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Graduate Employability: Employers' Perception Survey Report

2018 – Pakistan

by
Muhammad Moazam Shahbaz



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



This work is dedicated to my spiritual mentor

(رحمت اللہ علیہ)

Hazrat Khawaja Sufi Muhammad Azmat Ullah Shah

Astana-e-Aliya Naqeeb-A-Abad Shareef - Kasur, Pakistan

Who always encouraged me to do work that impacts society at large.

A close-up, macro photograph of several interlocking brass gears. The gears are made of a polished, golden-brown metal, likely brass. The teeth of the gears are sharp and well-defined, showing the precision of the manufacturing process. The lighting is warm and directional, coming from the upper right, which creates bright highlights on the surfaces of the teeth and deep shadows in the gaps between them, emphasizing the three-dimensional texture and mechanical nature of the components. The background is softly blurred, focusing the viewer's attention on the intricate details of the gear mechanism.

**"Strong linkages between Industry & Academia
are crucial for Pakistan's economic growth!"
Muhammad Moazam Shahbaz**

GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY: EMPLOYERS' PERCEPTION SURVEY REPORT 2018

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About **NAQEEBZ Consulting**

Naqeebz Consulting is a business consulting firm, with its headquarters in Lahore, involved in Business Transformation; Marketing, Advertising & PR; Training & Development and Research having clients in Pakistan and overseas from Aviation, Corporate, Education, Fashion, Hospitality, Media, Retail, Technology, and Training industries.





About the *Report*

The "Graduate Employability: Employers' Perception Survey Report 2018" is an Initiative of Nazeem Consulting headed by Muhammad Moazam Shahbaz - a catalyst in influencing the skills agenda in Pakistan. Mr. Shahbaz has collaborated with leading national and international experts to support his quest for change for many years now. The report considers the findings of an earlier research conducted in 2016, the current state of skills, and employability affairs of a corporate Pakistan. Glaring similarities between the earlier report and the recent one are noteworthy, that may be summarized as *alarming gaps*.

Highlights

The report outlines the missing links between the skills of graduates passing out of Pakistani universities, and their suitability for employment by the corporate Pakistan. We have highlighted the issues raised by 212 corporate respondents who were canvassed, encompassing business owners, C-Level executives and HR leaders from a range of businesses, SMEs to Large National Corporations, and MNCs. The findings clearly illustrate that the current skills development roadmap needs urgent enhancing; that a multi stakeholder engagement model covering policy makers, faculty, parents, learners, universities, school authorities, and corporate recruiters is best suited to resolve the challenges outlined.

Based on our first-hand working and engaging experience with the education and corporate sectors, we understand the challenges and opportunities from a domestic perspective.

Our recommendations focus on the need to fast-track the interventions required to close the gap between academia and a corporate Pakistan.



The National Employability and Enterprise Skills Development Framework

To support the immediate changes required, Naqeebz Consulting has proposed a structured approach and program entitled, The National Employability and Enterprise Skills Development Framework (NEESDF). It was presented to the Higher Education Commission (HEC) at a multi stakeholder focused group workshop on the 5th of January 2019 at HEC Regional Office, Lahore. This workshop comprised of 35 policy makers related to corporate business, human resource front-runners, Advisor HRD at HEC, The Regional Director of HEC, and two significant Vice Chancellors of public sector universities based in Lahore. The participants applauded and accepted the strategic and tactical recommendations and key findings presented. The impact is noted as "far reaching".

On this basis, we will continue to invest in pushing forward the recommendations we have provided. We will continue to drive enhanced stakeholder engagement to support the implementation of a National Capacity Program that extends to fresh graduates, new entrants to universities (public and private), and employees within the corporate and academic space.

CEO's Message

I am pleased that our engagement with the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and corporate community has been warmly encouraged, and that our approach and commitment to multi stakeholder engagement has been accepted as being productive and highly relevant to the existing challenges. I am committed to support this collaboration, and here to support Pakistan's transforming skills agenda.

Based on the results of the 2018 "Graduate Employability: Employers' Perception Survey" it is clear that the current output of graduates from the education system in Pakistan is not in congruence with the requirements of a corporate Pakistan. I am not just stating facts based on research, but also putting forward practical recommendations to deal with the challenge.

According to the findings of this report, 78% employers expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of university/college graduates who approached them. This has a double-edged impact: it causes frustration for employers as well as graduates and their parents. With over 212 companies across Pakistan taking part in the survey, it is high time we take note of the results. My concern is that it does take time for new policies and efforts to be initiated, therefore, there needs to be cohesion in the objectives, program delivery, and sharing of best practices. This timely and effectively programmed action is necessary, especially in the glaring face of a wide disconnect between academia and industry.



Academic results are important - so are corresponding enabling skills! They collectively drive productivity and have a wide-ranging impact on civic engagement. I believe, we should think beyond academic qualifications as a merit of success for which we need to build on our learners' relevant employability and enterprise skills. Examples include the application of critical, analytical, and creative thinking skills - all of which have been highlighted as missing and in need by those surveyed (the employers).

As stated, there is a significant gap between expectations and needs of the employers and availability of university graduates who are able to demonstrate employability and enterprise skills. In order to rectify this, a new approach is needed. One that supports both: those entering the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and those who are enrolled or in their final year of studies. An educational approach that reflects a national capacity skills development program which grows above and beyond proverbial education, existing employees, and government sector workers. By addressing this as a capacity building project, we will unify efforts and create an inclusive enabling environment to support national transformation.

For HEIs it is an enormous task to prepare graduates as per the industry/corporate demands. It requires engagement with industry which is continuously changing. What is required is a well-thought shift in the academic curriculum, teaching methodology, and assessment criterion to groom the kind of skilled graduate the industry demands. There is a need to build enhanced cohesion of efforts and to establish dialogue that drives enhanced rapport and greater collaboration between HEIs and employers from all industries. In this regard, HEIs are keen to understand the reasons of these gaps and are willing to navigate the interventions best suited to support the required shift or change.

I recommend with learned conviction, that a multi stakeholder approach be adopted, including a specific monitoring and evaluation unit to ensure momentum, where standards are not compromised. We will provide our Intellectual Property (IP) and relevant frameworks with suggested interventions that require support and endorsement of the education sector, government, and employers alike.

I recommend that enterprise and employability skills development program should not be exclusive to final year graduates. This is because many of the enabling and enterprise skills required by industry should be started earlier in the career development cycle. By the final year, it is too late to utilize the receptive years that have been lost in conditioning the learner to only earn a degree and a good CGPA!

In our report published in 2016, 95% of the recruiters indicated that the fields students chose to study were not in alignment with their aptitudes. There are a number of reasons why this could occur. One of them is the quality of guidance given to them at the time of induction in the universities, and also because majority of the universities in Pakistan have fixed roadmaps for the degree programs offered; unlike American universities where students are given opportunity to make informed decision about choosing their majors.

I look forward to hosting and participating in discussions continually, and will be introducing several interventions to carry on momentum.

I sincerely thank everyone who has contributed in the development of this report and also extend my gratitude to all those who attended the NEESDF's focused group discussion held in HEC Regional Office on January 5th 2019. Looking forward to extend my support to everyone who wishes to make a difference!

Muhammad Moazam Shahbaz
Founder & CEO
Naqeebz Consulting
moazam@naqeebz.com





Executive Summary



The Graduate Employability: Employers' Perception Survey Report 2018 is a research-based publication by Naqeebz Consulting, which was conducted to assess the skills gap in the Pakistani graduate. The objective is to create enhanced dialogue between Higher Education policy makers, HEIs, and Employers through collaborative multi stakeholder engagement. Together, the three will address the severe skills gap highlighted by employers, and initiate the process of change that is required now.

In our 2016 report, we highlighted significant gaps between the actual skill sets of fresh graduates entering the job market and the employers' expectations. We expected to see a reduction in the issues raised in our 2018 survey. Unfortunately, this has not been the case!

Survey Respondents by Sector

Our latest research reflects feedback and inputs from 212 organizations across 25 industries that collectively employ over 500,000 workforce. A balanced and representative sector-wise breakdown of the corporate Pakistan as survey respondents is as follows:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------|
| 1) IT/Telecom/BPO/Call Center | (20%) |
| 2) FMCG/Manufacturing | (16%) |
| 3) Retail/Fashion/Hospitality/Food | (14%) |
| 4) Professional Services | (12%) |
| 5) Education & Training/Research | (9%) |
| 6) Banking & Finance/Insurance | (8%) |

The results of the survey are important, as they convey consistent concerns of employers from Pakistan's leading industries and organizations.

Targeted Audience

The targeted audience for this report includes Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), faculty members of public and private universities, degree awarding institutes, technical and vocational training institutes, professional training institutes, industry and business leaders, policy-makers, media, and the public in general. HEIs and HEC may use the information presented in the report to improve the curriculum and curriculum objectives; improvise teaching pedagogies; and assessment methods or they can partner with Naqeebz Consulting to drive forward the changes required.

Survey Respondents by Job Title

The data used in our report was provided by designated decision makers, including human resources executives, CEOs, and board members – a breakdown of which is as follows:

- 27% Chairman/CEO/CHRO/Deputy CEO
- 25% VP HR/Director HR/Head of HR
- 44% Manager HR/Recruitment Specialist

Survey Respondents by Region of Operations

The representative corporate organizations have their operations in the following locations:

- Punjab (84%)
- Sindh (56%)
- Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (42%)
- Overseas (30%)
- Balochistan (29%)
- Azad Kashmir (22%)
- Gilgit Baltistan (19%)
- FATA (15%)

Lack of Satisfaction at Play

The results conclusively highlight that 78% of the employers canvassed are not satisfied with the quality of fresh graduates. The correlation of the data points also indicate that senior leaders are unhappy with the inability

of graduates to justify their higher grades when their knowledge, skills and abilities are challenged at the mere interview or assessment stage. In addition to this, over half of the employers sampled, expressed their dissatisfaction with the lack of commercial awareness/viability of the graduates.

Alarming, 77% of employers are dissatisfied with the content and claims made by graduates on their CV/resume. This ties up valuable human resource time, and also slows down the entire recruitment process. It adds costs to training and creates a major bottleneck in the human capital inflow required to support Pakistan's economic growth.

Recruitment Factors

82% of employers cited that they do not hire fresh graduates merely on the basis of 'high grades' as what is essentially required to support decision-making in the recruitment process, is a blend of employability & enterprise skills to academic degrees. These skills are outlined in NEESDF which we have put forward.

The Soft Skills in Demand by Industry

It is worth noting that 85% of businesses look for a positive attitude and 70% for confidence. 65% cited decision-making, verbal communication, teamwork, passion/enthusiasm and personal integrity as key criteria for hiring. Listed next were strong 'analytical skills', 'time management', and 'critical thinking skills' that comprised 50% of businesses.

Academia-Industry Linkages

In the light of the above-mentioned backdrop, employers were asked if they have ever been approached by HEIs or HEC for collaboration or input into the curriculum development process, or in any activity facilitating academia and industry linkages. 80% of the total employers responded in the negative. However, given a chance, almost all employers (96%) showed an interest in becoming partners or collaborators with HEC and HEIs to improve curriculum.

Forecasted Job Openings 2018-2022

In the survey, employers were asked to identify the most desired skills/functional areas that will be highest in demand based on present and a forecast of the job openings over next five years. The following functional areas were highlighted in order of need:

- 1) Business Development (55%)
- 2) Digital Marketing (40%)
- 3) Human Resource Managers (40%)
- 4) Marketing (35%)
- 5) Business Analysis (35%)
- 6) Project Management (33%)
- 7) Brand Management (32%)
- 8) Software Development (31%)
- 9) Client Services (28%)

Key Recommendations

Irrefutably, the key recommendations of this study include improving the instructional design & teacher training material, initiating skills development programmes, and renewing methods of assessments. This report has proposed a comprehensive intervention plan that will support the transforming skills Pakistan agenda. We will continue to influence the developmental agenda in an inclusive, dynamic, and cost effective manner. Further, we commit to being the central anchor for multi stakeholder monitoring and evaluation systems. It was agreed at the multi stakeholder meeting held in Lahore on January 5th, 2019 in the presence of HEC officials and leading corporate houses that we should continue to lead the National Capacity Skills Program and work with them to integrate the National Employability and Enterprise Skills Program in collaboration, leveraging combined resources and infrastructural support.

Naqeebz Consulting is committed to effectively initiate and anchor a much-needed shift in bridging the gap between academia and industry in favor of a skilled Pakistani graduate.





Voice

of Business & HR Leaders

What Industry Leaders *Say...*



The results of the Employers' Perception Survey Report 2018 allude to the fact that there exists a significant academia-industry gap which needs to be bridged. Universities often neglect skills like verbal communication, positive attitude, team work, critical thinking, time management, and self-confidence etc which are the most sought after by employers these days. Furthermore, the quality of career guidance needs to be enhanced to make sure that students study the subjects which match their personalities. This survey would be helpful for the stakeholders in formulating effective policies and making amendments not only in curricula but also in teaching methodologies.

Almas Hyder

President

Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry



The Employers' Perception Survey Report 2018 serves as a moment of awakening for academic institutions who are sending a large number of graduates into the job market every year. As there is a vast gap between the skills set of the graduates versus required by the employers, providence of market-based skills should be incorporated as the basic building block of all curriculum design. On their part, students must also endeavor to adapt themselves to the market demands much before completing their course work. They should be aware that employers search for positivity and a can-do attitude in new talent.

