

## **Higher Education as a Predictor of Employment: The World of Work Perspective**

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### **Abstract**

The main objectives of this study were to explore the common perception of students about their education for their practical lives, investigate the relationship between higher education and employment, and the extent higher education predicts employment for students. Number of participants were 1210 which were divided into two groups i.e. current students and previous students, and were accessible as sample from public universities in Punjab. The collected data were analyzed through statistical techniques of multiple regression, correlation, t-test, and ANOVA. The results of this study revealed that most of the respondents strongly agreed with the view that higher education is for world of work. The relationship between higher education and employment found significantly positive and it was evident that higher education strongly affects and applied as predictor of employment. On the bases of these findings, it was suggested that Educational ministry must engage its strength for the expansion of higher education and encouragement of proper structural reforms in employment directions. Career guidance and services to search employment inside institutions should be provided to the students for the sake of saving their energies with long time of searching job. Students of postgraduate level should be given more opportunities for placement of work with employment experience.

**Keywords:** Higher education, predictor, employment, world of work.

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## **Introduction**

Achievements in education has abound us throughout world with all levels of developments. Although much residuals need to be done in educational development. Education links with regular working fields and other spheres of life (Yabiku, & Schlabach, 2009). It is a social mechanism, which enables him or her to achieve life's tasks with diversity (Nasir & Nazli, 2000). The more efficient students to work for world bring more development of the country and generating competencies.

For thousands of individuals, higher education is necessary for success in the world of work. The main objective of higher education is to transform the students through enhancing learning skills, behavior, and lifelong empowerment as critical and logical reflective person (Harvey, 2000). However controversially, higher education does not seem to be the first objective of employability for students. Moreover, not every individual focused that high education is a preparation of life (John & Moyer, 2014) for working world and catered to employment circumstances. In general, with emerging trends, every institution nourishes students for the world of work with primary goal of education (Warrick, Daniels, & Scott, 2010). However, the environments of institutions and working world are differing from each other and institutions do not provide any security for employment of student.

In the last two decades, major focus was on higher education to increase national growth, regenerate economical roots, and develop significant direction to meet new challenges of the world (Harvey, 2000). The relationship between higher education and employment has been given attention for policy making issues as well as research purposes (Pages & Stampini, 2007).

Lettmayr (2012) suggested that countries around the world, grasped long-term economic crises and face many complex challenges. It can be solved to some extent if they pay great amount of attention to nourish the education for the world of work. In addition, youth of the country requires preparation for the employment to thrive with participation in nation building (Hussain, 2005). Today employment is the rising up agenda, thousands of students with high qualification continued to be jobless with one or other reasons. Higher education is reshaping its objectives to support learners for careers, opportunities, progressive employment, training for working world (Pages & Stampini, 2007) and better understandings with their capacities. Higher education helps the students to build employability skills now (Nasir & Nazli, 2000), which means that of enabling students to get and keep a job, allow them to bring changes of working world, and similar proficiency for development.

Higher education by developing understandings with changing trends of world of the work enables the learners to investigate the career opportunities. With this aim, every learner has some expectation with their high qualification to raise their achievements of life (Pages & Stampini, 2007). They plan their long or short-term goals for future work.

Higher education makes the postgraduates well informed and responsive according to opportunities but there are also limitations for careers of these graduates. In general, overall downsizing of job opportunities delay the results of nations' expectations towards postgraduates. Demanding more graduates by the smaller group of companies put more pressure on the higher education to empower students with the new trends and needs of labor market. Higher education is the big platform to ensure quality and quantity of developmental governness (Hussain, 2005). It was revealed from different studies that every additional year of higher education could be increased production in wage employment with 10% even controlling simultaneous factors. As well as skill development is the key with higher education for export efficiency ability. In Pakistan, cities with higher education, rate show high level of development (SPDC, 2003). Students must have to deal with the employment opportunities, particularly in Pakistan where are uncertain economic conditions and instability between production students following post-graduation and employment.

Harmony between higher education and working world is contextual approach of developing practical interface of education for the world of work. Pivotal in this process is relationship between learner and learning, learner and teacher, learner and working world, work and employers, learner to other learner, and education with employment (Tynjala, Valimaa, & Sarja, 2003). Today higher education is considered to be the most important determinant tool for working world and strongly affects with higher status and interesting working innovations. It is growing dynamic system for occupation with various modes of trainings.

