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MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

The relationship between higher education and employability has been transformed into a growing pressure on both undergraduate students and higher education institutions. This research paper focuses on defining the employability challenges which can be recognized by future bachelor's degree graduates, universities and employers from the perspective of the HEIs. The target population of this research was 210 fresh-out bachelor students of three "innovative" Azerbaijani Universities. To answer the research questions among the sample population, the survey was used as a research instrument. The findings obtained from the research allowed to claim that most of the undergraduate students' workplaces are either partly related or not related to their qualifications, which proves not only the mismatch between the skills taught at universities and the needed employability skills, but also the lack of vacancies for bachelor's degree graduates as a result of stiff competition in labor market in Azerbaijan. Thus, we recommend strengthening the role of HEIs on the result of employability, and creating a safe environment where students can learn the required skills and knowledge.

Keywords: undergraduate employability, bachelor's degree students, higher education, employability skills, employment decisions.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The higher education (HE) system in the Republic of Azerbaijan consists of different kinds of state and private institutions, including colleges, institutes, academies, universities and conservatoires. The basic principles of state policy and general conditions for regulating educational activities in the field of ensuring the right of citizens to education enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan is defined by The Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Education. According to the principles of Law on Education (2016), institutions have the right to draw academic plans and determine the syllabus.

To help undergraduate students answer their questions regarding employability, to enable students to find jobs or boost their qualifications to help their employability, career centers are established in the Azerbaijani universities. Furthermore, the growth of such career centers at HEIs would be advantageous for the bachelor's degree graduates to become more capable candidates for the labor market. (*Mammadova, 2019)*

Statement of Problem

The key challenge needed to be addressed is employability of bachelor's degree graduate students. High unemployment rate is not only an issue for students who fulfilled their secondary general education, but surprisingly, it is comparatively high among undergraduate students at HEIs, stated Aliyev, Valiyev and Rustamova (2011). According to Aliyev et.al (2011), "There is a surplus of graduates in Azerbaijan in areas such as health, education and humanities, as well as a shortage of graduates with the qualifications of financial managers and agriculture experts"(p42). Also, " The national labor market requires strengthening to address key issues of mismatches of demand and supply, high standards of

capacity building as well as underemployment, youth unemployment, and informal employment, which has particularly affected women in Azerbaijan." (UNAPF 2015) Consequently, at the 2007 job fair in Baku, only a half of the 7,000 offered vacancies were filled with suitable candidates. (World Bank, 2009a) Relevantly, International Labor Organization (ILO) (2020) highlights, the economic circumstance in Azerbaijan has uncovered that the economic development is yet to interpret full elimination of poverty and other problems such as youth unemployment, skills development, occupational safety and health. Given that, we hypothesize that HEIs in Azerbaijan fails in educating employable undergraduate students.

Employability of bachelor's degree graduates is crucial in many distinct ways, thereby having an impact on different areas. As Cendejas and Fachelli (2018) relate undergraduate students' employability problems with the economic crisis it can be said, if this issue is not solved now, undergraduate employability will trigger an increase of unemployment rate among the youth in future. Accordingly, ILO (2020) states, economical structural changes in Azerbaijan have led to transformations in employment, too. In details, the proportion of public organization employees nearly halved from 56% to 25.2% from 1995 to 2005 correspondingly. ILO (2020) further underlines, in 2005 the majority of bachelor's degree graduates entered the job market as entrepreneurs or self-employed. Matsumoto and Elder (2010), provided statistical data of Azerbaijani youth, where the preponderance of undergraduate students with bachelor's degree diploma failed in entering the job market in comparison with the youth between 15 - 29 ages positioned at "illiterate" workers' category with 60%. However, according to Humburg and colleagues (2013), universities should assist in bridging undergraduate students with new workplaces.

Producing employable undergraduate students is one of the numerous aims of the HE system (Teichler 2010). The relationship between HE and employability has been conceptualized in many distinct ways. For instance, Bills (2003) suggested various theories to describe the interrelation between HE and employability. In each theory, the central causal mechanism concerns how employers and job seekers acquire and use labor market information. Control theory, signaling theory and screening theory explain how higher education is linked to employability. Screening theory sees higher instruction as a screening tool for students, whereas signaling theory signals particular skills as esteemed by employers. (Bills, 2003).

The World Bank stated that Azerbaijan is a resource rich country and it is dependent on certain sectors only. Additionally, over-reliance on one sector has given a rise to unemployment among young people after graduating from universities with a bachelor's degree. They further stress out, entrepreneurship in Azerbaijan is low which increases employability issues in the country. Overall, the unemployment rate in 2015 was 5.2%, which is comparatively low in comparison with the decline in labor force participation. (Appendix A).

Another factor which reduces employability among the youth is more attention given to the capital city, Baku in contrast to other areas. According to the report of Azerbaijan State Statistics Committee in January 2021, 69.3% of new jobs were created in Baku, 0.7% in Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, 30.0% in other regions. Considering the impact of the pandemic situation on the economy, current workplaces are highly unlikely to be vacated by the position holders. Therefore, the statistics also illustrate the minor possibility for youth employability in regions. The statistical reports for 2019 and 2020 demonstrate 11976 and 9619 newly opened workplaces, accordingly. As a result, the 20% reduction in the

workplaces questions the youth employability issue in Azerbaijan.

All things considered, undergraduate students graduates should be considered as stakeholders are affected by this problem in our country.

The Purpose of the Study

Our study will provide information on undergraduate students' employability to contribute to the research world in the educational sphere implemented in the context of Azerbaijan. It also explored the employability challenges encountered by bachelor's degree graduates . The knowledge generated in this study may enable undergraduate students to increase their employability potential.

Research Questions

1. What are the undergraduates' perceptions of the relationship between higher education and employability?

2. How is higher education fostering undergraduates' employability skills?

Definitions of the Key Terms

This research paper defines employability as a set of skills of both graduate and undergraduate students to be qualified for a job. Although the efforts were focused to define employment, the definitions look distinct from one another which imply its huge role on undergraduate students' prospective vocational lives.

Significance of the Study

One of the major concerns in Azerbaijan in the field of education is employability after graduating from HEIs which is increasing despite the eminent progress in the educational sector, Azerbaijan's Education Minister Mikayil Jabbarov stated (2014). Therefore, there is an urgent need for HEIs to evaluate employability of the undergraduate students and refer to this data to reinforce the quality of HEIs. As Mammadov (2008) stated, Azerbaijan Republic has difficulties with ensuring employment of specific groups of people - women, youth, disabled and rural population. Also, according to World Bank statistics, more than two thirds (precisely 67 %) of the young HEI graduates continue to find a job in public sectors, however due to the mismatch between the skills of potential employees' and the required ones, there is a shortage of employees in the private sector. Due to its immense significance, researchers all over the world have studied this topic from distinct perspectives. This project presents a review of different issues such as the relationship between higher education and employability, the main factors which influence employee recruitment decisions, as well as competences the employers require workers entering the job market remain within the discussion. As this paper describes the most current situation at three HEIs in Azerbaijani context, it will be valuable for future researchers to review the most updated data in libraries.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

This section provides information about the researches that have already been done in the similar field.

Undergraduates' Perceptions of the Relationship Between Higher Education and Employability

The relationship between higher education and employability has been transformed into a growing pressure on both bachelor's degree graduates and higher education institutions. Hillage and Pollard (1998) clarify that the fundamental role of HEIs in employability is to improve student knowledge, abilities and skills by enabling them to become critical analyzers and potential learners on job market. Undergraduate employability is commonly defined as the ability to access a job, maintain it, or find another one (Hillage and Pollard, 1998). In this context, Lee Harvey (2000) mentions the transformational role of higher education in the article of "*New Realities: The relationship between higher education and employability.*" The author states that the role of employability empowers learners on two propositions; firstly, higher education needs to be transformed to reach its purpose which is empowering students as lifelong critical and reflective learners, and secondly, transformed bachelor's degree graduates obtain a significant role as transformative agents in society. From the organizational perspective, growing economy thrives for successful, educated and talented undergraduates. This statement is also applicable in Azerbaijani context since the most perspective employment opportunities in Azerbaijan is related to oil and gas industry, construction, engineering, healthcare and transportation (Smart Resources Group, 2019). There are plenty of undergraduates who are ready and have skills and knowledge to work in these fields. Nevertheless, the country should ensure building and sustaining competencies

for future labor market needs, focusing on the strategic role of education and skills (AMCHAM, American Chamber of Commerce in Azerbaijan, 2016).