Junaid Esmail Makda

President

Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry



The corporate sector has long been raising its voice regarding the quality of our existing education system and the flight worthiness of our fresh graduates. This report takes an overall view, identifies the importance of all subsystems, and challenges the conventional wisdom that prevails in Pakistan's educational infrastructure. The report's listing of multilateral benchmarking of skills set could become a guideline for the corporate as well as the public sector for accessing the right people with validated competencies. It is evident that this would require considerable systems analysis, reengineering, and trade off studies to arrive at a level where Pakistan would be able to start building the right talent pipeline for its future.

Agha Zafar Abbas

Group COO Kansai Paint Middle East

Chairman & CEO Kansai Paint Pakistan



Pakistan is the land of true talent and great opportunities. But sometimes, this talent and these opportunities remain untapped due to a disconnect between education and corporate sectors. We appreciate Naqeebz Consulting's services for this comprehensive Employers' Perception Survey 2018 as it highlights the need to reduce the academia-industry disconnect and standardize education across the board.

Irfan Wahab Khan
President & CEO
Telenor Pakistan



We need graduates who thirst for excellence and set a much higher bar for themselves; who can think critically, see patterns in complexity, feel pain, and take pride in their work.

Yusuf Hussain
CEO
Ignite-National Technology Fund
Ministry of IT, Govt. of Pakistan



The graduate recruitment market is becoming increasingly competitive. New graduates must develop the capability to transform bookish-knowledge into critical thinking, innovation, and problem solving skills, so they are better prepared for the professional world. During the studies they should try and interact more with the corporate world to understand business dynamics & modern day working culture. This interaction will groom them for a better future in life after education.

Rizwan Khan
General Manager
Coca Cola Pakistan & Afghanistan

What Industry Leaders *Say...*



This survey has highlighted issues related to employability of students coming out of the universities. The students should have the ability to research, analyse, and present their hypotheses; this can be done by focusing on case studies. The universities should teach students the ability to prepare presentations, and effectively put across their view point to an audience. Confidence, command over the language, and logic are prerequisites, and hence, should be taught in the universities. Times are changing and the world is becoming competitive; we need better and more effective workforce!

Zia Hyder Naqi

CEO

Synthetic Products Enterprises Ltd.



In IT we are getting better graduates compared to 10 years ago. IT schools are maturing, however, some are very commercial and quality is compromised. The main issue in graduates is a lack of leadership skills. The cost of inhouse training is very high, which makes it all the more frustrating.

Salim Ghauri

Founder & CEO

Netsol Technologies



Very impressive report which highlights the critical areas for improvement. Our education and training system requires realignment in terms of curriculum, foresight, and an attitude of excellence which the future demands.

Aftab Butt

CEO

KAPCO



This report is an excellent insight into key drivers of graduate employability. Only those companies that can attract the top minds with the right attitude to join their teams will succeed in this age. People is the only suitable competitive advantage

M. Mudassar Aqil
CEO
FINCA Microfinance Bank Limited



Pakistan's human landscape encompasses enormous opportunities of growth, which can only be capitalized true to its potential if we address the gap between the world of learning and the world of working. The harmony between key stakeholders including government, academia, and industry through integrated platform is the key to unlock this potential of growth. Inarguably, the rate of return on human capital investment outweighs the return on financial capital by three times. Fully alive with this potential, the government sets off the HR development as its top most priority. The Prime Minister's task force on HRD is up with numerous proposals to take this off for a great Pakistan ahead.

M. Tahir Mushtaq
Member HRD
Ministry of IT & Telecom, Govt. of Pakistan



Academia industry linkage is very critical and this survey report is certainly going to help build that relationship stronger by identifying the critical gap areas. With every passing moment, this world is transforming and becoming more volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous and with these radical changes, we need graduates who are flexible, resilient, willing to unlearn, relearn, and capable to respond to change effectively. PTCL has been hiring fresh graduates directly from universities and the kind of talent we are getting onboard is indeed high quality. However, it is that lot of students who go through a very rigorous assessment process and, hence is not representative of the overall caliber of students we are producing in universities. In general, we find a delta in the desired emotional and adversity quotient in fresh graduates that needs to be bridged by universities and employers together.

Syed Mazhar Hussain
Chief HR Officer
PTCL Pakistan

What Industry Leaders *Say...*



Learning agility & cognitive flexibility are the key competencies for any graduate in my view. Organizations operate in VUCA environment where employees constantly must learn, unlearn, and relearn skills to stay relevant. In my experience, our graduates generally lack these key competencies. Organizations and academic institutions must collaborate to address this gap.

Asghar Jameel
Group Director HR
HQ VECN



The future belongs to those who commit to exponential, continuous learning especially in the age of technological disruption where required technical and behavioral skill sets are constantly changing. Thus, we must enable better alignment between industry demand for, and academic supply of talent. It is commendable that Nageebz Consulting conducted this survey in order to encourage a closer partnership between the industry and academia. It would serve Pakistan well to continue on a structured path in guiding our next generation towards better opportunities.

Fatima Asad-Said
Regional Director
Abacus Global



The biggest challenge facing the industry today is a war for talent, both against direct competitors, and other industries often seen as offering more attractive career prospects. In the realm of ongoing transformation and change, human capital has a direct impact on how well organisations can respond to the changing economic times. More than ever, industry and academia must get together to find solutions on recruiting diverse talent; developing and engaging talent.

Amra Mubashir
Senior Manager
Learning, Culture, Diversity and Engagement
Rest of Asia Pacific, PepsiCo



Quite a comprehensive guidance for Pakistan's youth, academia, and businesses! Academia and business linkages shall play a pivotal role in thinking ahead and shaping the future of workplace. Our youth is the single largest unexploited natural resources Pakistan has; understanding the market expectations, demonstrating ethical & professional behaviours, and investing in positive attitude shall create a competitive edge in global workplace.

Sajjeed Aslam

Head
ACCA Pakistan



There are several factors that influence graduate employability, including internal factors (individual's capacity), institutional factors (availability and support for work experience and career development), and a range of external realities (market trends and the cultural readiness of the workforce). Despite the fact that the number of students graduating every year is increasing, there is still a blatant skills gap that exists between the universities and the employers. The Global Skills Gap report has revealed that most students do not fully understand which skills employers merit. Universities need to focus on the development and application of skills like critical and lateral thinking, creative problem-solving, digital literacy, influence, cross-cultural competency, initiative, entrepreneurship, and leadership.

Nida Yousuf

Director Human Resources & Administration
Daraz (Alibaba Group)



This is a ground breaking and much needed work from Naqeebz Consulting on one of the most fundamental challenges impacting employability of young graduates. It rightly highlights the gap between what is required by the industry and what is taught in the universities (based on empirical evidence, and not hearsay). We have some of the most talented young individuals in the world who just need to be groomed, a little conversant with presentation/communication skills, and emotionally intelligent enough to compete with the best in class. It is sad that academia does not make an effort to connect with the corporate world to bridge this gap. In my opinion this should be done on war footing to have a positive impact on employability of youth.

M. Ashaar Saeed

Group General Manager - Human Resources
Ghulam Faruque Group of Companies

What Industry Leaders *Say...*



An extremely comprehensive survey, which clearly delineates that the issue of the "industry-academia linkage" still continues to have a lot of deficiencies and lacunas. The conclusion and recommendations, at the end of the report, are not only robust, but appear to be quite meaningful too. However, only a progressive mindset towards change management, on both sides of the divide, can really help resolve this age old dilemma!

Dr. Sitwat Hussain
Group Head Human Resources
Habib Bank AG Zurich



GRIT (perseverance & patience) is very low and sense of entitlement is high in most graduates. Corporate professionals' feedback should be minimum 30% for each course implementation and design. Graduates need to be taught values and technical skills. Being respectful, honest, and doing hard work is still "IN".

Shaista Hassan
Head Ops, Learning & OD
Human Capital Management
Fauji Food Limited



The practical gap between academia and corporate sector is not a recent challenge. It has been there for a longtime now. As per my experience, corporate professionals have tried through different ways to help academia but I have not seen academia going out of the way to reduce the gap. A lot of talking happens, but only few institutions which can be counted on fingers realise the real challenge and make efforts. I suggest this to be regulated through legislation where students and institutions must be bound to earn corporate exposure to get a degree and it shouldn't be limited to internships only. On campus management trainee programs could be the way forward.

Khubaib Ahmed
HR Director
Fauji Fresh n Freeze Limited



The biggest deficit among our graduating students is 'employability skills' as those skills are demanded by the market; industry has to spend more on graduates to bring them at par with the industry requirements. All the faculties should bring local and global consultancies to the classroom to give right direction to students! This could be one solution. Another main problem is that students don't get the right guidance or counseling at the beginning of their academic career and this problem should be addressed by both industry and academia. To bridge this gap, we need top class educational trainers and industry coaches to train those graduates. The future career mapping is another issue for which they need coaches or mentors during their careers.

Adeel Anwar

President

Pakistan Human Capital Forum (PHCF)



This report gives an excellent insight on the gap between the output from universities and the corporate expectations and requirements. It is very well drafted based on facts and real issues. In this age there is a tussle between demand and supply of talent. Employers are focussing on devising strategies to attract the right talent from the available pool. Employer value proposition has also become very critical and challenging.

Toima Asghar

Chief Human Resource Officer

Systems Ltd.



This is a great initiative and service to Pakistan by Naqeebz Consulting in order to improve employability skills for youth. The survey reports and highlights both the relevant factors - industry & academia, which have a direct impact on the employability of youth. This report will be helpful in bridging the gap between industry-academia linkages for better curriculum development to fulfill the industry demand. At the same time, industry also needs to set realistic expectations from young graduates till the time this transition is completed where soft skills will be embedded in the curriculum to prepare a workforce for future.

Asim Pasha

Head of HR

Punjab Skills Development Fund

What Industry Leaders *Say...*



Graduate Employability: Employers' Perception Survey is a great cause and contribution to society, which I strongly endorse. I could speculate the implications of this report on industry, academia, and on the national economy, by and large. I have been a proponent and advocate of economic and businesses development. This report would surely act as a prelude to skill enhancement, employability, and economic growth in future. Together, we should hope for a better and brighter future of Pakistan!

Muhammad Azfar Ahsan

Founder

Nutshell Conferences, Corporate Pakistan Group & HRM Council Pakistan



"Nothing succeeds like success!"

In this modern age the striking feature of peer superiority revolves around the human capital that it inhibits and inculcates. The challenges of increasing competitiveness require putting the best minds to work, and there is a huge gap between education quality imparted by top tier business schools in Pakistan when compared to institutions in the next tier. This increasing imbalance needs an immediate correction and that's exactly what this excellent survey undertaken by Naqeebz Consulting points towards.

Muhammad Kamran Nasir

CEO

JS Global



GEEPS Report 2018 by Naqeebz Consulting truly reflects Employers' perception of graduate employability. Employers always seek individuals with well-rounded personalities by which we mean they have good technical knowledge and skills: their softer skills are polished, they know how to talk, how to work with teams, how to have a positive orientation about work, are self-aware, and willing to learn, unlearn, and re-learn. I believe this report will help academia, parents, and students become aware of the employers' expectations.

Rashid Hameed Ch

President

Sahiwal Chamber of Commerce & Industry



"If we do not change the way we teach, 30 years from now, we're going to be in trouble."

Jack Ma

Founder | Alibaba Group



"The soft skills, creative skills, research skills, the ability to find information - Synthesise it; make something of it."

Minouche Shafik

Director | The London School of Economics



Ruins of 1st University in Turkey.
Houses, Camel.



Introduction

Employment and Labor Force in Pakistan

The World Bank sums the total number of labor force in Pakistan to be around 69.9 million¹ for the year 2017. Pakistan Bureau of Statistics reports decreased labor force participation rate i.e. 45% for the year 2014-15 as compared to the previous years.²

Responding to Challenges

Pakistan remains to be the 10th largest labor force in the world and continues to face challenges in providing equitable work opportunities to a rapidly increasing population. The scenario calls for urgent policy measures to meet these challenges appropriately. Furthermore, in order to harness the potential of youth – which constitutes around 65% of the population, our recommendations will cut across all levels of skills and labor categories.

The HEC can play an instrumental role in boosting economic growth by equipping youth with up-to-date knowledge and skills acquisition, resulting in improved employability and overall quality of life. The impact is far reaching not just in university graduates but for social cohesion as well. It also enhances programs such as ICT4D and social welfare reforms.

Role of NEESDF

Naqeebz Consulting's proposed "National Employability & Enterprise Skills Development Framework (NEESDF)" incorporates components of several international frameworks and findings of this research to make it relevant to international and local market needs.

The proposed National Employability & Enterprise Skills Development Framework (NEESDF) and delivery model is scalable and will support the findings of this report. It will drive enhanced economic growth and prosperity and is cross cutting across the private and public sector.

¹World Bank, Labour Force, total. Retrieved from: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.TOTL.IN?end=2017&start=2017&view=bar> (2017).

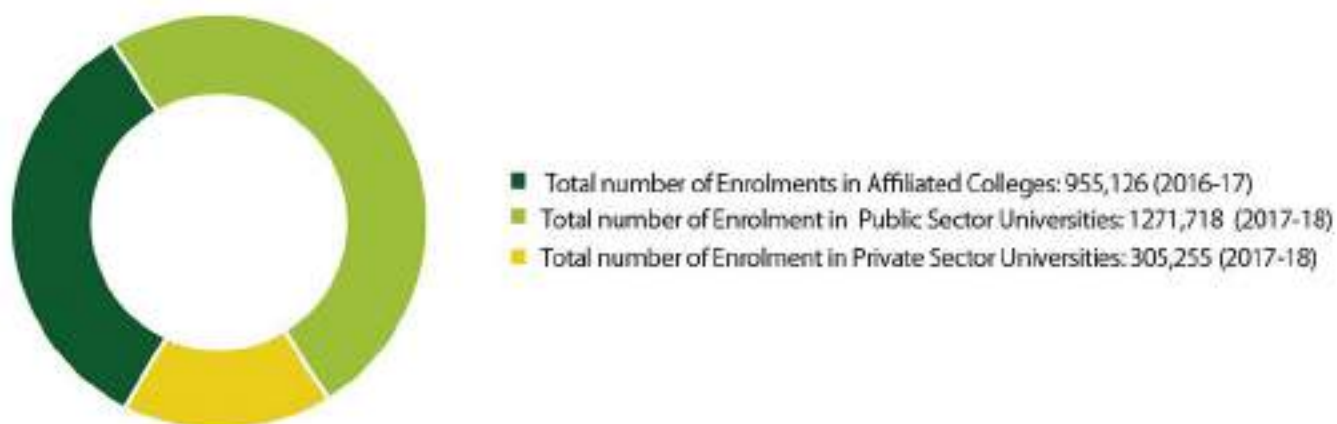
²Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force Survey, 2014-15 (Annual Report), PBS, Govt. of Pakistan, 2015.

