



GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY 2020

University of Kelaniya

University Statistics & Data Monitoring Unit

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“Lifelong learning is no longer a luxury but a necessity for employment.”

Jay Samit

Prologue

The present report is the outcome of the annual graduate employability survey of 2020 conducted by the University Statistics and Data Monitoring Unit of the University of Kelaniya.

The survey was carried out continuously for the fourth time since 2016.

Adopting the strengths and features of the changes made in the survey in 2018, the graduate employability survey in 2020 reflected the status of the university graduates in 2020.

The survey differentiates between “Degree was a ladder for my dreams” and “Degree solemnly not relevant for us to get employment”. The findings of the study reveal that not only the degree but also the personality, soft skills, and good academic performance result in quick employment opportunities after completing the degree qualifications.

The survey is not free from limitations. Incomplete or invalid responses and inappropriate and contradictory responses caused some drawbacks, but the research team completed the report as mistake-free as possible.

If anyone gets the full use of this report to facilitate the first employment after completing the degree or to rearrange the study patterns during the academic period so that they could get immediate employment opportunities the utmost purpose of doing the survey will be fulfilled.

Acknowledgments

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1 INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive job market, the employability of graduates has emerged as a significant concern for individuals, educational institutions, and policymakers alike. Public sector higher education institutes (HEIs) play a crucial role in equipping graduates with the necessary skills and knowledge to thrive in the professional world. This research-based introduction essay explores the concept of graduate employability in the context of public sector HEIs and highlights the factors that contribute to enhancing employability outcomes for graduates.

Graduate employability refers to the ability of graduates to secure and sustain employment, adapt to changing work environments, and contribute effectively to the workforce. It encompasses a range of attributes, including academic knowledge, technical skills, employability skills (such as communication and problem-solving), and the ability to engage in lifelong learning. Enhancing graduate employability is crucial for public sector HEIs as it demonstrates their effectiveness in preparing students for successful careers and contributes to socioeconomic development.

Public sector HEIs have a unique responsibility to serve the broader interests of society by providing affordable, accessible, and quality education. These institutions have a mission to produce well-rounded graduates who possess not only subject-specific knowledge but also a comprehensive skill set that meets the needs of the job market. Public sector HEIs often prioritize inclusivity, social equity, and community engagement, which are essential aspects of graduate employability in the context of societal development.

Key Factors Affecting Graduate Employability in Public Sector HEIs:

- **Curriculum Design and Relevance:** Public sector HEIs must align their curricula with the demands of the job market and industry needs. A curriculum that combines theoretical knowledge with practical skills, experiential learning opportunities, and industry

collaborations enhances graduate employability. Integration of employability skills, entrepreneurship, and innovation in the curriculum equips graduates with the competencies sought by employers.

- **Industry Partnerships and Internships:** Public sector HEIs should establish strong partnerships with industries, businesses, and government agencies to facilitate internships, cooperative education programs, and industry-based projects. These collaborations provide students with real-world experience, industry exposure, and networking opportunities, improving their employability prospects.
- **Research and Innovation:** Public sector HEIs should promote research and innovation activities to foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity among students. Encouraging undergraduate research, engaging students in cutting-edge projects, and facilitating patent filing or commercialization of ideas can enhance graduates' competitiveness in the job market, particularly in knowledge-intensive sectors.
- **Career Guidance and Counseling:** Public sector HEIs should offer comprehensive career guidance and counseling services to assist students in exploring career paths, identifying their strengths, and developing job search strategies. Providing workshops on resume writing, interview skills, and networking enhances graduates' employability readiness and helps bridge the gap between academia and the workforce.
- **Alumni Engagement and Industry Networks:** Public sector HEIs can leverage the expertise and networks of their alumni and industry partners to enhance graduate employability. Alumni mentoring programs, alumni-led career talks, and industry-focused events provide graduates with valuable insights, professional connections, and potential job opportunities.

Enhancing graduate employability in public sector HEIs requires a comprehensive and research-based approach. By aligning curricula with industry needs, fostering industry partnerships, promoting research and innovation, providing career guidance, and facilitating

alumni and industry networks, public sector HEIs can effectively prepare graduates for successful careers. A focus on graduate employability not only benefits individual graduates but also contributes to economic growth, social development, and the overall advancement of society. Employability; The role of State University Graduates

In today's highly competitive job market, employability has become a significant concern for both graduates and employers. State universities play a crucial role in shaping the employability of graduates by providing them with a well-rounded education and equipping them with the necessary skills to succeed in the professional world. This report explores the key aspects of graduate employability and discusses how state university graduates contribute to the workforce.

State universities are renowned for their academic rigor and commitment to high-quality education. Graduates from these institutions often possess a strong foundation in their respective fields of study. Their knowledge and expertise are crucial in meeting the demands of a constantly evolving job market. The emphasis on academic excellence in state universities ensures that graduates are well-prepared to face the challenges of the workplace.

While theoretical knowledge is essential, practical skills are equally important for graduates to thrive in the job market. State universities often integrate practical components into their curriculum, providing students with opportunities for hands-on learning, internships, and cooperative education programs. These experiences enable graduates to acquire valuable skills such as problem-solving, teamwork, communication, and critical thinking. State university graduates are, therefore, equipped with a diverse skill set that makes them attractive to employers.

State universities are hubs of research and innovation. Graduates from these institutions are exposed to cutting-edge research and often have the opportunity to participate in research projects themselves. This exposure fosters a spirit of innovation, creativity, and problem-

solving among students. State university graduates bring fresh perspectives and a willingness to explore new ideas to the workforce, contributing to the growth and competitiveness of industries.

State universities frequently collaborate with industries, businesses, and community organizations to bridge the gap between academia and the workforce. These collaborations often result in internships, co-op programs, and industry placements for students. Through these partnerships, state university graduates gain practical experience, network with professionals, and develop industry-specific skills. The close ties between state universities and industries enhance graduates' employability and make them highly sought after by employers.

State universities provide numerous networking opportunities for students through career fairs, alumni networks, and industry events. These platforms allow students to connect with professionals, potential employers, and mentors. Networking enables state university graduates to establish valuable connections, gather industry insights, and explore job prospects. The strong alumni network associated with state universities often provides ongoing support and guidance to recent graduates, aiding them in their job search and career development.

State university graduates are equipped with adaptability skills and a commitment to lifelong learning. They are accustomed to rigorous academic environments that require them to constantly update their knowledge and skills. This adaptability and eagerness to learn new things make state university graduates highly adaptable in dynamic work environments. They can readily embrace new technologies, industry trends, and changes in the job market, making them valuable assets to employers.

State university graduates play a vital role in the employability landscape due to their academic excellence, practical skills, research and innovation mindset, industry collaboration, networking opportunities, and adaptability. These graduates possess a strong foundation in their chosen fields, as well as the ability to apply their knowledge to real-world situations. Their skills and

attributes make them highly employable, sought-after by employers across various industries. State universities continue to play a crucial role in shaping the workforce by producing graduates who are well-prepared, versatile, and capable of making significant contributions to the economy and society at large.

2 GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY; THE ROLE OF STATE HEI'S

In an era of rapid technological advancements and evolving job market dynamics, the employability of graduates has become a paramount concern for both individuals and society as a whole. State Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) play a pivotal role in shaping the employability of graduates by providing them with quality education, fostering essential skills, and preparing them for the ever-changing demands of the professional world. This article delves into the key aspects of graduate employability and explores the significant role played by state HEIs in producing job-ready graduates.

State HEIs offer a comprehensive and holistic educational experience to students, encompassing not only specialized knowledge but also a broad range of transferable skills. The curriculum in these institutions often emphasizes critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and teamwork, preparing graduates to effectively navigate the complexities of the modern workforce. The well-rounded education provided by state HEIs equips graduates with a strong foundation and enhances their employability prospects.

State HEIs actively collaborate with industries, businesses, and professional organizations to align their curricula with the needs and requirements of the job market. This collaboration ensures that graduates possess the skills and competencies sought by employers. Through internships, co-op programs, and industry projects, students gain practical experience and exposure to real-world scenarios, making them better prepared to enter the workforce upon graduation. State HEIs act as catalysts in bridging the gap between academia and industry, thus enhancing graduate employability.

State HEIs are centers of research and innovation, fostering a culture of exploration, experimentation, and creativity among students. Graduates from these institutions often possess a keen analytical mindset and are well-versed in the latest advancements in their

respective fields. The exposure to research and innovation equips graduates with problem-solving skills, adaptability, and a mindset geared towards continuous learning, making them highly employable in industries that value innovation and adaptability.

State HEIs play a pivotal role in nurturing entrepreneurship and facilitating the growth of start-ups. They offer entrepreneurship programs, incubation centers, and mentorship opportunities, empowering students to transform their ideas into viable businesses. By fostering an entrepreneurial mindset and providing the necessary support, state HEIs enable graduates to not only seek traditional employment but also create job opportunities for themselves and others. This entrepreneurial ecosystem contributes to the overall employability of graduates and the economic growth of the region.

State HEIs provide robust career guidance and placement services to their students. Through career counseling, resume building workshops, mock interviews, and networking events, they assist students in identifying their strengths, exploring career options, and securing suitable employment opportunities. State HEIs maintain strong connections with alumni, industry professionals, and employers, facilitating job placements and internships. These support services enhance the employability of graduates and ease the transition from academia to the workforce.

State HEIs emphasize the importance of social responsibility and community engagement, encouraging graduates to become responsible citizens and agents of positive change. Through volunteering programs, community service initiatives, and social entrepreneurship endeavors, graduates develop a sense of empathy, leadership, and ethical decision-making. The societal impact created by state HEI graduates not only enhances their employability but also contributes to the development and well-being of the communities they serve.

State Higher Education Institutions play a vital role in shaping graduate employability by providing holistic education, aligning curricula with industry needs, fostering research and

innovation, promoting entrepreneurship, offering career guidance, and emphasizing social impact. The multifaceted approach of state HEIs ensures that graduates possess a blend of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are highly valued in the industry.

3 STUDY OBJECTIVES & SURVEY METHODOLOGY

3.1 STUDY OBJECTIVES

The ultimate objective of this study is to empower graduates of the University of Kelaniya and ensure employability skills and employment within the first 10 months of their graduation. Thus, the primary objective of this study is to assess the current employment rate of the University.

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To estimate the overall employment rate of the University of Kelaniya.
2. To estimate the employment rates by Faculties and assess the trends of employment patterns.
3. To recognize the factors associated with graduate employability and to assess the patterns of employment by both Faculties and each factor.
4. To identify the hurdles encountered by the graduates in getting employment.
5. To assess the feedback given to current study programs and patterns of the University.

3.2 DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Conducting the graduate employability survey 2020 was a far more challenging to the University of Kelaniya than previous. The graduate employability study conducted by Gunaratne and Weerathne et al. in 2018 surveyed a combination of online and paper-based surveys (Gunaratne, Weerathne, Thilakaratne, Sarathchandra, & Devindi, Graduate Employability 2018: University of Kelaniya, 2020) and the graduate employability study conducted by Gunaratne, Weerathne and Thilakkaratne in 2019 adopted the same methodology (Gunaratne, Weerathne, & Thilakaratne, Graduate Employability 2019: University of Kelaniya, 2020). However, due to the COVID 19 pandemic situation in the

country, paper-based survey needed to be cancelled and thus the whole survey was conducted online.

3.2.1 Population, Target Population and Response Rate

The survey population under the study consisted with the graduates of the 2020 (2017/18 academic year). Accordingly, highest number of students have graduated from the Faculty of Social Sciences while the lowest are from the Faculty of Medicine.

Table 1-1: Internal undergraduate output of the University

| Faculty | Total | Percentage |
|--|--------------|-------------------|
| Faculty of Commerce & Management Studies | 486 | 20% |
| Faculty of Humanities | 471 | 19% |
| Faculty of Medicine | 189 | 8% |
| Faculty of Science | 447 | 18% |
| Faculty of Social Sciences | 873 | 35% |
| Total | 2,466 | 100% |

The University output consist with the students who are graduated from the main cohort and repeat candidates. Since repeat candidates have more time to get employment than main candidates, the study focused on the graduates of the main cohort of 2020. Moreover, the Medicine graduates were also omitted from the study since their degree program is job oriented and guaranteed. Thus, the target population under the study was as following table 1-2.

