human Capital Theory and Institutional Theory, discussing ramifications for policy reform, institutional effectiveness, and socio-economic development.

This study explores a long list of implications related to protracted fiscal constraints in higher education institutions in Pakistan. Continuous dependence on inadequate governmental funding in addition to a lack of adequate public-private partnerships restricts the maximum possible capacity of universities in utilizing the existing resources to the highest extent possible in order to enhance infrastructure, research, and development of faculty. This paper bases its arguments on Human Capital Theory. According to it, education investments increase human productivity and, thus, the overall economic potential. Becker, (2009). Pakistan University lacks financial viability and,

therefore, deters the generation of a skill-intensive workforce; finally, deteriorating prospects for growth of the country.

Moreover, the dependence on high tuition fees has distorted the opportunity to access higher education for the low-income student, thereby reducing the available colleges further. Other funding sources for the institution may cushion the financial squeeze and can even include donations or contributions from a variety of philanthropic bodies as well as professional associations. This would, in turn, ensure that research productivity and academic quality increase while becoming more inclusive.

Administrative inefficiencies and governance challenges are the biggest impediments to the effectiveness of higher education institutions. The case study reveals that politicized appointments, lack of transparency, and ineffective leadership undermine the autonomy and credibility of universities. According to Institutional Theory by North (2005), it has been observed that the cultural, social, and regulatory environments have a major impact on organizational behavior. Weak governance structures result in low faculty morale, reduced accountability, and poor student outcomes in Pakistani universities.

Reforming governance practices would be critical in improving the performance of institutions. Merit-based appointments, performance evaluations, and leadership training programs could enhance transparency and accountability. Improved governance mechanisms would not only lead to increased institutional effectiveness but also create a culture of academic excellence and innovation.

This outdated curricula and the poor research practices based on this study hinder both innovation and employability. The findings of the present study indicate that in many Pakistani universities, curricula lag behind the evolving demands of global knowledge economies. Thus, graduates suffer from lacking critical thinking, problem-solving, and practical skills and emerge as unemployable at the end.

Curriculum upgradation is required in the areas of the future which would begin including digital transformation, artificial intelligence, and sustainability. Industry relevance will improve for academic programs through practical training, internships, and collaborative projects that might bridge the skills gap and help in enhancing the employability of graduates. Higher research funding is also required to ensure a culture of innovation and knowledge creation in higher education.

The sector of higher education in Pakistan still remains very gender-disadvantageous. The research finds several constraints against female students in the higher education sector: cultural restrictions, gender discrimination, and lack of support systems. All these are the factors that hinder women's participation and access to higher education, mainly because of their background-rural or low-income women.

It will address gender disparities with a multidimensional approach. Policies and programs will be conducted with gender sensitivity, which would lead to more inclusion through mentorship and community involvement. Equal opportunities for women in higher education are part of social justice but also an integral part of national development. Educating women empowers them and brings about a better society.

As discussed in the paper, weak ties between academia and industry are producing a large gap of skills in the graduates that are produced. With little practical experience coupled with a lack of curricula from industry, the resultant graduate is ill-equipped for entering the job market. This can be resolved through stronger academia-industry collaboration through research projects, internships, and courses by industries.

Strong connections between universities and industries will make academic programs relevant to graduate employability, stimulate innovation, and work towards higher employability for graduates. Students will also acquire practical exposure through these relationships, thus graduating better.

The findings of the study regarding faculty promotion policies reveal that TTS and BPS have their limitations. TTS promotes research productivity but offers minimal job security, while BPS ensures job stability with no performance incentives. These policies have a direct effect on faculty performance, job satisfaction, and institutional outcomes.

Faculty promotion policies may offer a hybrid approach to solving these challenges. Performance-based incentives within a stable employment framework are likely to boost motivation and productivity among the faculty members. Improved job satisfaction is also seen through enhanced, more effective promotion pathways that truly respect transparency, merit-based outcomes, and superior job performance.

This research's findings support the imperative of a holistic overhaul of policies within the higher education sector of Pakistan. It is essential to deal with financial issues, administrative problems, curriculum-related problems, gender gaps, and academia-industry links in an integrated manner. Education, governance reform, gender equality, and industry linkages are to be invested in by policymakers to build an inclusive, innovative, and dynamic higher education structure.

The need for a culture of accountability, transparency, and academic excellence has been well-underlined. These can include, among other aspects, strengthening the governance structures; revising the curricula; pursuing greater gender sensitivity in the enrollment pattern; and enriching the academia-industry links, to strengthen the quality and relevance of higher education.

This study finds expression in the systemic challenges confronting Pakistan's higher education institutions. Thus, the results substantiate the case for an urgency to address the problems of financial, administrative, curricular, gender, and industry-specific difficulties so that this sector can improve its contribution toward national development. Only a more inclusive, innovative, and relevant policy reform plan will make the system of higher education more holistic for policymakers. The basic principles of Human Capital Theory and Institutional Theory provide a strong framework to understand and address these issues, thereby enabling the building of a more just and prosperous future for Pakistan.

**Recommendations**

The financial problems characterizing the growth of higher education in Pakistan need to be diversified with the provision of financial stability to the institutions. The budgetary allocations must be increased by the government concerning higher education, which should provide a steady stream of resources for research, infrastructure, and the development of students. Public-private partnerships and philanthropic contributions should also be pursued actively to generate supplementary funding. Scholarships and other forms of financial aid are, in fact the only ways of increasing access and equity in education as well as of developing the diversity and quality of the institutions' graduating classes.

