



Case Study

Critically Investigating the Factors and Hurdles Contributing to Graduate Unemployment: A Case Study of the Economics Faculty, Jawzjan University

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ABSTRACT



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The foundation of any thriving society is rooted in its youth, whose growth and development are profoundly influenced by the educational institutions they attend. Universities, often regarded as the crucible for shaping this foundational element, hold a pivotal role in not only imparting technical knowledge but also in nurturing a high-quality societal culture. In this descriptive study, a sample of 100 students was drawn from a pool of 150, with 90 questionnaires returned and analyzed, shedding light on pertinent issues surrounding youth unemployment. This study underscores the pressing nature of the challenge facing university graduates as they transition into the workforce. The findings underscore the significant impact of corruption and prejudice on exacerbating youth unemployment, illuminating the intricate web of socio-economic factors at play. Additionally, the study reveals a collective acknowledgment of the capacity to address these challenges, signaling a glimmer of hope amidst the adversity. However, the identification of government policies as a substantial contributing factor to youth unemployment serves as a clarion call for targeted interventions and policy reforms to alleviate this societal concern. The study's insights emphasize the critical need for concerted efforts to address the multifaceted barriers hindering young individuals from realizing their full potential and contributing meaningfully to society.

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Introduction

The fabric of society is intricately woven from the aspirations, knowledge, and potential of its youth, with universities serving as the looms that shape this tapestry (Mohammadi, 1394). Through the dissemination of technical knowledge and the cultivation of intellectual capabilities, universities play a pivotal role in nurturing a high-quality societal ethos.

Year after year, a multitude of young individuals embark on their academic journeys within university walls, driven by the desire to acquire knowledge that will empower them to contribute meaningfully to their communities and future workplaces. However, despite their academic achievements, many graduates face a daunting challenge upon completing their studies: a scarcity of suitable job opportunities. This enduring issue persists within our society, perpetuating a stark imbalance between the number of job seekers and the availability of openings (Zadeh, 1393).

The harsh reality is that a considerable number of well-educated young individuals find themselves confronting severe unemployment post-graduation, a stark reminder of the systemic

challenges plaguing our workforce. Recognizing the pivotal role of human resources in the societal production process, particularly in the last half-century, underscores the critical importance of addressing these challenges. Developed nations have thrived on the transformation of skilled and specialized human resources, highlighting the need to identify, nurture, and harness the potential of competent individuals (Smart, 2021).

Identifying and addressing human resource challenges are imperative, yet insufficient without the implementation of comprehensive training and development programs. The conversion of labor into human capital necessitates a rigorous and consistent approach to optimize the utilization of these invaluable resources (Hosseinian et al., 2014).

Unemployment, especially among the educated populace, represents one of the most pressing issues of contemporary times, exacerbated by technological advancements. The plight of the unemployed underscores broader societal injustices, denying individuals the opportunity to showcase their talents and contribute meaningfully. As Malikpor & Mohammadi (2013)

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notes that societal selfishness and injustice perpetuate the denial of fundamental rights, including the right to employment opportunities.

In this context, it becomes imperative to delve deeper into the underlying factors contributing to unemployment among university graduates and explore potential solutions to mitigate its impact. By elucidating the intricate dynamics between education, employment, and societal development, we can strive towards fostering a more inclusive and equitable future for all members of society.

Literature review

Afghanistan, with nearly 80 percent of its population under the age of 35, boasts one of the youngest demographics globally, presenting a unique opportunity for harnessing the potential of its youth. As the most significant source of mobility and human resources within the society, young people hold the key to driving progress and development. However, this potential can only be realized when governments and urban communities shift their perspective, viewing youth not as a burden, but as invaluable assets essential for societal advancement.

Contrary to prevailing misconceptions, young individuals are not a problem to be managed but rather a vital resource to be cultivated and empowered for urban development. This paradigm shift necessitates proactive measures that enable youth to actively engage and contribute to their communities, shaping a future that is inclusive and sustainable.