Table 1-2: Target population - graduates of main cohort

| Faculty | Total | Percentage |
|--|--------------|-------------------|
| Faculty of Commerce & Management Studies | 473 | 21% |
| Faculty of Humanities | 454 | 20% |
| Faculty of Medicine | 31 | 1% |
| Faculty of Science | 431 | 19% |
| Faculty of Social Sciences | 868 | 39% |
| Total | 2,257 | 100% |

The data collection was carried out through an online questionnaire in which all the target population were given a written notice by post informing about the period of data collection.

Accordingly, the overall response rate was 78%. However, the lowest response rate was recorded from the Faculty of Medicine (3 out of 31,10%) and thus by removing Faculty of Medicine from the study, the accessible population become as following.

Table 1-3: Accessible Population

| Faculty | Accessible Population | Number of Responses | Response Rate |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Faculty of Commerce & Management Studies | 473 | 347 | 73% |
| Faculty of Humanities | 454 | 356 | 78% |
| Faculty of Science | 431 | 326 | 76% |
| Faculty of Social Sciences | 868 | 726 | 84% |
| Total | 2,226 | 1755 | 79% |

3.2.2 Sampling Method, Sample Size, Sampling Technique, and the Sample

The achieve the prime objective of the study using probability sampling method rather than non- probability sampling is more convenient. By using probability sampling method, it could eliminate the sampling bias and could get a quality sample which can represent the population.

To estimate the population proportion of employed graduates of the University of Kelaniya, the sample size was decide considering the employment rate of the University in 2019 considering 1.25% precision at 95% confidence level. Accordingly, the sample size:

Equation 1-1: Sample size by proportions

$$n = \frac{Z_{\alpha}^2 p (1-p)}{\left(\frac{a}{100}\right)^2 + \left(\frac{Z_{\alpha}^2 p (1-p)}{N}\right)}$$

where $Z_{\alpha}=1.96$, $a=1.25$, $p=0.51$, $N=2,226$

And thus,

$$n = 1634$$

Four faculties of the University were considered for the study and therefore, stratified random sampling was used for the study considering each Faculty under the study as a stratum.

Accordingly, the sample was allocated to each Faculty proportional to the population size.

Thus, the sample size for each Faculty (Table1-4):

Table 1-4: Sample sizes for each Faculty

| Faculty | Sample size | Percentage |
|--|--------------------|-------------------|
| Faculty of Commerce & Management Studies | 347 | 21.2% |
| Faculty of Humanities | 333 | 20.4% |
| Faculty of Science | 316 | 19.4% |
| Faculty of Social Sciences | 637 | 39% |
| Total | 1633 | 100% |

3.2.3 Data

The survey questionnaire consists of both open ended and closed ended questions. It included, general information regarding the graduates and their academic period, academic activities, and performance. Then, upon the choice of their employment situation at that moment, either questions related to employed graduates or unemployed graduates could be answered.

The demographic variables collected through the questionnaire included name, gender, year of exam and z-score, location, and contact details. And the academic related questionnaire included, Faculty, name of the degree program, type of the degree, medium of instruction, English language proficiency, Academic performance, feedback about the University education, involvement in extra- curricular and concurrent activities.

Unemployment section of the questionnaire consisted of questions regarding the reasons for the unemployment, job rejection, job field of interest, and feedback on the University and requests for the University to improve employability. On the other hand, the employment section consisted of questions on status of the employment, type of employment, date of appointment, field of employment, and monthly salary. Furthermore, employment section also included method of finding the employment, most relevant aspect in getting a job, employment in relation to the study area and job satisfaction.

3.3 DATA ANALYSIS

This report focuses on an overall idea about the employability in relation to the employment as well as unemployment. Therefore, the study involves analyzing both quantitative data and qualitative data related to employed graduates and unemployed graduates. Basic descriptive statistics and content analysis is used to address the objectives of the study.

4 FINDINGS

This chapter contains the results and findings of the graduate employability study conducted to estimate the population proportion of employed graduates in 2020.

This chapter also includes discussion on employed graduate profile and unemployed graduate profile along with the factors associated with employability. Apart from that, this chapter focuses on special discussion regarding the hurdles face by graduates in finding employments, common reasons for unemployability and the feedback given to the University of Kelaniya.

4.1 SAMPLE PROFILE AND DATA

In 2020, total of 2,226 graduates have been passed under the main cohort (excluding the graduates of Faculty of Medicine) and 1,755 graduates of them have responded to the survey. The sample was allocated to each Faculty (considering each Faculty as a stratum) proportional to the number of graduates of the respective Faculty. Accordingly, the sample consisted with 39% representatives from the Faculty of Social Sciences, 21.2% from the Faculty of Commerce & Management Studies, 20.4% from the Faculty of Humanities and 19.4% from the Faculty of Science.

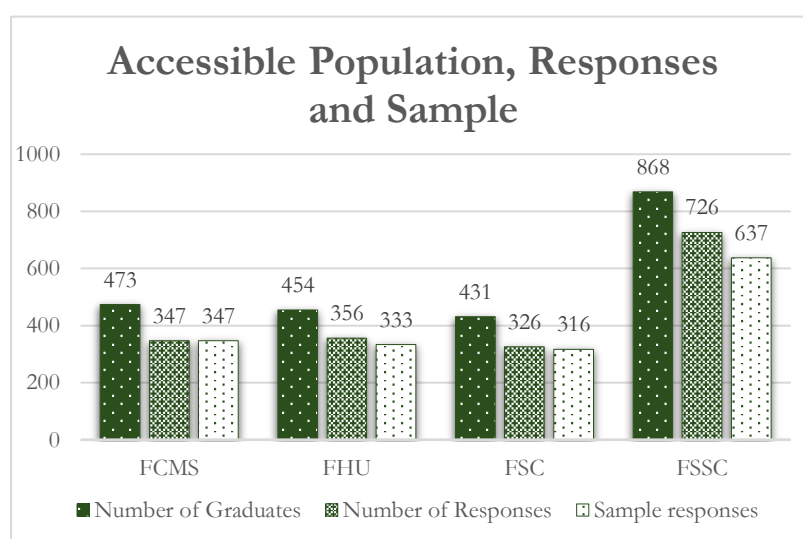


Figure 4-1: Accessible population, number of responses and sample size

The respondents of the survey are more likely to come from the Western province. That is, 37.8% out of the total sample are from Western Province and among them most are from Gampaha District. Taken as a whole, most of the respondents are from Gampaha District (17.1%) and least are from Kilinochchi District of Northern Province and Batticaloa District of Eastern Province. Following table 5-1 and geographical map on figure 5-3 depicts a picture of respondents' locations.

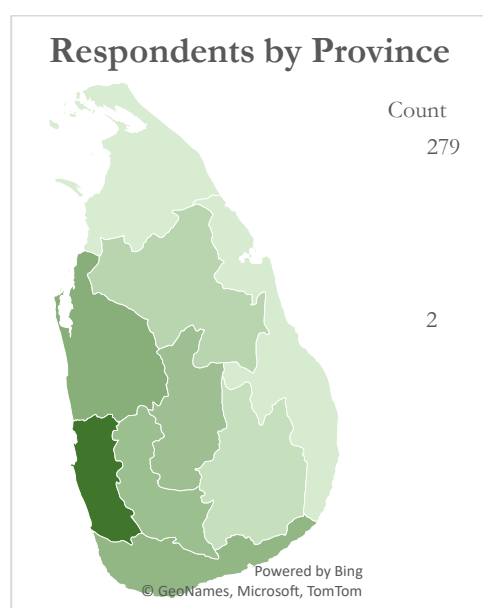


Figure 4-2: Respondents by location

The graduates of 2020 have scored on average 1.4980 z-score with 0.00696 standard error of mean to get admission to the University. The minimum z-score so far recorded from the graduates is 0.2522 (Faculty of Humanities) and the highest z-score is recorded as 3.9 (Faculty of Social

Sciences). Following table 5-2 shows descriptive statistics of z-score of the graduates of 2020.

Table 4-1: Respondents by location

| District | Count | Percentage |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| Gampaha | 279 | 17.1% |
| Colombo | 219 | 13.4% |
| Kurunegala | 150 | 9.2% |
| Galle | 131 | 8.0% |
| Kalutara | 120 | 7.3% |
| Ratnapura | 113 | 6.9% |
| Kandy | 112 | 6.9% |
| Kegalle | 104 | 6.4% |
| Matara | 86 | 5.3% |
| Anuradhapura | 62 | 3.8% |
| Hambantota | 50 | 3.1% |
| Puttalam | 41 | 2.5% |
| Badulla | 39 | 2.4% |
| Moneragala | 37 | 2.3% |
| Matale | 26 | 1.6% |
| Nuwara Eliya | 15 | 0.9% |
| Polonnaruwa | 14 | 0.9% |
| Ampara | 11 | 0.7% |
| Jaffna | 9 | 0.6% |
| Trincomalee | 6 | 0.4% |
| Vavuniya | 5 | 0.3% |
| Batticaloa | 2 | 0.1% |
| Kilinochchi | 2 | 0.1% |
| Total | 1633 | 100% |

Table 4-2: Descriptive statistics of α -score

| Descriptive Statistic | Value |
|------------------------|---------|
| Number of responses | 1597 |
| Mean | 1.4980 |
| Standard error of mean | 0.00696 |
| Standard deviation | 0.2782 |
| Minimum | 0.2522 |
| Maximum | 3.9000 |
| Median | 1.4976 |
| Mode | 1.4000 |

This sample included more female graduates than male graduates. Accordingly, the sample

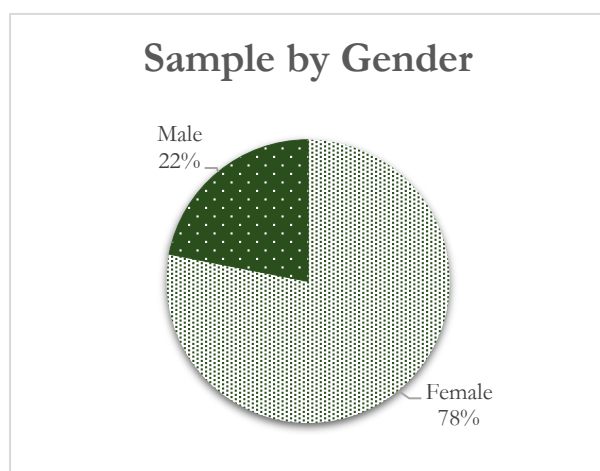


Figure 4-3: Responses by gender

consisted 78% of female graduates and 22% of male graduates (Figure 5-2). However, when considering the University's student enrollment, annually more female students are enrolled to the programs than male students. Furthermore, highest number of female graduates are from the Faculty of Social Sciences, Faculty of Humanities and

Faculty of Commerce & Management Studies. And Faculty of Science has approximately 60% of female graduates.

Most of the graduates of 2020 have obtained honors degrees while only 17.4% are having general degree. As depicted in the below 5-3 table. Out of the three Faculties which offer general degrees, the lowest number of general degree holders are form the Faculty of Social Sciences and lowest number of honors degrees has been awarded by the Faculty of Science. Moreover, the graduates of the Faculty of Commerce & Management studies and Faculty of Science has followed their studies in English medium and 10.3% of the graduates of the Faculty of Humanities and 9.9% of graduates of the Faculty of Social Sciences has followed their studies in English medium while 27% and 42.4% respectively from each of both Faculties has

followed the degree programs as a combination of both English and Sinhala medium. And the highest number of graduates who have followed their study programs are recorded from the Faculty of Humanities. These observations can be generalized that, the Faculty of Humanities has more cultural, religious, and native subjects than other Faculties such as Sanskrit, Pali & Buddhist Studies and Sinhala.