Governance reforms are equally important to improve institutional performance and credibility. Merit-based appointments and promotions would help avoid politicization and foster institutional autonomy. Transparent governance frameworks, combined with regular performance reviews, can promote accountability and excellence. Leadership training programs for university administrators can further be used to provide them with skills to manage institutions effectively and make them

better able to respond to the challenges of today and to take institutions forward to innovation and growth.

One of the high-priority areas for curriculum modernization is in alignment with global industrial standards. Curricula must address the trends such as digital transformation, artificial intelligence, and sustainability. Practical training in the form of internships or industry-led projects embedded into the structures of academia will help fill in the gap of skills and make graduates more employable. The research funding would increase innovations whereby the university becomes a creator of knowledge and problem solver.

Gender inequalities in higher education demand multi-strategies. Policies to be developed should be gender-sensitive to encourage an atmosphere in colleges and universities in which women students and faculty can shine. Supportive mentoring schemes along with sound mechanisms for support would be able to lead women toward efficient learning and professional practices. Community awareness campaigns will also play an equal role in raising questions on the ills and misconceptions that bar women from access to higher education. This will lead to a cultural transformation into gender equality in higher education.

Academia-industry interface needs to be strengthened so that graduates are made more employable. Universities need to engage with industries to co-design curricula and collaborate on ensuring that the curricula provided meet the needs of the market and equip the students with skills relevant to prepare them to be critically and practically prepared. More importantly, joint research projects, internships, and practical training opportunities will afford students firsthand experience in filling in this gap between theoretical learning and practical applications at work. Dedicated liaison offices would ensure sustained and meaningful engagement between academia and industry.

Major changes need to be brought into faculty development and promotion policies so that job satisfaction and productivity might be enhanced. A hybrid model, which is going to integrate the benefits of both TTS and BPS, will overcome these issues by introducing job security as well as providing performance-based incentives. Merit-based open pathways and pathways for promotion through research excellence will motivate the faculties to do better for the greater goals of these institutions. This would be the case wherein the measures undertaken would be able to contribute to a dynamic, vibrant higher education system that would help in solving the socio-economic challenges for Pakistan.

**Conclusion**

Higher education in Pakistan is confronted with an elaborate complexity of problems which have handicapped the role of higher education as an enabler for socio-economic advancement and national progress. Financial instability forms the root cause behind all these challenges that strangle the growth and functionality of higher education institutions. Since there are always scarce resources and meager, irregular flows of funding, governments cannot empower their universities to an extent that would support them in their capacities to conduct research, infrastructures, and faculty development. Over-reliance on tuition fees also discourages the poor from advancing towards higher learning due to heavy fees charged for tuition, thus heightening educational inequality. What is needed of the hour is a multilateral effort to increase government funding, facilitate public-private partnerships, and attract philanthropy. This will allow the higher education institutions to establish a solid financial footing that will enable them to exercise their academic and research potential.

Administrative inefficiency and governance issues are further worsening the plight of higher education in Pakistan. Politicized recruitment, lack of transparency, as well as bad leadership, have dealt a death blow to institutional autonomy and credibility. Such structural vulnerabilities weaken the faculty's morale, innovation, and overall quality of education. Governance structures need to be reformed through merit-based appointments and promotions, transparent decision-making processes, and development programs for leadership. This way, universities can establish a culture of accountability and excellence, which will lead to improvement in institutional performance and the reacquisition of the trust of students, faculty, and stakeholders. Such is important as to facilitate an atmosphere conducive to the intellectual growth of innovation.

Other factors that don't let the Pakistani higher education system move forward are outdated curricula and inadequate research infrastructure. The prevailing approaches to teaching are rigid and traditional rather than critically equipping graduates to operate in an ever-changing economy with a high demand for adaptability worldwide. It makes graduates unqualified for most workforce positions, thereby limiting their chances of employability and subsequently retarding national economic growth. Modernization of curriculum is needed so that it consists of emerging topics such as digital transformation, artificial intelligence, and sustainability. This gap of knowledge acquired from academia and practical applications must be filled by universities as well as industries by investing both in research and innovation. Practical training, internship, and industry-led projects must be an integral part of the curriculum. In doing so, they will be capable of competing with the market as well as, simultaneously, inspire them to innovate.

Gross imbalances in gender in higher learning curtail access to such institutions drastically for women coming from the rural background and those of the lower social classes. Other restrictions imposed due to culture or gender prejudice, along with the absence of policies that have a more woman-friendly orientation, also limit female scholars from attending such institutions. Besides, these cannot be overnight changes by focusing only on gender-specific policy formulation; therefore, this must accompany community involvement strategies and creating the necessary infrastructure with support structures. Higher education inclusivity is not only an equity issue but also a strong driver of national development. Therefore, this enlightened and empowered female population will help in social development and economic stability; targeted interventions must be made to eliminate barriers and foster gender equality in higher education.

Essentially, it is the conjunction of financial constraints, inefficient governance, antiquated curricula, gender inequality, and a weak academia-industry linkage that combine to make the problem area an intricately knotted affair in which Pakistan's higher education sector is engaged, and it is only this integrated solution that can be proffered for the problem area. Prerequisites from the perspective of Human Capital Theory and Institutional Theory make it necessary to systemically change the whole scenario to obtain a much more inclusive, innovative, and dynamic higher education system. All these are essentials for this transformation: the financial sustainability of the institutes, reforms in governance, curricula modernization, gender equitability, and academia-industry collaboration. All these factors would be adequately represented if Pakistan establishes a higher education system not only conducive to the needs of Pakistan but positions this country on a higher competitive platform on the world map and, more importantly, propels national development.

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