Exploring the Factors Influencing Job Finding in Afghanistan
(Case study Shaikh Zayed University Economics Graduates 2019-2022)

T. Asst. Prof. Abdul Fattah Mofleh
S. T. Asst. Prof. Mamordin Mangal

Economy faculty, Shaikh Zayed University, Khost Afghanistan

Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the role of academic performance (Percentage grade), English proficiency, computer skills and personal contacts (recommendations) on job finding of Shaikh Zayed University Economics faculty graduates. To achieve this objective an accidental sampling technique was used in the selection of the samples. A total of 86 respondents out of 600 graduates who have graduated from the economics faculty of Shaikh Zayed University between 2019 and 2022 were used for the study as per Yamane (1967) sample size method. The major instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled factors affecting Job finding for SZU-Economic graduates (FAJFSG). It was designed by the researchers with the aid of 3 research experts to establish its validity and reliability. The ranking of the factors was recognized by using Gerrett ranking technique. The result of the analyses showed that percentage grade of the graduates is the first and highly significant factor influencing job finding of the graduates after graduation, while computer skills, English proficiency and personal contacts (recommendations) were ordered as second, third and fourth significant factors. Based on these findings, it was recommended, that the university students should consider securing high level of percentage grade as the first priority, good skills in computer at the second, fluent English proficiency at the third and supportive personal contacts at the fourth priority to find a job after graduation in the contemporary labor market of Afghanistan.

KEYWORDS: Percentage Grade, English proficiency, Computer skills, Personal Contacts, Job finding

Introduction

The increasing number of university graduates in Afghanistan has led to a challenging job market, where finding a job with suitable income and conditions requires significant effort (Sediqian & Srivastava, 2020).

Employers prefer to hire well educated and communicative applicants to their organizations, according to the result of a study, communication skills is correlated with improved grades in
major subjects and it allows graduates to find a job in their respective fields within one to six months after graduation (T. Rizaldo, 2020).

The result of a study encourages future graduates of BSHRM to develop and acquire English Proficiency skills for better employment (Gaytos et al., 2019).

In Afghanistan, the widespread use of the internet has made it possible for 75% of the job seekers to find jobs online, making computer and internet skills essential factors in finding a suitable job and these skills are commonly reflected in the resumes of job seekers (Ezeyi, 2011; Sediqian & Srivastava, 2020)

While the lack of these skills contributes to unemployment in Afghanistan, the country's economic condition resulting from the war also plays a significant role. Empirical analysis suggests that both positive and negative asymmetric shocks from civil war significantly increase and decrease the unemployment rate in the short and long runs, respectively (Hameed et al., 2023).

Moreover, the finding of academic factors and graduate employability in Nigeria suggests that employability of graduates is significantly influenced by academic discipline (Edinyang & Odey, Clarence Odey, Gimba, 2016)

This essay aims to explore the factors that affect employment opportunities for SZU-Economics graduates in Afghanistan. Focusing on the years 2019-2022, we examine the impact of factors like percentage grade, English proficiency, computer skills, and personal contacts on job finding of the graduates. By analyzing these factors, we aim to provide insights into the challenges faced by SZU-Economics graduates and potential solutions to improve their employment prospects.

**Methodology**

The study was conducted during March and April 2023 with the help of an online questionnaire. Based on the review of literature, 4 factors which tends to influence job finding of SZU-Economics graduates were selected for the study. A total 86 economics graduate who have jobs responded to the online survey and were considered for further analysis. To determine the most significant factor influencing job finding of graduates, Garrett ranking technique was followed.

**Garrett ranking technique**

Respondents were asked to mark the qualities they had at the time of getting jobs. Linker score system was used as (1) presented excellent level, (2) Very good, (3) Good and (4) Not Good level for every factor (English proficiency, Computer skills, percentage grade and personal contacts) in
the questionnaire. To find out the most significant factor influencing the respondent, the outcome of the rankings was converted into percent position by using the following formula:

\[
\text{Percent Position} = \frac{100 \ (R_{ij} - 0.5)}{N_j}
\]

Where, \( R_{ij} \) = Rank given for the \( i^{th} \) variable by \( j^{th} \) respondents

\( N_j \) = Number of variables ranked by \( j^{th} \) respondents

The percent position estimated was converted into scores with the help of Garrett’s Table. The scores of each individual rank corresponding to that particular factor were added and the mean values of score was calculated. The factors having highest mean value has to be considered to be the most important factor.

**Results and discussion**

Table 1 shows the rankings provided by the 86 respondents for various factors influencing job finding. Among 86 respondents, 11 of them gave the first rank for the English proficiency, 16 of them gave the first rank for computer skills, 29 of them gave the first rank for the percentage grade and 23 others gave the first rank for the personal contacts as most important factor in finding job.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Not Good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>English Proficiency</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Computer Skills</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Percentage grade</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Personal Contacts</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Per cent position for the ranks were calculated using Garrett ranking formula. Based on the percent position Garrett value for corresponding ranks were found out using Garret table and are depicted in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>100 ((R_{ij} - 0.5)/N_j)</th>
<th>Calculated Value</th>
<th>Garrett Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent (1)</td>
<td>100* (1-0.5)/4</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Good (2)</td>
<td>100* (2-0.5)/4</td>
<td>37.50</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good (3)</td>
<td>100* (3-0.5)/4</td>
<td>62.50</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Good (4)</td>
<td>100* (4-0.5)/4</td>
<td>87.50</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further, to obtain scores for each factor, garret value is multiplied with corresponding frequencies of that particular rank. By adding each row, the total Garret sores were obtained and
the mean value of Garret score can be used to determine the most important factor influencing job finding (Table 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Not Good</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>percent</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>English Proficiency</td>
<td>803</td>
<td>2296</td>
<td>1320</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>4527</td>
<td>52.64</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Computer Skills</td>
<td>1168</td>
<td>2576</td>
<td>968</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>4766</td>
<td>55.42</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Percentage grade</td>
<td>2117</td>
<td>2464</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>5102</td>
<td>59.32</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Personal Contacts</td>
<td>1679</td>
<td>840</td>
<td>1056</td>
<td>648</td>
<td>4223</td>
<td>49.10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results presented in the Table 3 after the analysis of data reveals that ‘GPA Level’ is the most significant factor influencing job finding with a Garret mean score of 59.32 (1st rank) followed by ‘Computer skills’ with a mean score of 55.42 (2nd rank), ‘English proficiency’ with corresponding mean score of 52.64 (3rd rank) and ‘Personal contacts’ with corresponding mean score of 49.10 (4th rank).

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

Fresh graduates of Shaikh Zayed University's economy faculty face significant challenges in securing employment in Afghanistan's labor market due to high levels of unemployment and a lack of job experience. However, there are strategies that can be employed to improve their employability, such as focusing on academic performance, improving English proficiency and computer skills, and building personal contacts with potential employers.

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the employability of Afghan graduates is significantly influenced by their percentage grade, computer skills, English proficiency, and personal contacts. Therefore, it is important for job seekers to prioritize these factors in their efforts to secure employment.

To address the challenges facing fresh graduates, the following recommendations are made:

I. Students should prioritize their academic performance during their studies to achieve high percentage grades, which will improve their chances of securing employment after graduation.

II. The government should provide English and computer learning programs for economics students at SZU to help them improve their skills in these areas, which are highly valued by employers.

III. Future research should expand the scope of the study to include other faculties and universities in Afghanistan to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges facing graduates in the country's labor market.
By implementing these recommendations, it is hoped that the employability prospects of Afghan graduates will improve, and they will be better equipped to contribute to the country's economic development.

REFERENCES


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