

Gallup Pakistan Analysis of
Economic Census 2024

Economic Establishments



PRESS RELEASE

Gallup Pakistan Analysis of Economic Census 2024

7 Million Establishments Recorded Nationwide – Majority in Services, Small-Scale Units Dominate

Islamabad, September 11th, 2025

Gallup Pakistan, as part of its Big Data Analysis initiative, is examining the findings of the first-ever integrated Economic Census 2023/24, conducted by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). This landmark exercise, aligned with the 7th Population and Housing Census, represents Pakistan's first comprehensive digital count of economic establishments.

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 integrates economic activity data into the population census for the first time. It provides a national baseline of nearly 7 million establishments, covering establishment type, sectoral activity, and workforce size. This makes it the most comprehensive mapping of Pakistan's business landscape to date.

Gallup Pakistan analysis of Pakistan Economic Census 2024

7 Million Establishments Recorded Nationwide – Majority in Services, Small-Scale Units Dominate

BY UNIT TYPE:



2.7million

Retail shops dominate with 2.7 million,



643,000

Followed by **production shops** (643k)



256,000

The number of **hotels** stands at 256,000.



242,000

The number of **schools** stands at 242k



119,000

The number of **hospitals** stands at 119k



600,000

The number of **mosques** stands at 600k

There are only 23,000 factories.

BY WORKFORCE SIZE:

Over **99%** of establishments employ fewer than **50** workers. Only **7,086** large establishments (**250+ workers**) exist nationwide – just **0.1%**.



BY SECTOR:



Trade leads with **3.22 million** establishments.



Followed by agriculture (**1.1m**),



Manufacturing stands at (**696k**).



Education (**327k**) establishments



And Health (**124k**) establishments

STRUCTURAL MESSAGE:

Pakistan's economy is dominated by micro and small-scale enterprises; the 'missing middle' constrains productivity and formalization.),

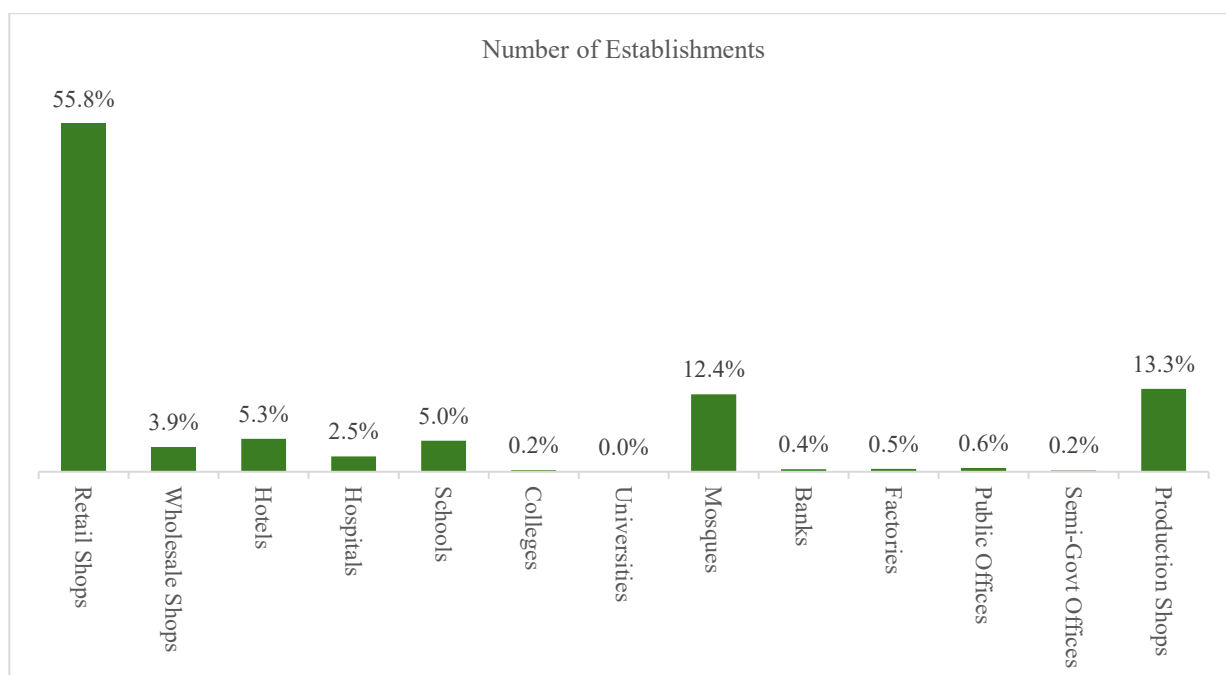
Key Findings:

1. Total establishments: 7.14 million nationwide.
2. By Unit Type: Retail shops dominate with 2.7 million, followed by production shops (643k), hotels (256k), schools (242k), and hospitals (119k). Factories number just 23k. Mosques (600k) and other institutions highlight the broad scope of the Census.
3. By Workforce Size: Over 99% of establishments employ fewer than 50 workers. Only 7,086 large establishments (250+ workers) exist nationwide – just 0.1%.
4. By Sector: Trade leads with 3.22 million establishments, followed by agriculture (1.1m), other services (945k), and manufacturing (696k). Education (327k) and health (124k) establishments, though smaller, have outsized social impact.
5. Structural Message: Pakistan's economy is dominated by micro and small-scale enterprises; the 'missing middle' constrains productivity and formalization.

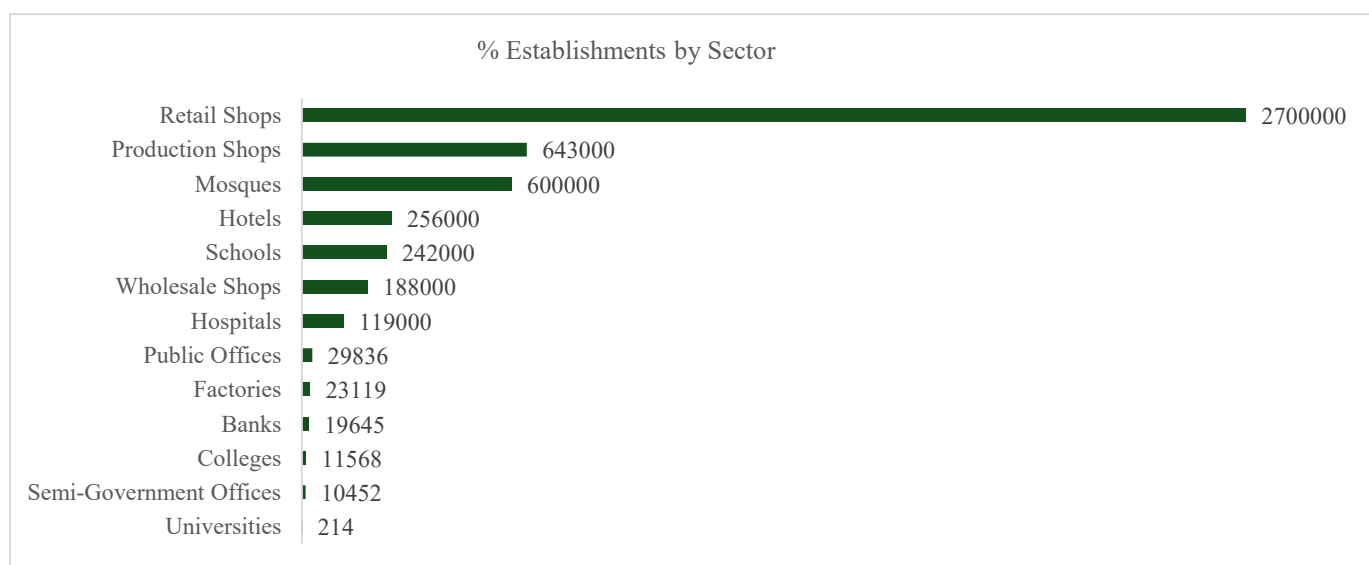
1. Distribution of Establishments by Unit Type

Retail Shops Dominate with 2.7 Million Units; Social Institutions Captured Too

Retail shops dominate Pakistan's economic landscape, with nearly 3 million units nationwide. Service-based establishments such as hotels, schools, and hospitals also constitute a significant share, highlighting the consumption-driven nature of the economy. Factories, while fewer in number, represent the backbone of formal production and employment. Religious institutions (mosques) are included in the census, underscoring the broad definition of establishments.