Higher Education Landscape in Pakistan

Total Number of Universities & Affiliated Colleges



Total Number of Enrolments in Universities & Affiliated Colleges



Source: Higher Education Commission, Pakistan

Future of *Work*

The future of work is changing rapidly. It is worth noting that to respond to these changes, we need graduates to be ready with the skills which drive adaptability and innovation.

Technological, Social & Emotional, and Higher Cognitive Skills are placed among top three skills in demand by the year 2030³. These traits and skills have been incorporated in the NEESDF.

A 'skilled shift' is required to be adapted with an agile flexibility by our youth for future employability!

Automation and AI will accelerate the shift in skills that the workforce needs.

Based on McKinsey Global Institute workforce skills model

0 100



NOTE: Western Europe: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Numbers may not sum due to rounding.

SOURCE: McKinsey Global Institute workforce skills model; McKinsey Global Institute analysis

Figure 1: World Economic Forum: Skills Shift - Automation & The Future of The Workforce

The Age of *Services*

Jack Ma, Founder of Alibaba, at the World Economic Forum in 2017, said, "Only by changing education, can our children compete with machines. We cannot teach our kids to compete with machines. Teachers must stop teaching knowledge. We have to teach something unique, and so a machine can never catch up with us." He continued, "Education is a big challenge now. If we don't change the way we teach, we will be in big trouble in 30 years from now. Because the ways we teach, the things we teach our kids, are the things from the past 200 years – it is knowledge based. We need to be teaching our children values, believing, independent thinking, teamwork, care for others... These are the soft parts. The knowledge will not teach you that. That's why I think we should teach our kids sports, music, painting, and art. Everything we teach should be different from machines."⁴

³World Economic Forum – The 3 key skills sets for the workers of 2030. Retrieved from: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/06/the-3-skill-sets-workers-need-to-develop-between-now-and-2030/>

⁴Barnes, Peter. (2018, February 19). Jack Ma: Teach Soft Skills, Not Knowledge, to Compete with Machines [web log post]. Retrieved January 09, 2019, from <https://blog.learniasthq.com>

Futurist Kevin Kelly wrote in his book “The Inevitable – Understanding the 12 Technological Forces That Will Shape our Future” that artificial intelligence and robotics would make our society vastly different. The artificial intelligence embedded in these machines will be augmenting human performance and freeing us to concentrate on activities where humans are better than machines - activities requiring creativity, strategic thinking, empathy, and other “soft skills”.⁵ The crux of the argument clearly presents inherent human qualities as the foundation of new jobs.

Communication Skills and Customer Services Topping the Charts in the Freelancing Industry!

In the Freelancing Industry, Pakistan is currently ranked at 4th position worldwide⁶ for having 9% (approximately over 1.3 million freelancers) of the total freelancers’ population of the world.

It is riveting to know that most of them are students. At present, freelancers are contributing US\$0.5 billion annually into Pakistan’s economy⁷. It is a popular belief that freelancing demands more than 80% of effective communication skills (communicating with clients for winning a project and customer services after a bid is won), and merely 15-20% of technical skills (delivery of the project/assignment/task) are required. Hence, the involvement of the right behaviour and attitude is playing an important role in getting them work. If Pakistan wishes to grow in this area, freelancers would need to have better written communication skills and effective customer services skills in order to compete with freelancers from other parts of the world to sustain and build on the above numbers.

The Pakistani freelance worker needs to work on inculcating the right behaviour and attitude not just to get work, but also to sustain it, and elevate the numbers!

⁵ The Inevitable - Book by Kevin Kelly (2016)

⁶ Online Labor Index, Oxford Internet Institute 2017

⁷ Pakistan Today's Report. Retrieved from: <https://profit.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/06/26/pakistan-4th-most-popular-country-for-freelancing-report/>

National Education Policy Framework 2018

The National Education Policy Framework 2018⁸, published by the Ministry of Education and Professional Training summarizes education challenges in Pakistan as depicted in the chart below:

Out of School Children	Uniform Education System	Quality	Skills and Higher Education
Low and inequitable access & participation	Lack of coordination in policy formulation and implementation across the country	Low student learning outcomes	Low and inequitable access and participation
High levels of poverty in certain disadvantaged areas resulting in high OOSC	Lack of coherence and coordination in curriculum frameworks, textbooks and exam systems	Poor teacher quality and accountability	Poor quality and relevance of teaching and research conditions
Limited investments in early childhood education resulting in high dropout in early grades	Discrepancies in systems of schools, i.e. across public, private and madrasa education system	Lack of school leadership-School Principals/Head Teachers	Weak linkages with industry
Low Quality of Non-Formal and Accelerated Learning Programs	Variation in management of school systems	Poor school environment multi-grade teaching, limited facilities in schools and poor infrastructure	Inadequate sector governance and management
		Inadequate use of student learning outcome data to inform policy making	

Figure 2: National Education Policy Framework 2018, Ministry of Education & Professional Training, Govt. of Pakistan

The above framework highlights various challenges that need to be addressed including a lack of coherence and weak industry linkages. NEESDF addresses all those needs.

⁸National Education Policy Framework 2018, Ministry of Education & Professional Training, Govt. of Pakistan



Academia-Industry Linkages in Pakistan

Although, there is a mismatch between the demand and supply of human capital, this gap can be closed efficiently through enhanced collaboration amongst all stakeholders.

HEC along with the World Bank initiated a Tertiary Education Support Program (TESP) under Government's Higher Education Development Program, as a part of 2nd Medium Term Development Framework for Higher Education (MTDF-HE II, 2011-2015)⁹. MTDF HE I (2005-10) focused on internal development of Institutes of Higher Learning and the purpose of MTDF-HE II was to link this development to the society and industry as per Vision 2030 which intended to meet the contemporary and future challenges through accumulation of knowledge and collective competence¹⁰.

According to Planning Commission of Pakistan (2011) Pakistan was ranked 92 out of 133 countries in a university-industry linkages index, much lower than China and India, which were ranked 23 and 46, respectively¹¹. HEC initiated setting up of ORICs (Office of Research, Innovation, and Commercialization) at universities in 2010 with an aim to empower HEIs as a powerhouse of sustainable research and high growth innovation¹². HEC's website states that since then 66 universities have notified setting up of ORICs.

Our findings reveals that majority (80%) of the organizations participated in this survey have never been contacted by HEIs or HEC for any sort of linkages.

ORICs may form part of the multi stakeholder group as proposed earlier. There is an opportunity to understand the challenges faced by industries, and provide enhanced information to graduates at the heart of greater academia-industry linkages.

⁹Grand Thornton and Higher Education Commission, Employers' Perception Survey, 2016.

¹⁰Higher Education Medium Term Development Framework II 2011-15 – HEC

¹¹Grand Thornton and Higher Education Commission, Employers' Perception Survey, 2016.

¹²Higher Education Medium Term Development Framework II 2011-15 – HEC



The background is a solid light blue. A faint, stylized world map is visible in the background. Overlaid on the map are several abstract elements: a large yellow semi-circle, a blue gear, a black line graph with a white dot, a blue circle with a white checkmark, a dashed black semi-circle with an arrow, a black plus sign, a black starburst, and a black line with three horizontal bars. The word "Methodology" is written in a white, italicized serif font across a dark blue horizontal band.

Methodology

Planning the Survey/Study

The Graduate Employability: Employers' Perception Survey Report 2018 is an initiative of Naqeebz Consulting. It is a 2nd report of the 2016 report that was conducted by Naqeebz Consulting's in-house team. The sampling and work plan was reviewed and vetted by field experts.

Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to investigate the gap between academia and industry, employers' views on quality of education imparted to university/college students, and its relevance to the demands of the industry.

Our survey was conducted over a span of six months, and recorded feedback from 212 organizations, employing over 500,000 workforce.

The questions asked from respondents included:

- Are employers satisfied with the quality of graduates?
- What are the reasons of satisfaction or a lack of it?
- What factors do employers consider important when recruiting fresh graduates?
- Which soft-skills are considered important when hiring fresh graduates?
- Have employers ever been contacted by HEC, Provincial HECs, and universities to have consultation or collaboration on curriculum development and other affairs concerning liaison between academia and industry?
- Were employers willing to participate if HECs and/or universities approach them for liaison or collaboration?
- What are the areas where most jobs will be created and what will be the most demanded/sought after skills among graduates by the industry in next five years?
- Are they satisfied with the quality of CVs of fresh graduates?
- Which type of information is required on the CV of a fresh graduate/graduate professional?

The respondents' data was also clustered to respondents' designation and industry.

Data Sources

The primary research in this study was backed by a secondary research that constituted reviewing major reports and literature available on the subject. Primarily, the reports included UK Education and Skills Survey 2017, Employability: A review of the literature 2012 to 2016: Higher Education Academy 2016, Annual Report of Confederation of British Industry 2013, and Report by Global Innovation Index and Employers' Perception Survey submitted to Higher Education Commission in May 2016. Moreover, various models and theoretical perspectives were studied to reach the conceptual framework of the study.

The review of literature was conducted on available research studies and briefs in Pakistani context. This review also included various questionnaires and surveys already employed in the field with more or less similar objectives. Secondary research helped clarify the objectives and framing questions for the survey. In addition, secondary research also provided with theoretical background necessary for the study. The survey/questionnaire was identified as a main tool of data collection to conduct the study.



Sampling

Sampling was done following multi-staged stratified random sampling techniques, surveying professionals only, who were directly involved in the decision making during the recruitment process.

Therefore, the survey was administered to senior officials, heads of the organizations, executives, and HR managers from organizations belonging to a wide range of industrial sectors such as Manufacturing, Information Technology, Education, Health, Banking, and Engineering. In order to ensure considerable representation from each sector, the executives were sampled on the basis of their designations/profiles, years of relevant experience, size of the organization, nature of business, and corresponding industry. The size of the organization was also a measure of number of graduates employed from the labor market. It was assumed that larger organizations with larger workforce would have employed more university graduates. Lists of 200+ companies were prepared with targeted executives/senior officials. In order to ensure the reliability of the responses, the respondents of the survey were carefully selected. Moreover, the internal validity of the research was ensured by designing a questionnaire that would specifically pertain to quality of education, skills, and attributes of the professionals required in the industry, and major obstacles in finding and hiring such suitable candidates for placement in the industry.

Development of the Tool

The survey consisted of 18 contextually relevant questions requesting details on:

- Demographic information
- Organizational details
- Employers' perceptions towards quality of education
- Reasons for satisfaction/dissatisfaction
- Factors and skills to consider during recruitment of professionals
- Contact or communication by HEIs with business organizations regarding education reform process by the universities

The survey also sought answers on employers' perceptions based on the changing trends of business and different industries.



Survey Administration

The survey was designed and administered via an online tool, Survey Monkey (www.surveymonkey.com).

Responses were obtained from 212 individuals. Survey Monkey also provided an opportunity for online data collection without compromising integrity and authenticity. Each of the respondents could enter responses once only as IP restrictions applied. The potential respondents were contacted via LinkedIn, Email, Telecon, and WhatsApp to seek their permission for participation in the survey and the link of online survey was shared with them. The respondents were also informed about the objectives and purposes of the study.

The list of the organizations that participated in the survey is attached as Annexure C. Distribution of the organizations across corresponding industries and representation as in the sample can be found in the (Figure.8).

Data Collection, Analysis, and Reporting

Before analysis, the data was reviewed for any inconsistencies such as incomplete or erratic responses. Valid data sets were analyzed to determine the frequency distributions against various strata given in the questionnaire. The data was then exported to MS Excel for record and graphical presentation.

Limitations

Since this survey was conducted online and was shared directly with the targeted prospective respondents, hence, there has been less response from the public sector organizations, print & electronic media/entertainment industry, and organizations from the agriculture sector.



The background of the slide is a warm-toned photograph of a library. In the foreground, an open book with yellowed pages lies flat on a wooden surface. To its right, a stack of several thick, old books is visible. The background is filled with out-of-focus bookshelves packed with books, creating a bokeh effect with soft light spots. A semi-transparent dark horizontal band is positioned across the middle of the image, serving as a backdrop for the title text.

Background & Review of Literature

The Challenge

Pakistan's progress in the area of education continues to encounter challenges in providing a relevant supply of skilled graduates, in line with corporate demand. To fix this, different interventions are required, which can't work in isolation.

Utilizing the Kaleidoscope

Targets set by UNDP in Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 2015 and indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals targets (SDGs) for 2030 all interlink to build capacity and have a far ranging impact on economic growth, social cohesion, innovation, civic, and welfare engagement – all components support national and government transformation.

Global Innovation Index & Pakistan's Compromised Ranking

The Global Innovation Index (GII) analyzes countries on the basis of their innovative outputs. They may be affecting a series of factors including energy efficiency, human resource, technological innovations and outputs, and institutional environments. They might be demonstrating creativity in solving social problems or researching innovations: the idea is that everything should be conducive to sustainable growth¹³.

