Gallup Pakistan Analysis of
Economic Census 2024

Sectoral Distribution

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Trade & Services Dominate Pakistan's Business Landscape; Manufacturing Smaller Than Services, Education & Health Show Social Depth

Islamabad, September 18th, 2025

Gallup Pakistan, as part of its Big Data Analysis initiative, presents the third release in its series on the Economic Census 2023/24, conducted by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). This release highlights the sectoral distribution of Pakistan's 7.14 million economic establishments, showing how trade and services dominate the enterprise landscape, while manufacturing, agriculture, education, and health reveal the structural balance of the economy.

What is the Big Data Analysis Series by Gallup?

Gallup Pakistan's Big Data series was started by Bilal I Gilani, Executive Director of Gallup Pakistan. Bilal explains the rationale of the series: "*The usual complaint from academics and policy makers is that Pakistan does not have data availability. Our experience negates that. Pakistan has lots of data, but it is not available in a usable form and not widely accessible. At Gallup we plan to bridge this gap in terms of accessibility and use of data. The Gallup Big Data series has earlier worked with data sets such as [PSLM,](#) [Labour Force Survey, and](#) [Economic Survey reports](#) as well [as National Census Reports](#) and [Election Commission Data](#) [sets](#). The current series is using the [Global Burden of Disease dataset](#), which provides a variety of health-related statistics. We hope that these series are useful, and we welcome both feedback as well as possible collaborations as we create a public good in the form of useful data sets in Pakistan.*"

What data points this current edition covers:

The Economic Census provides, for the first time, a detailed provincial breakdown of all establishments. This distribution is crucial for policymakers and researchers to understand regional economic strengths, disparities, and opportunities.

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PTrade & Services Dominate Pakistan's Business Landscape; Manufacturing Smaller Than Services, Education & Health Show Social Depth

Wholesale & Retail Trade:
3,223,227 establishments;
7,443,985 persons engaged.

Agriculture, forestry & fishing:
1,102,497 establishments;
2,231,990 persons engaged.

Manufacturing:
696,558 establishments;
3,175,433 persons engaged.

Education:
326,868 establishments;
5,138,696 persons engaged.

Human health & social work
123,973 establishments;
814,096 persons engaged.

Other service activities
945,013 establishments;
2,585,085 persons engaged.

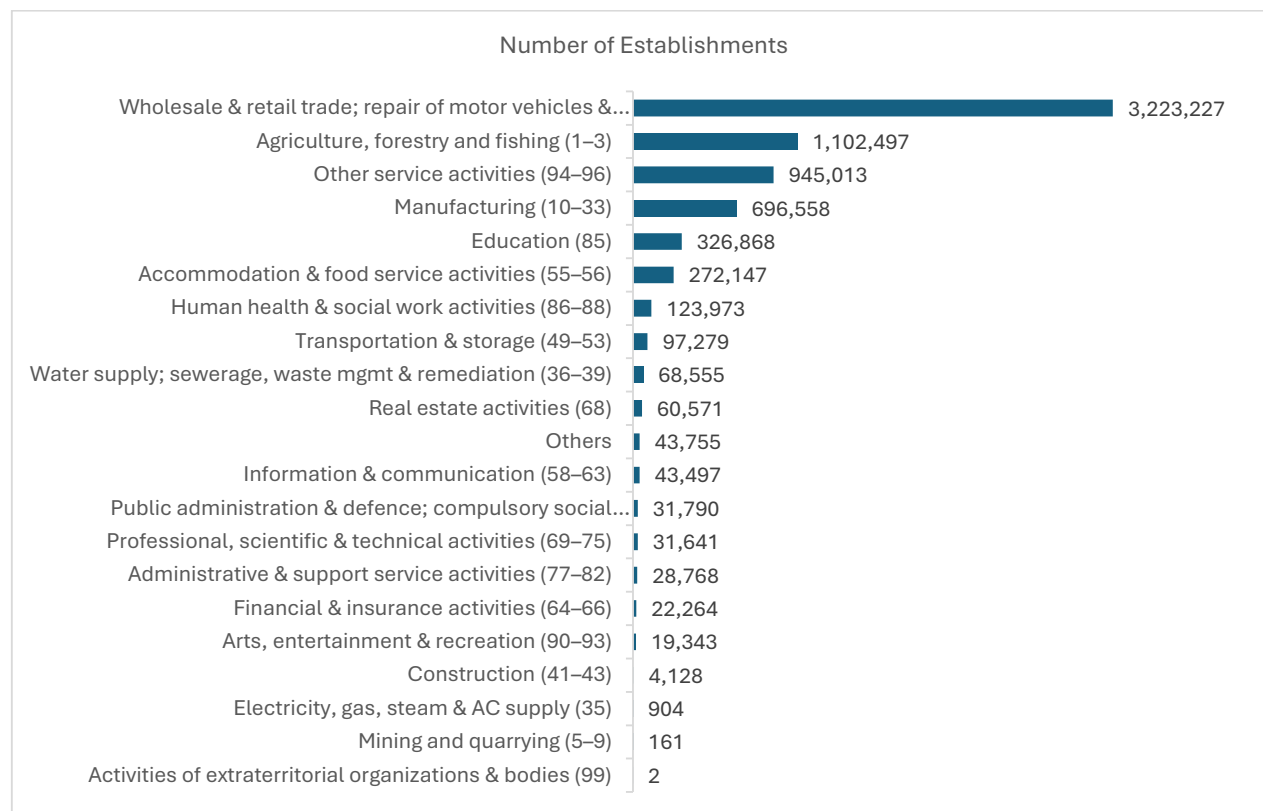*Macro view: Services 58%, Production 25%, Social 14%.*

