



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**The Impact of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor on the  
Employment and Entrepreneurship of Pakistani College Students**

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**ABSTRACT**

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is an important outcome of cooperation between China and Pakistan and has had a profound impact on Pakistan's economic and social development. The construction of the corridor has brought more economic opportunities and development prospects to Pakistan, and provided broader employment and entrepreneurship space for college students. However, this impact is also accompanied by a series of challenges, including poor employment channels and an unfavorable entrepreneurial environment. The main objective of this research article is to trace out background and construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, analyzes its impact on the employment and entrepreneurship of Pakistani college students, discusses the opportunities and challenges, and proposes countermeasures. Through the analysis and outlook of the actual situation, the government and relevant departments can be better guided to take effective measures to promote the sustainable development of employment and entrepreneurship among Pakistani college students. The methodological approach is the comparative study between the Pakistan and China economic corridor impacts. It is highly recommended that college students to be engaged in entrepreneurship at a larger scale.

**KEYWORDS** China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, Pakistan, College Students, Employment and Entrepreneurship

**Introduction**

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is an important part of China's "Belt and Road Initiative" and aims to strengthen economic cooperation and exchanges between China and Pakistan. As one of the important nodes, Pakistan plays an important role in the construction of economic corridors. The construction of the economic corridor not only affects Pakistan's infrastructure and economic development, but also brings new opportunities and challenges to the employment and entrepreneurship of Pakistani college students. This article aims to deeply explore the impact and mechanism of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor on the employment and entrepreneurship of Pakistani college students (Shah, et al. 2020). The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is an important part of China's "Belt and Road Initiative" and aims to strengthen economic cooperation and exchanges between China and Pakistan. The corridor was proposed in 2013 and announced by Chinese President Xi Jinping in his speech to the Pakistani Parliament, marking the further strengthening and deepening of relations between the two countries (Muzaffar, et. al. 2018). The plan of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor includes infrastructure construction, energy, transportation, information and communications and other fields to promote economic development and trade in areas along the route (Arif, et al, 2021)

The construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is divided into two parts: the western line and the eastern line. The western line is mainly concentrated in the western region of Pakistan, including highway construction from Karachi to Peshawar, railway construction from Peshawar to Sugin, Gwadar port expansion and other projects; the eastern line focuses on highways and railways from Lahore to Karachi and Construction of economic zones. These projects aim to improve Pakistan's infrastructure, promote economic development, and improve people's livelihood. In addition to infrastructure construction, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor also covers energy cooperation, trade facilitation, people-to-people and cultural exchanges and other fields. In terms of energy cooperation, China and Pakistan have cooperated in building a series of coal-fired and hydropower projects to solve Pakistan's long-standing power shortage problem. At the same time, the two sides have also strengthened trade cooperation, simplified trade procedures, and promoted the development of bilateral trade. In terms of people-to-people and cultural exchanges, the two countries have strengthened exchanges and cooperation in education, culture, tourism and other fields, enhancing the understanding and friendship between the two peoples. In general, the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is not only of great significance to Pakistan's economic and social development, but also provides new opportunities and motivation for the deepening and consolidation of relations between China and Pakistan (Rehman, et al, 2021).

Do the megaprojects present a chance or a risk to small and micro businesses? Seldom is this subject explored in the literature. The specific question that this study seeks to answer is whether large-scale initiatives like economic corridors improve or limit the options available to micro and small businesses. We are using the case study of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a multibillion-dollar investment project in Pakistan funded by China as part of its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), to examine the effects of the mega project on the performance of micro and small enterprises (MSEs). While analyzing how a transportation infrastructure project affects many socioeconomic aspects, stressed the importance of keeping an eye on how megaprojects affect the areas around them. The CPEC has made significant investments in communication, power, and infrastructure, making northern Pakistan more traveler-friendly. As a result, there are now more tourists visiting the area. This research attempts to investigate the relationship between this tourism and micro-entrepreneurs, and to determine if it is a threat or a sign of new opportunities brought about by the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) (Rahim, et. al 2018). Rapidly expanding micro and small businesses (MSEs) are seen to be crucial for the development of less developed countries. Sometimes, MSEs' quick expansion turns into a barrier that reduces their ability to survive in the market. For example, heightened rivalry in the tourism sector presents a chance for big businesses to take control of the market by driving out smaller competitors. According to Kirsten and Rogerson, big businesses are controlling the market in developing nations, which pushes out smaller businesses in the tourism industry. Other than that, a lot of small businesses lack management expertise and inadequate planning. Some businesses lack the time and resources necessary to carry out plans and adhere to them effectively.