Pakistan was ranked 109 in 2018 out of 126 countries (113 in 2017) in the area of Innovation by GI¹⁴. From South Asia and Central Asia, the top performers in the Innovation Index remain India, Kazakhstan, and Iran. Pakistan has been placed into low-middle income group with a high population growth, but low GDP per capita i.e. US\$5358.3. On the other hand, China rises in the Global Innovation Index¹⁵.

As a measure of market sophistication and innovative outputs, the GI rank of Pakistan raises concerns about state of Higher Education and its alignment with industrial requirements and a realistically productive future.

Pakistan's Alarming Ranking on Global Competitiveness Index

Pakistan ranks a staggering low 115th on the Global Competitiveness Index 2017-2018 amongst 137 economies! This is far behind other South Asian economies such as India (40th position), Iran (69th), and Nepal (88th).¹⁶

Pakistan faces significant skills shortages and mismatches. There is a growing gap as the demands by industry are not being adequately met by market-relevant, job-specific skilled individuals, produced by either the higher education or any other sector. In this context, the Government of Pakistan called for initiatives that would develop and improve

¹³ Dutta, Soumitra, Rafael Escalona-Reynoso, Antonina Gwanisvili, Kritika Saxena, Bruno Lamsin, Sacha Wunsch-Vincent, Lorena Rivera León, and Francesca Guadagno. "The Global Innovation Index 2018: Energizing the World with Innovation." *Global Innovation Index 2018 (2018)*: 1.

¹⁴ *The Global Innovation Index, 2018*.

¹⁵ *The Global Innovation Index, 2018*.

¹⁶ *GCI Database 2018, World Economic Forum*

higher education sector. As part of Government's agenda for higher education development under second Medium-Term Development Framework for Higher Education 2011-2015, HEC was mandated with some seriously urgent and important tasks. That included improving the conditions of teaching, learning, quality of research, access, and the relevance of these to the technical needs of economic growth. The program was carried out with support of World Bank under Tertiary Education Support Program (TESP)¹⁷. In this regard, NEESDF's recommendations are in sync with what the Government of Pakistan wishes to impart, and we will support existing efforts and conscientiously improvise new frontiers of development.

Literature Review

Defining Employability

With the changing structure of the future of work, it has now become even more difficult to define 'employability' and to date there is no common definition available.

- CEO of Nageebz Consulting, Muhammad Moazam Shahbaz, defines employability as, "An individual's ability to acquire and retain employment or self-employment, with the ability to grow in a career or business on the basis of knowledge, traits, technical/professional skills, enterprise, and soft skills."

Other popular definitions of employability are:

- A set of achievements (skills, understandings, and personal attributes), that makes individuals more likely to gain employment, and be successful in their chosen occupations. This benefits themselves, the workforce, community, and economy. (Yorke and Knight-2006)
- Employability is the possession by an individual of the qualities and competencies required to meet the changing needs of employers and customers and thereby help to realise his or her aspirations and potential in work. (CBI, 1999, p. 1)
- Employability means the development of skills and adaptable workforces in which all those capable of work are encouraged to develop the skills, knowledge, technology, and adaptability to enable them to enter and remain in employment throughout their working lives. (HM Treasury, 1997, p. 1)
- Employability is the relative capacity of an individual to achieve meaningful employment given the interaction of personal circumstances and the labour market. (Canadian Labour Force Development Board, 1994, p. viii)
- Employability is the capability to move into and within labour markets and to realise potential through sustainable and accessible employment. For individuals, employability depends on: the knowledge and skills they possess and their attitude, the way personal attributes are presented in the labour market, the environmental and social context within which work is sought, and the economic context within which work is sought. (DHFETE, 2002, p. 7)

Graduate Employability Attributes & A Need for Revision

In recent decades, universities have come under increased pressure to produce graduates who are equipped with the skills, training, and qualifications that meet market demands i.e. graduates who demonstrate high employable skills. However, there is a greater emphasis on understanding the attributes that result in greater employability among students who enter the higher education status.

¹⁷Grand Thornton and Higher Education Commission, Employers' Perception Survey, 2016.

Bridgstock (2009)¹⁸ argues that as countries are turning to dynamic 'information and knowledge intensive' economies, there is a trend to revisit the most desired traits/employability skills by employers. Therefore, the generic skills possessed or listed by graduates in the past may not be relevant today.

Bowden (2000)¹⁹ describes graduate attributes as, "The qualities, skills, and understandings a university community agrees its students would desirably develop during their time at the institution and, consequently, shape the contribution towards their profession and as a citizen". However, Bridgstock contends that graduate employability attributes refer to the skills set and dispositions that will align an individual with the requirements of most of the employers and increase the opportunities (might be short-term and immediate) of employment.²⁰

The Kirby Report (2000) by the Australian Department of Education, Employment, and Training and International Labor Organization (ILO) (2000) presents a rather broad definition of graduate 'employability' as an idea that, "Involve[s] self-belief and an ability to secure and retain employment. It also means being able to improve [the worker's] productivity and income-earning prospects. This often requires competing effectively in the job market and being able to move between occupations as necessary. It requires 'learning to learn' for new job opportunities."²¹ This definition describes that the alignment of skills with market demands, in combination with self-career management and higher education, brings better job prospects. Furthermore, optimal social and economic growths are dependent upon competition in the job market, and adaptation of the graduate professionals according to the dynamics of the market.

A Conceptual Framework of Graduate Employability

Bailly's Model of Employers' Beliefs

Bailly's Model of Employers' Beliefs (2008) describes three stages of employers' beliefs when evaluating the graduate employability skills and characteristics at the time of recruitment and during the work span²².

According to this model, at preliminary stages employers have no experience or knowledge about graduates with certain qualifications when hiring them.

- Initial Signals – Firstly, the employers make decisions about recruitment based on their initial beliefs and anticipated levels of productivity as estimated through the credentials presented on the graduate's profile. This information can be termed as Initial Signals.

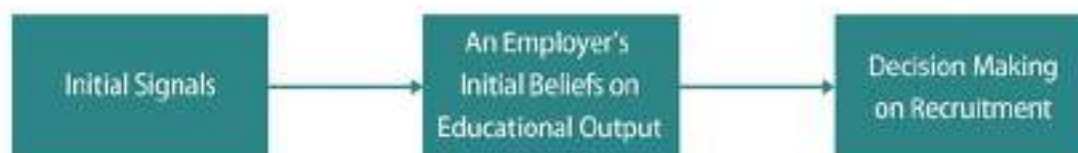


Figure 3 : Stage-I Of The Employer's Beliefs About Educational Output Of The Applicants (Bailly, Franck, 2008)

¹⁸Bridgstock, Ruth. "The graduate attributes we've overlooked: Enhancing graduate employability through career management skills." *Higher Education Research & Development* 28, no. 1 (2009): 31-44.

¹⁹Bowden, John, Gail Hart, Bruce King, Keith Trigwell, and Owen Watts. "Generic capabilities of ATN university graduates." Canberra: Australian Government Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (2000).

²⁰Bridgstock, Ruth. 2009.

²¹Victoria. Department of Education, Employment, and Training. Communications Division, and Peter Kirby. *Ministerial Review of Post Compulsory Education and Training Pathways in*

²²Bailly, Franck. "The role of employers' beliefs in the evaluation of educational output." *The Journal of Socio-Economics* 37, no. 3 (2008): 959-968.

Employers' Initial Beliefs on Educational Output

The second stage commences after the recruitment of the graduates. The employers acquire an experience of understanding the educational credentials and the graduates' productivity is visible and measurable (Figure.4). This experience allows them to form realistic beliefs. At this stage, the Initial Signals become less influential upon an employers' understanding, as Initial Beliefs take center stage according to the quality of work and employees' performance.



Figure 4 : Stage II Employer's Beliefs On The Performance Of The Worker (Bailly, Franck, 2008)

Decision Making on Recruitment

The third stage begins when an equilibrium is achieved between successive recruitments and employers' understanding of the best recruits based on their skills, attributes, and educational qualifications (Figure 5).

Bailly's Model as the Conceptual Framework

Bailly's model of employers' beliefs may form the basis of studies that aims to determine the employers' perception of employability skills among graduates passing out of universities.

In the present study, Business and Human Resource leaders from organizations in SMEs, MNCs, and Public Sector responded to the questions regarding their perceptions towards employability skills of the graduates. As these executives have years of experience of recruiting graduates and managing workforces, they have gained an understanding of the productivity and efficiency of the graduates demonstrating certain skills and attributes. Therefore, Bailly's model of employers' beliefs forms the conceptual framework of the present study and is relevant to our recommendations.

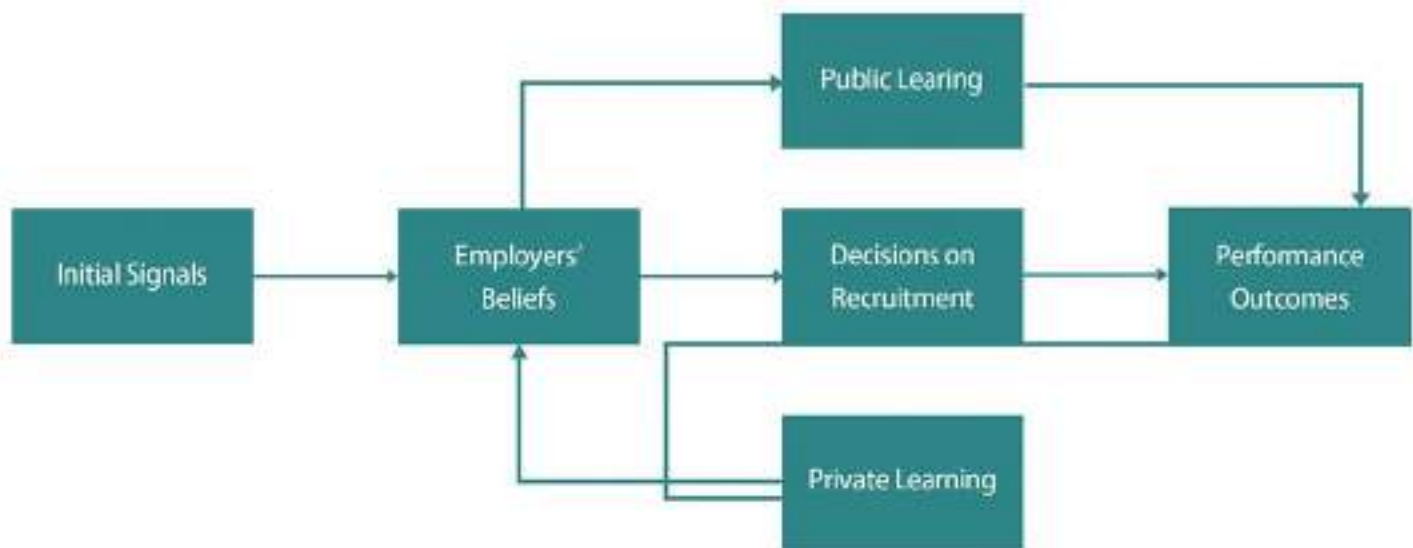


Figure 5: Stage III Equilibrium Between Recruitment Of Graduates And Employers' Understanding Of The Educational Credentials (Bailey, Franck, 2008)

Harvey's Model of Graduate Employability Development

Harvey (2000) believed that there are external factors required for employability in addition to personal attributes. Therefore, the difference exists between the perception of individual and the actual employment. Harvey elaborated this in his "Magic Bullet" model of employability, linking the graduate attributes with the attainment of employment. Proceeding on this model, Harvey (2003) contended that there are other factors (subject areas, employability development opportunities, and extra-curricular experiences) required for employability apart from the graduate attributes: these factors are driven by the process of engagement, pedagogy, reflection, and articulation. The employment model depends on three key factors - HEIs, graduates, and employers (Figure 6). These key indicators will ultimately lead to employment.

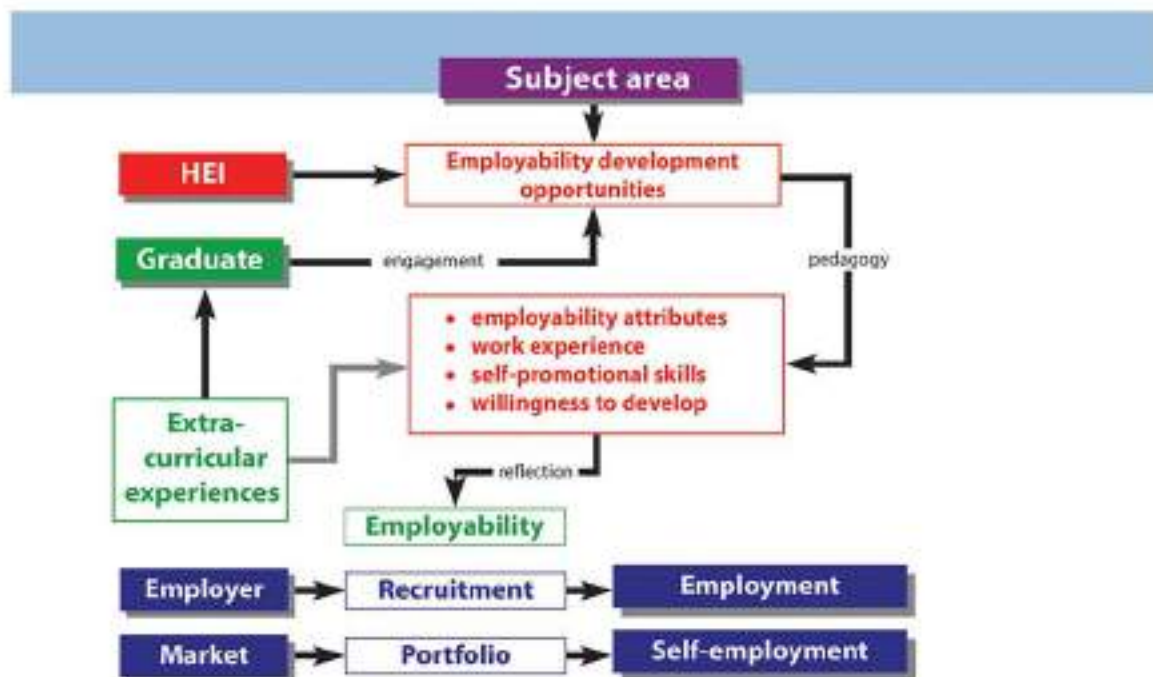


Figure 6: A Model by Harvey (2002, p4) of graduate employability development

Naqeebz Consulting devised a framework,²³ deriving the employability attributes from Harvey's Model, with certain employability competencies. These competencies are based on the findings of the surveys conducted in 2016 and 2018, respectively. (Refer to section 7.1 for NEESDF)

Skills and Attainment of Jobs

Employability refers much more than acquiring a first job. The International Labor Organization describes employability as equipping the individuals with skills that help them attain and secure a long-term work opportunity: one that ensures them a lifelong career. However, according to ILO, young graduates across the world do not possess the competencies and skills that are required for the attainment and securing of a long-term work opportunity. There is a strong consensus (Cole and Tibby-2013) that employability is more than obtaining employment, and that HEPs should not focus simply on supporting the graduates in getting their first jobs. Instead, the need of the hour is to support the graduates to building positive and meaningful careers and to participate meaningfully in the society.