There is paradoxical situation in Pakistan regarding education for working world and employment. Unfortunately, there are some complexities with low status of education (Hussain, 2005). It is encouraging that percentage of unemployment is decreasing slightly from 6.3 % to 6 % in skilled person category (PBS, 2015). Former regional chairmen of FPCCI Sheikh Abdul Waheed Sandal claimed confidently that no person with skills and higher education has found unemployed in big cities (Abduhu, Alam, & Bhatti, 2014). He even said that most of the other economic sectors like, textile, engineering, services etc. are facing lack of highly qualified persons.

There is vast literature regarding education and employment as it is the all-time subject of discussion of human resource and educational policies as well as. The relationship between education and employment is seeing as anti-intellectualism as for apologist. It is just like higher education proposing training treatments for graduates to get jobs only rather than improving intellectual aspects of personality, develop over all moral of person, build nation with creativity and humanity (Harvey, 2000).

Although contrary, higher education is facing now new challenges of the global competencies. Moreover, we have controversial views with differences in findings of studies, to investigate the relationship between education and employment. Such as, situated learning and sociocultural theory have views that participating in community provide practices this point of view engaged the students in practices with social interaction. Activity theory focused on development of education for work, Dewey's theory of learning by doing has significance through concrete reflective experiences in which students are capable for work. Furthermore, reflective practitioners, informal and incidental theory favored the education with actual place to work for the world. Constructive views of theory strongly supported the integration of education and working practices to enrich the nation with practical knowledge (Tynjala et. al. 2003).

However, controversial debates unsurprisingly come to note about the dimensions of education and reshaping the ways of education to serve the world of work. We have divergent views about impacts of education ought on subsequent of working world. According to Lettmayr (2012), in past few decades, education has been changed in different fields like technical education, globalization of education, demographic needs and trends. These reasons strongly affect the quantity and quality of high-qualified agents of society.

The world is changing day by day and the role of education especially higher education is very important now. Every noble institute has mission to explore how to enable learner to become educated citizen that our society needs with fulfillment of learners needs. Collaborative interaction of education with employment implements the nature of derived goals (Warrick, Daniels, & Scott, 2010). But in Pakistan there are also some consequences for achieving goals, educational approaches, employment with elimination of unemployment, unfolding careers, organizational structure and many more others (Hussain, 2005). There is need of the time to interact the students to make them up for world of work. It is challenging with excitement and need more researches to develop this area internally and externally. In this context, this study was conducted to explore the elements of higher education to predict the employment base for students. To design the solutions of the problems, which students face, related to their career and hopes, the results of this study would fill the gap of researches working on relationship between higher education and

employment with the deeper evidence of education as predicting object of employment in Pakistan. The findings and results of this study contributed to gain better understandings about to what extent higher education predicts employment for students.

### **Significance of study**

The major objective of this study was to explore common perception of students about higher education for working world, higher education relationship with employment, and higher education as predictor of employment for students. Development of country depends upon well-educated agents of society, so results of this study would contribute to explore the students' perception regarding education for employment as well as working world. It also carried information for education policy makers and human resource management in Pakistan about the potentiality of postgraduate students and demands with contrary of supply of employment. It also revealed the deeper sense of ground reality of education preparation for the world of work that enable the strategists to plan for check and balance among supply of high education with quality of working in world and demand of employments. This study is also a guideline for the future researcher to investigate on the topic of high education and employment in more detail.

### **Objectives of the study**

These main objectives of the study were to:

1. Explore the common perception of students about their higher education for working world.
2. Investigate the relationship between higher education and employment.
3. Find out the extent to which higher education predicts employment for students.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the common perceptions of students about their higher education for the world of work?
2. What is the relationship between higher education and employment?
3. What is the extent to which higher education predicts employment?

## Methodology

The survey technique of descriptive approach was used in this study. The accessible sample was consisted of 604 participants who completed their masters' degree and 606 students who enrolled in final year of masters' degrees program from public universities in Punjab. More detail of participants is given in table 1.

**Table 1**  
*Demographical Information of Participants*

Status		<i>n</i>	Percent within status	<i>n</i>	Percentage
Current Students	Students Male	205	33.8	606	50.1
	Female	401	66.2		
Previous Students	Employed Male	52	32.3	604	13.3
	Female	109	67.7		
	Unemployed Male	237	53.5		36.6
	Female	206	46.5		
	Male n	289			
	Female n	315			
Total Male		494			40.8
Total Female		716			59.2

Table 1 demonstrates the demographical details of participants. There were 1210 participants included in this study with 494 of total male participants and 716 of total female participants. Among these participants, 606 were selected as current students (205 male students and 401 female students). In addition, 604 participants were previous students including 289 male students and 315 female students. Previous students were also categorizing into employed, 161 and unemployed, 443.