Table 4-3: Characteristics of the sample

| Characteristics | FCMS (n _{CMs} =347) | FHU (n _{HU} =333) | FSC (n _{SC} =316) | FSSC (n _{SSC} =637) | Overall (n=1633) |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| Gender | | | | | |
| Female | 67.1% | 87.1% | 59.8% | 88.4% | 78.1% |
| Male | 32.9% | 12.9% | 40.2% | 11.6% | 21.9% |
| Degree Type & Duration | | | | | |
| General - 3yrs | 0% | 20.1% | 51.6% | 8.5% | 17.4% |
| Honors - 4yrs | 100% | 79.9% | 48.4% | 91.5% | 82.6% |
| Medium | | | | | |
| English | 100% | 10.3% | 100% | 9.9% | 45.3% |
| E & S | 0% | 27.0% | 0% | 42.4% | 23.3% |
| Sinhala | 0% | 62.7% | 0% | 47.7% | 31.4% |
| Academic Performance | | | | | |
| First Class | 15.3% | 14.7% | 17.7% | 8.8% | 13.1% |
| Second Upper | 44.7% | 74.5% | 37.0% | 82.4% | 64.0% |
| Second Lower | 18.2% | 5.4% | 24.7% | 5.3% | 11.8% |
| Pass | 21.9% | 5.4% | 20.6% | 3.5% | 11.1% |

Taken as a whole, according to the sample statistics, the University has produced more graduates having a second-class upper honor than other class awards or ordinary passes. However, the graduates of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Faculty of Humanities has outstanding academic performance since only 3.5% and 5.4% respectively has obtained ordinary passes than other two Faculties. In contrast, the graduates of the Faculty of Science have received the highest number of first-class honors than other Faculties and the least number of first classes has been received by the graduates of the Faculty of Social Sciences.

4.2 EMPLOYABILITY

Graduate employment rate of the University of Kelaniya is calculated based on the sample proportion who are employed by the time of survey which is within the first 10 months of the graduation (results valid date) of each year. Accordingly, the sample employment rate is the ratio of employed graduates to which the total number of responses.

The sample graduate employment rate of the University for 2020 thus become 34% indicating that, 34% of the respondents are employed at the end of ten months from the graduation (Table 5-4):

Table 4-4: Sample employment rate of University of Kelaniya 2020

| Employment Status | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------|
| Employed | 33.7% |
| Unemployed | 66.3% |

And the sample employment ratios of the Faculties are:

Table 4-5: Sample employment rate by Faculty

| Employment Status | FCMS | FHU | FSC | FSS |
|-------------------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| Employed | 52% | 19% | 68% | 14% |
| Unemployed | 48% | 81% | 32% | 86% |

Since stratified sampling technique was used in the study the estimated employment ratio of the University of Kelaniya for 2020 become,

$$\widehat{Employment\ rate}_{st} = \sum_{i=1}^4 \frac{N_i}{N} p_i \quad ; \text{ where } i = \begin{cases} 1; FCMS \\ 2; FHU \\ 3; FSC \\ 4; FSS \end{cases}$$

N_i = size of i^{th} stratum,

N = Population size,

p_i =sample proportion of employment of i^{th} stratum

Employment rate_{st} (Estimate)= 34.6% with variance of

$$\widehat{Var}_{prop}(p_{st}) = \frac{N-n}{Nn} \sum_{i=1}^4 w_i \frac{p_i q_i}{n_i - 1}$$

$$Var_{prop}(p_{st}) (Estimate) = 2.5063 \times 10^{-7}$$

Thus, the *standard deviation*_{prop}(p_{st}) = -0.0005

4.3 GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY BY THE FACULTY

The highest employability rate of the University of Kelaniya recorded from the Faculty of Science where 68% out of the total respondents are employed within first 10 months period after completing the degree. As depicted in table 5-6, the lowest employability rate is recorded from the graduates belonging to the Faculty of Social where only 14% of graduates are employed.

Table 4-6: Graduate employability by Faculty

| Employment Status | FCMS | FHU | FSC | FSS |
|--------------------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Employed | 52% | 19% | 68% | 14% |
| Unemployed | 48% | 81% | 32% | 86% |

52% of the graduates of the Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies are employed by the time of survey and 19% of the graduates belonging to the Faculty of Humanities are employed by the time of survey. Compared to the finding of the previous year, 2019, all Faculties show a considerable drop in employment rates. Per the statistics of the report 2019, Faculty of Science has had 84% employment rate, the highest rate of all the Faculties, in which in 2020 it has been reduced to 68% showing off approximately 19% percentage decrease (Gunaratne, Weeraratne, & Thilakaratne, Graduate Employability 2019: University of Kelaniya, 2020). Moreover, the highest percentage decrease, 40%, was recorded from the Faculty of Social Sciences in which in 2019 the employment rate was 25% and in 2020 it is 16%. However, as shown in table 5-7, the overall percentage decrease of the employability rate is 33%.

Table 4-7: Percentage decrease of employability rate compared to 2019

| Faculty | Employability Rate | | Percentage Decrease |
|---------|--------------------|------|---------------------|
| | 2019 | 2020 | |
| Overall | 51% | 34% | -33% |
| FCMS | 81% | 52% | -36% |
| FHU | 27% | 19% | -30% |
| FSC | 84% | 68% | -19% |
| FSS | 25% | 14% | -44% |

4.4 GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY BY THE GENDER

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls is one of the sustainable development goals listed in the status of sustainable development goals indicators in Sri Lanka: 2017 adopted from the United Nations sustainable development goals. Women empowerment, gender equity and women labor force are several popular concepts in today's world and promoting equal opportunity to engage in paid work and for both men and women have become a must in most of the countries.

75% of the graduates of 2020 are female students and 77% of them have responded to the survey while, out of the male graduates, 25%, 63% have responded to the survey. As per the

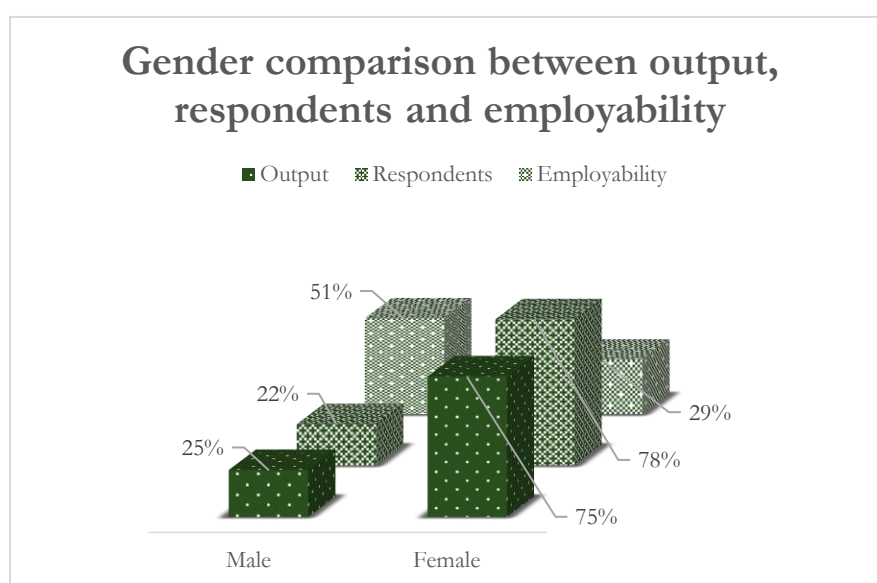


Figure 4-4: Gender comparison between output, respondents, and employability

statistics shown in table 5-8, a higher percentage of male graduates are employed than that of female graduates. And the figure 5-4, depicts a clear picture that

compared to female participation, graduate employability shows a considerable drop of value.

Table 4-8: Graduate employability by gender

| Employment Status | Male | Female |
|--------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Employed | 51% | 29% |
| Unemployed | 49% | 71% |

More than two third of the total female sample are unemployed while more than 50% of the male graduates are employed by the first ten months of the degree completion date.

Some of the Faculties explicit a difference pattern in gender. That is, the gender composition of the Faculty of Science is 60% to 40% and the same for the Faculty of Social Sciences is 88% to 12%. Thus, it is evident to analyze the graduate employability of each Faculty by the gender. The relevant statistics are shown in table 5-9.

Table 4-9: Graduate employability of the Faculties by gender

| Employment Status | FCMS | | FHU | | FSC | | FSOSC | |
|--------------------------|-------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|--------------|----------|
| | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M |
| Employed | 48% | 60% | 18% | 26% | 69% | 67% | 13% | 27% |
| Unemployed | 52% | 40% | 82% | 74% | 31% | 33% | 87% | 73% |

Except for the graduate employability rate of the Faculty of Science, female graduate employability rates are lower than that of male graduates. However, female employability rate 2% higher than the male employability rate of the Faculty of Social Sciences. And moreover, it is the only Faculty which have higher employability rates for both female and male graduates which exceeds 50%. Female graduate employability rate of the Faculty of Commerce & Management Studies is 48% and is lower than that of the male graduates (60%). However, both male and female graduates of the Faculty of Science seem to have equal opportunities for employments than other Faculties.

REVIEW

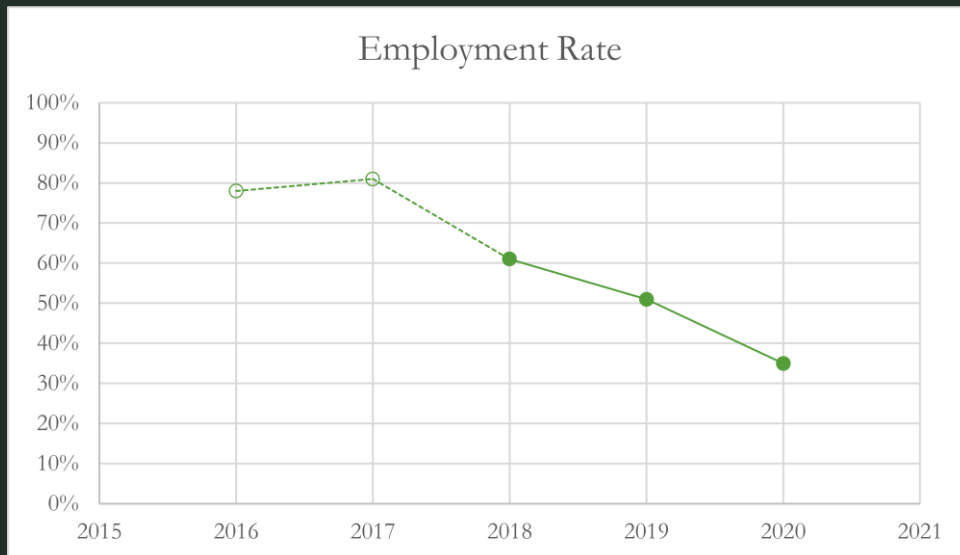


Figure 4-5: Graduate employability of the University of Kelaniya over years

Graduate employability of the University of Kelaniya seems to drop for two consecutive years compared to the starting point of the current survey methodology in 2018. However, 2018 is the only year so far which did not have any issues which are out of control of the University or the economy. The easter blasts and the COVID 19 pandemic has affected the employment rates of Sri Lanka and has influenced the University's graduate employment rate too.

4.5 CHARACTERISTICS OF EMPLOYABILITY

Employability, as defined at the beginning of the report is not only about getting employment. Employability has a vast meaning in which the term “employed” can be categorized as suitable and proper employment and not. Thus, it is evident to investigate the characteristics of the graduates’ employment.

Per the graduate employability reports of 2017, 2018, and 2019 by the University of Kelaniya and the tracer study of graduate employability by the University grants commission of Sri Lanka, it has been identified that the average time to find the employment, status of the employment, type of the employment, economic sector of the employment, method of finding the employment, position, and the average monthly salary as several characteristics of employability. Accordingly, this section will take a close look at the above characteristics of graduate employability.

4.5.1 Timing of the Employments

The time on average a graduate spent on finding their first employment is an explicit reflection of the demand for graduates of respective degree programs. Graduates may find employment before the University studies or during the University or even after completing the degree. But, in most cases, the graduates have found employment after they complete the degree. Gunaratne, Asoka, and Damayanthi have indicated in their study that, most of the graduates have found their employment after releasing the results in state Universities while the graduates of non- state Universities have found their employment equally during the University or after sitting the final exams or after releasing the results (Gunaratne, Asoka, & Damayanthi, 2018)

The findings of the study of the 2020 survey indicate that, out of the employed graduates, most have found their employment after completing the degree. That is 73% of the employed graduates have found their employment after completing the degree while 26% have succeeded during university and 1% have come to the University while working.