The ILO terms these skills as '21st Century Workplace Skills'²⁴ that include the following 4 Cs:

1. Communication
2. Creativity
3. Cooperation
4. Critical Thinking

Moreover, employers from across the world, place emphasis on varied skills, aptitude, and attributes of university graduates. Here again, these skills are the same as those highlighted amongst respondents of this report.

Examining different frameworks in the 187 papers, Higher Education Academy (HEA) has provided an extensive list of graduate attributes:²⁵

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Aspiration | 18. Language Skills (Particularly 2nd Language Skills) |
| 2. Autonomy | 19. Multi-Tasking |
| 3. Career Management | 20. Numeracy |
| 4. Communication Skills | 21. Opportunity Awareness |
| 5. Creativity | 22. Positive Attitude |
| 6. Critical Thinking Skills | 23. Presentation Skills |
| 7. Customer Awareness | 24. Problem Solving |
| 8. Digital Literacy | 25. Professional Knowledge |
| 9. Efficiency | 26. Research Skills |
| 10. Emotional Intelligence | 27. Resilience |
| 11. Enterprise and Entrepreneurship | 28. Self-Management |
| 12. Ethics | 29. Social Intelligence |
| 13. Flexibility and Adaptability | 30. Team-Working |
| 14. Giving and Receiving Feedback | 31. Time Management |
| 15. Independent Thinking | 32. Willingness (and Capability) to Learn |
| 16. Initiative and Self-Direction | 33. Work Ethic |
| 17. Inter-Personal Skills | 34. Writing Skills |

²³ National Employability Enterprise Skills Development Framework (NEESDF)

²⁴ INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE. *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2017: Paths to a better working future*. International Labour Office, 2017.

²⁵ *Employability: A review of the literature 2012 to 2016*. Higher Education Academy 2016

Embedding Employability in Higher Education

Employability cannot be taught as a standalone subject. The employability and enterprise skills highlighted in this report and other national and international reports need to be embedded in every subject taught at HEIs, Colleges, TVET institutes, and schools. Faculty members and teachers need to be made aware of these skills, and they should have a common framework to refer to. Teaching pedagogies and assessment methods have to be changed accordingly as well.

In an attempt to resolve this, Higher Education Academy (HEA) in 2016 developed a framework for embedding employability (Figure: 7) in higher education.

HEA views embedding employability as providing the opportunities to develop knowledge, skills, experiences, behaviors, attributes, achievements, and attitudes to enable graduates to make successful transitions and contributions - employability that benefits the graduates, economies, and their communities. Employability is relevant to all students at all levels of education, hence, includes both undergraduate and postgraduate provision.²⁶



***Naqeebz Consulting's
"National Employability &
Enterprise Skills Development Framework (NEESDF)" (Figure: 28)
incorporates components of several international frameworks and
findings of this research to make it relevant to
international and local market needs.***

²⁶Embedding Employability in higher education: Higher Education Academy 2016.



Figure 7 : HEA's Framework for Embedding Employability in Higher Education





Results and *Findings*

Through our research, employers from diverse industrial sectors have presented their views on the shortcomings or the lack of qualities in graduates coming through the current education system. There is a considerable supply - demand lag.

Respondents' Profiles

By *Industry*

The results indicated that executives and senior officials from 25 different industries responded to the survey. However, for the sake of understanding, respondents (businesses) with related industries have been clustered under 13 closely related business sectors.

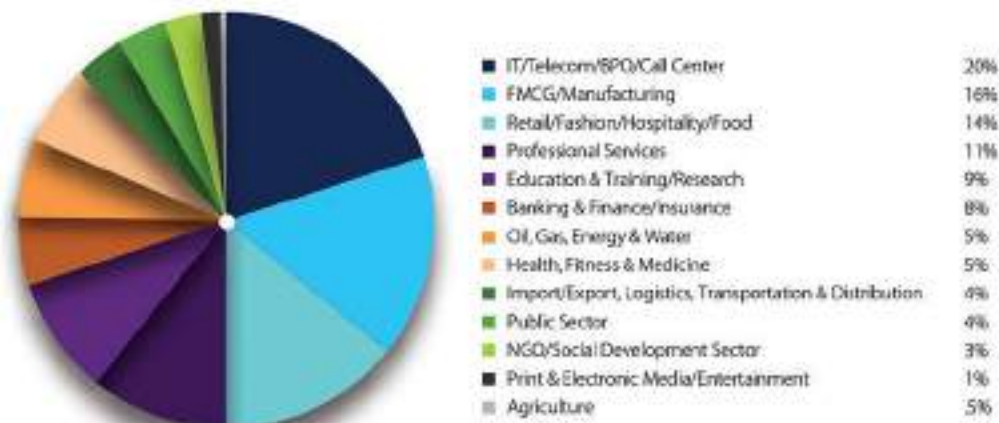


Figure 8 : Graphical Presentation Of Distribution Of Respondents Across Different Business Sectors

By *Designation*

Out of total respondents to the survey, the designation wise division constituted:

- C-Level Executives - 27%
- VP/Director/Head - 25%
- HR Managers/Recruitment Specialists - 44%
- Non-HR Director(s)/Non-HR Manager(s) - 4%

The data above adds to the reliability of the responses obtained in the survey.



Figure 9 : Graphical Presentation Of Respondents' Designations/Job Titles

By Employees *Size Base* of the Company

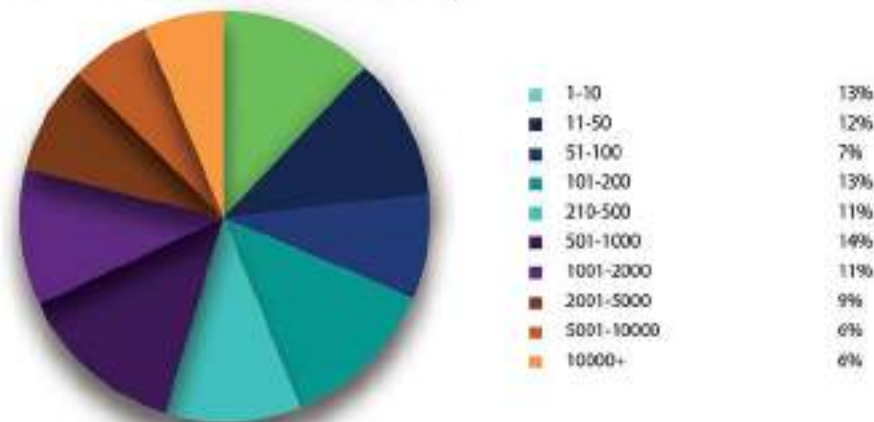


Figure 10 : Showing Response Percentage Of Respondents' Companies With Different Employee Base

By *Regional Operations of the Companies*

In order to obtain a holistic knowledge, organizations of the respondents were also analyzed on the basis of their scope of operations. The following ratio wise location based analysis helped solidify the holistic knowledge that is promised. The results indicated the following preferred province wise operations of these organizations:



Figure 11: Showing Response Percentage Of Respondents' Companies By Regional Operations

The diversity in the locations/areas of operations not only demonstrated the scope of the organizations in terms of services, but also showed employers' experience with candidates or professionals across provinces.

Employers' Satisfaction

Employers' Satisfaction or a Lack of it with the Quality of Graduates

- The results indicated that an alarmingly high number i.e. 78% of 212 employers are dissatisfied with the quality of skills and qualifications of graduates in Pakistan!
- Only 22% of the employers feel satisfied with the quality of available skills sets of the graduates in the market.

In comparison to the results of a similar survey on employers' perceptions conducted by CAAS (now Naqeebz Consulting) in 2016, the dissatisfaction level has now risen by more than 2 points i.e. 76% employers (of 171 respondents) were dissatisfied earlier in 2016 with the quality of skill sets of graduates. The increase in dissatisfaction is significant, keeping in view the increased and diversified sampling represented in the survey. The results above also indicate a widening gap between the available skill sets and changing demands of the industry.

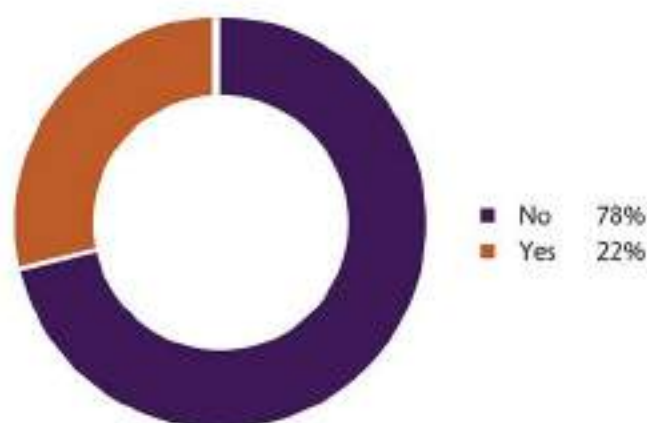


Figure 12 : Showing Levels Of Satisfaction And Dissatisfaction Of The Employers With Skill Sets Of The Graduates Available As Workforce

Level of Employers' Satisfaction by Designation

Employers' Dissatisfaction at CEO/Deputy CEO/CHRO Level

Results indicate that around 89% of the C-level executives (CEOs/Deputy CEOs/CHROs) are dissatisfied with the quality of graduates: factors include qualifications, skills, and employability.

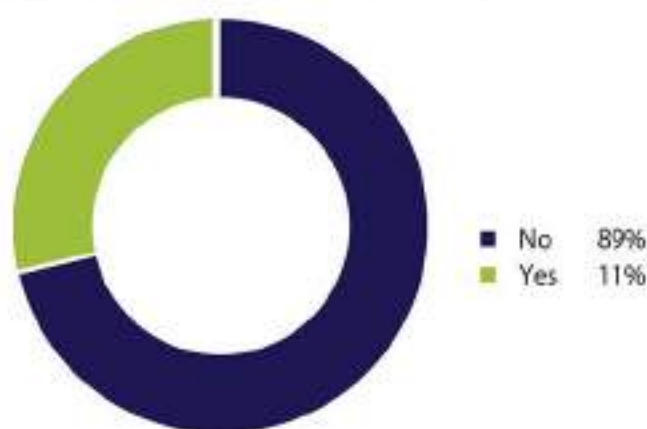


Figure 13 : Showing Levels Of Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction Of The Employers With Titles: CEO/Deputy CEO/CHRO

VP HR/Director HR's Dissatisfaction!

Results indicate that a whopping 78% of the employers at VP HR/Director HR/Head level are dissatisfied with the existing skills of the graduate workforce.

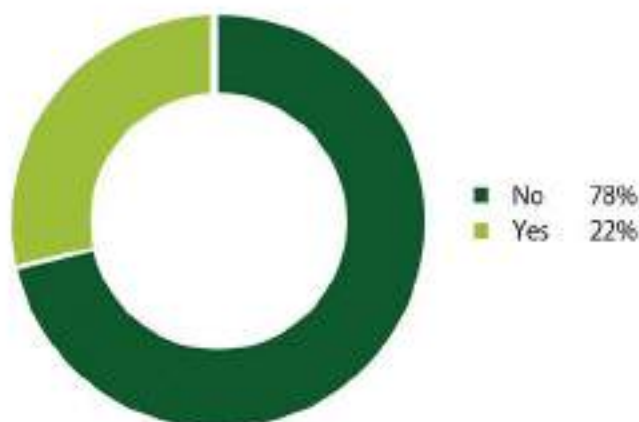


Figure 14: Showing Levels Of Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction Of The Employers With Titles: VP HR/Director HR/Head

Employers' Dissatisfaction at Manager HR Level & Below

Keeping up with the earlier trends emerging from the results, 71% employers at Manager HR level and below showed dissatisfaction with the quality of graduates available.

