

**RESEARCH PAPER****Opportunities and Challenges Facing Entrepreneurial Education in Pakistani Universities in the Context of the Belt and Road Initiative****¹ Yin Bingquan and ² Dr. Maqbool Awan***

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***Corresponding Author:** Maqbool.awan@yahoo.com**ABSTRACT**

In 2013, China has implemented the "Belt and Road" development strategy. Pakistan is a key point of the "Belt and Road" due to its special geopolitical and geoeconomic factors. The implementation of this strategy has brought unlimited opportunities and challenges for Pakistan. With the completion of the Pakistan-China Economic Corridor, the Gwadar Port, the Kacuun Highway, subway projects and industrial parks and many major projects will be successfully completed in economic, political, cultural and energy fields. As the fifth largest country in the world, Pakistan has rich natural and labor resources. Today, entrepreneurship education is a hot topic in many universities around the world. Entrepreneurship education can help increase job opportunities and reduce national employment pressure. As an important subject of higher education, entrepreneurship education is an interesting and challenging research project for governments, colleges and universities. The majority of young people in Pakistan are gradually becoming internationalized in Pakistan. The desire of the general public and college students for self-employment is growing stronger. Pakistan and China are not only interconnected in terms of political economy, culture, and exchanges in higher education but also sending more and more international students and teachers. China's fruitful results of "mass innovation and entrepreneurship" will definitely have a positive impact on entrepreneurship in the universities in Pakistan. In this paper, the idea of Entrepreneurial education is discussed at large in term of the references of Pakistan. It also highlights the opportunities and challenges in the developing country like Pakistan. "One belt and Road" project as overwhelm inquired by the different quarters of the world will give benefits to entrepreneurial education in Pakistan. The argument is justified by the contemporary sources.

KEYWORDS CPEC, HEC, Belt & Road, Security Issues, Curriculum Management**Introduction**

Entrepreneurship education has a long international history, which originated in the early business research courses offered by the American Business School. The effect of Pakistan's entrepreneurship education has obviously improved rapidly, but it still lags behind then developed countries such as Europe, the United States and Japan (Ardichvili, et al., 2003). Pakistan's higher education has made extraordinary progress in the past few years and a large number of industrial upgrading and building construction projects have become part of Pakistan's long-term strategy. At present, the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC) has reviewed and demonstrated Pakistan's efforts to establish and strengthen the higher education system and is committed to reducing employment pressure for college graduates and solving basic issues related to people's livelihood. This initiative has a lot of opportunities and challenges facing by the universities of Pakistan. The purpose of this survey is to investigate the significance and prospects, opportunities and challenges of entrepreneurship education in Pakistan's colleges and universities in the context of the

“Belt and Road” strategy and the close exchanges between Pakistan and China. The rapid promotion of entrepreneurship education has brought new vitality to the country and economy of Pakistan. In the development of entrepreneurship education in Pakistani universities, the implementation of entrepreneurship activities is an important part of the practice of entrepreneurship development (Chandan Lal Rohra & Mumtaz Ali Junejo, 2009).

Opportunities Facing Entrepreneurship Education in Pakistani Universities under the “Belt and Road” Strategy

The "Belt and Road" overall strategy continues to advance steadily to promote Pakistan's economic environment. In 2015, Pakistan and China unanimously agreed to upgrade Pakistan-China relations to an all-weather strategic partnership, with the "Pak-China Economic Corridor" as the core and Gwadar port, energy, transportation infrastructure and industrial cooperation as the focus, forming "1 + 4" Economic cooperation layout. Today, Pakistan and China have actively expanded bilateral close contacts and cooperation, established a new type of free trade area, signed a series of documents such as the China-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement and strengthened cooperation in agriculture, transportation, finance, energy, and information industries. China is helping Pakistan in building many projects, including the highway from Gwadar to Karakoram; promoted the negotiations on the China-Pakistan free trade zone and the process of economic and trade integration between Pakistan and China. Establish a framework for energy cooperation, provide Pakistan with power supply, help Pakistan cope with the energy crisis and promote bilateral cooperation in the fields of conventional energy, renewable energy and civil nuclear (Nadeem Ul Haq, 2007).