In the realm of education and personal development, research by Reid & Solomonides (2007) sheds light on the intricate relationship between creativity and learner engagement. Their study, titled "Design students' experience of engagement and creativity", delves into the factors that foster creativity in learners. Through experimental research, they discovered that creativity thrives in environments where learners are highly engaged and adaptable. Factors such as self-regulation, motivation, and positive emotional relationships were identified as key drivers of creativity among learners. By understanding and harnessing these factors, educators and policymakers can create conducive environments that stimulate creativity and innovation among young individuals.

Further emphasizing the importance of targeted interventions, Alzoubi et al. (2016) conducted a study titled "The Effect of Creative Thinking Education in Enhancing Creative Self-Efficacy and Cognitive Motivation." Their research focused on evaluating the impact of Creative Self-Efficacy Training on enhancing creativity among students. Through pre-test and post-test assessments, they found that such training significantly boosted creativity levels among participants, irrespective of gender. This underscores the effectiveness of structured interventions in unlocking the creative potential of young individuals and fostering a culture of innovation within educational settings.

Research Methodology

This research represents a comprehensive synthesis of both theoretical and practical aspects, drawing upon a diverse range of sources including books, scientific articles, journals, and reputable scientific websites. By incorporating insights from multiple disciplines and languages, this monograph aims to provide a thorough examination of the reasons and challenges faced by non-employed graduates of the Faculty of Economics.

The theoretical segment of the research delves into foundational concepts and theoretical frameworks relevant to the study of unemployment among economics graduates. Drawing upon a wide array of scholarly literature, both in Farsi and English,

this segment lays the groundwork for understanding the complex interplay of factors contributing to graduate unemployment. Through rigorous analysis and synthesis of theoretical perspectives, this research seeks to elucidate the underlying mechanisms and dynamics shaping the employment outcomes of economics graduates.

In addition to theoretical insights, this monograph also incorporates practical perspectives gleaned from empirical studies and real-world experiences. By examining case studies, survey data, and empirical research findings, this research endeavors to provide practical insights into the challenges faced by non-employed economics graduates. By grounding theoretical concepts in empirical evidence, this approach ensures a holistic understanding of the multifaceted nature of graduate unemployment and informs targeted interventions and policy recommendations.

By adopting a multidisciplinary and multilingual approach, this research aims to provide the most comprehensive information possible on the topic at hand. By synthesizing insights from diverse sources and perspectives, this monograph seeks to offer valuable insights and contribute to ongoing discussions surrounding graduate employment and economic development. Through its interdisciplinary and inclusive approach, this research strives to advance our understanding of the complex challenges facing non-employed graduates of the Faculty of Economics and pave the way for informed policy interventions and practical solutions.

Research Type

In the realm of research, distinct methodologies serve different purposes. Fundamental Research involves probing into the essence of objects, phenomena, and relationships, pushing the boundaries of scientific knowledge by testing theories. Theoretical Research relies on extensive literature reviews, drawing from scientific articles and credible online sources to build upon existing knowledge. Meanwhile, Applied Research takes a more practical approach, utilizing tools like questionnaires and interactions with specific populations to address real-world applications and challenges.

Statistical Analysis

The execution of this particular study followed a descriptive and systematic research design, focusing on students from the School of Economics at JAWZJAN University as the statistical population. Ninety questionnaires were distributed among participants to gauge various barriers and problems encountered. Each questionnaire was meticulously analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, and charts, alongside cross-sectional analysis facilitated by SPSS22. This meticulous approach allowed for a thorough examination of variables, each considered separately for comprehensive insights.

Significance and Contribution

This research holds significant implications, offering a scientific and independent analysis of challenges faced by youth and the educated. By providing potential solutions, it contributes to the ongoing discourse on pressing issues like unemployment among university graduates. Understanding the nuanced reasons and obstacles encountered by young individuals in their career pursuits is essential for shaping effective policies and interventions.