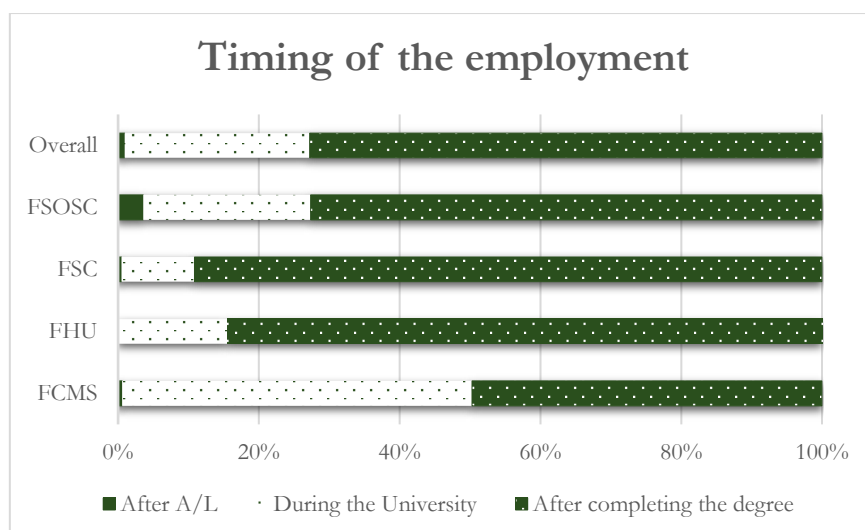


Figure 4-6: Timing of the Employment

The highest percentage of students who have been successful in getting a job during the study period are recorded from the Faculty of Commerce & Management Studies, which is 50% and the least is from the Faculty of Science which is 10%. In contrast, the highest percentage of graduates who were working before the University is recorded from the faculty of Social Sciences while the least is from the Faculty of Science and none from the Faculty of Humanities.

Out of the 73% of graduates who are employed after completing the degree has found their employments, on average, within 5 months period of the results validation date. Moreover, the least average time for finding an employment has been recorded from the graduates of the Faculty of Science while the highest of it has recorded from the graduates of the Faculty of Commerce & Management Studies and Faculty of Social Sciences. Table 5-10 depicts the average time to find the employment by each Faculty.

Table 4-10: Average time to find employment (From March 2020)

| Faculty | FCMS | FHU | FSC | FSOSC | Overall |
|------------------------------|------|-----|-----|-------|---------|
| Average Time (Months) | 6 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 5 |

4.5.2 Status of the Employment and Employment Sector

An employment may be a permanent one, a temporary one, self-employment or entrepreneurship. Previous studies of graduate employability of the University of Kelaniya has revealed that, the first employment of a higher percentage of graduates are temporary appointments which are offered for short period of time. In 2018, 55% of employed graduates were having temporary appointments while, in 2019, 44% were having temporary appointments. (Gunaratne, Weerathne, Thilakaratne, Sarathchandra, & Devindi, Graduate Employability 2018: University of Kelaniya, 2020) (Gunaratne, Weerathne, & Thilakaratne, Graduate Employability 2019: University of Kelaniya, 2020)

However, again in 2020, the percentage of employed graduates whose employment status is temporary has increased than permanent employment. That is, while the percentage of graduates who are having permanent employment is lower than the percentage of graduates who are doing temporary employments. Compared to 2019, the percentage drop of permanent employments and percentage increase of temporary employments is 13%. In addition, the overall involvement in self- employments and entrepreneurship seems not to vary from the previous values. However, as a higher education institute, the University of Kelaniya should focus on increasing the permanent employments after graduation and, motivating the graduates to start their own businesses so that in the long run the ultimate target of higher education with respect to the national economy is fulfilled. Table 5-7 depicts the status of the employments of graduate employees in 2020. Most of the 'other' status of the employment refers to the employed graduates who are undergoing trainings prior to the employments.

The overall figures seemed to vary between gender. As depicted in the table 5-11, majority of male graduates are having a permanent employment while majority of female graduates are having temporary appointments.

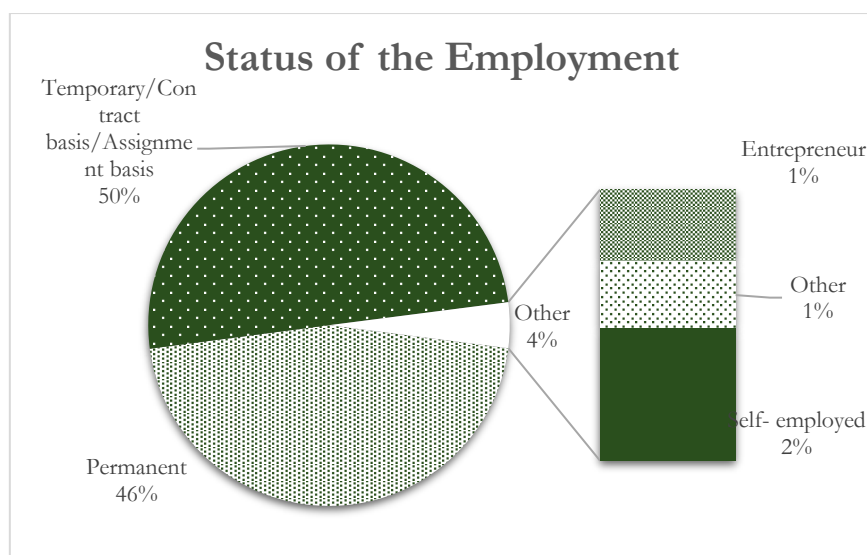


Figure 4-7: Status of the Employment

Table 4-11: Status of the employment by gender

| Status of the employment | Female | Male |
|---|--------|------|
| Permanent | 39% | 61% |
| Temporary/Contract basis/Assignment basis | 58% | 34% |
| Self-employed | 1% | 3% |
| Other | 1% | 1% |
| Entrepreneur | 1% | 1% |

In contrast, more male graduates are engaged in their own self- employments than that of female graduates. From the several individual interviews conducted on the topic, it was revealed that female graduates tend to get public sector permanent employments than other employments. This might be the reason for the increase in temporary employments of female graduates as they are working somewhere temporarily until they get a permanent employment. however, it is evident to analyze this further to check whether the gender inequality is affecting the scenario.

Out of the employed graduates who are not involved in entrepreneurships or have their own self- employments may work in public sector, semi- government sector, private sector or in foreign employment. As per the statistics of 2020, most of the employed graduates are working in the private sector while the least are working in the foreign sector. The percentage of

graduates working in the private sector is nearly three times of the percentage of graduates who are working in the public sector. The relevant statistics are shown in the figure 5-8.

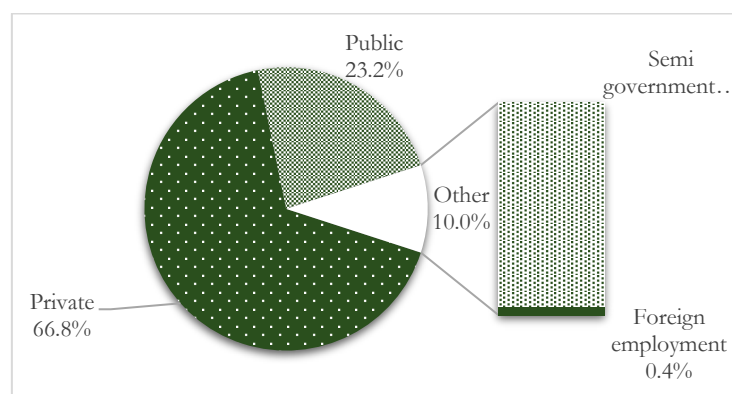


Figure 4-8: Type of employment

However, compared to previous two years, 2020's graduate employability in private sector has been increased by approximately 7% with respect to 2019 and 8% with respect to 2018. Apart from that, foreign employment rate has been decreased compared to previous two years and percentage of graduates who are working either in public sector or semi government sector has reduced.

As depicted in the figure 5-9, most of the temporary placements are represented in private sector. But the converse of the above is as most of the private sector employments are permanent. However, it can be assumed that most of the graduates who are engaged in temporary appointments are waiting to be employed in public sector or maybe they are waiting for a proper employment which suits their qualifications best.

Table 4-12: Status of the employment by gender and Faculty

| Status of the Employment* | FCMS | | | FHU | | | FSC | | | FSOSC | | | Overall | |
|---------------------------|------|----|----|-----|----|----|-----|----|----|-------|----|----|---------|----|
| | M | F | O | M | F | O | M | F | O | M | F | O | M | F |
| Permanent | 66 | 50 | 56 | 82 | 38 | 46 | 59 | 34 | 44 | 40 | 31 | 33 | 61 | 39 |
| Temporary | 28 | 47 | 40 | 18 | 60 | 52 | 39 | 65 | 55 | 45 | 63 | 59 | 34 | 58 |
| Entrepreneur | 3 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Self-employed | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 10 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Other | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 |

M: Male, F: Female, O: Overall *Values are denoted as percentage

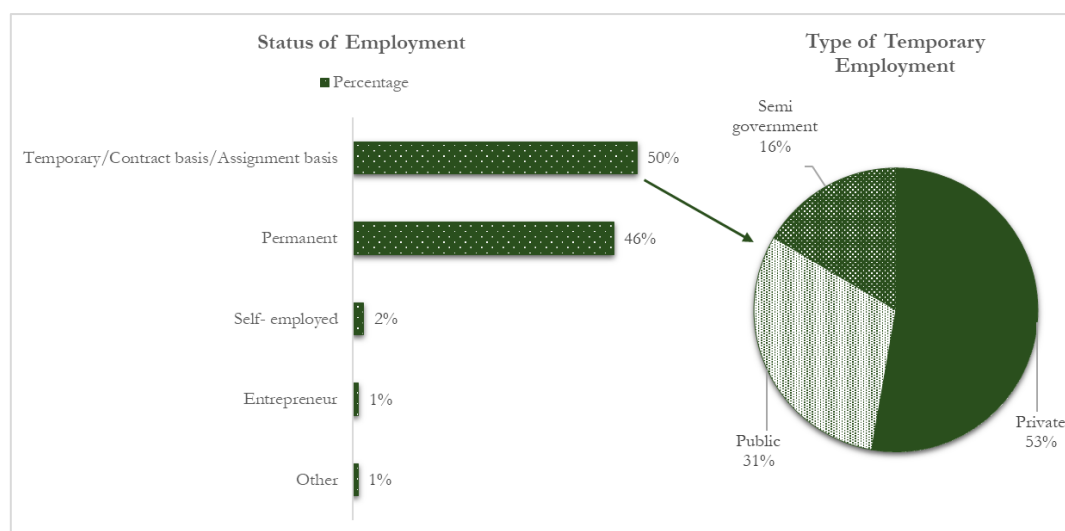


Figure 4-9: Type of temporary employments

According to the statistics depicted in the table 5-12, in all Faculties male graduates have secured permanent employments than female graduates. The female graduates of the Faculty of Commerce & Management Studies are the only ones who have gained more permanent employments than that of female graduates of the other Faculties. The further analysis on how the status of the employment has varied in between each employment sector by gender and Faculty reveals that, most of the permanent employments which the male graduates have belongs to the private sector. But the male graduates of the Faculty of Humanities show a deviation from the general scenario since the more male permanent employees are working in public sector. As depicted in the table 5-13, a higher percentage of female graduates who have permanent jobs are working in public sector and semi government sector (59%) while 41% are working in private sector. But most of the female graduates of the other faculties who have permanent jobs are working in private sector.

Table 4-13: status of the employment by the employment sector by Faculty and gender

| Faculty | Gender | Status of the Employment | Employment Sector | |
|---------|--------|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| | | | Private | Public/ Semi Government |
| FCMS | Male | Permanent | 98% | 2% |
| | | Temporary | 79% | 21% |
| | | Grand Total | 92% | 8% |
| | Female | Permanent | 88% | 12% |
| | | Temporary | 92% | 8% |
| | | Grand Total | 90% | 10% |

| | | | | |
|-------|--------|-------------|-----|------|
| FHU | Male | Permanent | 25% | 76% |
| | | Temporary | 0% | 100% |
| | | Grand Total | 20% | 80% |
| | Female | Permanent | 63% | 37% |
| | | Temporary | 38% | 62% |
| | | Grand Total | 47% | 53% |
| FSC | Male | Permanent | 96% | 4% |
| | | Temporary | 55% | 45% |
| | | Grand Total | 79% | 21% |
| | Female | Permanent | 86% | 14% |
| | | Temporary | 31% | 69% |
| | | Grand Total | 49% | 51% |
| FSOSC | Male | Permanent | 50% | 50% |
| | | Temporary | 56% | 44% |
| | | Grand Total | 53% | 47% |
| | Female | Permanent | 41% | 59% |
| | | Temporary | 38% | 62% |
| | | Grand Total | 39% | 61% |

In contrast, out of the employed graduates who are having temporary jobs, a higher percentage of graduates of the Faculty of Commerce & Management Studies and a higher percentage of male graduates of the Faculty of Science and Faculty of Social Sciences are working in private sector while others work in public or semi- government sector.