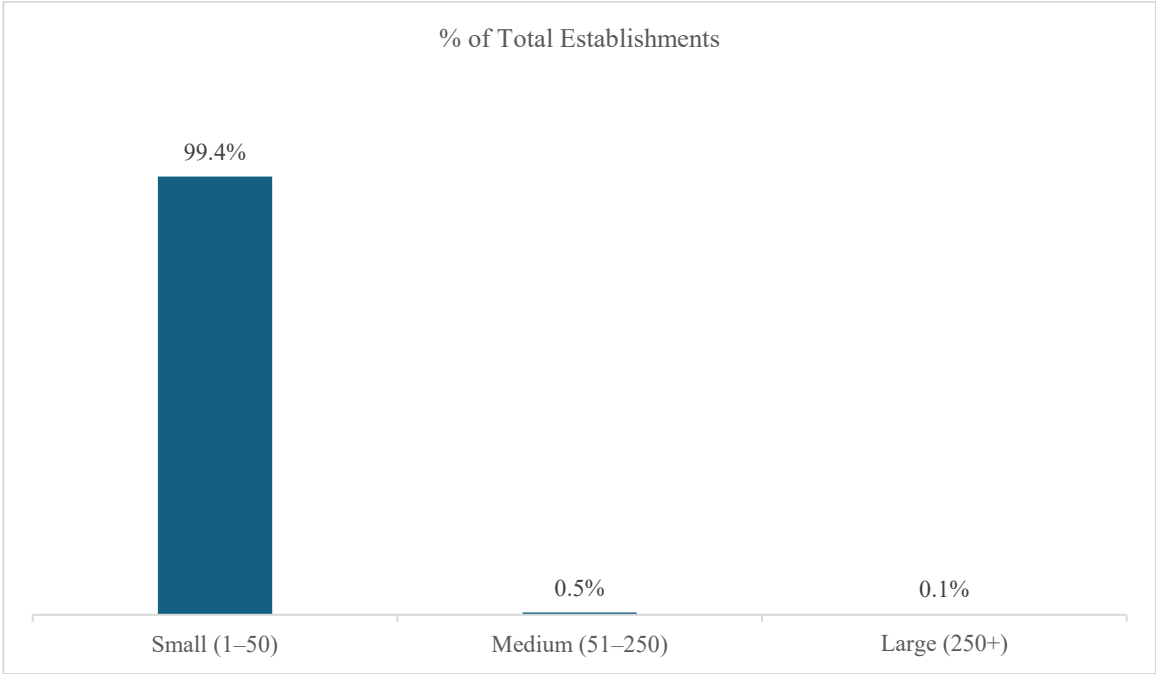
Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Economic Census 2024 – Main Findings Report