### **Literature Review**

China Pakistan has remained of the mainstream research all over the world after the 2013. A plethora literature is produced in the for the business and development of the CPEC. Some of the peer reviewed articles are reviewed to understand the importance of China Pakistan Economic Corridor. Pakistan is currently a developing nation with many economic, noneconomic, technological, educational, and infrastructure issues as

well as low skilled workers, high tax rates, and subpar residential assets. To accelerate the rate of economic growth, officials and legislators are creating a variety of development initiatives. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is the most ambitious of these projects. When President General Pervez Musharraf and President Hu Jintao met in Beijing in 2003, CPEC was formally announced. It is a component of the One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative, which the Chinese government launched in 2013 (Kanwal, Chong & Pitafi, 2019). The massive investment project known as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has expedited Pakistan's socioeconomic development. One important industry that will be improved as part of CPEC is higher education in Pakistan. Higher education cooperation between China and Pakistan has grown since the 2015 signing of the CPEC agreement. Beijing is providing Chinese language instruction, scholarships, and career training to young people from Pakistan. It is also opening doors for academic and research cooperation. This research aims to investigate how China uses higher education as a tool of soft power to boost its stature and influence in Pakistan. It makes the case that increased collaboration in education is promoting professor and student mobility between China and Pakistan as well as cross-cultural relationships. (Bashir, Noreen & Awan, 2022).

Pakistan is not an exception, despite the fact that this is a global phenomenon. The youth population, which makes up the largest segment, has serious developmental issues. Pakistan has the tenth largest labor force in the world, with around 4 million youth reaching working age annually. Pakistan has a higher rate of youth unemployment than a number of other South Asian nations. World Bank (2020) reports that a deficiency in employment skills prevents millions of Pakistani youths from entering the workforce each year. Furthermore, Pakistan ranks 125th out of 141 countries in the 2019 World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report, indicating that it has one of the lowest levels of human capital capabilities (Ahmed, et al, 2022).

### **Analysis of the current situation of employment and entrepreneurship among Pakistani college students**

As a developing country, Pakistan's economic status and employment situation are affected by many factors. In this context, college students' employment and entrepreneurship face many challenges and opportunities. First of all, Pakistan's education system is relatively backward. Although there are some excellent higher education institutions, the overall level still lags behind that of developed countries. This means that college students face greater competitive pressure in the job market. Secondly, Pakistan's economic situation is not optimistic. It has long been affected by terrorism, political instability and other problems, resulting in slow economic development and limited employment opportunities. Especially in rural areas and poor areas, young people's employment pressure is more prominent. In this economic environment, college students often face the dilemma of lack of employment opportunities and low wages (Rathore, Khan & Chawla, 2020).

At the same time, Pakistan's social culture also has an impact on college students' employment and entrepreneurship. The traditional concept is that the purpose of studying is to find a stable job, not to start a business or start a business on your own. Therefore, many college students prefer to choose stable employment rather than the risks of starting a business. This concept inhibits the cultivation and development of entrepreneurial awareness to a certain extent. However, despite facing many challenges, there are also some positive factors and opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship among Pakistani college students. First of all, with the development of information technology and the process of globalization, some emerging industries in

Pakistan, such as information technology and software development, have gradually emerged, providing more employment opportunities for college students. Especially in urban areas, some foreign-funded enterprises and innovative enterprises have a growing demand for talents. Sher, et al, 2019).

With the government's policy support and the improvement of the entrepreneurial environment, more and more college students are beginning to realize the importance of entrepreneurship and try to turn their creativity and ideas into reality. The government provides a series of support policies and entrepreneurial funds for entrepreneurs to encourage young people to actively participate in entrepreneurial activities. As a country with a large population, Pakistan has huge market potential. In the context of accelerated urbanization, market demand continues to expand, providing college students with a broader space for employment and entrepreneurship. Especially driven by the Belt and Road Initiative, Pakistan's economic and trade cooperation with China and other countries has become increasingly close, providing more opportunities and platforms for Pakistani college students to start their own businesses. To sum up, Pakistani college students face many challenges in employment and entrepreneurship, but there are also many opportunities and potentials. The government, social and educational departments should strengthen policy support and training guidance to guide college students to establish correct entrepreneurial concepts and stimulate entrepreneurial potential, thereby promoting Pakistan's economic development and social progress (Arif, et al, 2019).