4.5.3 Average Monthly Salary of the Employed Graduates

The graduate employees hold a variety of positions in various organizations in different economic sectors. Employment positions vary from assistant level to executive level and from junior management level to senior management level. Parallel to the managerial position they hold, there are graduates employees who earn below Rs. 20,000 and beyond Rs. 75,000. Most of the graduate respondents earn between Rs. 40,000 to Rs. 49,999 while similar percentage, 7%, earn below Rs. 20,000, between Rs. 60,000 to Rs. 75,000 and beyond Rs. 75,000. Per the statistics depicted in the table 5-14, 75% of graduate employees earn below Rs. 50,000 while the remaining 25% earn above Rs. 50,000.

Table 4-14: Gross monthly salary

| Gross Monthly Salary | Percentage |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Less than 20,000 | 7% |
| 20,000 - 29,999 | 17% |
| 30,000 - 39,999 | 22% |
| 40,000 - 49,999 | 29% |
| 50,000 - 59,999 | 11% |
| 60,000 - 75,000 | 7% |
| Over 75,000 | 7% |

Furthermore, compared to 2019 study, the average salary range of the graduate employees has increased in 2020 although, the percentage who earns more than Rs. 75,000 has been decreased. On the other hand, the percentage of graduate employees who earn more than Rs. 50,000 has increased in 2020 than in 2019. However, the institute should focus on creating a skilled graduate so that they could obtain a job which would offer them a higher wage. (Gunaratne, Weeraratne, & Thilakaratne, Graduate Employability 2019: University of Kelaniya, 2020)

The comparison of salary between each Faculty yields that on average the highest paid graduate employees belong to the Faculty of Science, that is 36% are paid above Rs. 50,000, while least paid graduate employees belong to the Faculty of Social Sciences, that is 86% are paid below Rs. 50,000.

Table 4-15: Gross monthly salary by Faculty

| Gross Monthly Salary | FCMS | FHU | FSC | FSOSC |
|-----------------------------|-------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| Less than 20,000 | 16% | 5% | 2% | 4% |
| 20,000 - 29,999 | 21% | 12% | 9% | 31% |
| 30,000 - 39,999 | 29% | 32% | 12% | 25% |
| 40,000 - 49,999 | 19% | 21% | 41% | 26% |
| 50,000 - 59,999 | 10% | 25% | 8% | 10% |
| 60,000 - 75,000 | 3% | 5% | 13% | 1% |
| Over 75,000 | 2% | 0% | 15% | 3% |

Analyzing the wage range pattern of each Faculty depicts that, for the Faculty of Commerce & Management Studies and for the Faculty of Social Sciences, the gross monthly salary of the

graduates, lesser salaries are higher and higher salaries are lesser. In contrast, for the graduates of the Faculty of Science higher salaries are higher and lesser salaries are lesser. And for the graduates of the Faculty of Humanities lesser salaries are lesser and higher salaries are also lesser.

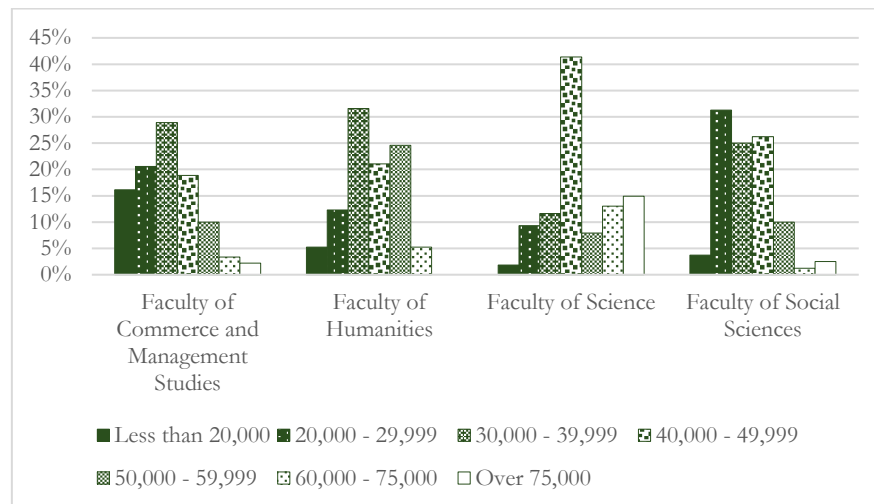


Figure 4-10: Gross monthly salary by Faculty - Graphical comparison

Moreover, out of the 7% of graduate employees who earn more than Rs. 75,000, 84% belong to the Faculty of Science and out of the 7% who earn lower than Rs. 20,000, 74% belong to the Faculty of Commerce & Management Studies. In general, most of the lesser range wage receivers (salaries below Rs. 40,000) are from the Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies while most of the higher range wage receivers (salaries above Rs. 50,000) are from the Faculty of Science.

Generalizing the reason behind the latter mentioned scenario would be that, in many cases, for the people who work in the commerce and management field experience is much more important to get a reputed job. So, it can be assumed that the graduates of the Faculty of Commerce & Management Studies tend to take any opportunity which would be beneficial for them in getting experience even for a minimum salary. The further inquiry regarding the status and the type of employment found that, most of the lesser range wage receivers work as interns (temporary appointments) in private sector.

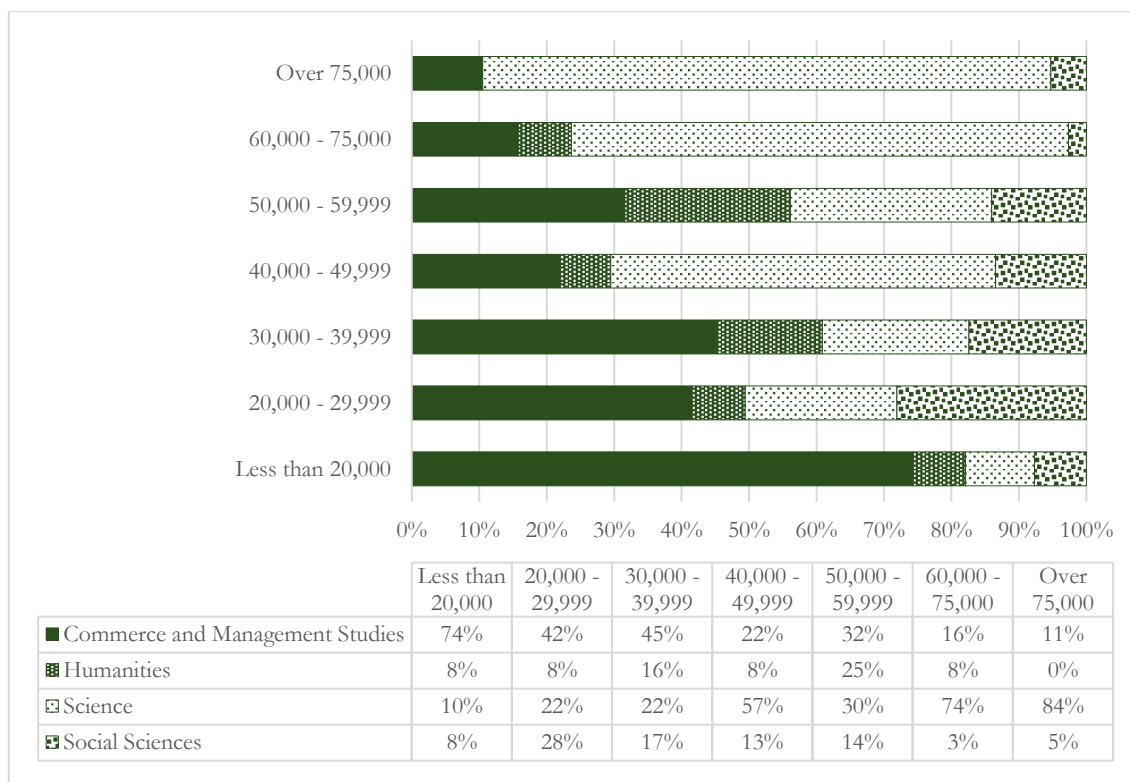


Figure 4-11: Wage range distribution among Faculties

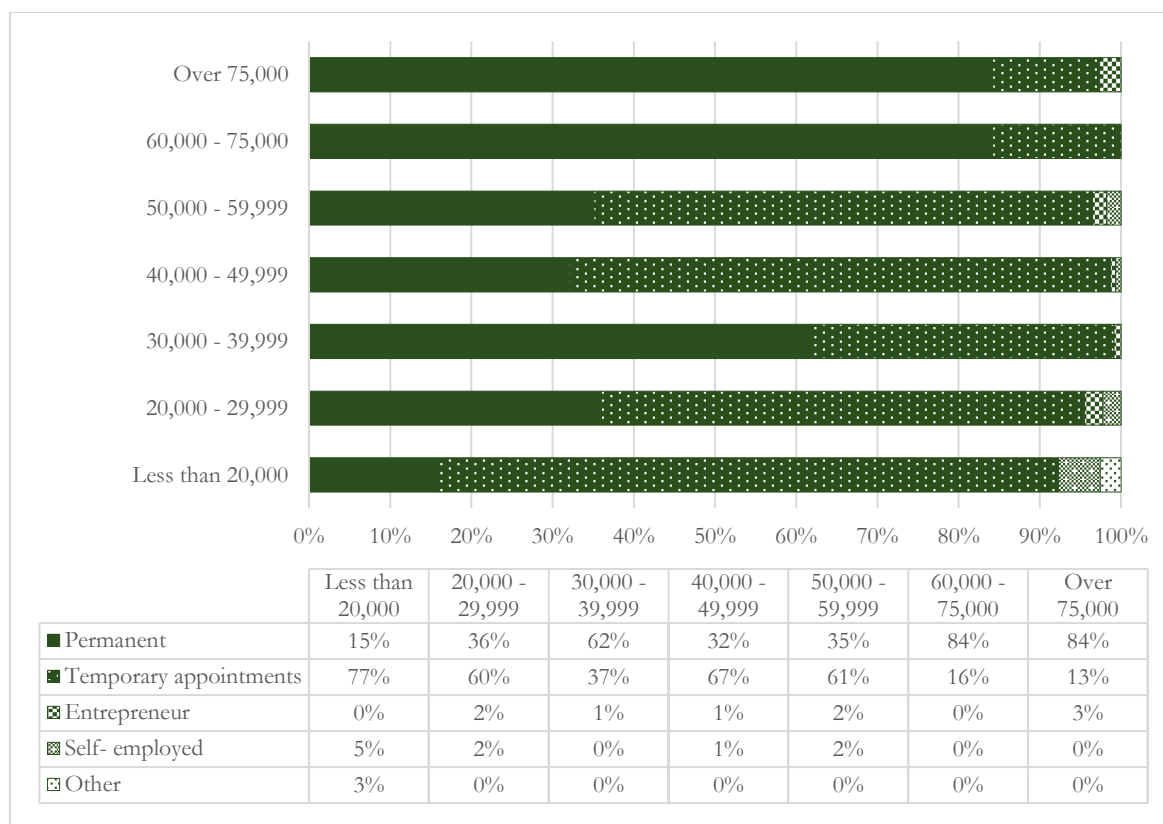


Figure 4-12: Gross monthly salary by the status of the employment

As illustrated in the figure 5-12, out of the graduates who earn less than Rs. 20,000, 77% are having temporary jobs while out of the graduates who earn more Rs. 75,000, 84% are having permanent employments. Apart from that, the income of the graduates who are entrepreneurs has varied from Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 60,000 while self-employed graduates' income varies below Rs. 60,000.

As depicted in the figure 5-13, out of the graduate employees who earn more than Rs. 75,000 are in private sector while the remaining 3% are having foreign employments. Public sector employments are more popular in the Sri Lankan state University system than private sector specially in Arts stream. But, when analyzed for the gross monthly salary of the public sector and semi- government sector employments, the salaries vary between Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 75,000. However, though the salaries of private sector employees vary from less than Rs. 20,000 to more than Rs. 75,000, a graduate employee could expect a higher salary in private sector than in public sector. And most importantly, more than 95% of the private sector employed graduates who earns over Rs. 75,000 are in IT sector working as software engineers.