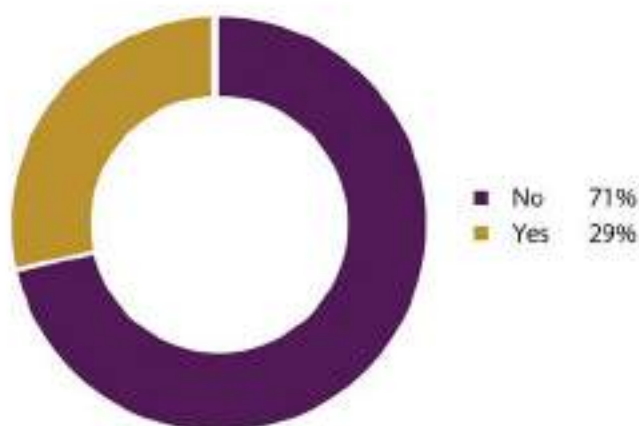


Figure 15: Showing Levels Of Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction Of The Employers At Manager HR Level And Below

Reasons for Dissatisfaction

Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) must reform and realign instruction and assessment systems in a way that provides realistic information on learning achievements of graduates.

The respondents to this survey were presented with an array of options on skills related to collaboration, communication, presentation, knowledge, and attitude towards work that may potentially be the cause of their dissatisfaction. The responses from the employers in this section are particularly important for academia to prioritize and focus on the areas where increased attention is direly needed (refer to figure 16).

Incorrect Reflection of Knowledge

Around 60% of the respondents have marked, "Knowledge, skills & abilities of individuals failing to reflect the high grades they have achieved" as a leading reason for dissatisfaction. This highlights the gap between actual learning achievement and grades obtained through rote learning or cramming.

Graduates must have sufficient industry exposure to gain commercial awareness and acquire technical skills that will help them in becoming industry-relevant.

Disparity in Rights & Responsibilities

Likewise, around 56% and 55% of the employers chose "lack of commercial awareness" and "high salary expectations" as second and third highest reasons of dissatisfaction. Lack of knowledge on mechanics of commercial markets and a demand of an inversely proportional salary structure doesn't work. It again demonstrates wide gaps and weak linkages between academia and industry.

The *Process* that Leads to Dissatisfaction

It is like so many people are working really hard – but sadly, in the wrong direction. This dissatisfaction of the employer is not only a consequence of absence of industrial exposure to the students during degree programs, but also the fact that schools do not provide adequate information on industrial demand of the discipline. The institution should educate the student on the required skills, possible job roles, and expected salary when they enroll in different academic programs.

Moreover, around 40% to 46% employers indicated dissatisfaction with communication, soft skills, and presentation skills of the graduates. These trends are major pointers for academia.

Lack of or poor soft skills remain one of the major hurdles in induction of graduates in the industry.

Overall Reasons for Dissatisfaction

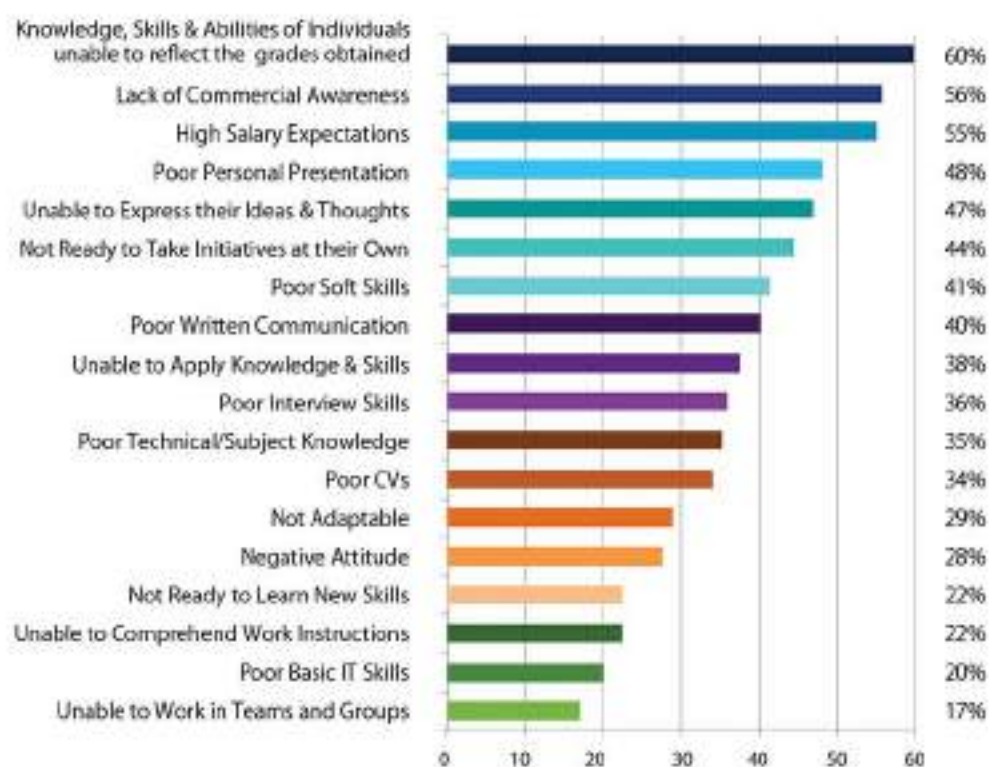


Figure 16: Overall Reasons Of Dissatisfaction Of Employers Towards Graduate Workforce

Reasons for *Satisfaction*

Just like there are two sides to every story, a number of areas were highlighted by the employers that presented strengths and potentials of the graduates passing out of universities. The information in this section is useful in terms of determining the strengths that must be developed in skilled areas (refer to figure 17).

Employers sought after candidates who demonstrate good communication, presentation, and 'soft' skills.

- More than 52% of the employers highlighted that fresh graduates demonstrate a good knowledge of the basic IT skills, willingness and ability to learn new things, and express their ideas and thoughts without conditioned inhibition.
- 50% of the employers responded that graduates have a positive attitude and demonstrate adaptability.

In combination, these skills and abilities promise immense potential for Pakistani university graduates to acquire greater knowledge and enhance their skills, given they are strengthened with the right opportunities and a focused medium of instruction. On the other hand, adaptability and ability to learn new things on the part of the graduates may help them in quickly learning the competitive and complex business environments, making them good workers and eventually industry leaders.

Reasons for Satisfaction



Figure 17: Overall Reasons Of Employers' Satisfaction Towards Graduate Workforce

Factors in Consideration while Employers Recruit Fresh Graduates

Factors Influencing the Recruitment

Technical skills, professional knowledge, and soft skills carry the highest weightage along with relevant qualification to successfully acquire a job in the industry!

In universities, students are led to believe that only good grades will secure them good jobs, however, employers have a different perspective.

A number of factors influence the recruitment of graduates according to the following info (see figure 18):

- 79% of employers prefer 'Technical Skills/Professional Knowledge' to 'High Grades' when recruiting fresh graduates
- About 76% of the employers encourage 'Relevant Qualification' when hiring
- 70% of the next highly demanded skill includes 'Soft Skills'
- 'Personal Presentation' comprised (68%)
- Only 57% of the recruiters gave weightage to the performance in organization tests and/or assessments

Technical Skills VS Branded Degrees

Furthermore, it is evident that in the industry, technical skills and knowledge are more valued than the type or cadre of the university attended by the candidate. Qualities of soft skills and enterprise positively influence the candidate's chances of being hired.



Figure 18: Overall Reasons Of Satisfaction Of Employers Towards Graduate Workforce
Factors in Consideration while Employers Recruit Fresh Graduates

Top-Ten Soft Skills Required by Employers

Soft skills are the most prized features during interviews and on-job after being hired. Academia should focus on developing soft skills alongside offering textbook knowledge.

Employers speak at length about the soft skills that they like to see among graduates during interview and on-job, once they are hired. Amongst the most demanded soft skills, the ones that top the list are as follows:

- Positive Attitude 85%
- Confidence 70%
- Verbal Communication 66%
- Team Work 64%

'Integrity', 'analytical skills', 'time management', and 'critical thinking skills' along with 'planning and organizing' follow the above skills.

Once again, the onus is placed on developing soft skills along with knowledge development and good academic performance. Aligning with that, university education must also include preparing the learners for professional challenges along with imparting them conventional education.

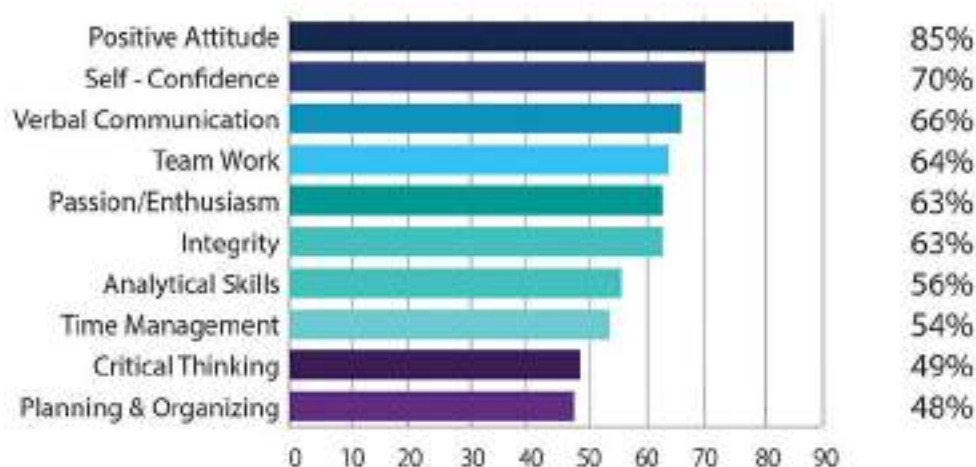


Figure 19: Top 10 Soft Skills Required By The Employers

Academia-Industry Linkages

Employers Contacted by HEC and/or Universities for Curriculum Development

A spectrum of issues represented above in employability skills, relevant qualification, and lack of soft skills can be addressed by reflecting on the strengths of cohesion and value exchange between academia and industry. The disconnection between academia and industry could be because of HEIs focus on imparting theoretical knowledge and focus on descriptive research. In such a scenario, the opportunities for graduates to learn practical aspects greatly reduce. Side by side, the development and implementation of the employability and enterprise skills framework will reduce the current gap.

Have you ever been approached by HEC or any university to participate or nominate someone from your organization to help them in curriculum development or share input?

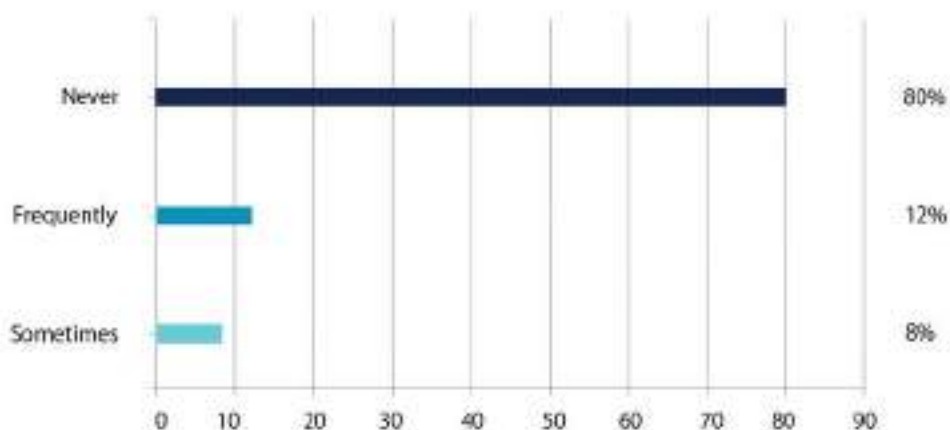


Figure 20 : Industry Contacted By Academia For Curriculum Development

Through this survey, 80% of the employers reported that they were never contacted by academia or HEIs for their inputs into curriculum development, or designing modules for skill development among university graduates.

Only 12% of the respondents mentioned that they were frequently called for their inputs on curriculum development by universities.

Industry's Willingness to Channelize Solutions

Collectively, an extremely promising 96% of business leaders from the industry exhibited a strong inclination to assist universities, including the HEC, in the curriculum development process and capacity building program (Figure 21).

The promising response of business leaders must be channelized to form educated and scalable decisions by the universities on an immediate basis so no further brain and time is lost!

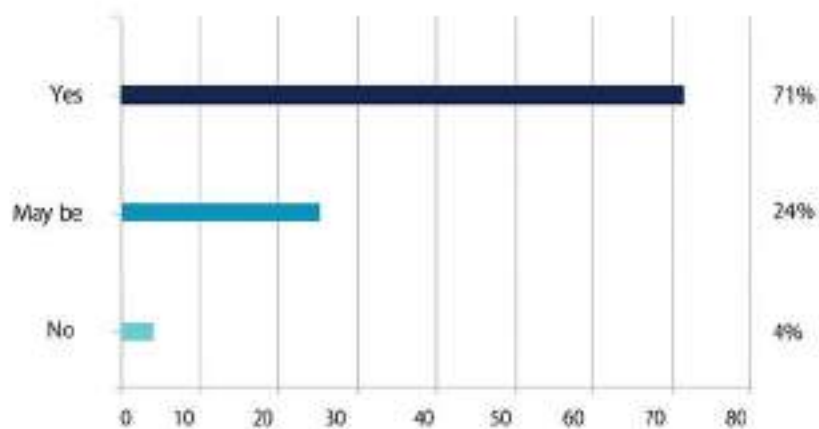


Figure 21 :Willingness Of Industry To Engage With HEIs/HEC By Nominating Individuals For Curriculum Development

The role of Career Services Offices at ORICs can be redefined as points of effective engagement and partnerships with industry and corporate leaders.

The Career Services Offices and ORICs in universities are good platforms to actively engage with the industry for curriculum development, industrial research, knowledge of latest trends, job placement of students, and for other popular activities like inviting guest speakers from industry and running recruitment drives.

However, there is a need to move beyond this!