Harvey (2000) also states the significant changes that the undergraduate students have brought in the employment organizations in the last decades. According to his article, these primary improvements include the process of downsizing, which taught organizations at all levels believe that they have become "leaner" and "fitter" (p. 23). Part-time and short-time contracts being a part of flexible contractual agreements, outsourcing and home working are also a part of this (Harvey, 2000). In addition to these modifications, the process of delayering which includes extracting insignificant layers of middle managers and giving them a general portfolio, has influenced undergraduate students at job markets too (Harvey, 2000). In case of Azerbaijan, AMCHAM (2016) reports that alumni or individuals with superior work experience prefer to be employed in companies that, in addition to high salaries, also offer on-the-job training, education, career planning and other development opportunities. Since employees mainly look for these opportunities, the need to be more flexible and less clear career progression occurs among the graduates. All of these marked changes have fundamental effect on bachelor's degree graduates in terms of the need to be more flexible, less clear jobs and career progress and the ability to work in teams.

Professor Yorke (2006) also contributed essential findings on the topic of relationship of higher education and employability. The author sees the relationship between higher education and employability as a longstanding process. In his terms, employability is a result of complex learning. It refers to undergraduate's success, accomplishments and potential to obtain a job which continually needs to be refreshed through the individual's working life. In this way, Suleman (2017) states that human capital theory states the issue of education, and how it is linked to job assignment. The core idea is to explain the relationship between the

individual level of academic attainment and earnings in the labor market (Allen & DeWeert, 2007). In his book of *"Learning & Employability"*, Yorke (2006) clarifies two purposes that are served on the process of employability. Firstly, employability as a set of accomplishments establish essential cases for gaining. Although this condition is necessary, it is barely sufficient. In this case, employability is highly connected with the academic valuing of good learning. The second purpose deals with curricular activities in higher education. This process might simplify the growth of prerequisites related to employment but cannot guarantee it. This means that, it is not true to think that students are highly employable in terms of curricular process – the entire experience that the learner undergoes on his/her studies.

Factors Influencing Undergraduate Employability Decisions

According to the research on *Asia-pacific journal of convergent research interchange,* Heo and Xiaohui (2019) identifies the main factors affecting employment of undergraduates which are divided as internal and external. In this study, the internal and major factors are identified as gender and age, while the external factor is stated as the period of study in minor or double major. The results clarified that gender can make a distinction in employment, meaning that men have more impact on the employment possibility than women. Secondly, findings displayed that the factor of age do not have a substantial effect on employment. The authors suggested improving the recruitment system in terms of individuals' abilities rather than gender and considering employment programs and policies to assist bachelor's degree graduates majored in humanities, social sciences and so on. For that reason, not only educated but also skilled, talented and trained graduates will get higher opportunities in the job market (Heo & Xiahui, 2019).

In the same field, Sinead and Pugh (2020) discussed the factors that can influence student career decision making at their research study. Participants revealed that the lifestyle choices have a huge impact on the career decisions. Family and close social network, societal expectations, the desire to make a difference by career choice, and preparation to adulthood (purchasing a house or a car, starting a family, business) are included to these factors. In addition to these factors, geographical locations play a significant role during career decision making in individuals' lives. The results of the research displayed that the undergraduates had a strong view on where they wanted to locate after degree studies. Thus, the location of career opportunity is highly essential in decision making process.

The *Employment policy in Azerbaijan* (Mammadov, 2008) reports that the root of the problem starts with the able-bodied population who has left the country in search of better job opportunities in neighboring states. On the other hand, the "regional disbalance" (p. 14) increased the internal migration that resulted in people moving to the capital city to be more employable. For that reason, the American Chamber of Commerce in Azerbaijan (2016) clarifies that businesses and the public sector either face the lack of qualified workers, or the risk that they will leave the country for better career opportunities abroad. According to this source, the efficiency and improvement of economy in the country becomes under a threat which slows down corporate growth. In order to solve this issue, the private and public sectors should work towards influential solutions in collaboration with civil society.

Undergraduates' Employability Skills

Human capital theory states the issue of education, and how it is linked to job assignment (Suleman, 2017). The core idea is to explain the relationship between the individual level of academic attainment and earnings in the labor market (Allen & DeWeert,

2007). Much research involving undergraduate student employability revolves around students' employability skills. Olivier et al. (2014) condensed the skills required by employers into six broad clusters: foundation skills, which include written and oral communication, problem solving, and critical analysis; adaptive capacity, which involves the ability to adapt to new situations and foreign workplaces, learn autonomously, develop new ideas, and innovate; team working and interpersonal skills; IT skills; employability skills related to coping with pressure and stress, being flexible and adaptable, and meeting deadlines; and technical- and domain-specific skills. In the same topic, Abas and Ombra (2016) also state that bachelor's degree graduates are expected to improve not only subject based skills related to their studies but also employability skills to make a difference in employability competences. In this context, employability skills include academic skills, thinking and critical skills, and personal qualities. The authors categorized these skills into three areas such as fundamental, personal management and teamwork skills. Finding of the research study revealed that "personal management skills had moderate relationship with employees' contextual behavior, the competence in personal adaptability and learning continuously are contributory across all elements of contextual performance" (p. 31). In addition to that, teamwork skills, mainly the skills on working with others, were also moderately related with employees' contextual performance.

The International Labor Organization (2013) refers to employability skills as: the knowledge, skills and competencies that improve a worker's ability to keep a job, progress at work and handle a change; if they wish or have been dismissed, enter into the labor market more effortlessly at different durations of the lifetime. Undergraduates are most employable when they acquire comprehensive education and training, basic skills, including communication, problem solving, language skills, teamwork and ICT skills (ILO, 2013). This compound of skills enables them to adjust to development in the sphere of work and

influence undergraduate students' recruitment decisions. In Azerbaijani context, there is often inconsistency between skills learned during training programs and skills demanded by the labor market (AMCHAM, 2016). For that reason, businesses should be the primary operators by working closely with training programs to ensure workers with skills that are in interest. Not only businesses but also ministries, central and regional authorities and NGOs are all involved in skills development.

Chapter 3: **Methodology**

This section provides information about identifying the unit of analysis, research instruments, procedures of data collection and data analysis.

Research Design

Research design defines a logical plan of research through research questions, analysis, data collection, and interpretation (Claybaugh, 2020). Since the design of this research is quantitative and descriptive type, the data was measured by collection and analysis as Bryman (2012) states. Numerical factors in the quantitative research method play a pivotal role, as the research is measured by statistics. In this way, data was collected through student surveys.

Sampling

To answer the quantitative research questions and hypothesis, bachelor's degree graduates were used as sample population. Before, participants had been planned to be picked randomly from four "innovative" Azerbaijani universities – Baku State University, Khazar University, Azerbaijan University of Languages, and Azerbaijan State Economic University, and data was gathered at university level. The planned quote to use in the study was 70 students as sample size from each university ,with an exclusion of Khazar University, to participate in this research.

After selecting the participants, we got their permission to be studied in the research. It ensures that the students cooperated in the study and provided data. Besides, their

permission also confirmed that these individuals understood the purpose of this study and would be treated ethically. In this topic, Creswell (2014) states that the best way to seek permission from necessary individuals or groups is to ask for it formally in a letter by mentioning the purpose of the study, the amount of time you will be at the site collecting data, the time required from the participants, and how you will use the data or results. Thus, with the help of director of MAEM program and the academic advisor for graduate programs of ADA University, a letter of request was sent to physical addresses of four deans from above mentioned universities. On those letters, we introduced ourselves, gave relevant information about our research project, its goals and objectives, and asked their permission to collect data from undergraduate students. After getting the approval, the survey in Azerbaijani and English languages was sent to deans, and they shared it with bachelor's degree graduate students via email. For that reason, we did not have a direct contact with the respondents.

We got permission from three universities, except from Khazar University. Since the targeted sample size had been seventy undergraduate students from four universities before, we had to change it to seventy undergraduate students from three universities because of the delay at Khazar University. Once seventy students filled out the survey from each university, we closed the response option of the survey for the particular university. Thus, totally 210 undergraduate students participated in the data collection of this project.

Representatives of any field with bachelor's degree could participate in this research. As it is obvious from table 1.1, participants have various degree backgrounds in this study. According to Zetlin (2018), people at these stages of their lives are usually more actively looking for job opportunities as they want to direct their gained knowledge to business life. Moreover, the selection process was held in Azerbaijani universities only.

