## Bridging the Academia – Industry Gap through Virtual Interactive Lab –

## ‘VR Connect’

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**Abstract**

Academia and Industry share a synergetic relationship. Colleges produce graduates that are employed by the companies. An institutionalized framework for improving Industry-Academia connection is required to establish unremitting communication between the stakeholders. With Education 4.0, Academia started leveraging on technology incorporated teaching methods to meet the needs of industry, by ensuring the best possible student experience. However, with the advent of Industry 5.0 adding the Human edge to Innovation, and the growth of artificial intelligence & ChatGPT, mechanization, mobile supercomputing, intelligent robots, self-driving cars, neuro-technological brain enhancements and genetic editing, the future workers are expected to be exceedingly skilled and trained in the emerging technologies and essentially, expected to be flexible to work from remote locations and be ethical, and appreciate the values associated with using those technologies. There is a sweltering need for rethinking teaching & restructuring learning paths to make it applicable to future generation’s learning needs and practices. Colleges need to be cognizant of the needs of the companies and their working environments; and the Industry needs to offer insights to faculty and students, enabling them to amend their course contents to cope with the industrial developments and culture.

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This paper proposes Virtual Interactive Lab - ‘VR Connect’, leveraging on Artificial Intelligence and Virtual Reality technologies to bridge the gap between Academia and the Industry. ‘VR Connect’ acts as a platform to facilitate Industry-Academia collaborative research and innovation in order to meet the challenges of the Industrial Revolution 5.0.

**Key Words: Industry 5.0, Education 4.0, Employability, Industry – Academia Gap**

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