Key Findings:

1. Wholesale & retail trade (PSIC 45–47): 3,223,227 establishments; 7,443,985 persons engaged.
2. Agriculture, forestry & fishing (PSIC 1–3): 1,102,497 establishments; 2,231,990 persons engaged.
3. Other service activities (PSIC 94–96): 945,013 establishments; 2,585,085 persons engaged.
4. Manufacturing (PSIC 10–33): 696,558 establishments; 3,175,433 persons engaged.
5. Education (PSIC 85): 326,868 establishments; 5,138,696 persons engaged.
6. Human health & social work (PSIC 86–88): 123,973 establishments; 814,096 persons engaged.
7. Macro view: Services 58%, Production 25%, Social 14%.
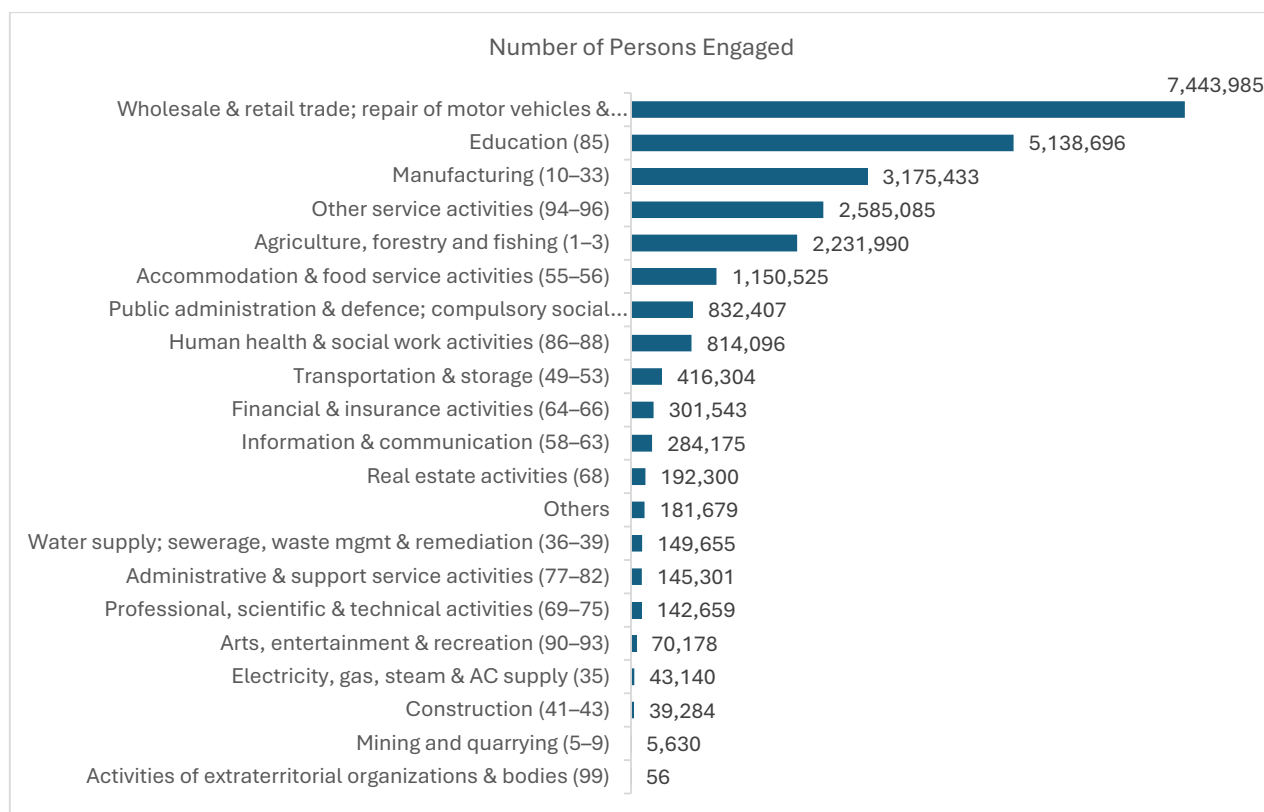
1. Establishments by PSIC Major Section