Table 1.1. *Participants' major of studies*

Please choose your major of studies:
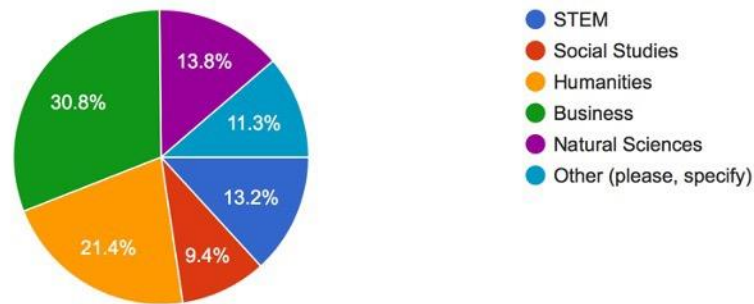
Creswell (2014) clarifies that the most popular and rigorous form of probability sampling from a population is stratified random sampling; in this way, any individual had an equal probability of being selected from the population. For that reason, the selection process of the participants was on stratified random sampling. Table 1.2 clearly describes that participants do not only belong to a specific graduation year. To ensure limited participation in this project the participants were asked to register. Since the type of sampling was stratified random sampling, it prevented the sampling bias in this research. Representatives of a particular age or gender could avoid joining the research.

Table 1.2. *Participants' graduation years*

Please indicate your graduation year in numbers (e.g 2010):
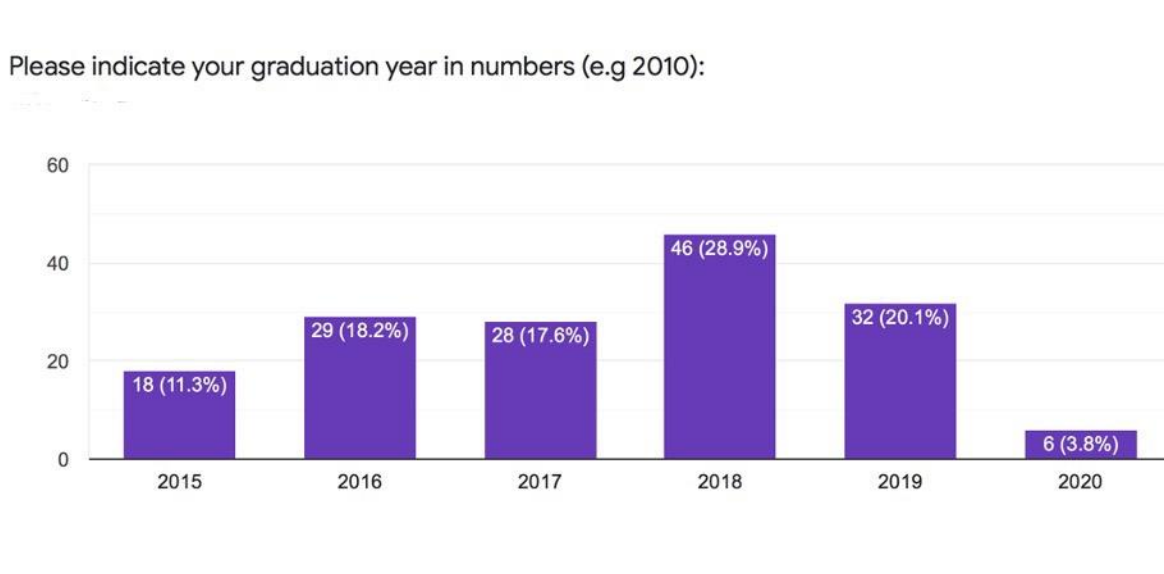
Data Collection

For data collection process, a survey in both Azerbaijani and English was conducted to gain deep understanding on the research questions. The type of the survey was cross-sectional and consisted of 11 closed and open-ended questions focusing on the relationship between respondents' work experience and educational background. The concept of employability was introduced as a set of skills for respondents. By means of the survey bachelor's degree graduates' perceptions on soft skills, analytical skills, technical skills, research skills, decision making skills, language skills, written and oral communications, team working and interpersonal skills and adaptive capacity were measured.

To ensure validity of the study, the survey we designed has content suitable to the research topic. The survey was created through an online platform called "Google Forms." This website collected and analysed the responses using graphs and tables. Before completing the survey, undergraduate students were asked to read terms and conditions. At the beginning of the survey a brief introductory paragraph was included to inform the respondents about the purpose of the research, its aim, approximate time for the survey completion, and participant confidentiality terms. The survey contained questions about undergraduates' bachelor degree

institutions, graduation years, employment statuses, perceptions on the contribution of their bachelor's degree studies to their employability potential and factors affecting their job search after graduation (see Appendix A).

Creswell (2005) discusses that the reliability in research refers to how consistently a method measures something. The measurement can be considered reliable when the same result is regularly achieved with the same methods under the same circumstances. On the other hand, the author states that validity refers to how precisely a method measures what is intended to measure. Research with a high validity means that it presents the results that are in correlation with real properties, characteristics and variations. High reliability can convey the validity of the measurement. In this research, construct validity was used to measure if the test is constructed in a way that it successfully tests what it claims to test (Creswell, 2005).

Participants' own evaluations of their skills were measured in the survey by looking at their employability skills, including soft skills, leadership skills, analytical skills, research skills, decision making skills, language skills, written and oral communications, team working and interpersonal skills and adaptive capacity. In this way, we asked two scholars from ADA University who has deep understanding in research to peer review the survey questions both in Azerbaijani and English to ensure validity. After they provided us with valuable feedback, the potential problem areas and deficiencies were identified, and we made corrections accordingly. A small pilot study before starting the data collection gave us the opportunity to detect potential discrepancies. Two experts with a research background reviewed the survey questions. After pilot testing, we made relevant changes and retested them once more.

Data Analysis

Quantitative analysis was done by using online survey platform – Google Forms. This platform had already evaluated and analysed the collected data. The survey results were gathered and a data transcription was done. All gathered data were analysed immediately after each data collection. On the other side, we filtered all the data by using Excel and divided the responses into three groups based on each university. Check & Schutt (2011) state that in order to describe data in form of chart, graph, etc. descriptive analysis should be used. To achieve the best results, the collected data was shown in graphs and tables, and elaborated accordingly. Later, the data was discussed for drawing the outcomes. The statistical numbers from surveys were gathered to make comparisons and reach conclusions.

Research Limitations

Since Khazar University did not reply to our request for data collection, we could not include the 70 students from this university. Because the data instrument was already planned to be distributed among four universities beforehand for 70 students, some questions were designed accordingly. In this way, we had to make changes in the sample size of the research because of the delay of response. Instead of 70 students from four universities, we included 70 students from three universities for data collection; overall 210 students instead of 280 attended in this survey.

Although the surveys were fully confidential, some participants may refuse to share their personal experiences for ethical reasons, and give incorrect answers to the survey. Some participants might not fully trust the survey. The survey fatigue might be another limitation in this research, as the participants were selected on a random basis which may lead to the lack of interest in this study. However, the participants were informed beforehand that their

participation would be voluntary. Moreover, some participants may feel "fatigue" and uninterested to fill out the survey. Participants may also fill the survey, but avoid joining online discussions, which may lead to incomplete results. Access is also one of the limitations of this study. The other limitation of the study was generalizability which measures how useful the results of the study can be in a broader context. As it was a small-scale project, generalizability can be an inevitable limitation for it.

Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter provides information about findings from data collection.

Findings

This section of the chapter outlines the findings of quantitative research conducted in the local context, which targeted to collect data among undergraduate students of Baku State University, Azerbaijan University of Languages and Azerbaijan State Economic University.

Employability of Undergraduates. According to the results of the survey, the minority of the bachelor's degree graduate students (45%) were employed, whereas the minority of them (55%) were unemployed. Table 2.1 clearly states that less than a half of the participants (45 %) reported that their major of studies was partly related to current job situation. On the other hand, while 30 % answered that there was no any relevance between their major and current job, 25% reported relevance between two variables. This statistical data indicates that most of the undergraduate students' workplaces are either partly related or not related to their qualifications, which proves not only the gap between the skills taught at universities and the needed employability skills, but also the lack of vacancies for undergraduate students as a result of stiff competition in labour market in Azerbaijan. Only a quarter of the respondents' workplaces are related to their studies which raises the question about skills taught at universities.

Table 2.1 *Relevance of current job to students' major*

If you answered "Yes" to Question 4, please indicate the relevance of current job to your major:
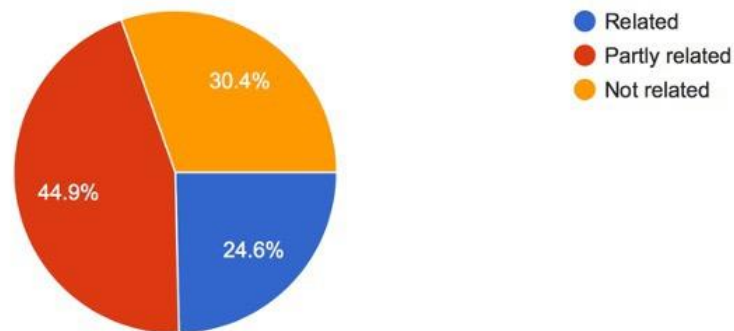
- ● Related
- ● Partly related
- ● Not related

30.4%

44.9%

24.6%

Undergraduates' Perceptions of the Relationship Between Higher Education and Employability

The role of university on students' employability levels. Firstly, the students were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement that whether the university they studied at informed students about job market's requirements. As it is apparent from the table 3.1, the proportion of undergraduate students who strongly agreed with the statement (31%) outbalanced the students who strongly disagreed with it (1%). About a quarter of the students (n-50) responded that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, while a negligible amount agreed (n-23).