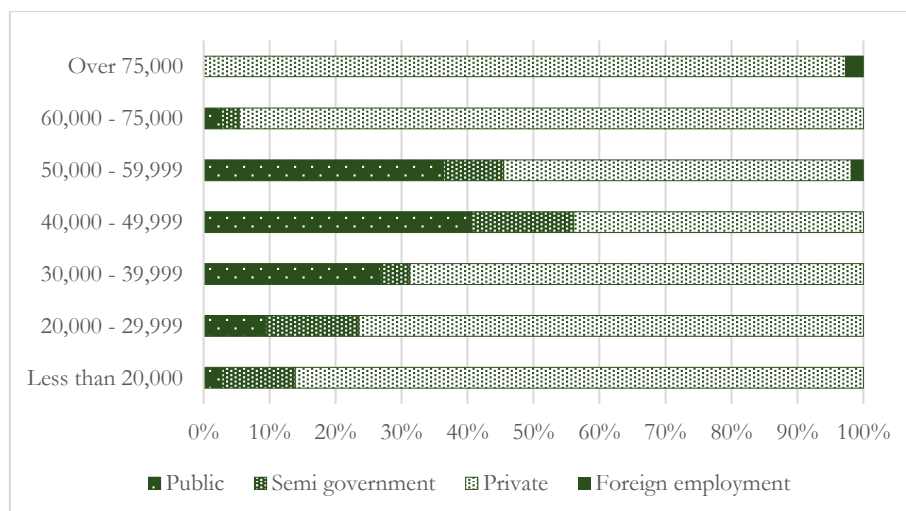


Figure 4-13: Gross monthly salary by the employment sector

4.6 FACTORS AFFECTING THE EMPLOYABILITY

The ability of a graduate in earning an employment depends on some factors. Researchers has continuously worked on identifying the exact factors which influences seeking a proper and permanent employment within a short period of time. The previous graduate employability surveys of the University of Kelaniya has found that, the status of employment varies with academic performance, medium of instruction, English language proficiency, participation in industrial training or internship training, involvement in extra-curricular activities, experiences in full- time or part- time employment during the academic period (Gunaratne, Weeraratne, & Thilakaratne, Graduate Employability 2019: University of Kelaniya, 2020) (Gunaratne, Weeraratne, Thilakaratne, Sarathchandra, & Devindi, Graduate Employability 2018: University of Kelaniya, 2020)

This section reveals the association of the above-mentioned factors on the graduate employability rate in 2020.

4.6.1 Academic Performance

The University of Kelaniya awards four categories based on the overall performance of the graduates namely, first class honors, second class honors- upper division, second class honors- lower division and ordinary pass. And majority of the graduates belonging to the population under the study, have obtained second class upper divisions at the end of their studies while least number of students have obtained first class honors (Table 5-16).

Table 4-16: Graduate output and the class awards of the population

| Faculty | 1 st Class | 2 nd Upper | 2 nd Lower | General Pass |
|---------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| FCMS | 14% | 43% | 21% | 22% |
| FHU | 12% | 74% | 7% | 7% |
| FSC | 16% | 38% | 22% | 24% |
| FSSC | 6% | 84% | 6% | 5% |
| Total | 11% | 64% | 12% | 13% |

Moreover, Faculty of Science has offered the highest percentage of first class honors awards, 16%, than other faculties where the least percentage of first classes have been awarded by the Faculty of Social Sciences which is 6%. In terms of second class honors- upper division, the Faculty of Social Sciences has offered 84% of awards which is the highest and the lowest is offered by the Faculty of Science which is 38%. Apart from that, Faculty of Science has offered the highest percentage of second-class lower divisions and general passes compared to other Faculties (Figure 5-14).

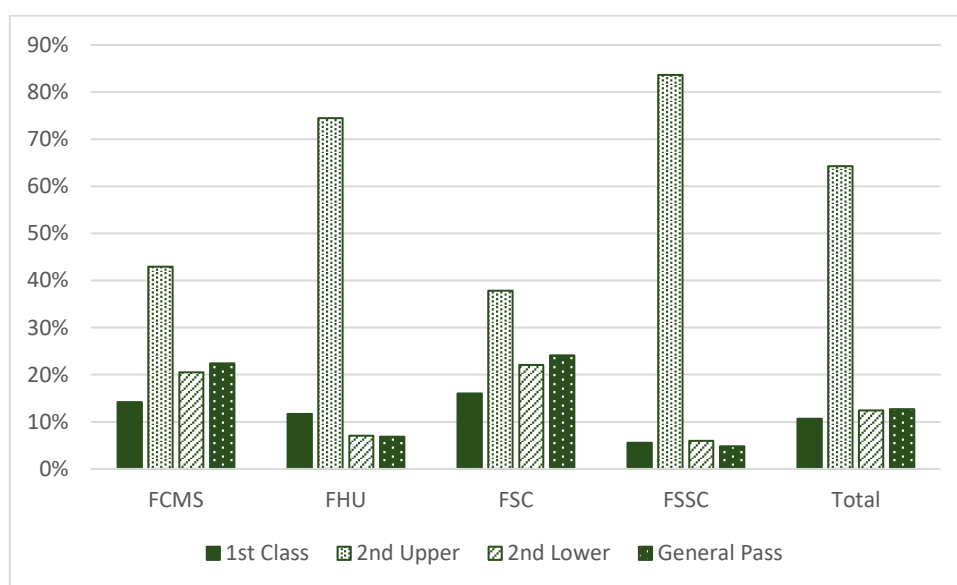


Figure 4-14: Class awards by Faculty

By the analysis it was found that, out of the graduates who have obtained First class honors division. In overall, the graduate employability rate of the students who had obtained first class honors divisions has higher employability compared to the other awards.

Table 4-17: Employability by the class received

| Faculty | Class Award | Employability Rate |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Faculty of Commerce & Management Studies | First Class Honors | 45% |
| | Second Class Honors - Upper Division | 59% |
| | Second Class Honors - Lower Division | 51% |
| | Ordinary Pass | 43% |
| Faculty of Humanities | First Class Honors | 31% |
| | Second Class Honors - Upper Division | 18% |

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----|
| | Second Class Honors - Lower Division | 11% |
| | Ordinary Pass | 6% |
| Faculty of Science | First Class Honors | 89% |
| | Second Class Honors - Upper Division | 77% |
| | Second Class Honors - Lower Division | 58% |
| | Ordinary Pass | 46% |
| Faculty of Social Sciences | First Class Honors | 23% |
| | Second Class Honors - Upper Division | 13% |
| | Second Class Honors - Lower Division | 24% |
| | Ordinary Pass | 23% |
| Overall | First Class Honors | 48% |
| | Second Class Honors - Upper Division | 28% |
| | Second Class Honors - Lower Division | 45% |
| | Ordinary Pass | 38% |

4.6.2 Medium of Instruction

The medium of instruction of the degree programmes followed by the respondents is given in Table 22 which indicates that the majority of the respondents, that is 47%, have followed the degree programmes in English medium. Sinhala Medium was reported as 31%. And also, 22% of respondents have followed the degree program in both English medium and Sinhala medium.

Table 4-18: Respondents by the medium of instruction

| Medium of Instruction | Percentage |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| English | 47% |
| Sinhala | 31% |
| Sinhala and English | 22% |
| Grand Total | 100% |

Graduates who have followed the degree program in English medium, have obtained more job opportunities than other medium of instructions. That is, 58% of the graduates who have studied the degree course through English medium are employed, while only 11% of the graduates who have studied the degree course through Sinhala medium only have employment

opportunities. Moreover, 14% of the students who have completed the degree course in both Sinhala and English Medium have got job opportunities.

Table 4-19: Employability by the medium of instruction

| Medium of Instruction | Employability Rate |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| English | 58% |
| Sinhala and English | 14% |
| Sinhala | 11% |

4.6.3 English Language Proficiency

The previous section pointed out that, the graduates who followed the degree programme in English medium have a higher employability rate than that of any other medium of instruction. Therefore, it is evident to find out the employability with respect to the language proficiency before the University.

Accordingly, the Table 24 indicates that the graduates who have obtained higher grades for English in general certificate of examinations- ordinary level, are more employed than the below grades. That is 11% out of the total respondents have obtained higher grades representing the top 20% and among them 69% are employed while 36% out of the total respondents who represent the lowest 20%, has only 15% employability rate.

Table 4-20: Language proficiency and the employability

| Language proficiency for O/L | Respondents | Employed |
|------------------------------|-------------|------------|
| A | 11% | 69% |
| B | 8% | 61% |
| C | 15% | 50% |
| S | 30% | 27% |
| W/F | 36% | 15% |
| Grand Total | 100% | 34% |

Moreover, the further analysis of English Language proficiency and the medium of instruction revealed that, the graduates who had obtained lower grades for English in O/L examination and followed the degree program in English have lower employability rate compared to others

and simultaneously, the graduates who obtained lower grades and followed the degree program in Sinhala medium has higher employability rate. Similarly, the graduates who got higher grades for English and also followed the degree programme in English medium have obtained a higher employability rate. The distribution is clearly depicted in the figure 15.

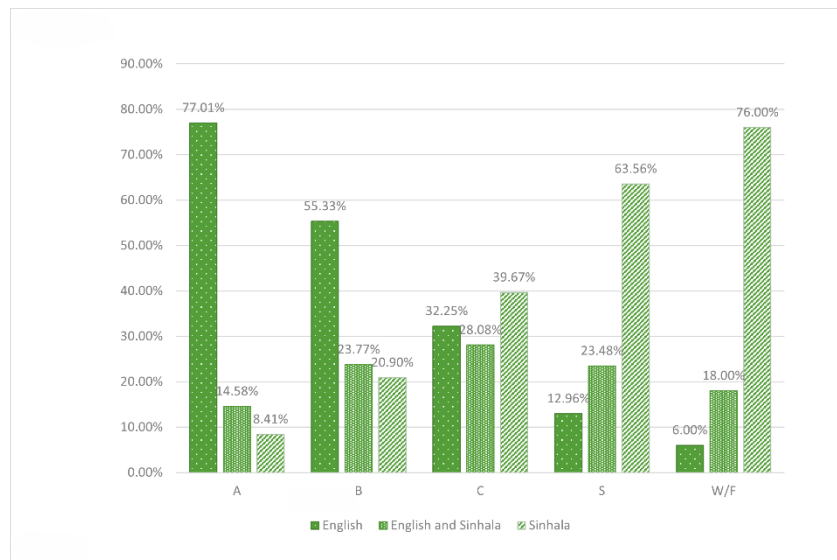


Figure 4-15: Employability by the Medium of Instruction vs. Language Proficiency

4.6.4 Extra-Curricular Activities

Undergraduates of the University of Kelaniya have a large variety of extra-curricular activities such as sports, aesthetic activities, and students' clubs and unions to engage during their academic period. Involvement in extra-curricular activities helps to develop communication skills, teamwork, adaptability to new situations, decision-making skills, planning and organizing skills, analytical thinking, and problem-solving skills.

The respondent profile indicated that 57% of them have been involved in extra-curricular activities, while only 43% have not been involved. Also, as depicted in Figure 16, the employability rate of the graduates who have been involved in extra-curricular activities is higher than that of the graduates who have not.