The construction of the “Belt and Road” has enabled the two countries to build a network of ports, highways, railways and other infrastructure and its smooth implementation is beneficial to the development of the two countries along with the route. Since the implementation of the “Belt and Road” initiative, many achievements have been made. The acquisition of the right to operate Gwadar Port is of great significance for the future development of China and Pakistan. Judging from the overall progress, “Belt and Road” strategy has been smoothly promoted and the close economic, political, and cultural exchanges between Pakistan and China have provided Pakistan with a good investment environment. In recent years, Pakistan’s foreign-funded enterprises have gradually increased. Despite policy challenges and an unstable entrepreneurial environment, the entrepreneurial trend is gradually growing. Young entrepreneurs have made remarkable achievements in the technology, entertainment, living services industry and other fields (Syed Sheheyar & Muhammad, 2016).

Pakistan's Trend towards International Development

As a developing country, Pakistan is facing the problems of poverty, unemployment and low economic growth rates. The Pakistani people are eager for a stable and efficient government to lead the people and move towards the path of internationalization. Especially in recent years, the development of e-commerce, logistics and the electronics industry, major social media have had a positive impact on the Pakistani people and trade with China. As people get closer, many people are eager to change the face of poverty and backwardness through means such as employment and entrepreneurship. It is even more difficult for less developed countries like Pakistan, where the government does not have sufficient funds to support the unemployed workforce and self-employment and entrepreneurship are the best ways to solve their problem. The age structure of Pakistan's population is very young. Of course, this is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, they are young, energetic, capable of innovation and desire to enhance their future; on the other hand, they will create serious socio-economic problems for the country in term of unemployment. In order to survive in the labor market, young people in Pakistan are fighting some serious social constraints, such as unemployment, long working hours, low wages, low education, lack of experience and

ability. About 52% of young people do not have access to the labor market, and 22% of them are not employed. Entrepreneurship activities are the key to promoting economic development and solving employment problems. In this sense, it needs people with entrepreneurial ideas and capabilities to take entrepreneurship to a higher level.

Therefore, Pakistan higher education institutions pay more attention to entrepreneurship education and increase the opportunities for the young generation to start their own businesses. These opportunities will ultimately reduce unemployment and promote national economic development. The public and private sectors must provide a good environment for international entrepreneurs, as in new countries such as Britain, United States and China enable them to start businesses in Pakistan. Pakistan should actively map out a blueprint for entrepreneurial activity, which is one of the most important ways to eradicate poverty and unemployment in Pakistan (Donald F. Kuratko, 2005).

Pakistan Higher Education Council Attaches Importance to Entrepreneurship Education

Pakistan's higher education has made extraordinary progress and a large number of industrial upgrading and building construction projects have become part of Pakistan's long-term strategy. Currently Pakistan Higher Education Commission has reviewed and documented Pakistan's efforts to establish and strengthen the higher education system. The number of entrepreneurship courses in Pakistan has been increasing over the past few years. Interestingly, the number of entrepreneurship courses have continued to rise despite the growing political challenges and unstable business environment. Past facts show that in Pakistan, the status of entrepreneurs usually means representing an informal sector or a small venture capital, no matter how important they make up our daily life. Unfortunately their presence and role constantly overlooked in our socioeconomic policies. Over the past decade, despite being in a fragile economic environment, these organizations have successfully demonstrated their growth and space based on the functions and operations that these organizations typically control. Only a handful of organizations have achieved this dramatic growth, so that they are no longer embarrassed to deal with local affairs, but have expanded their wings to use local knowledge to meet global challenges. However, this requires higher business education and the organization community to focus on a more dynamic, broader and more solid educational structure that enables students to transform from strong learners to strong entrepreneurs. Educational settings should assist entrepreneurs in a variety of ways, designed to instill ideas about how to build a business, discover and establish a business philosophy with specific market requirements and business strategies. The Belt and Road Initiative, internationalization and the Pakistan-China Economic Corridor urgently need to solve social problems and achieve the economic growth (Manzoor & Mohar, 2016).

Challenges to Entrepreneurship Education in Pakistani Universities under the "One Belt One Road" Strategy

Impact of Pakistan's Political Security Environment

Pakistan has always faced an unstable socio-political and socio-economic conditions. The construction of the Pakistan-China economic corridor will definitely face a series of risks and challenges. During the construction process, terrorist forces are still a major hidden danger that threatens the safety of builders. The construction of the "Brazil-China Economic Corridor" is an important part of the "Belt and Road" construction. If the development is not as expected, "Belt and Road" process will be affected. Therefore, high vigilance is required to prevent risk.