According to the second bar of the table 3,1, the preponderance of the students (37%) did not agree that the university they studied at offered courses on skills and strategies on career development in the curriculum, while the insignificant proportion (13%) agreed with the statement. It is evident from both literature and findings that universities show constraint of support by psychologists, career advisors and instructors for undergraduate students' employability by means of informing them about job market's requirements; offering courses

on skills and strategies for career development in the curriculum; providing them with the skills and knowledge necessary for employability; creating an environment where they could seek help for career advising and mentoring. However, Navracsics (2016) highlights HEIs should: prepare the youth for work and enable them to live confidently and independently; modernize their curricula in accordance with swiftly changing job markets; enhance provision of employability skills and competencies; adapt them to future labour market demands and career changes.

Table 3.1 also describes that the majority of undergraduate students (35%) opposed that the university they studied provided them with the necessary skills and knowledge necessary for employability, whereas the minority of them (30%) acknowledged the statement. Additionally, more than a quarter neither agreed nor disagreed, while a small proportion agreed with this statement. According to the survey, a remarkable number of the students (n-114) did not consider their internship program was related to their majors. On contrary, a marked number of students (n-55) believed and a small amount (n-39) neither agreed nor disagreed that their internship program was relevant to their professions.

Lastly, the fifth statement on the table 3.1 describes if the university provided an environment where students could seek help for career advising and mentoring (e.g., CV, resume and cover letter writing, development of branding and networking skills). In this statement, the minority of respondents (24%) concurred, while the majority of them disagreed that (44%) disagreed that the university provided them with help for career advising and mentoring.

Table 3.1. *Students' perceptions on the role of university in their employability levels*

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:
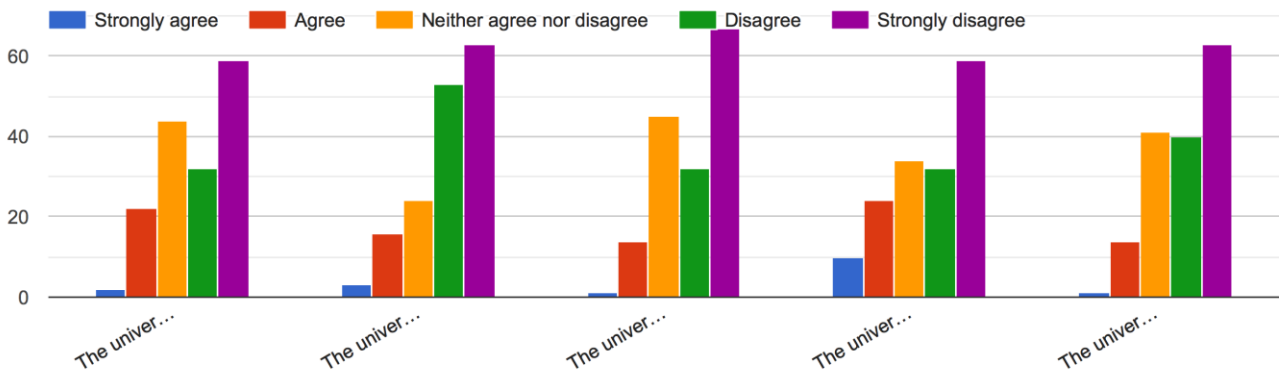
According to the responses, it can be noticed no job fairs are conducted in order to raise undergraduate students' awareness on employability. Additionally, students support service either do not exist, or do less productive job in the direction of improving undergraduates' employability.

The role of degree programs on undergraduate students' employability levels. Firstly, students were asked whether their degree program engaged them with oral, written and interpersonal communication in line with course structure. Table 3.2 clearly illustrates that a considerable number of respondents disagreed (31%) , whereas a slight proportion of them agreed (11%) that their degree program engaged them with oral, written and interpersonal communication in line with course structure. The second statement asked students whether the program helped to incorporate new perspectives to students' problem-solving skills. According to the results of the survey, the number of students who oppose (35%) the statement is significantly higher than those who agree with it (10%)

Table 3.2 displays the statement whether the program helped students to improve their critical thinking skills. 22 % of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed, 12% of them agreed and 2% strongly agreed. Nevertheless, a relatively higher portion of students (64%)

disagreed that they improved their critical thinking skills during their degree program. Participants were also asked whether the program helped them to be creative and innovative. Although a large proportion of the students disagreed (67%), more than a tenth agreed with the stated opinion. The remaining 23% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that the program promoted students' creativity and innovation

Finally, students were asked whether the program gave them an opportunity to work in a group to effectively develop their ideas. While 27 students (13%) agreed, 44 students (21%) neither agreed nor disagreed, and only 8 of them (4%) strongly agreed. However, 63 students (30%) disagreed that they did not have an opportunity to work in a group to effectively develop their ideas, and 68 students (33%) strongly disagreed with this statement.

Table 3.2 . *Students' perceptions on the role of degree program on their employability*

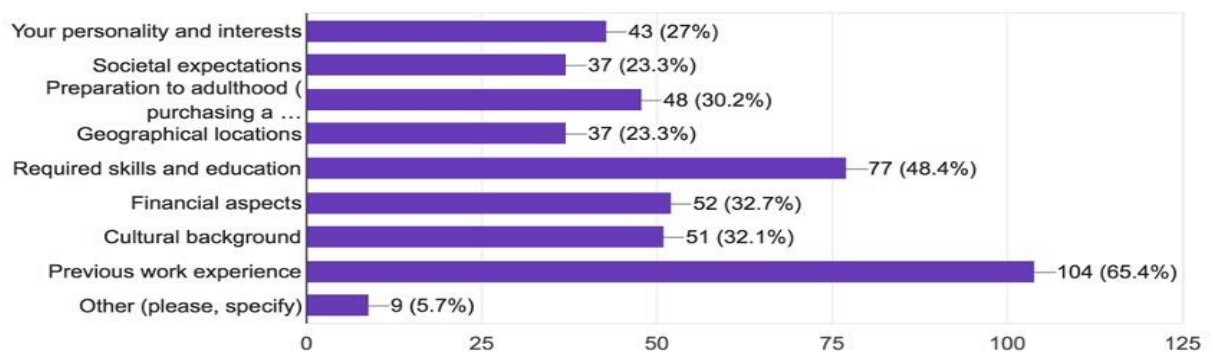Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:
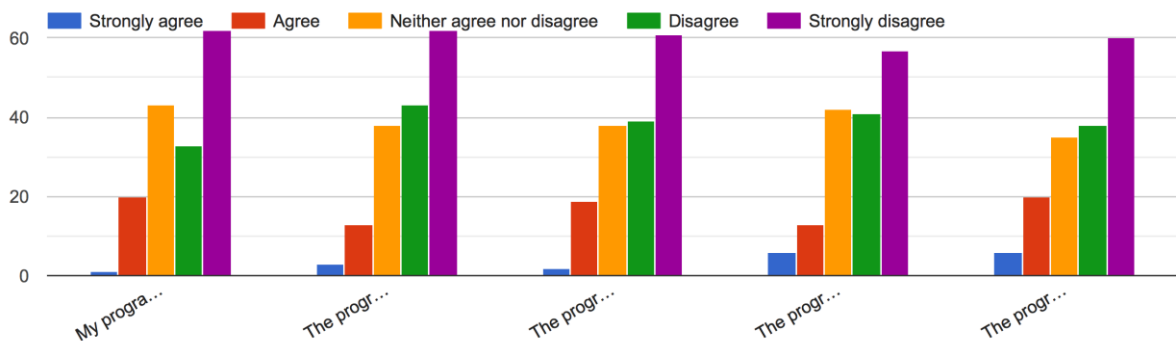
Factors Influencing Undergraduate Employability Decisions

Identifying factors affecting undergraduate students' job search. The respondents were asked to choose the factors that influence their job search among the given options: their personality and interest, societal expectations, preparation to adulthood (purchasing a

house/car, starting a family/business, etc.), geographical locations, required skills and education, financial aspects, cultural background, and previous work experience. According to the respondents' choices, previous work experience is considered as the most required option with 65% rating. Likewise, required skills and education are also considered as the most chosen option with 48% rating (Table 4.1). Another most preferred factor to influence the participants' job search is financial aspects accounting for 32% of the results.