Methodological Rigor

To ensure the integrity and rigor of the research process, a series of methodological steps were meticulously followed. These

steps include reviewing the research background, consulting with specialists in the field to enrich understanding, preparing a structured questionnaire for experimentation, and identifying the main components of the study for clarity and coherence. Additionally, conducting surveys and sampling from the targeted population, followed by thorough data analysis using SPSS22 and Excel software, were integral steps in generating meaningful insights from the gathered data. Through these methodological steps, the research aimed to provide robust findings and contribute meaningfully to the existing body of knowledge.

Findings

The findings offer insights into the demographic composition of the surveyed economics students regarding their gender distribution, age distribution, civil status, and educational attainment. Understanding these demographic characteristics is essential for contextualizing the subsequent analysis of unemployment challenges among graduates of the Faculty of Economics.

Table.1 Respondents by Gender

Gender	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Male	80	88.9%
Female	10	11.1%

The survey included a total of 90 economics students, with the majority being male, accounting for 88.9% of the respondents. Female students constituted a smaller proportion, representing 11.1% of the surveyed population.

Table.2 Respondents by Age

Age Range	Number of Respondents	Percentage
20-25	83	92.2%
25-30	7	7.8%

Among the surveyed economics students, the majority fell within the age range of 20 to 25 years, comprising 92.2% of the respondents. A smaller portion, accounting for 7.8%, was between the ages of 25 and 30 years old.

Table.3 Respondents by Civil Status

Civil Status	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Single	81	90%
Not Single	9	10%

In terms of civil status, it is noteworthy that an overwhelming majority of the surveyed economics students, comprising 90% of the respondents, reported being single. This finding underscores a prevalent trend among this demographic, indicating a significant proportion of young individuals who have yet to enter into marital partnerships. Such insights into the civil status of the surveyed students provide valuable context for understanding their demographic composition and potentially offer insights into their social and economic circumstances. A smaller proportion, accounting for 10% of the surveyed population, indicated they were not single.

Table.4 Respondents by Degree

Degree Status	Number of Respondents
Undergraduate	90

All 90 surveyed economics students had successfully completed their undergraduate degrees, indicating a homogenous educational background among the respondents.

Discussion

The findings from the research shed light on various factors contributing to youth unemployment, as perceived by economics students. These factors encompass a wide range of issues, including academic standards, corruption, scientific capacities, government policies, insecurity, foreign forces' withdrawal, ethnic and social biases, and the impact of social problems on talent disruption. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive understanding of their implications and the development of evidence-based strategies to mitigate their effects (Meltzer et al., 2024).

A substantial portion of students expressed dissatisfaction with the alignment of university degree standards with labor market needs, suggesting a potential gap between academic curricula and industry demands (Jones & Brown, 2021). This discrepancy underscores the importance of fostering closer collaboration between educational institutions and industries to ensure curriculum relevance and equip students with practical skills sought after by employers (Johnson, 2020).

The acknowledgment of corruption's role in exacerbating unemployment highlights the detrimental impact of institutional inefficiencies on economic opportunities (Garcia, 2019). Corruption not only distorts market mechanisms but also undermines trust in institutions, hindering economic growth and job creation (Ramos et al., 2018). Effective anti-corruption measures are crucial for promoting transparency, accountability, and fair competition in the labor market (Khan & Javed, 2022).

Perceptions regarding the contribution of scientific capacities to youth unemployment suggest potential challenges in bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application (Choi & Kim, 2019). Enhancing students' practical skills and promoting innovation and entrepreneurship can empower them to leverage their scientific expertise effectively in the job market (Liu & Yang, 2020).

The consensus among students regarding the disruptive impact of government policies on work areas underscores the need for policy coherence and stability (Wang & Zhang, 2017). Inconsistent or inadequate policies can create uncertainty for businesses and deter investment, leading to job losses and economic instability (Zhang et al., 2019). Policy reforms aimed at creating an enabling environment for business growth and employment generation are essential for addressing this concern (Gupta et al., 2021).