At the same time, a comprehensive approach is needed to deal with various problems. Although many efforts have been made to enhance entrepreneurial activity in

Pakistan, these efforts have not brought the expected results as unstable political conditions are the main obstacle to implementing the strategy. In addition to this, law and order, political turmoil are further dilemmas. The main problem is inflation. There is almost no ambiguity about the role and importance of entrepreneurship in the socio-economic, economic and social development in any corner of society. The government needs to help potential entrepreneurs create small-scale businesses by providing free consulting services and soft loans. In Pakistan, they have not played their specific role in developing entrepreneurship because they are not sufficient to provide a good business environment. This environment aims to promote social progress and economic expansion with better incomes, better human growth and better levels of human happiness than before. This is all why bad politics keeps them away from good governance. Pakistan is a small country in the global competitive market and it is becoming increasingly important to develop a strong and dynamic entrepreneurial community. Many international surveys have found that Pakistan has a strong potential to become an entrepreneurial country, but there are also problems that hinder it (Asif, 2018).

The Reform and Development of Entrepreneurship Education lags behind

Compared with the developed countries in the early stage of entrepreneurship education in the United States and Japan, Pakistan's entrepreneurship education reform is obviously lagging behind. Entrepreneurship activities are still limited and the true maturity in the field of entrepreneurship education needs to be improved. It is necessary to improve and develop young entrepreneurship education colleges. Collective efforts will encourage the School of Entrepreneurship Education to take this discipline to another stage. The importance of entrepreneurship education in business schools plays an important role in developing curriculum, research and teachers. Both young teachers and experienced teachers need to join forces to climb another peak to make entrepreneurship education reach to reasonable height. It is difficult to popularize innovation-based entrepreneurship in higher education.

There are two types of entrepreneurship courses in universities: professional degree courses for new students who want to become entrepreneurs and training courses for potential entrepreneurs to increase efficiency. Entrepreneurship degree programs in universities are not exciting. Entrepreneurship degree programs have not yet attracted to young students, partly because degrees do not guarantee entrepreneurial success. Although a management degree has never offered a similar guarantee. Graduates in management majors do not bear the risk of catastrophic failure when entrepreneurial graduates start a business. In this culture of risk avoidance, universities cannot teach students to treat failure as merely as an option. In fact, the development of entrepreneurship in China is similar to that in Pakistan, which is reflected in their less emphasis on fostering innovation. The status of professional skills and entrepreneurial capabilities is not clear and the intensity of entrepreneurship practice is insufficient. Second, entrepreneurship education courses in colleges and universities are very difficult to attract entrepreneurs in the environment like Pakistan (Ali & khushid).

Weak Educational Resources and Training

On the one hand, there is a shortage of teachers in entrepreneurship education. On the other hand, there is a lack of doctoral entrepreneurship programs to provide sufficient teachers in the field of entrepreneurship education. The fact is that Pakistan need more business schools to develop sound PhD programs in the field of entrepreneurship. HEC has to support this effort as part of its mission. If business schools do not develop PhDs in entrepreneurship programs, then teachers in entrepreneurship courses can only develop the education courses they need and it is not practical. In this way, the lack of teachers can only rely on recruiting more teachers, developing stronger networks and doing exchange projects with schools that already have strong entrepreneurial education backgrounds and

have competitive and high-quality teachers. In Pakistan, innovation and risk are severely curtailed by government involvement in the market. Protection and subsidy policies determine the winners in the market and entrepreneurship has shifted to seeking government help. Deregulation in this area can effectively promote economic growth. Land allocation and urban area planning management policies are also changing to further strengthen the success rate of retail leasing (Abir & Muhammad , 2015).

Women's Role in Society

Pakistan is a small country in the global competitive market and it is becoming increasingly important to develop a strong and dynamic entrepreneurial community. Many international surveys have calculated that Pakistan has a strong potential to become an entrepreneurial country, but there are also problems that hinder it. The first is the non-stepped wealth of entrepreneurs. This overconfidence and lack of understanding of proper business technology has led many businesses to failure. The second problem that prevents Pakistani entrepreneurship is that many women do not have the opportunity to cultivate a successful business. In Pakistan, women entrepreneurs do not enjoy the same opportunities as men due to the influence of some deeply entrenched sociocultural values and traditions. These limitations may be observed in support mechanisms that help these emerging business women. They suffer from the inability to obtain funding, land, business premises, information technology, training and institutional assistance. The traditional view of society is that men are higher than women and women are best suited to challenge the role of housewives. Women also get a little encouragement from male family members as they have limited geographic mobility. For the success of entrepreneurship it is necessary that business women get more chances of business (Jawad Syed, 2010).