Information Employers Seek on a Fresh Graduate's Resume

Quality of CV/Resume

This study revealed that fresh graduates are unable to produce a professional resume while spending considerable time studying for degrees in HEIs. They are also not aware of the fact that CVs are the first impressions through which decisions are made. In this study, employers have expressed their opinion on the quality of the CVs and information presented in them by the graduates.

- 77% of the employers were not satisfied with the overall quality, presentation, and presented information.
- 97% of the employers prefer a simple format with clear and concise information in a logical sequence emulating the learnt and applied skills/knowledge to any fancy formats.

97% of the employers prefer a simple format with clear and concise information in a logical sequence to any fancy formats with colors and designs.

Survey *Revelations*

1. Employers are weary of the 'Career Objectives' on CVs. They feel that mostly the statements provided sound cliché and 'not unique' to the candidate.
2. As per the employers' feedback, every 2 out of 4 candidates are found to have vague or confusing details about their education, IT skills, and job/Internship/s experience on their CV.

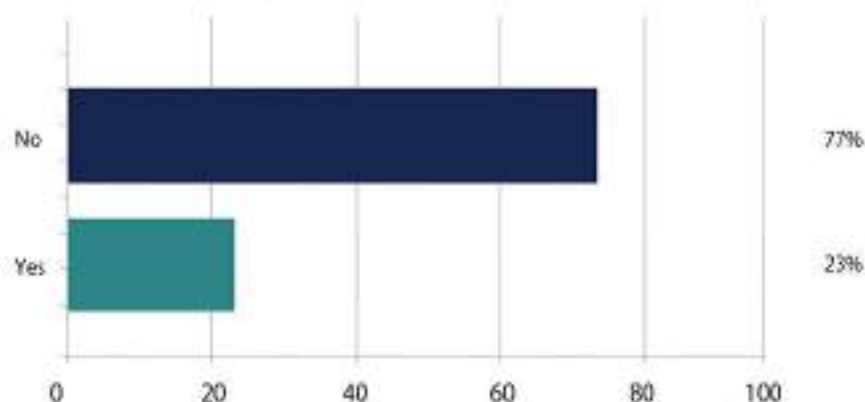


Figure 22 : Employers' Satisfaction with the Quality/Format of the Candidates' CV/Resume

Furthermore, through this study, employers were asked to elaborate on their responses and give a detailed perspective on the required elements of a fresh graduate's CV. A list of elements arranged on the basis of priority is available for the candidates to learn from.



Figure 23: Information That Employers Wish To See On CVs Of Fresh Graduates

62% - 68% of employers prioritized information on Bachelors /Master's degree obtained by the candidates, skills learned through internships and experience, and details on Final Year Project as most important (Figure 23).

Next in line, the employers gauged and placed highest importance to the acquisition of soft skills, basic IT skills, and communication skills of graduates applying for jobs in their organizations.

Candidates should highlight their education, technical knowledge gained through experience (internships), and soft skills in their CVs.

The priorities of the employers listed in this section of the study are a reminder to what industry is seeking from the universities and the graduates.

Again, the results suggest commercial awareness and a need to inculcate soft skills amongst our graduates. When graduates are more aware of the industry, they would tend to acquire knowledge and skills that are aligned with demands of the corporate sector. This will eventually reflect on their CVs as well.

5 Years Analysis – Top Ten Jobs Forecast in Pakistan (2018-2022)

Next Five Years - Jobs Demand in Pakistan (2018-2022)

The knowledge on the employability skills among university graduates and need for technical knowledge and soft skills would be incomplete without knowing which sectors of industry will be demanding professionals in the next few years. At the same time, universities and students need to know the areas where highest specialization is required.

In this context, employers were given more than 250 functional areas/skills/job titles to choose from, in which they will have job openings in their own organizations in the next five years (2018 – 2022).

- More than 55% of the employers shared that they would need Business Development Professionals in their organizations across diverse sectors (Figure 24).
- This is followed by more than 40% of the organizations that will be looking for HR Professionals and Digital Marketing Experts.

Interestingly, all of the three functional areas require excellent communication and critical thinking skills with persuasive presentation strategies.

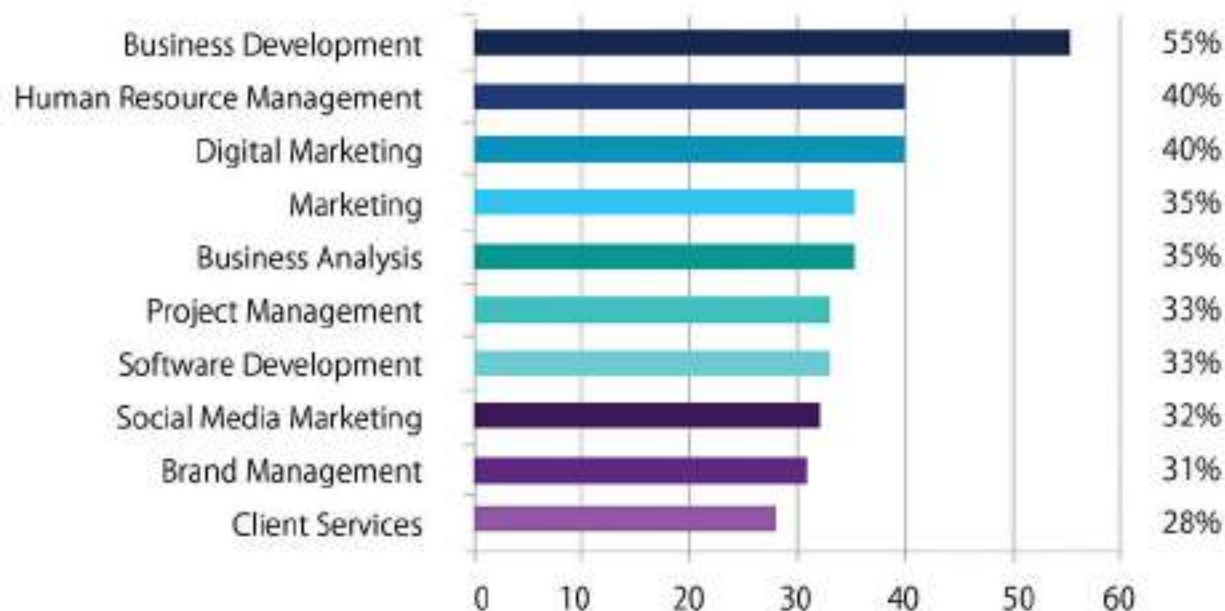


Figure 24: Jobs Demand in Pakistan (2018-2022) by Functional Area

In next five years (2018-2022), professionals will be most in demand in the areas of Business Development, Human Resource Management, Digital Marketing, Marketing and Business Analysis.

Jobs in IT/Telecoms/BPO/Call Centers

1	Business Development	62%
2	Software Development/Software Engineering	59%
3	Digital Marketing	56%
4	Mobile App Development	46%
5	IT Security	38%

Figure 25: Top Five IT/Telecom/BPO/Call Center Jobs In Demand (2018-2022)

In IT/Telecom/BPO/Call Center Industry, most of the hiring will be of Business Development, Software Engineering, Digital Marketing, Mobile App Development, and IT Security Professionals. Business Development Professionals (62%) will be in most demand in this sector.

Jobs in FMCGs/Manufacturing Industry

Business Analyst	52
Brand Management	52
Human Resource Management	48
Digital Marketing	44
Retail Operations	44
Business Development	40
Supply Chain Management	40
Accounting	36
Retail Management	35

Figure 26: Top Six Jobs In Demand In FMCG/Manufacturing (2018-2022)

In FMCG/Manufacturing industry, most of the hiring will be of Human Resource Management (62%), Business Development (59%), Marketing (45%), Supply Chain Management (45%), Accounting (41%), and Distribution and Logistics professionals (41%) in the next five years (2018-2022).

Jobs in Retail/Fashion/Hospitality/Food industry

1	Human Resource Management	62%
2	Business Development	59%
3	Marketing	45%
3	Supply Chain Management	45%
4	Accounting	41%
4	Distribution & Logistics	41%
4	Manufacturing & Operations	41%
5	Mechanical Engineering	38%
6	Industrial Production	34%

Figure 27: Top Six Jobs In Demand In Retail/Fashion/Hospitality/Food Industry (2018-2022)

In Retail/Fashion/Hospitality/Food Industry, the jobs highest in demand will be of Business Analysts, Brand Managers, HR Managers, Digital Marketing Experts, Retail Operation Managers, and Business Development Experts.

Reflections

The information provided in this section is very useful for academia, as clear demands have been put forward by the industry. It is time for the academia to respond to them.

In order to boost Pakistan's economy, it is high time that industry be supported with innovative solutions, modern techniques, and more sophistication in managing HR.

The future is about both knowledge and skills. Only individuals with relevant industry skills and technical knowledge will be able to launch themselves successfully in the corporate sector.





Conclusion

Conclusion

The review of various literatures and our findings accentuates the need and significance of industry-academia linkages. The linkages will fundamentally enhance the understanding of the employers' perception, and how to cope with the changing dynamics of market. As discussed earlier the conceptual framework of Bailly's model of employers' beliefs suggests improving the quality of education, relevance of research, and professional training of the graduates by HEIs. They will, resultantly, influence employability in national and international markets.

Definition of Employability has continuously been evolving yet all definitions, available to date, converge to the point that it is the combination of technical and soft skills that is imperative to employability. ILO clearly stated that only individuals who have soft skills would be able to enjoy career growth and life long career opportunities. Confederation of British Industry identified that employers look beyond good grades and qualifications, as right attitude and aptitude was accounted as the most significant attribute for employability.

"Employability: A Review of the Literature 2012 - 2016" by HEA reaffirms the fact that employability skills cannot be taught as a standalone subject. Rather, employability & enterprise skills need to be embedded in every subject taught at HEIs, colleges, TVET institutes and schools. Faculty members and teachers need to be made aware of these skills and should have a common framework to refer to. Teaching pedagogies and assessment methods have to be modified as per the change in need.

The inputs from experienced business and HR leaders will enhance the delivery system of skills and should be part of the HEI's reform program but not limited to surveys and reports. They should be embedded in curriculum development, instructional methods, and training priorities.

It could also be inferred that the cost of training for employers is higher when employability skills are weak; the knock-on effect impacts productivity and economic sustainability of businesses. Employability and Enterprise skills are not limited to graduates. They also reflect on those under vocational routes and alternate employment entry pathways. In other words, employability and enterprise skills have wider scopes and the economic and transformational impact is multi-dimensional.

Capacity development is a process through which individuals, organizations, and societies manage to obtain, strengthen, and maintain the competences to achieve their own developmental objectives. It reflects one of the key principles to sharpen skills and develop a human-rights-based approach: an approach that advocates gender equality, environmental sustainability, and results-based management as key forces. Because of its centrality to the development process, "collaboration" among all stakeholders is one of the core priorities of capacity development, which we have incorporated into our recommendations.

The review of literature enabled us to realize that the need to incorporate soft skills within the curriculum and instructional design is direly needed. Knowledge, skills, and abilities of the graduates must reflect the high grades they have obtained. The only way forward is by bridging the gap between industry and academia and industry. NEESDF can address this challenge as far as imparting soft skills in learners is concerned, which will not only update HEI's institutions but the results will be far reaching on individual performance and economic growth.







The Way *Forward*

Higher Education Commission may introduce policy-level reforms in higher education sector to create an enabling environment for development of capacity building in favor of change, and acknowledge the importance of employability and enterprise skills as core competency requirements.

Academia Industry Linkages

- Reform and realign higher education curriculum in conjunction with the industrial and business trends by pro-actively engaging business leaders and experts from the industry.
- Encouragement by HEC to HEIs for giving equal importance to Professor of Practice as compared to conditioned faculty members.
- Create an enabling teaching environment that works alongside industry and develops a collaborative research and commercialization of projects with the industry. This would solve practical problems of the industry.

Teaching Pedagogy & Assessment Methods

- Discourage rote memorization by changing assessment methods and techniques that encourages learners in developing greater comprehension skills, critical thinking, and analytical skills.
- Lecture based teaching to be replaced with experiential instructional methodology in an environment where teachers manifest themselves more as facilitators & mentors than as teachers.
- Local case studies to be developed and taught to make learners more commercially aware of the local market.

Employability & Enterprise Skills Development

- Make teachers aware of the industry expectations in terms of both technical and soft skills.
- Nationwide train-the-trainer workshops may be organized to train teachers how to facilitate learners to improve employability and enterprise skills.
- NEESDF may be adopted by HEC as a national framework for enterprise and employability skills development.
- Create central, regional, and city-based centers of excellence initiatives that are monitored and evaluated by multiple stakeholders.

Revamping Career Services Offices of HEIs

- National certification may be introduced to train staff involved in facilitating students at career services offices. There is a need for career services staff to be more commercially aware and be able to use technological methods for providing career counseling to students.
- Make NEESDF part of the orientation for new students so that they understand the importance of developing employability and enterprise skills apart from getting good grades.
- Rewarding students for their involvement in co & extra-curricular activities.
- Community and social work projects may be introduced on a point based system.
- Staff should keep record of learners' progress on employability and enterprise skills development from the first semester till they exit their university.
- Career services staff should also be able to provide mentoring and guidance to budding entrepreneurs alongside helping job-seekers find the right job.

Kill Fixed Roadmaps

- Except professional degrees like those of Medical and Engineering it is strongly advised that universities should stop making students follow fixed roadmaps. Students should be given liberty to study various Social Sciences or even STEM subjects of their own choice, before declaring their majors anytime before the start of 3rd or 4th semester of their undergraduate degree program.
- Student entering a university should be enrolled in the university rather than being enrolled for a specific degree program (likewise Liberal Arts Education in USA). It might be difficult for private universities to practice this, but large public sector universities may try.