Table 4.1. *Factors influencing undergraduates' job search*

Please choose the factors that influences your job search:

Factor	Value
Your personality and interests	43 (27%)
Societal expectations	37 (23.3%)
Preparation to adulthood (purchasing a …	48 (30.2%)
Geographical locations	37 (23.3%)
Required skills and education	77 (48.4%)
Financial aspects	52 (32.7%)
Cultural background	51 (32.1%)
Previous work experience	104 (65.4%)
Other (please, specify)	9 (5.7%)

As it is obvious from the Table 4.1 , the preponderance of undergraduate students opted for previous work experience, required skills and education and preparation to adulthood as the main factors influencing their job search. On contrary, a small minority believe, geographical location is a crucial component for their vocational choices. Nevertheless, Russell Weinstein (2017), argues in his article that geographical location is one of the most pivotal points considered when hiring new employees.

Attributes achieved at university and workplace by undergraduates. The participants were asked to match the given options by indicating whether they achieved them at university, workplace, both or none of them. These options include leadership skills, working in team, decision making, time management, logical thinking, problem solving, confidence, creativity, working with Office programs (Word, Excel, PowerPoint etc.), expertise in managing, project activities/planning, and understanding statistical data. Table 4.2 depicts that the majority of the respondents matched these attributes with the workplace; meaning that all of these attributes were mainly achieved at the workplace by undergraduates who participated in the survey.

Table 4.2. *Matching the attributes to the variable*

Please match the following attributes by indicating whether you achieved them at university, workplace, both or none of them.
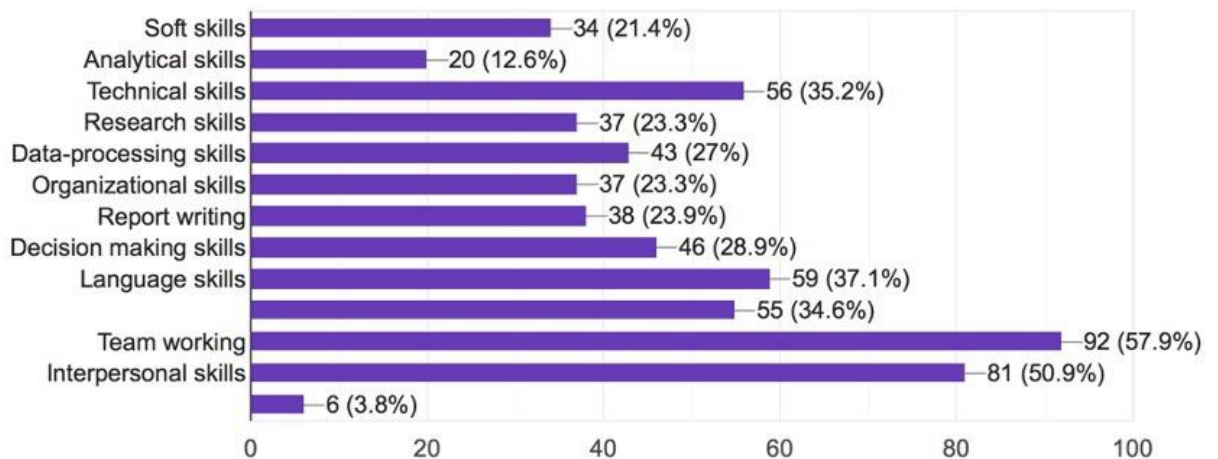
Undergraduates' Employability Skills

Employability skills that undergraduates acquired in their degree program. The respondents were asked to select the skills that they have acquired in their degree program during bachelor years. These skills include soft skills, analytical skills, technical skills, research skills, data-processing skills, organizational skills, report writing, decision making skills, language skills, team working and interpersonal skills. According to the table 5.1, more than a half of the bachelor's degree graduates acquired team working and interpersonal skills during their program period. Following this, above a third of the respondents developed language and written and oral communication skills.

Table 5.1. *Skills acquired in degree program*

Please select the skills that you have acquired in your degree program:

| Skill	Value
Soft skills	34 (21.4%)
Analytical skills	20 (12.6%)
Technical skills	56 (35.2%)
Research skills	37 (23.3%)
Data-processing skills	43 (27%)
Organizational skills	37 (23.3%)
Report writing	38 (23.9%)
Decision making skills	46 (28.9%)
Language skills	59 (37.1%)
	55 (34.6%)
Team working	92 (57.9%)
Interpersonal skills	81 (50.9%)
	6 (3.8%)

The importance of employability skills and knowledge in the job market. Undergraduate students were asked to rate the importance of employability skills and knowledge in the job market in the last survey question. These skills and knowledge include gaining insights to different culture, adapting to new and changing surroundings, the ability

to deal with multiple problems at the same time, self-reliance, handling with intellectual problems, understanding and analysing issues, understanding, manipulating, and making use of numerical and statistical data, presenting information both in verbally and written forms, the ability to express yourself clearly, and the ability to assimilate facts effectively. According to the statistics, roughly above a third of undergraduate students rated self-reliance the ability to express yourself clearly, adapting to new and changing surrounding, presenting information both in verbally and written forms, and gaining insight to different as the most important skills and knowledge that bachelor's degree graduates need to gain in the job market.

Table 5.2. *The importance of employability skills and knowledge in the job market*

How would you rate the importance of the following employability skills and knowledge in the job market?
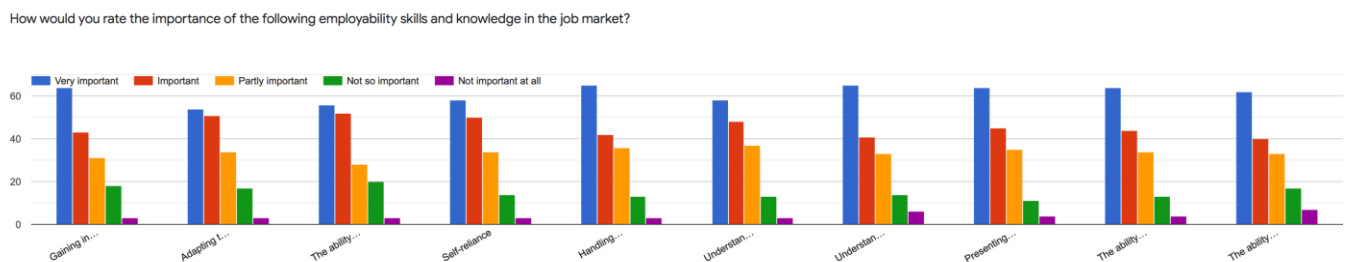
Knowing undergraduates' perspectives on employability skills helped us to analyse to what extent they find the employability skills essential. As they "*Strongly agree*" d with almost all criteria in the skill chart, it can be said, undergraduate students are well aware of the importance of the employability skills and highly appreciate their development during bachelor degree studies. Another noteworthy aspect is that the preponderance of undergraduates' responses indicated that they had acquired their employability skills at their workplaces. However, these skills should first be introduced to students at HEIs. Archer & Davison (2008, p8) also support this idea by stating: "The findings here illustrate that universities need to equip graduates with 'deep' intellectual capabilities and a battery of applied practical skills which make them more 'work-ready'". Moreover, the least rated skill

developed at universities was leadership, whereas team working skills ranked the highest by undergraduate students. In contrast to this, Anar Alimbekova and colleagues (2015), stated that HEIs should be accountable for undergraduate students' leadership skills acquisition, because they play a great role in students' personal and professional formation.

Overall, the survey results suggest that institutions where undergraduate students' studied at are yet to raise bachelor's degree students' awareness employability- as a notion, improve their employability skills (e.g. soft skills, analytical skills, technical skills, research skills, data-processing skills, organizational skills, report writing, CV writing, job application, decision making skills, language skills, team working and interpersonal skills), organize career fairs to inform undergraduate students about current vacancies in the country. It must also be concluded that career centres which help undergraduates with identifying their career goals, improving their job search and application skills, boosting their networking skills and getting suitable vocational positions, do not exist at the universities. Therefore, regardless their knowledge, the preponderance of bachelor's degree graduates of the universities where we did research either remain unemployed or work in spheres irrelevant to their major even after completing their four-year education. Considering the abovementioned factors, we suggest the three universities organizing a workshop to raise undergraduate students' awareness on employability and help them improve several skills such as CV writing, job search and application. However, as the workshop would not substantially solve the problem, we propose the universities to make relevant changes to their course design to promote undergraduate students' employability

Chapter 5: Final Product

Based on survey results we can figure out that the vast number of surveyed students have gaps in career building. Career centres should be able to host workshops and seminars, where speakers from partnered organizations are invited. These speakers should focus on offering internships and part-time job opportunities for students without previous work experience. Students need to be well navigated for the new vacancies, to be able to write their resumes, to have proper communication and business writing skills and to be able to decide on their future career. Therefore, the career centres should also provide students with free seminars where the previously mentioned skills are being taught by the invited recruitment professionals. Moreover, students can widen their networking by meeting many organizations' representatives. According to researches the 80% of the vacancies are filled based on the referrals (Office of Career Services, n.d).