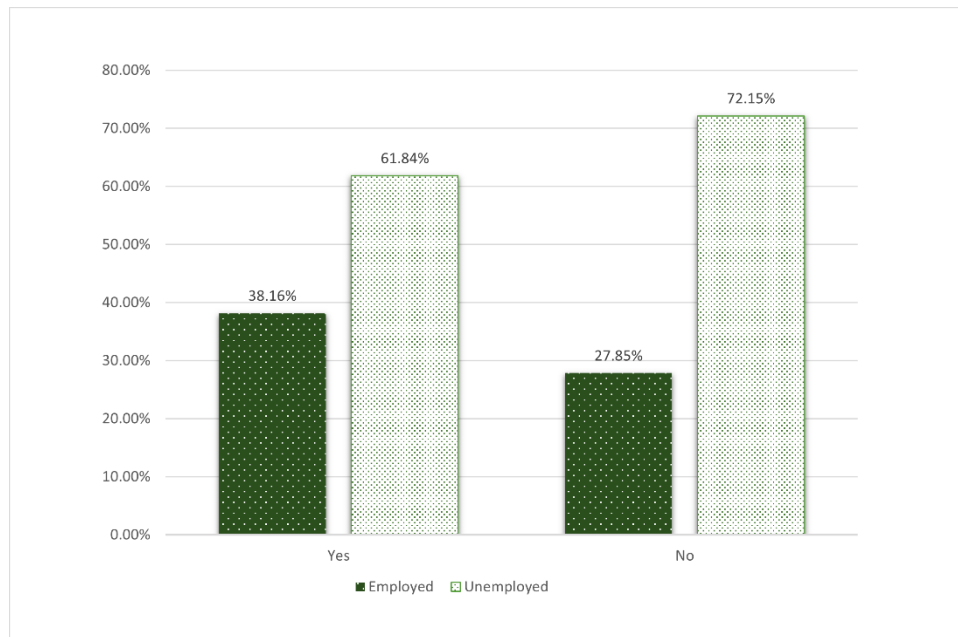


Figure 4-16: Employability by the involvement in extra-curricular activities

4.6.5 Full-time or Part-time Employment During the Academic Period

Some of the students of the University engage in full-time or part-time employment during the University due to many reasons. The analysis revealed that the employability rate of graduates who have been doing full-time/part-time employment has a higher employability rate than those who have not. (Figure17)

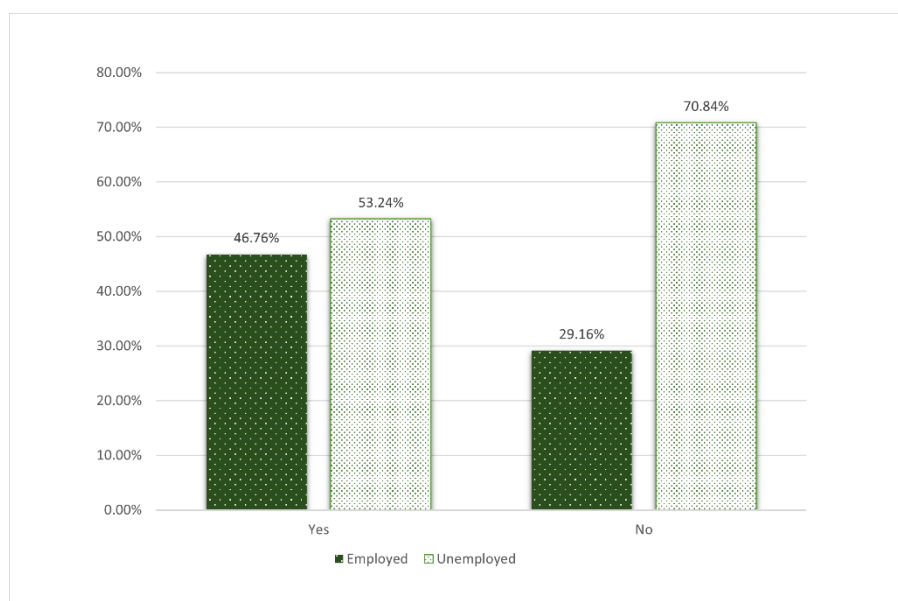


Figure 4-17: Full time/ part time employment and the employability

4.7 INSIGHTS ON EMPLOYABILITY: GRADUATES POINT OF VIEW

The survey examined opinions and feedback regarding employability, aiming to gain a comprehensive understanding of the changes necessary to enhance the current career guidance process. Respondents were asked how they found their jobs, the relevance of their current employment to their degree, their level of job satisfaction, and the most influential factor in securing employment.

4.7.1 Method of Finding the Employment

Most of the graduates, 36.73%, have found their employments through the advertisements on online media and social media networks such as LinkedIn. Personal contacts follow closely behind, aiding 19.27% of job seekers in their search. Traditional media, such as newspapers, still plays a significant role, with 12.91% of people finding jobs this way. Continuing jobs held during university is the route for 2.73% of graduates, while competitive exams and job fairs play a minor role, with only 0.73% and 0.36%, respectively, relying on these methods. Overall, the graph demonstrates the growing importance of digital platforms and personal networks in job searches, while traditional methods still hold some relevance.

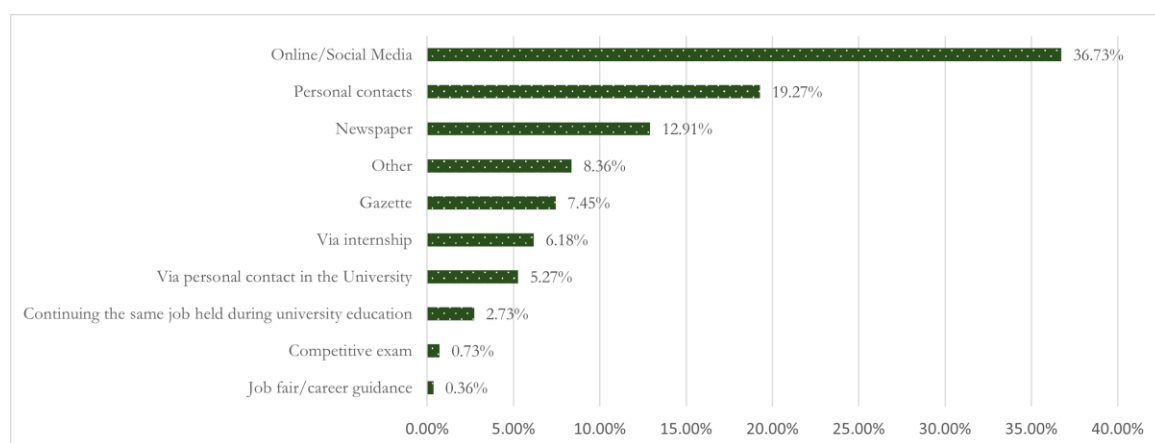


Figure 4-18: Method of finding the employment

The important factors which can be identified through this analysis is that, the graduates have obtained less percentage of employment via job fair/ career guidance of the University, which

implies that, the career guidance activities have to be modified to promote job opportunities for the graduates of the University.

4.7.2 Relation to the Field of Study and Current Employment

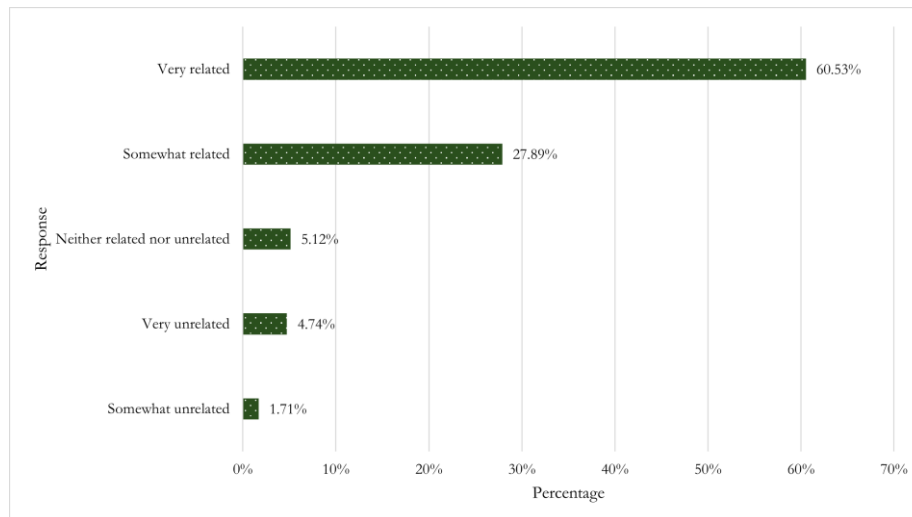


Figure 4-19: Related to degree qualification

As shown in above figure 19, most of the respondents stated that their current employment is very related to the degree programme they followed (60.53%). Only about 6.45% of respondents have stated that they are involved in a job which are unrelated to their degree qualification.

4.7.3 Level of Job Satisfaction

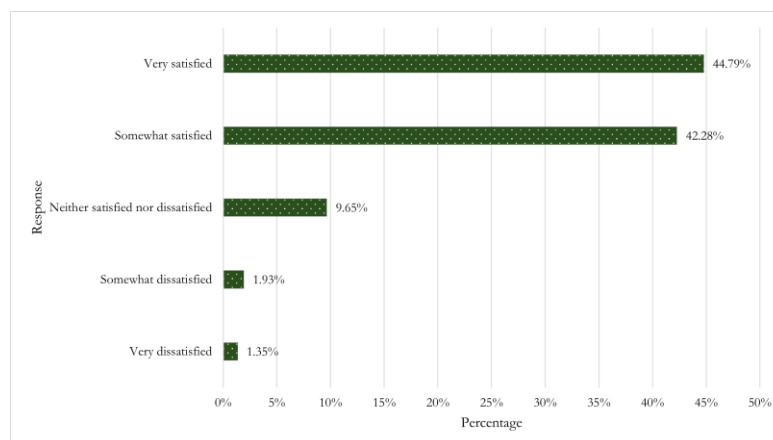


Figure 4-20: Level of satisfaction of the job

Figure 20 illustrates that most of the graduates are somewhat satisfied (42.28%) with their job. Among the graduates, 44.79% graduates are very satisfied with their jobs. Also, the percentages of somewhat dissatisfied and very dissatisfied were 1.93% and 1.35% respectively.

4.7.4 Most Influential Factor to Obtain a Job

Rather than deciding the influencing factors, by the University itself, it is more useful to get the graduate employees' point of view of their own experience. Accordingly, among these, 63% of respondents highlight the importance of their degree as the most significant element in securing a job. Close behind, 57% assert that their personality plays a vital role in their job prospects, while 53% emphasize the necessity of previous work experience. Additionally, 52% have mentioned English proficiency has been important and 47% believe that other professional qualifications enhance their employability. Computer literacy is regarded as essential by 44%, with 28% attributing significance to their specific field of study. The reputation of the university is recognized by 23%, while 22% rely on personal contacts to aid their job search. Overall, the data underscores that a degree, personality, and previous work experience are the most critical elements for graduates seeking employment, while factors like research experience hold less weight.

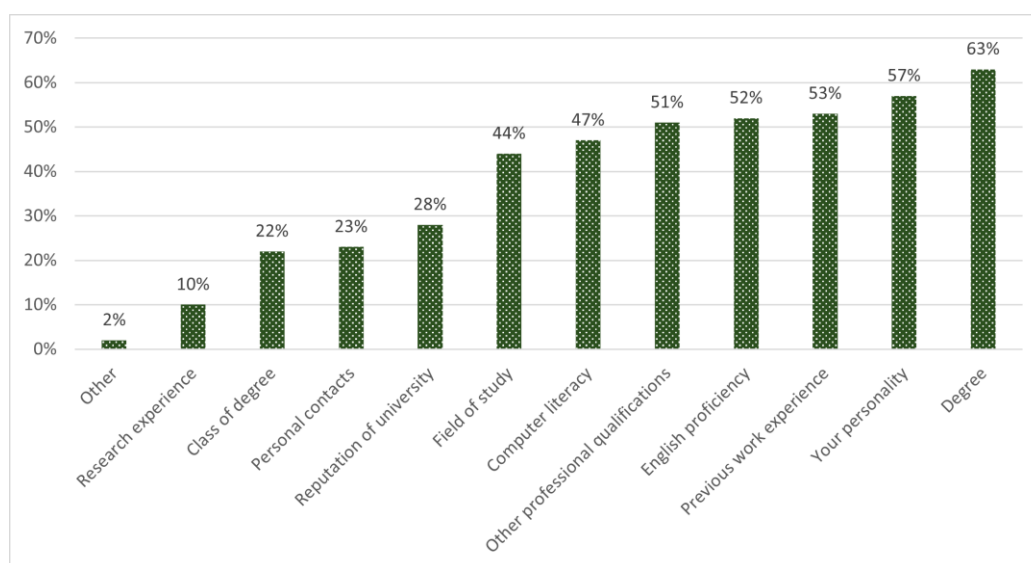


Figure 4-21: Most influential factor to obtain a job

4.8 UNEMPLOYMENT

Employment and unemployment must be thoroughly examined, as the issue of unemployability uncovers underlying factors that require immediate attention. Therefore, this section investigates the reasons behind graduates' unemployment and the challenges they faced in securing suitable jobs.