### **The impact of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor on the employment and entrepreneurship of Pakistani college students**

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is an important part of China's "Belt and Road Initiative" and aims to strengthen cooperation and exchanges between China and Pakistan in the fields of economy, trade, infrastructure construction and other fields. As an important economic project in Pakistan, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has had a profound impact on the employment and entrepreneurship of Pakistani college students. Here's an exploration of this impact:

First, the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has created a large number of job opportunities for Pakistan. With the advancement of infrastructure construction, many related industries such as construction, transportation, logistics, etc. are facing development opportunities. The booming development of these industries provides a wealth of employment options for college students, especially those with relevant professional backgrounds, such as graduates of engineering, construction, logistics management and other majors (Rauf, et al, 2018).

Second, the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has driven the development of various domestic fields in Pakistan and stimulated economic growth and industrial upgrading. This kind of economic growth will inevitably lead to the expansion of the job market and provide more employment opportunities for college students. At the same time, economic prosperity also means more entrepreneurial opportunities. Many college students can take advantage of the construction of economic corridors to start their own companies and participate in economic construction.

Third, the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has promoted the development of technology and human resources in Pakistan. During the construction process, a large number of technical and managerial talents are required to participate, which provides a broader employment space for Pakistani college graduates.

Pakistani college students have the opportunity to participate in the learning and application of advanced technologies, improve their skill levels, and enhance their employment competitiveness (Sher, et al, 2019).

Fourth, the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor also brings opportunities for cultural exchanges and personnel mobility. Pakistani college students have the opportunity to communicate and cooperate with students from China and other countries, learn about entrepreneurial concepts and experiences in different cultural backgrounds, expand their horizons, and enhance their confidence and ability to start a business.

However, it should be noted that the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor also faces some challenges and problems, such as funding sources, safety issues, environmental protection and other considerations. These problems may have a certain impact on the progress of the project, which in turn affects the opportunities and environment for employment and entrepreneurship.

In summary, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has had a positive impact on the employment and entrepreneurship of Pakistani college students. By providing employment opportunities, promoting economic development, and promoting talent training, economic corridors have created more development opportunities and space for young people in Pakistan. However, in order to better utilize the opportunities in the economic corridor, the government and all sectors of society need to work together to provide college students with a better entrepreneurial environment and development platform (Khan, et al, 2020).

### **The challenges of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor to the employment and entrepreneurship of Pakistani college students**

As a major regional cooperation initiative, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has brought opportunities and challenges to the employment and entrepreneurship of Pakistani college students. This initiative aims to strengthen the economic ties between China and Pakistan and promote the economic development of both parties through infrastructure construction, trade and investment. However, the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor also faces many challenges, which have an impact on the employment and entrepreneurship of Pakistani college students.

#### **Opportunities**

1. Increased employment opportunities: The construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has created a large number of employment opportunities for Pakistan. As infrastructure construction advances, a large number of labor forces are required to participate, providing a wealth of employment options for young people in Pakistan.
2. Technology transfer and talent training: China has introduced advanced technology and management experience in the construction of economic corridors, which provides Pakistani college students with opportunities to learn and apply. Through cooperation with Chinese companies, young people in Pakistan can be exposed to international advanced technologies and improve their professional skills and management levels.
3. Improvement of the entrepreneurial environment: The construction of the economic corridor has promoted the development of Pakistan's domestic market and stimulated the growth of entrepreneurial activities. Under this background,

Pakistani college students have more opportunities to start their own businesses and realize their self-worth.

### Challenges

- a. The pressure of competition for employment has increased. As job opportunities increase, competition in the job market has become more intense. Pakistani college students are facing competition from domestic and foreign countries and need to have higher professionalism and innovation capabilities to stand out in the fierce competition.
- b. Insufficient matching of employment skills. Although the economic corridor provides more employment opportunities for Pakistani college students, the skills of some college students do not match market demand, making it more difficult to find employment. Pakistan's education system needs to pay more attention to the cultivation of practical abilities and vocational skills to improve the employment competitiveness of college students.
2. The entrepreneurial environment is unstable. Although the entrepreneurial environment has improved, Pakistan still has problems such as political instability and high security risks, which have a certain impact on college students' entrepreneurial intentions and actions. The government needs to take effective measures to improve the stability and predictability of the entrepreneurial environment and encourage more young people to join entrepreneurship.
3. There is a lack of financial support for employment and entrepreneurship. Financial support in the entrepreneurial process is one of the key factors. However, Pakistan's banking system is relatively weak, and it is difficult for college students to obtain sufficient financial support for entrepreneurship. The government and financial institutions can increase financial support for entrepreneurial projects, lower the threshold for entrepreneurship, and attract more college students to participate in entrepreneurial actions.

