
University to Work Transition: Tracer Survey of Employability with Special Reference to Humanities and Social Science Graduates in a State University in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Graduate employability emerged in the twentieth century with the systematic development of higher education institutes (HEI). The study was conducted at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura aiming to trace the graduate employability in two attempts. Both Bachelors/ Honours degree holders eligible for the general convocation of 2017 were counted in. During the first phase, an interviewee-administered questionnaire was used and in the second phase, telephone conversations were used referring to the database developed earlier. Out of 808, 522 and 463 students have responded in both attempts. The number of employed graduates after six months of final examination was 22% (193) and increased up to 44% (214) in one year. The level of employability was increased by 24% of honors degree holders and 19% of general degree holders. The majority were working in the private sector. While the majority work on temporary basis (55% and 64%), engagement of permanent jobs has increased by 7%. The education sector earned the largest contribution (39%). 49% of the English medium graduates were employed at first 6 months, and 76% after twelve months. Gender, the language of study and the type of degree (General/ Honors) seemed the significant factors for graduate employability. Relativeness of the first job with the field of education and reaching a graduate-level job was neglected. Capability to obtain work and entering the world of work is considered a vital skill. We propose HEI to track graduate employability to assure the quality of our education systems.

Keywords: *Employability, Humanities and Social Science Graduates, Sri Lanka, Tracer study, World of work*

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