Myers et al. (2012) describes quality implementation as putting an innovation into practice in a way that meets the necessary standards to achieve the innovation's desired outcomes. In this way, the process of putting an adapted or modified innovation into practice includes specific standards for implementation and monitoring and evaluating activities. Thus, career related programs need to be worked on putting the innovations and services into practice with the help of stakeholders and employment industries. The programs should be mainly connected with the participants' - students' interaction and interests. In this way, students become the primary and most significant inputs of the career programs.

Since the findings of our study report a strong deficiency in career related programs, we suggest to host a career fair at the universities we have made researches for students' employability. The fair will be offered to hold twice a year for two days for fall and spring semesters and it will be hosted in a type of workshop where recruiters from different

companies and governmental work places will be invited to announce their vacancies for students or fresh-outs without any job experience (see Appendix F). Interested students will be registered at university site for the workshops as the number of the seats will be limited. These services are totally free, and students will be able to get advice for better navigation.

The career advisor of the seminar will be invited from one of the organizations. The advisor will be required to have a seminar plan. She/he will provide a formative assessment. The plan for the seminar will be shared. The important goal of each class is to achieve the knowledge in essentials of job applying, interviewing, resume and cover letter writing. The students will be required to reflect orally. The instructor will tell participants what type of questions are asked during the recruitment process and how to be confident during the interviews. In the short term, student will be able to write their resumes, have proper communication and business writing skills, and gain ideas for planning their future career as a result of this workshop. In the long run, students will be offered internships or part-time job opportunities for without previous work experience. However, before the workshop, all students should prepare a draft of their resumes for improvement with the help of their appointed career advisors after the workshop. Seat numbers will also be limited in these seminars, so it will be required for students to register beforehand.

According to the current situation related to the Covid19 pandemic, the workshop might be hold online or offline. The graduate students might have health issues; thus, they may not participate in the seminar. In order to solve this problem, an online class will be recorded beforehand and shared with students to ensure that they can watch it later. In case there will be a lockdown in the country, the participants' contact details will be taken in advance so that the seminar is held online. Another possible problem might be that the students might not have any prior knowledge about the selected topic that might cause

challenges in the acquisition of that topic. As a solution, the workshop materials will be sent to students before the seminar. Students will be asked to read them and share their opinions/arguments in the initial 5 minutes of the seminar.

The workshop will start with an activity called "Ice-breaker" which will take 3 to 5 minutes. In this activity, students will introduce themselves and answer related questions (see Appendix F). This activity will help the career advisor not only to initiate conversation, but also identify participants' background. For the second 15 minutes the participants will be asked to watch a video and take notes. They will share their thoughts after they watch the video. We decided to include our case study in the format of video (animation). According to Hattie & Yates (2013), our mind responds well to multimedia input and "We all are visual learners, and we all are auditory learners, not just some of us. Laboratory studies reveal that we all learn well when the inputs we experience are multi-modal or conveyed through different media" (p. 115). Lately, the participants will be asked to read a case study and answer the related questions (see Appendix G). A case study is a necessary platform for students to communicate and collaborate about a certain topic (Christensen & Hansen, 1987). Case study can be used to help a group of learners to focus on a specific concept, or it can help learners to solve a problem. The upcoming 20 minutes will be spent for CV and resume writing; participants will be asked to design their CVs/resumes and send to the seminar mentor's email. Further feedback will be given online. This activity will enable the participants to put new knowledge into practice. The feedback will be sent online to avoid time loss. Final discussions and feedback will be held while wrapping up the seminar. Participants will share their experiences while designing CVs and ask the mentor for advice, if needed.

For the second day, the workshop will start with the lead-in questions which will take approximately five to eight minutes. This part includes questions such as what kind of questions are asked in interviews, and what do these questions aim at? (Skills, attributes, knowledge, experience, understanding, enthusiasm, commitment, loyalty, personality, attitude, approach, good fit with company ethos, values and the existing team). According to Hattie and Yates (2013) prior knowledge effects are powerful in knowledge acquisition. We, as instructors, ascertain this fact and teach accordingly. (Ausabel, 1968). Prior knowledge effects in learning outweigh learning-styles. And if there is a misconception in student knowledge, an instructor should interfere and correct them (Hattie, Yates, 2013). This activity will help the career advisor not only to initiate conversation, but also identify students' background knowledge and act relevantly. In addition to that, there will be discussion of the reading materials for the next fifteen minutes. This part will revolve questions around "Higher Education and Employability" and will cover the following topics:

1. The most important employability skills including soft skills, leadership skills, analytical skills, research skills, decision making skills, language skills, written and oral communications, team working and interpersonal skills and adaptive capacity.

2. Factors affecting graduates' career choices

3. The relationship between higher education and employability

4. Factors affecting graduates' job searches

5. Graduates' employability levels

6. How to be an employable graduate

If students do not join the discussion voluntarily, we will divide them into pre-assigned peers to save time for the further activities. Instead of non-stop lecturing, we prioritize group discussion in the session and help students to be encouraged and learn from each other. According to Hattie and Yates (2013), in learning acquisition an individual has to keep in mind 1) concentration spans are short, 2) mind has to be kept active. Group discussion is an effective tool of teaching in that respect. Student attention will not be distracted with long teacher-centred lecture. "This principle is simply that learning occurs effectively once the mind responds to a meaningful experience through making a meaningful response. When the mind actively does something with the stimulus, it becomes memorable" (Hattie & Yates, 2013, p. 115). However, in some cases, the students will be given information on lacking sections. Lastly, the participants will be asked to read the case study (see Appendix G) and do the related activities individually for the next 25-30 minutes. A case study is a necessary platform for students to communicate and collaborate about a certain topic (Christensen & Hansen, 1987). Case study can be used to help a group of learners to focus on a specific concept, or it can help learners to solve a problem. The last stage is wrapping up when students will ask questions related to the discussed topic and share their final thoughts about the seminar for the last 10-12 minutes of the seminar.

After the career fair/workshops, the career centre counsellor will be appointed to gather all resumes and CVs. This will be helpful to create a database of students who are looking for a job, and a database of vacancies announced by the working places. University teachers will be asked to write their recommendation letters for the students for better results at the job market. After that students' resumes will be reviewed by the career counsellor, students will be directed for the most suitable vacancies related to his/her university major. In the next step, the career counsellor will contact the employers and provide students' resumes

with their recommendation letters based on applied organization's vacancy. The suitable student-candidates will be invited for the further interview process.

This career workshop will be very beneficial for participants who would like to gain deeper understanding on the topic of higher education and employability. The participants not only learn about important employability skills that are demanded in the job market, but also will be able to master at the job search, analyse the importance of career choice, and have clear information on CV/resume writing and interview protocols. Most importantly, participants will actually get a chance to work in part-time jobs and internship programs after completing this workshop.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

According to the study conducted to conceptualise employability skills and assess undergraduate students' perceptions on employability, enhancing bachelor's degree graduate students' employability skills plays a crucial role in their entering the job market. The study revealed that HEIs are less concerned about increasing undergraduate students' awareness on employability. For instance, HEIs are less likely to inform students about job market's requirements; to offer courses on skills and strategies for career development in the curriculum; providing students with the skills and knowledge necessary for employability and creating an environment where students can seek help for career advising and mentoring. Additionally, HEIs disregard helping students: to incorporate new perspectives to their problem solving skills; to improve their critical thinking skills; to be more creative and innovative.

Apart from this, it is noteworthy point that only a few universities have career centres which help students with their vocational decisions. Moreover, HEIs do not organize job fairs for undergraduate students. However, sustainable career centres and job fairs have an indispensable role in enabling students to enter the job market after graduation.

After analysing bachelor graduate students' perspectives on employability, it should be highlighted that students choose work in regard with their personality and interests, preparation to adulthood and their previous work experience. According to them the geographical location of the workplace is the least important aspect when choosing a job. However, according to scientists, HRs consider the distance between the house of the potential employee's and the workplace.