A questionnaire developed by the researchers was used to gather information from participants. Initially this questionnaire was consisted of 26 items including with 13 items related to Higher Education and 13 items related to Employment. Experts review the items of this questionnaire to check validity related to objectives of study. Experts rated at 3 points irrelevant, quite relevant and very relevant for each item. Then it was determined with index score of every item divided by sum of item to ensure content validity of questionnaire. In addition, the items with more than 75 percent of score were included in questionnaire and less than 75 percent of score excluded. Finally, 21 items were selected for final instrument through this criterion. Through pilot testing on 65 participants, reliability of questionnaire was ensured with the coefficient of Cronbach alpha= .845. Collected data were analyzed through statistical techniques of multiple regressions, correlation, t-test, ANOVA and presented in tabular and graphical form.

## Results and Findings

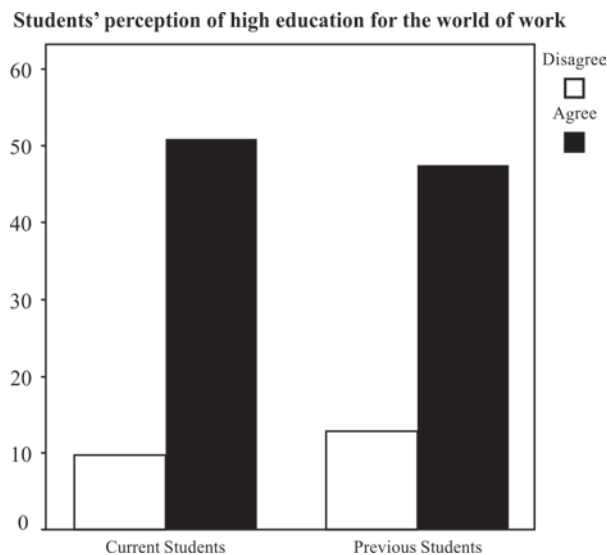
The results and findings after data analysis have been described in the following tables:

**Table 2**

*Students' Perception of Higher Education for the World of Work*

Variables	Status	Perception with	Percent	Total	
Higher Education for the world of work	Curret Students	Disagree	8.0	Count	606
		Agree	42.1	Percent	50.1
	Previous Students	Disagree	10.7	Count	604
		Agree	39.3	Percent	49.9
Overall	Disagree	18.7			
		Agree	81.3		

The sums of scores of students were categorized into disagreed and agreed. The mean score less than 3 were included in disagreed and more than 3 were in agreed. Table 2 is evident that majority of the overall students' 81.3 percent strongly agreed that higher education is for the world of work. While 18.7 considered that higher education is for educating themselves not for employment. Current students were more strongly agree that than the previous students did which is clearer in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Comparison of Current and Previous Students' Perception of High Education for the World of Work

**Table 3***Differences on the Bases of Gender Regarding Higher Education as a Predictor of Employment*

	Male				Female			
	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>
Current Students	205	2.74	.438	4.81*	401	2.89	.313	4.33*
Previous Students	289	2.67	.469	6.63*	315	2.89	.315	6.53*

\* $p < .000$ 

It is evident in table 3 that there is very slight difference between the students' perception on the bases of gender regarding higher education as a predictor of employment. It was found that there is no statistically difference between mean score of current male ( $M = 2.74$ ) students with  $t$  value = 4.81 and previous male students ( $M = 2.67$ ) with  $t$  value of 6.63. While, there is no significant mean difference between the mean scores of female students who enrolled to complete their master degree program ( $M = 2.89$ ,  $t = 4.33$ ) and who completed their master degree program ( $M = 2.89$ ,  $t = 6.53$ ). These results revealed that there is minor difference which is highly significant between the male students and female students whether they were current or previous students on the point of higher education is the predictor of employment with more chances and opportunities.

**Table 4***Multiple Regressions to Examine Higher Education as Predictor of Employment*

Variables	Mean square	$\beta$ (standard)	SE	<i>T</i>	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F (1,1208)	<i>r</i>
Constant	3155.5		1.28	16.64				
Employment	35.43	.262	.037	9.44	.262*	.069	89.06	.56*

\* $p < .001$ , Constant (predictor, DV = Higher Education)

It can be seen in table 4 that there is positive and strong relationship between higher education and employment. Whereas, the effect of higher education on employment is statistically significant with the value of  $F = 89.06$ . The analysis showed that the coefficient between the higher education and employment was  $R^2 = .069$  which indicated 69 percent of variance between them. It was observed that higher education has positive and strong effect on employment with the value of  $\beta$  standard = .262 with less than .001  $p$  value.