Figure 22 illustrates the various reasons for unemployment among individuals. A striking 74.24% of people remain unemployed because they have not yet secured a job, though they are actively seeking one. Additionally, 10.71% are not looking for a job at all, while 5.54% are focusing on furthering their higher studies. A smaller percentage, 2.22%, have resigned from their previous employment, and 2.12% declined the job offers they received. Overall, the graph emphasizes that the majority of unemployment stems from the inability to find suitable employment despite ongoing efforts.

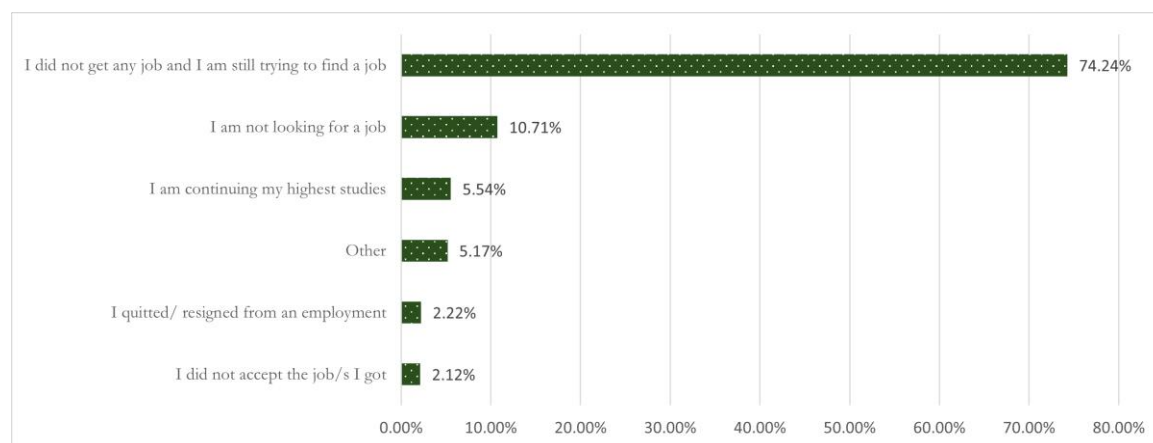


Figure 4-22: Reasons for unemployment

From the perspective of unemployed graduates, the main challenges they face in securing employment include a lack of experience, the gap between their academic qualifications and the job market such as fewer job-oriented programs, limited vacancies, and fewer opportunities in relevant fields in Sri Lanka, insufficient language skills and soft skills, and the influence of politics and politicians.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The primary objective of a higher education institution is to develop graduates who are well-prepared to meet both personal and professional goals. Employability serves as a key indicator of how successfully a university meets these expectations concerning its graduates. To assess this, the University of Kelaniya conducted a graduate employability survey, aiming to evaluate the employment readiness of its graduates and the extent to which the university has achieved its goal of fostering employable individuals.

The 2019 methodology was followed for the 2020 Graduate Employment Survey methodology where paper-based and online methods were used. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the paper-based paper was canceled and the whole survey was conducted online. The problem of comparing inter-faculty employment rates was solved by conducting the university-wide survey six to ten months after the degree effective date.

In addition, when deciding the target population, the graduates from the MBBS programme of the Faculty of Medicine was excluded since the MBBS graduates are granted government job opportunities after their graduation. And therefore, the graduates who followed the Bachelor of Speech and Hearing Sciences programme was only considered from the Faculty of Medicine. However, the data validation process removed a set of responses due to incomplete responses where the respondents have provided less information regarding their employability status. Moreover, several of them have mentioned contradicting responses where it was unable to decide whether they are truly employed or unemployed.

The survey analysis revealed that, in 2020, 73% of the graduates are employed and on average they have found the employments after five months of the graduation and are having a temporary/ contract basis/assignment basis employment mostly in the private sector related to education and are earning between Rs. 40,000 to Rs. 49,999. Further, the findings pointed

out that, male graduates have higher employability rate and also earns above Rs. 40,000 than female graduates.

The highest employability rate was recorded from the graduates of the Faculty of Science and the lowest employability rate was recorded from the Faculty of Social Sciences. Comparatively, the employability rate of the Faculty of Commerce & Management Studies and the Faculty of Science have higher employability rates than the Faculty of Humanities and the Faculty of Social Sciences. The reason behind these differences between the employability rates of the Faculties was found in the graduates' feedback about the most influential factor for obtaining an employment which is indicated as the degree. That is, the more the degree programmes are job oriented and compatible with the job market, the more the jobs are open, and the chances of getting selected for jobs are high.

Moreover, graduates have identified the COVID-19 pandemic as the primary obstacle to securing employment. Additionally, the lack of job opportunities, increased industry competition due to the pandemic, and insufficient work experience among graduates have been highlighted as further challenges. Apart from these, insufficient knowledge of the English language is the main obstacle they faced.

Opportunities to develop interpersonal skills with or without academic activities have been called for to develop factors that help to enhance employability such as personality. Furthermore, apart from degree courses and candidates' personality, respondents noted that proficiency in international language, English, and IT literacy had a significant impact on graduate employability. Therefore, increasing language learning opportunities as well as IT-related subjects will ultimately increase employment rates. However, the students' suggestions on increasing employability should be given high attention and should be followed up with a series of long-term and short-term solutions.

In addition, USDMU asked about the overall recommendation of the degree program at the University of Kelaniya and 95% of the respondents recommended the degree program to others and several of the respondents emphasized the importance of updating the degree programs. Also, the lack of practical sessions and the lack of value for the degree program in the job market have also been mentioned more.

This report provides valuable statistics that serve as an effective measure of the employability of University of Kelaniya graduates. It can be used to identify and analyze the factors that contribute to the rise in employability. The report offers a reliable and clear estimate of the employability rate, revealing that over 34% of students found employment after completing their degree. Consequently, the University of Kelaniya has maintained a satisfactory employability rate for previous years. However, the employability rate experienced a decline this year due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The report also highlights challenges that hinder further improvements, making it a useful tool for revitalizing the university and enhancing its employability outcomes.

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This document is only used for illustration. Graduates are given an online questionnaire

Questionnaire 2020

Form 01

Employability Study of Graduates 2020

This is the official census form on employability for all graduates this year.

PART A - GENERAL INFORMATION

- 1) Student Number:
- 2) Name with Initials:
- 3) Gender: Male Female
- 4) GCE (A/L) Examination:

| District | Z-Score | Year |
|----------|---------|------|
| | | |

- 5) Contact Details: email: Telephone:
- 6) Do you have a LinkedIn profile:
 Yes No
- 7) If 'yes', mention the URL of your LinkedIn profile:
- 8) Faculty/ Institution:
- 9) Degree type:
 General (3 years) Special (4 years) Medical (5 years)

9.1 If "General" please specify the degree

program.....

9.2 If "Special" please specify area of specialization:

.....

9.3 If "Special" please specify the academic

department.....

- 10) Medium of Instruction (Mark with a "√" to all that applies)
 English Sinhala English and Sinhala
- 11) Class received:
 First Class Second Upper Second Lower Ordinary Pass

12) English Language Proficiency

| Examination | Grade Received | | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| GCE(O/L) English Language | <input type="checkbox"/> A | <input type="checkbox"/> B | <input type="checkbox"/> C | <input type="checkbox"/> S | <input type="checkbox"/> F / W |
| GCE(A/L) General English | <input type="checkbox"/> A | <input type="checkbox"/> B | <input type="checkbox"/> C | <input type="checkbox"/> S | <input type="checkbox"/> F / W |

13) Have you sat for any examinations for any courses offered by the DELT?

 Yes No

14) What is the highest grade you have obtained for any course offered by the DELT:

15) Do you like to recommend your degree program to others?

 Yes No

If it is “No”. Please specify the reasons.

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

16) Was there an Internship Training component in your degree programme?

 Yes No Not relevant

If yes answer Questions 16.1 & 16.2

16.1 Was **Internship Training** Compulsory with Credits Compulsory without Credits Elective with Credits Elective without Credits Other please Specify16.2 Did you get the support from the university to find an **Internship Training**? Yes No

17) Were you involved in any of the following during your university years?

| Category | Yes | No | If yes, please specify |
|---|-----|----|------------------------|
| Extra-curricular activities | | | |
| Vocational training | | | |
| Other educational/professional qualifications | | | |
| Full/part-time employment | | | |

18) What are your career goals for the next two years? (Mark with a “√” to all that applies)

- Find a better job Migration Further studies
 Be an entrepreneur Other If other, please specify
- Upgrading the current position

19) What do you think could be done to facilitate the first employment after graduation?
Please give suggestions

PART B – Relevant only for unemployed respondents

20) Reasons for Unemployment

- Not looking for a job
- Continuing highest studies
- Still try to find a job
- I got a Job but I reject it
- I quitted/ resigned from an employment
- Other If other, please specify

21) If you didn't accept any job offer you got, please specify the reason/s:

22) If you rejected or quit a job, please specify the reason

23) What kind of a job in which area are you looking at.

24) What do you think are the main obstacles for you to get a job? Please give details

PART C – Relevant only employed respondents

25) Current status of the employment

- Permanent Temporary/Contract Basis /Assignment Basis
 Self Employed Entrepreneur Other

26) When did you find your **current job**?

After AL's

During the University

After completing the degree

27) What is the organization currently employed:

28) Date of the current employment as you remember MM/YYYY

29) Details of immediate supervisor: Name.....Contact Details:

30) Which sector are you employed in?

- Public Private Semi Government Self
Employed Foreign Employment Other please specify
.....

31) The position you hold currently?

- Senior Management Middle Management Junior Management
 Management Trainee Support Staff (Clerical/Secretarial) Teacher
 Lecturer Doctor Entrepreneur
 Other please specify

32) To which economic sector does your current job belong to

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture /Dairy | <input type="checkbox"/> Bank Finance/ Insurance | <input type="checkbox"/> Construction / Engineering |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing | <input type="checkbox"/> Power and Energy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hotels/ Travels/Tourism | <input type="checkbox"/> Health care | <input type="checkbox"/> Trade |
| <input type="checkbox"/> IT | <input type="checkbox"/> Plantation | <input type="checkbox"/> Telecommunication |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Administration & Defense | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional, Scientific & technical | <input type="checkbox"/> Other If other, please specify..... |

33) What is your current gross monthly salary (In Rupees)?

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 20,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> 20,000 - 29,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> 30,000 - 39,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 40,000 - 49,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> 50,000 - 59,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> 60,000 - 75,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Over 75,000 | | |

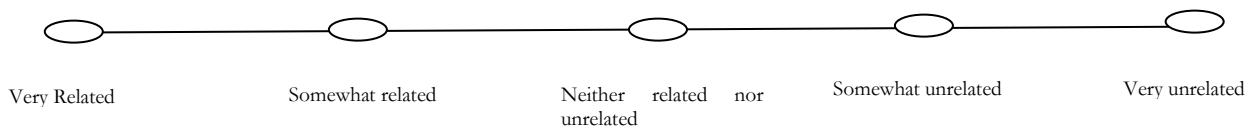
34) How did you find this job?

- Newspaper Gazette Online
 Personal contacts Competitive Exam Via Internship
 Via University Job fair/ career guidance
 Continuing with the same job held during university education
 Other If other, please specify

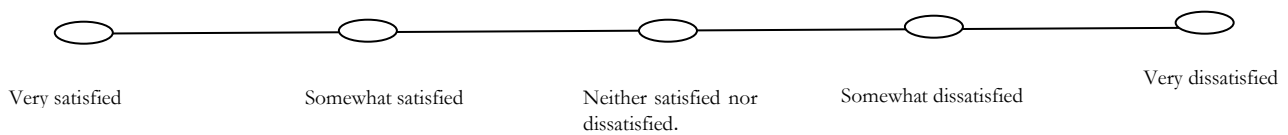
35) What do you think were the most important aspects in getting this job? (Check all that applies)

- Degree
- Class of degree
- Reputation of university
- Field of study
- Research experience
- Personal contacts
- Previous work experience
- English proficiency
- Your Personality
- Computer literacy
- Other professional qualifications
- Other If other, please specify

36) Is this job related to the field you studied for your degree?



37) How satisfied are you with this job?



Thank you for completing this census. We appreciate the time you have spent in providing us with feedback that will help reform.