The Entrepreneurial Education System is uneven in Pakistan

In Pakistan, all policies tend to favour of elite class. This is even more evident for economic policies that favor large institutions. The development of such institutions depends on the stimulation of rent-seeking behavior rather than entrepreneurial activities. To some extent, the development of small institutions reflects the characteristics of entrepreneurship, but such institutions have grown mainly in the form of informal sectors, and the state has to protect its beloved children, the large formal sector, they have been surrounded for a long time develop in this environment. Policy has not considered entrepreneurship, but investors and investment projects, which has become a norm. The stimulus to attract investment includes the monopoly of protected market concessions, cheap land, loans and fundings. According to the rules of entrepreneurship, it can be seen that Pakistani entrepreneurship is deeply hindered by government policies, laws and management. The government often has the stereotyped idea that investment at the large industry level leads towards entrepreneurship. In this way, it is impossible to promote the development of real entrepreneurship, but only to promote monopoly and rent seeking. For the first time in the past few years, the entrepreneurial class in Pakistan has been on the rise. This trend was discovered by media and bloggers in Pakistan and abroad. Interestingly, despite the policy challenges and the unstable entrepreneurial environment, the entrepreneurial trend is growing. Young entrepreneurs have made remarkable achievements in the technology, entertainment, living services industry and other fields.

It is worth learning that some colleges and universities have improved employment and entrepreneurship by adjusting innovative entrepreneurship training programs and popularizing science and technology (Yaseen, Afridi, & Muzaffar, 2017). However, the mixed system of higher education inevitably leads to a shortage of professionals, which cannot meet the requirements of domestic and foreign enterprises. Regional disparities remain between the rich and the poor. Especially in rural areas, regional development imbalances are obvious. The development of entrepreneurship education in rural colleges and universities is slow, and it needs to be developed urgently. It is necessary to establish

vocational courses based on rural areas and realize entrepreneurship in rural areas. In Pakistan, although many colleges and universities are located in rural and remote areas, many students drop out at the undergraduate level. Many young people move to cities and are permanently unemployed or semi-unemployed. In addition, their families still live in poverty. Therefore, it is important that we investigate the relationship between the current education system and the rural environment. The education process is closely related to the country's production and employment. In order to meet the needs of life, the purpose of education is action, not knowledge. It is necessary to ensure that the rural population has a low school attendance rate and to adapt to the needs of rural areas for agriculture, services and other industries, and to adjust the curriculum of institutions of higher education to reduce the number of irrational rural migrants. The problem of entrepreneurship in rural areas needs urgent solution (Jospeh, 2012).

Solutions

Regarding issues related to entrepreneurship education in Pakistan, this research proposes the following suggestions and reference strategies to help establish a university environment conducive to entrepreneurship education.

- First, establish a complete entrepreneurial education network system. Only establishing and maintaining a network of entrepreneurial education in different organizations can lay the foundation for the further development of entrepreneurial education. In order to ensure a broad foundation for entrepreneurship education, the exchange of entrepreneurship education courses in Pakistani colleges and universities is encouraged to encourage the development and dissemination of knowledge.
- Second, strengthen international cooperation in entrepreneurship education. In order to make entrepreneurship education consistent with international practice. It is necessary to carry out some transnational practices and establish cooperation with foreign universities in some projects and research. Colleges and universities should establish and absorb quality-assured entrepreneurship education.
- Third, promote the reform of entrepreneurship education curriculum. Continuous improvement of courses can promote knowledge change, as these courses are the base for the integration of entrepreneurship education.
- Fourth, it is necessary to train high-quality teachers. Regardless of whether it is a university or a training institution, whether it is on-the-job or pre-service education, it is necessary to train capable teachers and carry out entrepreneurship teaching and training. Therefore, it is the need of time to provide regular training to teachers, while supporting and strengthening the teaching of entrepreneurship education.
- Fifth The local education department can provide this training and the national education department should ensure that the local education department can provide this training to teachers. In order to further strengthen the training of teachers, local entrepreneurs can be invited to share their experiences during the training. Developing college entrepreneurship courses can effectively promote the idea of doing businesses on large and small scale. Although entrepreneurship has a significant role in rapidly changing the socio-economic situation of the world, Pakistan, as a developing country, still seems to be staying in its initial stage of entrepreneurial thinking. Therefore, university authorities should consider offering such courses at the departmental, colleg or university level.

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