In general, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor provides a wealth of opportunities and challenges for Pakistani college students' employment and entrepreneurship. By rationally utilizing these opportunities while effectively coping with challenges, young people in Pakistan can better achieve their career development goals and contribute to the country's economic prosperity and social stability.

### Response strategies and policy suggestions

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has provided new opportunities and challenges for the employment and entrepreneurship of Pakistani college students, and a series of solutions need to be adopted to deal with them. Here are the solutions to this problem:

- a. Strengthen the reform of the education system. Pakistan's education system needs to undergo in-depth reforms to cultivate talents that are more suitable for market needs. We should attach great importance to practical teaching and vocational skills training, strengthen cooperation projects with enterprises, and improve students' practical operational abilities and professional qualities. At the same time, entrepreneurship education courses are introduced to cultivate students' innovative spirit and entrepreneurial ability, laying a good foundation for their future employment and entrepreneurship.
- b. Establish a sound entrepreneurship support system. The government can establish a more complete entrepreneurship support system to provide entrepreneurial

guidance, training, consulting and other services to Pakistani college students. This includes establishing entrepreneurial incubators and technology parks to provide entrepreneurs with office space, financial support, mentorship and other resources. At the same time, the government can also encourage more college students to engage in entrepreneurship and reduce their entrepreneurial risks through tax cuts, loan guarantees, etc.

2. Strengthen cooperation and exchanges with Chinese enterprises. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor provides opportunities for Pakistani university students to cooperate with Chinese enterprises. The government can strengthen cooperation and exchanges with Chinese enterprises and promote technology transfer and talent training. By organizing internship exchanges and holding technical training, Pakistani college students can have a deeper understanding of international advanced technology and management experience, and improve their professional level and competitiveness.
3. Indirectly promote policy and system reform. In order to adapt to the needs of economic development and alleviate employment pressure, the government needs to promote relevant policy and system reform and create a good entrepreneurial environment. This includes simplifying the entrepreneurial process, lowering the threshold for starting a business, and strengthening intellectual property protection. The government can also increase support for innovation and entrepreneurship projects and encourage more college students to actively participate in entrepreneurial activities. At the same time, we should strengthen the publicity and training of laws and regulations to improve college students' legal awareness and risk prevention capabilities (Kumar, et al, 2022).
4. Strengthen international cooperation and exchanges. Pakistan can strengthen international cooperation and exchanges with other countries and absorb more international experience and resources. By holding international entrepreneurship competitions and organizing international entrepreneurship exchange activities, we can promote exchanges and cooperation between Pakistani college students and their international counterparts, and expand their international vision and cooperation space.

In summary, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has provided new opportunities and challenges for the employment and entrepreneurship of Pakistani college students. It requires the joint efforts of the government, enterprises and all sectors of society to adopt a series of positive and effective solutions to create a better environment for the employment and entrepreneurship of Pakistani college students. Good environment and conditions (Shahriar, et al, 2018).

## **Conclusion**

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has a profound impact on the employment and entrepreneurship of Pakistani college students, and it also presents a series of challenges and opportunities. Through a comprehensive analysis of these impacts, we can draw the following conclusions and prospects. First of all, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor provides more employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for Pakistani college students. With the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, more and more Chinese companies have entered the Pakistani market, bringing new impetus to Pakistan's economic development. This provides Pakistani college students with more employment options and a broader stage for their entrepreneurship. Secondly, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor also brings some challenges and problems. There are many problems in Pakistan's education system and job market. College students face many difficulties in finding employment and

entrepreneurship, including poor employment channels, unfavorable entrepreneurial environment, and insufficient entrepreneurial funds. In addition, the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has also brought about problems such as environmental pollution and resource waste, which have had a certain impact on Pakistan's society and ecological environment.

While facing these challenges, we also see huge development potential and opportunities. Pakistan is rich in human and natural resources and has huge development potential. The construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor provides Pakistan with a historic opportunity to promote the transformation and upgrading of Pakistan's economy and promote the sustainable development of employment and entrepreneurship. In general, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has an important impact on the employment and entrepreneurship of Pakistani college students, bringing both new opportunities and new challenges. We should fully realize these impacts, actively respond to challenges, seize opportunities, and create a better environment and conditions for the employment and entrepreneurship of Pakistani college students.

### **Recommendations**

Pakistani college students' employment and entrepreneurship have benefited from the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Economic corridors have given young people in Pakistan greater development possibilities and space by fostering employment prospects, talent training, and economic development. However, collaboration between the government and all spheres of society is necessary to give college students a better entrepreneurial environment and growth platform so they can take full advantage of the opportunities in the economic corridor. It is imperative for the countries to give more space to the young business firms.



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