Despite the findings of the study, there are some limitations to its implementation, too. First of all, the idea was to conduct survey among four HEIs in Azerbaijan. However,

after not being able to contact with one of the university authorities, we diminished the number of the HEIs from four to three. Therefore, the project targeted three of the four primarily intended public universities situated in Baku, the capital city and included 210 participants who represented STEM, Social Studies, Humanities, Business and Natural Sciences. Another limitation of our study was receiving employers' perspectives. Due to the outbreak of Covid19, it was difficult to conduct the research thoroughly and get more opinions on employability from different aspects. Considering these factors, the sample size of our research is small. However, owing to both our literature review and research findings, we believe this topic is worth more thorough attention and additional research is needed, especially to investigate students' perspectives at other universities and employer's take-on about employability of fresh graduates. Therefore, we would recommend future researchers of educational sphere to study this topic with more population including not only undergraduate students, but also university teachers, career advisors and employers.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Student Surveys in both English and Azerbaijani

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSflJ7ZEe-PT09AnwmJWV-FHKk9mWRsd8O-Vb_mztwVkFwWUKQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1kLLJt8_exzPW4NeBhlb0LHvrp44VehLcuMYwe-ci43Q/edit

Survey on Students' Perceptions of Higher Education and Employability

This survey is designed by ADA University students for Capstone Project to research students' perceptions in the topic of higher education and employability. The data will be collected and used for educational purposes only. Participation is voluntary and responses are completely anonymous. It will only take 5-7 minutes to fill out. Please note that by taking this survey you agree to voluntarily participate in this study.

Thank you for your time!

For example,

Please choose the university you studied at:

o Baku State University

o Khazar University

o Azerbaijan University of Languages

o UNEC

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

- o The university I studied at informed students about job market's requirements.

- o The university offered courses on skills and strategies for career development in the curriculum.

- o The university provided me with the skills and knowledge necessary for employability.

- o The university offered undergraduate internship program related to my major.

- o The university provided an environment where I could seek help for career advising and mentoring (e.g., CV, resume and cover letter writing, development of branding and networking skills)

Appendix B

Official Letter for Dean of Azerbaijan University of Languages

No_____ "02"_____2021-ci il

Azərbaycan Dillər

Universitetinin Tərcümə

fakültəsinin dekanı

xanım Bənövşə Məmmədovaya

Hörmətli Bənövşə xanım,

Nəzərinizə çatdırmaq istərdik ki, ADA Universitetinin MAEM 2021 "Təhsilin İdarəedilməsi" ixtisası üzrə magistr proqramının ikinci kurs tələbələrinin apardıqları yekun tədqiqat işi üçün (Higher Education and Employability - Ali təhsil müəssisələri və işə düzəlmə) Azərbaycan Dillər Universitetinin tələbə heyəti arasında sorğu keçirilməsi tələb olunur. Sorğunun məqsədi tələbələrin təcrübəsinə əsasən ali təhsil aldıqları müəssisənin işə düzəlmə prossesinə təsir edən amilləri müəyyənləşdirməkdir.

Bu məqsədlə tədqiqatın aparılması üçün şəraitin yaradılmasını Sizdən xahiş edirik.

Əməkdaşlığa görə təşəkkürmüzü bildiririk.

Appendix C

Official Letter for Dean of Baku State University

No_____ "02"_____2021-ci il

Bakı Dövlət Universitetinin

Jurnalistika fakültəsinin dekanı

cənab Vüqar Əliyevə

Hörmətli Vüqar müəllim,

Nəzərinizə çatdırmaq istərdik ki, ADA Universitetinin MAEM 2021 "Təhsilin İdarəedilməsi" ixtisası üzrə magistr proqramının ikinci kurs tələbələrinin apardıqları yekun tədqiqat işi üçün (Higher Education and Employability - Ali təhsil müəssisələri və işə düzəlmə) Bakı Dövlət Universitetinin tələbə heyəti arasında sorğu keçirilməsi tələb olunur. Sorğunun məqsədi tələbələrin təcrübəsinə əsasən ali təhsil aldıqları müəssisənin işə düzəlmə prossesinə təsir edən amilləri müəyyənləşdirməkdir.

Bu məqsədlə tədqiqatın aparılması üçün şəraitin yaradılmasını Sizdən xahiş edirik.

Əməkdaşlığa görə təşəkkürmüzü bildiririk.

Appendix D

Official Letter for Dean of Azerbaijan State Economic University

No_____ "02"_____2021-ci il

Azərbaycan Dövlət İqtisad Universitetinin

Biznes və Menecment fakültəsinin dekanı

cənab Mirağa Əhmədova

Hörmətli Mirağa müəllim,

Nəzərinizə çatdırmaq istərdik ki, ADA Universitetinin MAEM 2021 "Təhsilin İdarəedilməsi" ixtisası üzrə magistr proqramının ikinci kurs tələbələrinin apardıqları yekun tədqiqat işi üçün (Higher Education and Employability - Ali təhsil müəssisələri və işə düzəlmə) Azərbaycan Dövlət İqtisad Universitetinin tələbə heyəti arasında sorğu keçirilməsi tələb olunur. Sorğunun məqsədi tələbələrin təcrübəsinə əsasən ali təhsil aldıqları müəssisənin işə düzəlmə prossesinə təsir edən amilləri müəyyənləşdirməkdir.

Bu məqsədlə tədqiqatın aparılması üçün şəraitin yaradılmasını Sizdən xahiş edirik.

Əməkdaşlığa görə təşəkkürmüzü bildiririk.

Appendix E

Official Letter for Dean of Khazar University

No_____ "02"_____2021-ci il

Xəzər Universitetinin Humanitar, Təshil və

Sosial Elmlər fakültəsinin dekanı

xanım Elza Səmədovaya

Hörmətli Elza xanım,

Nəzərinizə çatdırmaq istərdik ki, ADA Universitetinin MAEM 2021 "Təhsilin İdarəedilməsi" ixtisası üzrə magistr proqramının ikinci kurs tələbələrinin apardıqları yekun tədqiqat işi üçün (Higher Education and Employability - Ali təhsil müəssisələri və işə düzəlmə) Xəzər Universitetinin tələbə heyəti arasında sorğu keçirilməsi tələb olunur. Sorğunun məqsədi tələbələrin təcrübəsinə əsasən ali təhsil aldıqları müəssisənin işə düzəlmə prossesinə təsir edən amilləri müəyyənləşdirməkdir.

Bu məqsədlə tədqiqatın aparılması üçün şəraitin yaradılmasını Sizdən xahiş edirik.

Əməkdaşlığa görə təşəkkürmüzü bildiririk.

Appendix F

Final Product

The main Idea	Aim	Sub aims	Included activities
➤ To open a "Career Management Center"	➤ To create a career fair at three universities participated in our research work	By the end of the fair, graduate students will be able to....... ➤ direct bachelor degree graduate students for future career planning and job searching ➤ provide resumes in a desirable format with individual career planning ➤ have an easy access for online application on the qualified job postings ➤ build long-term relations with business organizations, state agencies and NGOs to get internship opportunities, and networking for job positions for both students and alumni	➤ Career advising and mentoring ➤ Development of networking, leadership and presentation skills ➤ Training sessions to assist in writing resume and cover letters ➤ Career fairs (twice a year) ➤ Company visits ➤ Mock interviews ➤ Workshops and seminars, where speakers from partnered organizations are invited

Topic/Context	Short term outcomes	Long term outcomes
The career advisor of the seminar will be invited from one of the organizations . The advisor will be required to have a seminar plan. She/he will provide a formative assessment. The plan for the seminar will be shared. The important goal of each class is to achieve the knowledge in essentials of job applying, interviewing, resume and cover letter writing. The students will be required to reflect orally. The instructor will tell participants what type of questions are asked during the recruitment process and how to be confident during the interviews After the final assessment the instructor will make his/her own summary about the participants and may choose a candidate for the further relevant vacancies in their organization. At the end of the final class, the participants will be asked to make their own resumes. Seat numbers will also be limited in these seminars, so it will be required for students to register beforehand.	Students will be able to : ➤ write their resumes ➤ to have proper communication and business writing skills ➤ decide on their future career	Students will be offered internships or part-time job opportunities for without previous work experience.