**Table 5**  
*Group Comparison with Higher Education Effects on Employment*

Variables	(I)Status	(J)Status	Mean	*MD (I-J)	
Higher Education Employment	Current students	Students	Employed	.336	
		Students	Unemployed	2.98	.227
	Previous students	Employed	Students		.336
			Unemployed	2.64	.562
		Unemployed	Students		.227
			employed	3.20	.562

\* $p < .001$ , MD = Mean Difference

Two-way ANOVA applied between the groups of current and previous respondents (students, Employed, Unemployed) and variable of higher education with employment. The results of analysis indicated that there was significant main effect of higher education. Table 5 revealed that current students performed higher tendency towards higher education for employment than previous students without job. As compared to other groups, employed ( $MD = .336$ ) evaluated greater tendency towards higher education for the world of work than Unemployed ( $MD = .227$ ), unemployed ( $MD = .562$ ) more focused on higher education as predictor of employment than students ( $MD = .336$ ), and employed ( $MD = .562$ ) were greater than students ( $MD = .227$ ).

## Discussion

This study was conducted with the basic objectives of exploring the common perception of students about their higher education for working world, investigating the relationship between higher education and employment and to what extent higher education predicts employment for students. For achieving these derived objectives, researchers formulated three different research questions, which were: (a) what is the common perception of students about their higher education for employment? (b) What is the relationship between higher education and employment? And (c) to what extent higher education predict employment?

The researchers explored that majority of the students (current and previous students) had strong belief that higher education is the security of employment. Majority of students (81.3%) tried to get higher education with comparison of lifetime income source in return of their parents' investment in education. In term, higher education is tending to be a source of high paid job and positively related to the employment factor (Tynjala, et. al. 2003).

Another finding was differences on the bases of gender that revealed that there was no difference among male students and female students regarding this perception. The trends of higher education for the world of work are similar generally between male and female students (Yabiku, & Schlabach, 2009). Although the students who were on current seats or they left the programs with completion, the effect of higher education with skills and innovations on employment or world of work attaining them greatly. Students had strong belief that the concept of higher education is the basic source of getting high opportunities of employment.

Another finding revealed that there was positive and significant relationship ( $r = .562$ ) between higher education and employment (Lettmayr, 2012). Pakistan is an under developing country and its economic state directly affects the employment rate. On contrary, huge population of students engaged in higher education to get high level of employment. Students expect more secure lines in career with higher education. As well as most of disciplines reviewed with the concept of higher education and employment and their relationship. Higher education predicts high and sufficient employment chances for students (Carnoy, 1994; Grao & Mora, 2000; Lettmayr, 2012).

It was also evident from this study that selectivity of higher education accounted 69% of variance (Table 4) as a better predictor of employment tested by the researchers. Furthermore, collaboratively it was found that higher education affects employment (Harvey, 2000) and working world as a predictor. The results of this study were consistent according to the situation in which levels of education in which cohorts' perception of higher education as a predictor of employment becoming stronger. However, it is the reality, the number of employment opportunities not have been enough to use higher education degree with full potential. These are encouraging evidences in terms of higher education geared up to prepare students for working world in relation to employment, not for own gain but for successful economic condition of the country.

## **Conclusion**

In the light of findings of this study, it can be concluded that higher education tends to get more opportunities for employment. Increasing rate of return in higher education and lower opportunities of employment accompanied in Pakistan. Most part of this study on the basis of findings confirmed that working world required more efficient and highly qualified person. Higher education is a predictor of employment. While, the benefits of higher education in working world are not as much as graduates required.

Educational ministry must engage their strength for the expansion of higher education (Hussain, 2005) and encouragement of proper structural reforms in employment directions. Students whether they are currently enrolled in institutes or completed their educational life, were optimistic about the future of their higher education (John & Moyer, 2014). The contribution of these energetic working products may increase the development level of Pakistan. This study is limited to the higher education as predictor and in relation with employment in working world. In this study, the researchers do not propose the explanations of changing effects on employments, various modes of education of work. Moreover, it is not directly engaged with the changes and rates of supply and demand of labor market for high education and employment.

### **Recommendations**

Following recommendations have been developed on the basis of this research:

1. An empirical model associated to the higher education and employment gaps also open the eyes of policy makers and policy frame workers regarding students' huge expectations and preparations about higher education for better employment (Hussain, 2005). Therefore, authoritative seats should have to provide space for them to practice education in the world of work.
2. Educational bodies should be launched more reasonable professions for the bright careers for students.
3. The students are able to get more opportunities to work in the world, so more employment opportunities should be provided to the students who are still in search of better job with higher education.
4. Career guidance and services to search employment inside institutions must be provided to the students for the sake of saving students time long period of searching job.

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