Using Technology to Improve Quality in Affiliated Colleges

- HEC may shortlist country's top professors from different universities and develop online courses for each subject taught at HEIs in Pakistan.
- The online courses should be available free of charge for the students. Affiliated colleges may use them for classroom teaching as well. These lectures would also help indigenous teachers polish their teaching skills.
- Online courses may also be introduced for teachers training under HEC's faculty development institute.

The Proposed National Employability & Enterprise Skills Development Framework

This section focuses on how Pakistan can establish capacity building systems to develop a capacity to learn 21st century skills with the help of academia.

Naqeebz Consulting is the major catalyst and front line agency to lay out the framework and has made an effort to support the development and proposed Pakistan's first **National Employability & Enterprise Skills Development Framework (NEESDF)**. It emphasizes on strengthening policy frameworks, service delivery & protection systems, and aligning partner institutions.

The NEESDF will focus on designing and implementing **Employability and Enterprise Skills Development** across all sectors, and will work alongside the HEC, Provincial HECs, and HEIs in developing training modules which address the skills shortage.

NEESDF consists of 9 Core Competencies that have been developed considering the findings of this survey, HEA's Framework, University of Kent's Employability Skills Development Framework, and PCRN's National Employability Skills Framework (CTE – US Govt.).

The framework cuts across different segments - graduates, industry, and the government.

This framework will help:

Learners develop better understanding about the Importance of employability skills right from the beginning of academic year in universities. They can self-evaluate the level of each competency/skill possessed by them, and design their own improvements.

Higher Education Institutions would benefit from revamping curriculums, assessment methods, and teaching methodologies to support a better skills development.

Faculty Members would benefit from refresher programs, which incorporate various activities that will help them shift their instructional techniques from pure rote memorization to competency development of learners.

Teachers' Training by providing a lucrative teacher training to 'on job teachers' about the content delivery and students' engagement, to get the better results. This training program would also help teachers get acquainted with the content and to enhance their pedagogical skills.

Employers require a constant flow of interns and MTOs to help learners understand and focus on the areas that need improvement.

Government ministries are undergoing reforms and projects and transformational efforts require personnel who are equipped to make a difference. The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training has published National Education Policy Framework (NEPF) 2018. The report has indicated the challenges in general and in technical education system that can be highlighted as follows:

1. Poor quality and relevance of teaching and research conditions
2. Weak linkages with industry

The NEESDF competencies are aligned with the framework by the government. Both aim to strengthen linkages between the academia and industry, while bringing the higher education sector, corporate requirements, and capacity building programs under one umbrella. This will effortlessly culminate towards an industrial/ corporate Pakistan that truly reflects the productive manpower of our country.

The National Education Priorities listed in NEPF resolve to:

- Provide uniformity in educational standards
- Improve the quality of education
- Enhance access to relevant skills training

The NEESDF would help in achieving these priorities, and addressing the aforementioned challenges to contribute in the improvement of education standards by providing a common framework for employability and enterprise skills development.

As mentioned earlier NEESDF has been vetted in a focused group discussion held at HEC's Regional Center, Lahore on 5th January 2019 by 35 business, HR, and academic leaders.



Pictorial Highlights of the Focused Group Discussion Held at HEC's Regional Office to Vet Proposed National Employability & Enterprise Skills Development Framework.

Proposed National Employability and Enterprise Skills Development Framework (NEESDF)

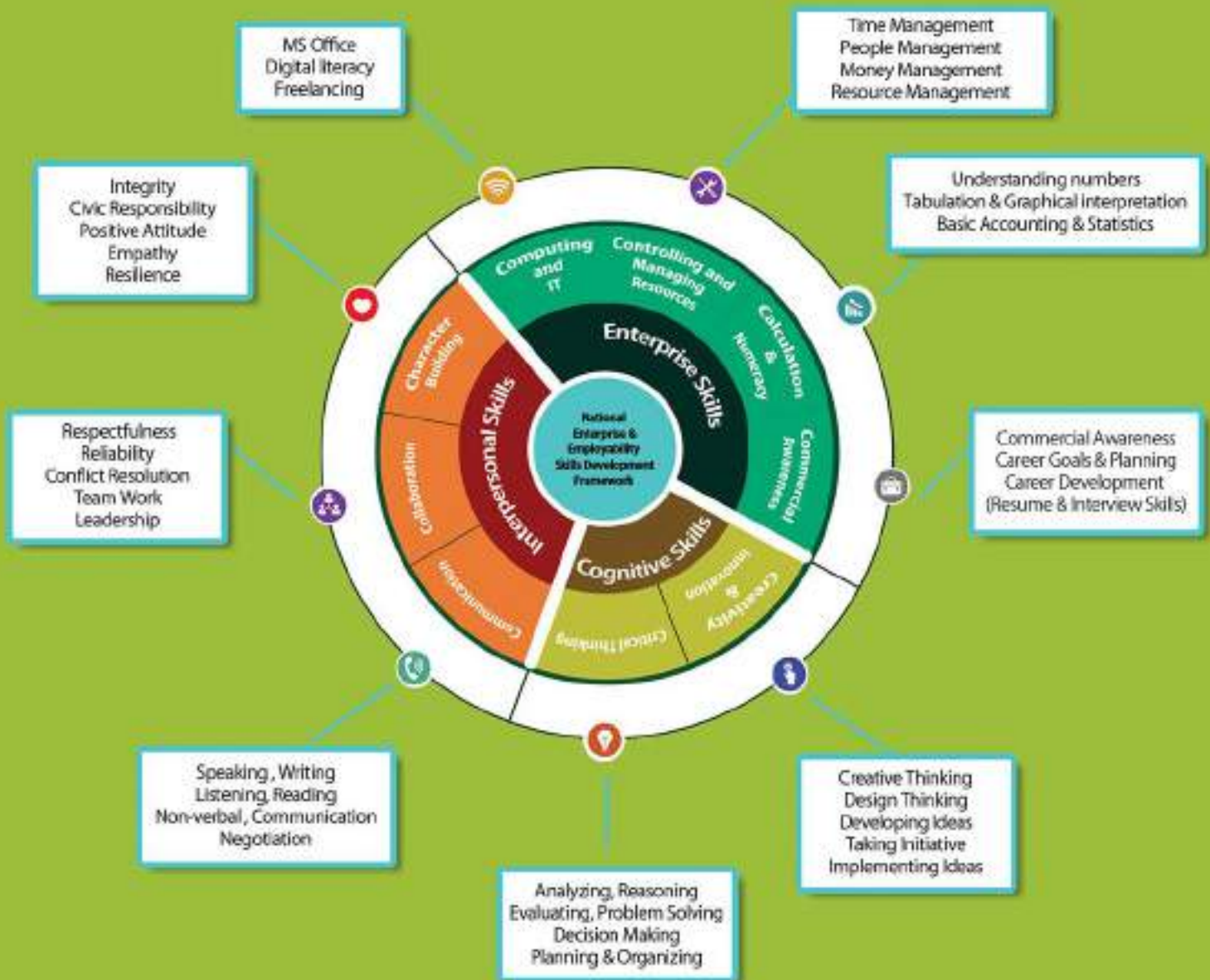


Figure 28: Proposed National Employability & Enterprise Skills Development Framework

Note: Complete framework can be obtained from Naqeebz Consulting by writing at business@naqeebz.com



Annexures

Annexure 1: Acronyms

HEC	Higher Education Commission
HEA	Higher Education Academy
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
ICT4D	Information & Communication Technologies for Development
MNCs	Multi-National Corporations
SMEs	Small Medium Enterprises
AI	Artificial Intelligence
NEESDF	National Employability & Enterprise Skills Development Framework
TESP	Tertiary Education Support Program
MTDF-HE	Medium Term Development Framework for Higher Education
IT	Information Technology
NEPF	National Education Policy Framework
FMCG	Fast-Moving Consumer Goods
HEPs	Higher Education Providers

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Annexure 3: List of Companies that Participated in the Survey

Abacus Consulting	DevSol Managed Services	INOVEDIA TECHNOLOGIES
Advans Pakistan MF Bank	DGS (TRG)	Interwood
Aga Khan Health Service Pakistan	DIN Media Group	Islamic Relief Worldwide
Agritech Limited	Dolmen Real Estate	Ittehad Life Sciences-ILS
Agro Processors & Atmospheric Gases	Eamas Private Limited	Jaans trading company
Alfalah Insurance Limited	ECC Corporate Solutions	JAZZ
Ali Gohar & Company	EFU Life Assurance Ltd	Jobs n Career
Allied Bank Limited	Emenac Pvt Ltd	Jotun Powder Coatings Pakistan Pvt Ltd
Alpha Insurance Company Limited	Engro	K Electric
Alshaheer Corporation	EPIC Consulting Group	Khushhallbank limited
American Refugee Committee	Ermine (Pvt.) Ltd.	Khyber Tobbaco Company
Arrowsol8	Exide Pakistan Limited	Lafrage Pakistan
Asian food industries	EY Ford Rhodes	Landmark Group Pvt Ltd
ASK Development	Fatima Group	Lean Automation
Askari Cement Limited Wah	Fauji Fresh N Freeze	LMKR Pakistan (Private) Limited
Ayesha Knitwear Pvt LTD	Fazleesons (Private) Limited	Macter International Limited
Bahria University	FedEx Gerrys	MAF - Carrefour
Bandhani Group	FINCA Microfinance Bank Ltd	MAS Enterprises
Bank Alfalah	FML	Maxfoster Global
Beaconhouse School System	Fresenius Medical Care	Mayfair Group Of Companies
Behbud Association Karachi	GMRIL - KFC Pakistan	MCB
Berger Paints	Gray Mackenzie Restaurants Intl Ltd	MCB Islamic Bank
Best Western Hotel Lahore	Habib Bank AG Zurich	Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)
Bling Drinking Water Company	Habib University	Medipak Limited
British Council	Haler	Metro Cash and Carry
Bulleysah	Haleeb Foods	Millat Tractors Limited
Cattle Market Management Company -	HANDS	Mindstorm Studios
Gujranwala Division	HASCOL Petroleum	MolT
Chawla Group	HG Markets (Pvt) Ltd	Mondelez Pakistan Ltd
ChenOne Stores Ltd	Himont Pharmaceuticals Pvt Ltd	MSHG Consulting
Cherat Packaging Ltd	Honeywell	Mushawar Consulting
Coca Cola Beverages Private Limited	Hotel One (Pvt) Limited	NAFFCA Group
Coca Cola Icecek	HR Metrics	NarejoHR
Coolpoint, Mah Plastic & Revive	HRPlus	National Logistics Cell
Coppergat Cables	HTA	Nayatel
Cotton Web Limited	i2c inc	NDL
Crescent	ICI Pakistan	Nes-pak
Crewlogix technologies	Idara Taleem-o-Aaghai	Nestle
CubeXS Weatherly (Pvt) Ltd	Ideas By Gulahmed	NETSOL Technologies
Daewoo Pakistan	IGI Insurance	NIB Bank Limited
Dawood Family Takaful Limited	Ignite - National Technology Fund	Nishat Mills Ltd
Deloitte Pakistan	INFOTECH	NorthBay Solutions (Pvt) Ltd
Descon Engineering	Innovation World	Norwegian Church Aid

NPPMCL
 NRS International
 Ora-tech Systems Pvt Ltd
 Orient Electronics
 Ovex Technologies (Pvt.) Ltd.
 Packages Ltd
 Pak Elektron Limited
 PAK-ARAB REFINERY LIMITED
 Pakistan Society for T&D
 Pakistan Telecommunication Authority
 Panther Tyres
 PEF
 Pepsico
 Pharmagen Limited
 Pioneer Cement Limited
 Private Power & Infrastructure Board
 Professional Employers Private Ltd
 Pronto Promo Pvt Ltd
 PSDF
 PTCL
 Punjab Social Security Health
 Management Company
 Qmobile
 R&I Electrical Appliances (Pvt) Ltd
 RA Consultants (SMC-Pvt) Ltd
 Ramada Islamabad
 Recruiter 380
 Reem Rice Mills
 Resource Linked
 Romaco Engineers
 Roshan Packages
 S&P Global Market Intelligence
 Samad Apparel
 Samad Rubber Works Pvt Ltd
 Samsung Electronics
 Samsung Mobile
 Sapphire Finishing Mills
 Sapphire Textile Mills Ltd
 Sefam Pvt Ltd
 Service Sales Corporation
 Servier Research & Pharmaceuticals
 Shakarganj Mills Limited
 Sharif Group

Shell Pakistan
 Shezan International
 Silkbank Limited
 SNGPL
 Sports Star International Pvt. Ltd.
 Sufi Group of companies
 Systems Limited
 Systronic IT Services
 Szaram HR Outsourcing & Consulting
 TEAMWORK PACKAGES
 TecnoMax International
 Telenor
 Terrabiz
 The Digital Ustaaad
 The Dynamics - Research Consultants
 The HR Consultant
 The Kidney Centre Post Graduate- Training
 Institute
 The University of Lahore
 Thermosole Industries Pvt.Ltd Lahore
 TkXel
 TNPTL
 Total Parco
 TPS Pakistan Pvt Ltd
 TRACON SERVICES PVT LTD
 Trade Optimize
 Trafco Logistics (Pvt) LTD.
 Treet Corporation
 TUSDEC
 U Microfinance Bank
 Ufone
 United Bank Limited
 United Snacks
 University of South Asia
 Uniworth (Shirt and Tie)
 US Apparel & Textile
 Voplum A/S Ltd
 YUM Group of Restaurant
 Zealcon Engineering Pvt Ltd
 Zong CMPAK
 ZOOM petroleum
 ZTE Pakistan

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