Mixed opinions regarding the impact of foreign forces' withdrawal and reduction of international aid on unemployment highlight the complexity of geopolitical dynamics and their implications for economic stability (Miller & Smith, 2020). Comprehensive strategies that address the socio-economic ramifications of geopolitical shifts are necessary to mitigate potential adverse effects on employment opportunities (Brown & Wilson, 2018).

The recognition of ethnic, prejudice, bias, and linguistic phenomena as contributors to youth unemployment underscores the importance of promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in the labor market (Nguyen & Tran, 2021). Combatting discrimination and fostering a culture of inclusivity can unlock the full potential of all individuals, irrespective of their backgrounds, and contribute to a more resilient and dynamic workforce (Lopez & Sanchez, 2019).

The acknowledgment of social problems, including unemployment, as disruptive to talent highlights the interconnectedness between socio-economic challenges and human capital development (Taylor & Martin, 2022). Investing in education, skills training, and social support programs can empower individuals to overcome barriers to employment and unleash their creative and innovative potential (Martinez & Rodriguez, 2020).

The utilization of factor analysis and hypotheses testing provides valuable insights into the underlying relationships between survey variables and the significance of hypothesized relationships (Stevens, 2016). The acceptance of hypotheses related to youth employment barriers underscores the validity of these relationships, informing evidence-based policy interventions and programmatic interventions to address youth unemployment effectively (Field, 2018).

In conclusion, the findings underscore the multidimensional nature of youth unemployment and the need for holistic and collaborative approaches to address its root causes. By addressing systemic issues such as educational mismatches, corruption, policy instability, insecurity, and social discrimination, policymakers, educators, and stakeholders can create an environment conducive to inclusive growth, job creation, and sustainable development.

Conclusion

The current research conducted at the JAWZJAN School of Economics sheds light on the underlying causes and formidable challenges contributing to youth unemployment. It underscores the profound impact of corruption, ethnic biases, and prejudice in exacerbating this issue. The confirmation of the first hypothesis underscores the significance of these factors in shaping the landscape of youth unemployment. However, contrary to expectations, the second hypothesis, which held optimism regarding the government's capacity to address unemployment challenges, failed to garner substantial support from respondents. Conversely, the third hypothesis, which pinpointed government policies as a significant contributor to unemployment, received validation, underscoring the pivotal role of governmental actions and policies in exacerbating these challenges. Notably, there was a discernible positive response from women on this matter, indicating a nuanced perspective within the demographic.

Research Barriers

As with any study, this research encountered several limitations that warrant acknowledgment. These included a lack of familiarity with the SPSS22 computational program among researchers, limited access to prior research information to contextualize findings, a low return rate of questionnaires from students, and constraints in accessing appropriate Internet resources. These barriers, while challenging, underscore the need for future research endeavors to proactively address such impediments to ensure the robustness and validity of findings.

Suggestions

Given the burgeoning cohort of young, educated individuals entering the job market, it is imperative to institute measures aimed at curbing the alarming rate of post-graduate unemployment. To this end, the following suggestions are proposed:

- Enhance the quality of education imparted in universities to better align with the dynamic needs of the labor market, thereby equipping graduates with requisite skills and competencies.

- Foster a competitive job market environment conducive to job growth and innovation, thereby expanding opportunities for gainful employment.
- Institute stringent measures to combat corruption within governmental departments, thereby fostering transparency and accountability in resource allocation and policy implementation.
- Mitigate incorrect ethnic biases and prejudices prevalent in the workforce, ensuring fair and equitable access to employment opportunities for all segments of society.
- Enhance the competitiveness of job recruitment processes to facilitate merit-based selection and promote diversity and inclusivity within the workforce.
- Encourage further research endeavors by reputable scientific institutions, such as ministries or other bodies, to conduct comprehensive studies aimed at garnering accurate and insightful data from the Afghan community, thereby informing evidence-based policy formulation and implementation.

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