Pakistan's economic map is firmly service- and trade-led. With 3.22 million units, wholesale & retail dwarfs every other category. Manufacturing—while smaller in count (~0.70 million)—is a heavier employer than many service branches, indicating larger average workforce per unit. Agriculture-linked establishments remain a substantial 1.10 million, reflecting the persistence of farm-linked commerce and processing. Other service activities (~0.95 million) highlight the breadth of household-facing services underpinning everyday economic life.

Number of Establishments

Category	Number of Establishments
Wholesale & retail trade; repair of motor vehicles &...	3,223,227
Agriculture, forestry and fishing (1–3)	1,102,497
Other service activities (94–96)	945,013
Manufacturing (10–33)	696,558
Education (85)	326,868
Accommodation & food service activities (55–56)	272,147
Human health & social work activities (86–88)	123,973
Transportation & storage (49–53)	97,279
Water supply; sewerage, waste mgmt & remediation (36–39)	68,555
Real estate activities (68)	60,571
Others	43,755
Information & communication (58–63)	43,497
Public administration & defence; compulsory social...	31,790
Professional, scientific & technical activities (69–75)	31,641
Administrative & support service activities (77–82)	28,768
Financial & insurance activities (64–66)	22,264
Arts, entertainment & recreation (90–93)	19,343
Construction (41–43)	4,128
Electricity, gas, steam & AC supply (35)	904
Mining and quarrying (5–9)	161
Activities of extraterritorial organizations & bodies (99)	2

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Economic Census 2024 – Main Findings Report

## 2. Workforce by PSIC Major Section

Education stands out with 5.14 million persons engaged, exceeding even wholesale & retail in total persons engaged. Wholesale & retail employs 7.44 million, echoing its commercial reach, while manufacturing engages 3.18 million, showing employment depth despite fewer units. Health & social work (0.81 million) further round out the social infrastructure. Together, these patterns reveal a consumption- and services-led workforce.

Number of Persons Engaged

PSIC Major Section	Persons Engaged
Wholesale & retail trade; repair of motor vehicles &...	7,443,985
Education (85)	5,138,696
Manufacturing (10–33)	3,175,433
Other service activities (94–96)	2,585,085
Agriculture, forestry and fishing (1–3)	2,231,990
Accommodation & food service activities (55–56)	1,150,525
Public administration & defence; compulsory social...	832,407
Human health & social work activities (86–88)	814,096
Transportation & storage (49–53)	416,304
Financial & insurance activities (64–66)	301,543
Information & communication (58–63)	284,175
Real estate activities (68)	192,300
Others	181,679
Water supply; sewerage, waste mgmt & remediation (36–39)	149,655
Administrative & support service activities (77–82)	145,301
Professional, scientific & technical activities (69–75)	142,659
Arts, entertainment & recreation (90–93)	70,178
Electricity, gas, steam & AC supply (35)	43,140
Construction (41–43)	39,284
Mining and quarrying (5–9)	5,630
Activities of extraterritorial organizations & bodies (99)	56