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

2. Establishments by Workforce Size

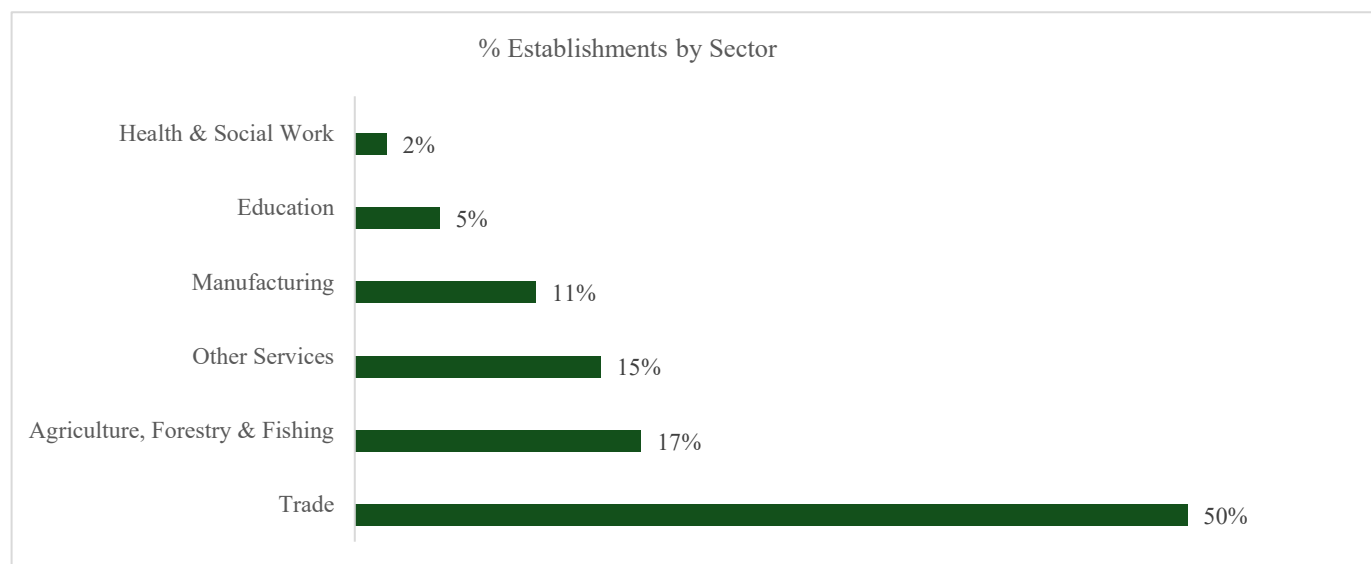
The data confirm that Pakistan’s economy is overwhelmingly small-scale. Over 99% of establishments employ fewer than 50 people, while only 7,000 qualify as large-scale enterprises. This “missing middle” is a structural weakness: too many micro-units, too few medium and large firms. Policymakers face the challenge of scaling up microenterprises into sustainable SMEs that can drive productivity and exports.



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

3. Establishments by Sector (PSIC Categories)

Trade and services dominate Pakistan’s economy, together accounting for the majority of establishments. Agriculture-related units (1.1 million) highlight the persistence of farm-linked enterprises, while manufacturing—just under 700,000 establishments—remains smaller than services. Education and health sectors, though smaller in absolute numbers, have significant social impact, reflecting Pakistan’s expanding non-market services.



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

Wholesale and retail trade accounts for the largest share of establishments (3.2 million), followed by agriculture, forestry, and fishing (1.1 million). Other services (945k) and manufacturing (696k) also play significant roles. Education (326k) and health/social work (123k) establishments, though smaller in number, highlight the social dimensions of Pakistan’s economic base.

4. Policy Implications

The dominance of micro and small establishments underscores the importance of SMEs in Pakistan’s economic structure. The heavy tilt towards trade and services reflects a consumption-driven base, while the relatively small share of manufacturing shows a need to strengthen production capabilities. For policymakers, the census provides the first-ever geo-tagged Business Register—critical for designing SME policies, monitoring entrepreneurship, and tracking structural transformation.

About the Economic Census

The Economic Census 2023/24 is Pakistan's first comprehensive, digital enumeration of economic establishments. Conducted by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) alongside the 7th Population and Housing Census, it provides a unified statistical frame of nearly 7.14 million establishments across the country.

Scope

The Census covers every type of economic unit — from retail and service shops to factories, farms, educational institutions, hospitals, banks, and public offices. Using Pakistan Standard Industrial Classification (PSIC) codes, establishments are categorized by sector, workforce size, and activity type.

Innovation

- First integrated census: Combined economic and population data collection for efficiency.
- Digital methodology: Use of GIS mapping, geo-tagging, and handheld devices improved accuracy and timeliness.
- Cost saving: By merging operations with the population census, PBS saved the exchequer approximately Rs. 7 billion

Outputs

The Census produces:

1. A Business Register — Pakistan's first geo-coded, comprehensive list of economic units.
2. Benchmarks for formal and informal sector activities.
3. Data for monitoring progress on SME development, industrialization, services, and SDGs.

Uses

4. Policymakers: Evidence base for SME policy, industrial zones, trade development, and services sector regulation.
5. Researchers: Baseline for enterprise surveys, labor market studies, and productivity analysis.
6. Private sector & investors: Insight into business density and sectoral distribution across provinces.

The Economic Census stands as the foundational dataset for Pakistan's enterprise landscape — providing a vital lens on the structure, scale, and diversity of economic activity nationwide.



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.

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