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Economic Census 2024 (Main Findings Report)

3. Sector-wise Distribution of Units

The services sector's 58% share shows how decisively the economy is organized around trade, hospitality, transport, finance, communications, and a wide array of personal/community services. Production at 25% combines manufacturing and agri-linked activities; it is substantial but clearly second to services in enterprise count. The social sector (14%)—education, health, community welfare—punches above its weight in employment terms, reflecting its systemic importance.
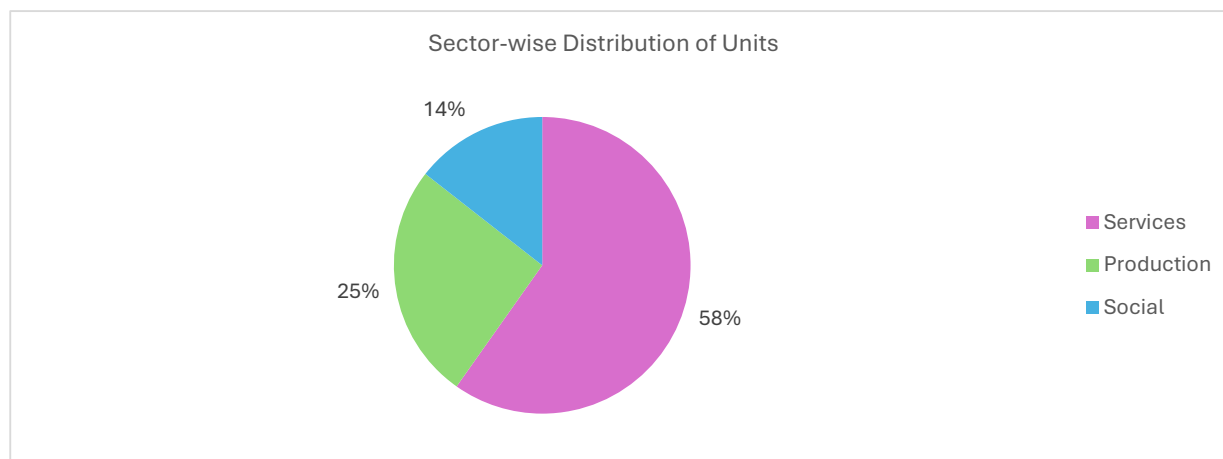
Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Agricultural Census 2024 (Main Findings Report)

The provincial breakdown of sectoral establishments shows distinct structural patterns across Pakistan. Punjab, with the largest population and industrial base, accounts for the majority of trade (1.93 million units) and manufacturing (770,000 units), reflecting its role as the country's commercial and industrial hub. Sindh follows, with strength in both trade (690,000) and manufacturing (300,000), heavily concentrated in Karachi's urban economy. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) is characterized by a strong presence of household-scale agriculture (120,000 units) and services (200,000 units), while Balochistan shows smaller but regionally vital contributions in agriculture and trade. ICT, though small in population, has a disproportionately higher concentration of education and health establishments, aligning with its urban, service-oriented profile.
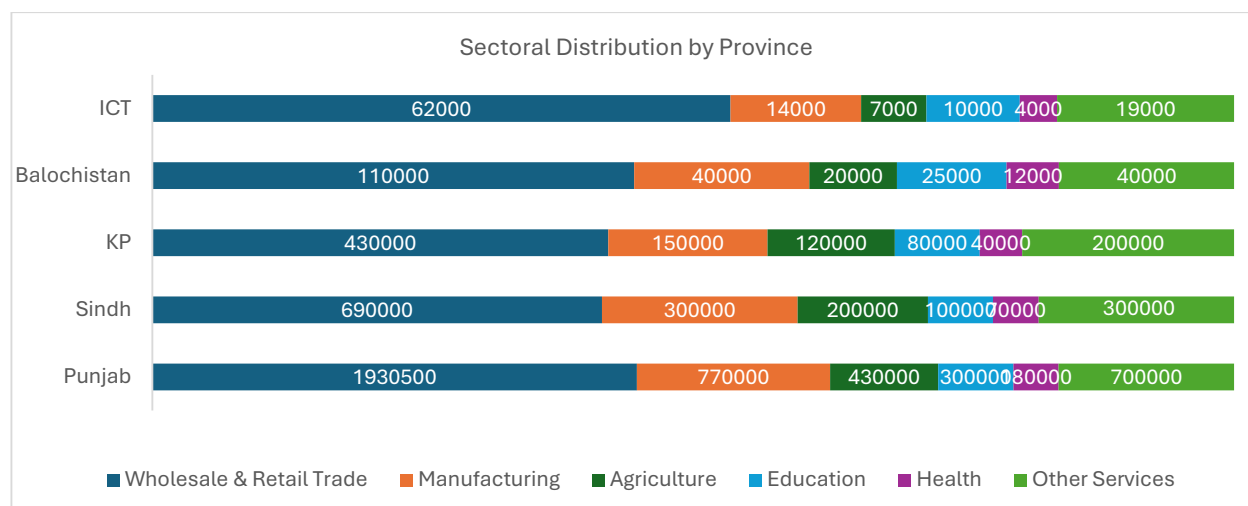
Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Agricultural Census 2024 (Main Findings Report)

4. Policy Considerations

1. Services-first growth: The dominance of services drives diffusion of business ownership but caps productivity and export potential. Formalization and digitization of MSMEs can lift productivity.

2. Manufacturing's employment depth: Despite fewer units, manufacturing's 3.18 million workforce indicates scope to scale via industrial estates, reliable power, and credit for technology adoption.

3. Social sectors as employers: Education (5.14m) and Health (0.81m) show large footprints. Prioritizing quality and skills would amplify human-capital dividends.

4. Agriculture-linked enterprises: With 1.10 million establishments, agro-linked activity remains central. Cold chains, storage, and upstream services can raise margins and reduce waste.

About the Economic Census

The **Economic Census** is Pakistan's most comprehensive and authoritative statistical exercise on business and enterprise activity. Conducted by the **Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS)**, it provides policymakers, researchers, and the public with a detailed snapshot of the structure of economic establishments across the country. The Census records information directly from enterprises and institutions, covering critical aspects such as establishment type, sectoral classification, workforce size, and location.

The 2023/24 Economic Census marks the country's **first integrated enumeration of economic activity**, conducted alongside the 7th Population and Housing Census. By merging these efforts, PBS not only achieved significant cost savings but also created Pakistan's first geo-coded **Business Register** — a foundational dataset for understanding enterprise dynamics nationwide.

This inaugural round represents an important milestone in Pakistan's statistical history. It incorporates methodological innovations such as **digital data collection, GIS-based mapping, and geo-tagging of establishments**, resulting in more reliable and timely results. The Census thus provides insights not only into the size and distribution of enterprises but also into the emerging challenges and opportunities facing Pakistan's economy — from the dominance of small-scale units to regional disparities in business activity and the rise of service-oriented enterprises.

Ultimately, the Economic Census stands as the **foundation for enterprise statistics in Pakistan**. Its findings guide ministries, provincial departments, and regulators in designing SME policies, industrial strategies, and regional development initiatives. They also serve as a valuable reference for academics, investors, and development partners seeking to understand Pakistan's business landscape. By documenting both continuity and change in enterprise structure, sectoral composition, and regional distribution, the Census underscores the vital role of establishments in the country's economic and social development.
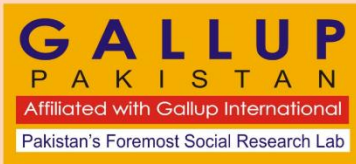
Wish to Contribute to Gallup Big Data Analysis?

Gallup Pakistan is looking for collaboration with researchers to expand the Big Data Analysis project. If you have any ideas, please write to Bilal I Gilani, Project Director, Big Data Analysis at Gallup Pakistan.