Time	Process	Rationale
3-5 min	**Ice Breaker :** ● Introduce yourselves ● When you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?	• This activity will help the career advisor not only to initiate conversation, but also identify participants' background.
13-15 min	**Discussion of the video material:** The participants will be asked to watch the video and take notes. They will share their thoughts after they watch the video. *"How to write a CV?" (Get noticed by employers)* *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_fP43gcBywU* *If students do not join the discussion voluntarily, we will divide them into pre-assigned peers to save time for the further activities.*	• We decided to include our case study in the format of video (animation). According to Hattie & Yates (2013), our mind responds well to multimedia input and "We all are visual learners, and we all are auditory learners, not just some of us. Laboratory studies reveal that we all learn well when the inputs we experience are multi-modal or conveyed through different media." (p. 115)
10-12 min	**Case Study:** *"A leadership challenge"* **Stage 1** The participants will be asked to read the case study and answer the following questions: • Was meeting each colleague a good idea? • Evaluate Mary's agenda. What kind of improvements could be made?	• A case study is a necessary platform for students to communicate and collaborate about a certain topic(Christensen & Hansen, 1987). Case study can be used to help a group of learners to focus on a specific concept, or it can help learners to solve a problem

Time	Process	Rationale
5-8 min	**Lead-in Questions:** ● What kind of questions are asked in interviews? ● What do these questions aim at? (Skills, attributes, knowledge, experience, understanding, enthusiasm, commitment, loyalty, personality, attitude, approach, good fit with company ethos, values and the existing team)	• According to Hattie and Yates (2013) prior knowledge effects are powerful in knowledge acquisition. We, as instructors, ascertain this fact and teach accordingly. (Ausabel, 1968). Prior knowledge effects in learning outweigh learning-styles. And if there is a misconception in student knowledge, an instructor should interfere and correct them (Hattie, Yates, 2013). • This activity will help the career advisor not only to initiate conversation, but also identify students' background knowledge and act relevantly.
13-15 min	**Discussion of the reading material:** *Revolve questions around "All about Interviews"* 1. The purpose of interviews 2. Different types of interview formats 3. Research and Preparation 4. Traditional, behavioural or competency based, scenario type and creative questions 5. General tips on answering questions 6. Creating an excellent first impression *If students do not join the discussion voluntarily, we will divide them into pre-assigned peers to save time for the further activities.*	• Instead of non-stop lecturing, we prioritize group discussion in the session and help students to be encouraged and learn from each other. According to Hattie and Yates (2013), in learning acquisition an individual has to keep in mind 1) concentration spans are short, 2) mind has to be kept active. Group discussion is an effective tool of teaching in that respect. • Student attention will not be distracted with long teacher-centred lecture. "This principle is simply that learning occurs effectively once the mind responds to a meaningful experience through making a meaningful response. When the mind actively does something with the stimulus, it becomes memorable" (Hattie & Yates, 2013, p. 115). However, in some cases, the students will be given information on lacking sections. *We prefer peer work instead of group work to ensure that everyone is engaged.*
13-15 min	**Case Study:** *Getting started on the right (or the left) foot ?* **Stage 1** The participants will be asked to read the case study and do the following individiually : • Evaluate the candidate selection procedure devised by Peter Gilmore • Anticipate negative and positive effects of the selection procedure on a candidate's future performance	• A case study is a necessary platform for students to communicate and collaborate about a certain topic(Christensen & Hansen, 1987). Case study can be used to help a group of learners to focus on a specific concept, or it can help learners to solve a problem
8-10 min	**Stage 2** The participants will be asked to answer the following questions in groups : • Did Peter Gilmore need to supervise David Randle's work? • What kind of control could P.Gilmore have over D.Randle's work? • What made D.Randle avoid fulfilling his responsibilities?	
10- 12 min	**Wrapping-up the seminar** • Final thoughts and feedbacks	• The last stage is wrapping up when students will ask questions related to the discussed topic and share their final thoughts about the seminar.

Appendix G

Case studies

A Leadership Challenge

Background Information

Mary Herzen could not have been happier when she was hired to supervise the Patient Services Department at Northside Hospital. At age 45, Mary had been in various patient and bookkeeping capacities for more than 15 years, and she enjoyed both the work and supervising others. This new opportunity came at a perfect time: Just three months earlier, she had lost her job as part of a general reorganization at Central Hospital.

As Patient Services supervisor, Mary oversaw a department made up of a senior services representative and two service reps. It had taken five months to fill the position. The delay was caused in part by the internal job-posting process of notifying and interviewing internal applicants before advertising outside the organization.

Two Northside employees had applied. Both worked in the Patient Services Department. Juanita Ramirez, 32, had been with Northside for 10 years. She was the senior services rep, with over eight years experience in this department. Sue Williamson, at 26, had less time with Northside and, therefore, less experience in the function. Although both were interviewed for the supervisory position, neither were seen as strong enough candidates for promotion.

When Mary arrived for work on the first day, she met her boss, Chris Sapiro, after completing the new employee paperwork in Personnel. Chris was the one who had interviewed Mary and decided to hire her.

After going over some general guidelines and providing further details about the department and its personnel, Chris mentioned to Mary that two of her employees had applied for her job.

Chris continued: "I just mention that because there could be a possible problem with Juanita. I don't know, she might be resentful. Handle it the way you see best."

Chris then took her to the Patient Services Department, where he introduced her to the other employees and showed her the office. Mary began to settle in.

Later that afternoon, Mary set up individual meetings with each of the employees. She wanted to get to know them personally, learn what their job duties were and how they did their jobs. All the meetings went smoothly except the one with Juanita.

Mary could tell from the start that there would be difficulties. Juanita came in reluctantly, sat down, and did not look at Mary. Her crossed arms and unyielding stare at the ceiling conveyed the message: "Don't mess with me."

35.1

Mary was barely able to get complete sentences from Juanita in response to her questions.

Mary tried to press Juanita on what her job duties and responsibilities were. After a few vague replies and more questions, Juanita said: "Look, I've told you what I do. It's your job to tell me what to do. I don't know beyond that."

This kind of exchange went on a little longer, until Mary finally said: "Juanita, if this is as well as we are going to communicate, we're going to have some real problems."

That seemed to catch Juanita's attention.

"Don't try to frighten me," Juanita replied tensely. Juanita was clearly chewing over something in her mind.

Mary paused, unsure of what to say next.

"The only reason you got this job is because you're Anglo," Juanita finally said. "I should have had that job. This hospital is afraid to promote a Chicano into management."

Juanita halted for a moment, her bottom lip starting to quiver. She began crying.

"I've been discriminated against. . . . You're the boss. You're the one who's supposed to know it all. I'm not going to answer any more of your dumb questions. You tell me what I'm supposed to do."

Approaching the Job of Supervisory Leadership

Peter Gilmore was a capable, energetic manager with the Republic Insurance Company. He began his career with Republic some 15 years ago, after graduating with an accounting degree from the night-school program at City University. He was personable, well-liked, and bright.

Peter worked hard and diligently, regularly putting in 10-hour days and work on the weekends. Because of his dedication, Peter had been rewarded with ever-increasing responsibilities and promotions. He was now serving effectively as the second in command in the Strategic Management Division.

Peter once summarized his supervisory philosophy and practice in this way: "You know, every time my boss gave me an assignment, I always worked as hard and as fast as I could to complete it perfectly and on time. I expect the same from my subordinates: If I give them something to do, I expect the same from them—it should be done correctly and on time. I can't take time to check up on them or see if they are doing it."

Peter's management practices were good to his word: He delegated projects easily and would expect them to get done. When he handed out an assignment, he didn't expect to have to deal with it again until the employee brought back the completed task within a reasonable time.

Getting Things Under Control?

After a month or so of orientation and break-in, Randle was regularly given assignments by his boss, Peter Gilmore. For example, one major assignment Peter gave to Randle involved proposed price changes in Republic's line of life insurance policies. These policies were a major income producer for Republic. Recent changes in the prices for similar products by the competition were beginning to put pressure on the profit margins of these products. Republic needed to maintain a strong and sound competitive posture in this sales area. This was a major, long-term study that would take about six or seven months to complete. During the period in which Gilmore was trying to hire a supervisor, he "baby-sat" the project. Once Randle was hired, Gilmore was more than happy to turn the project over to him.

Gilmore would give these studies and assignments to Randle and expect them to be done. Since many of these reports were prepared for other departments in the company, Gilmore did not necessarily see them once they were done.

In addition, it turned out that Gilmore and Randle lived in the same part of town. Shortly after Randle was hired, he and Gilmore started commuting together to and from work. Gilmore felt that Randle had ample opportunity to talk with him if there were any problems or questions.

There had been a series of problems in the Pricing Unit, though, not long before Randle was hired. Work was not getting done properly through the unit, and at first no one knew why. Sam Benson (the head of the Strategic Management Division) finally determined that these problems had developed because requests for work were made directly to the Pricing Unit from other departments. Benson issued a standing order to the other divisions in Republic that the Pricing Unit would no longer take work requests directly from other departments. Instead, the requesting department had to submit their work order directly either to him or to Peter Gilmore for initial approval.

Randle learned of this rule very quickly. When managers approached him for work assignments, Randle told them: "I'd really like to help. But you know the rule that Sam Benson laid down. You need to discuss the project with him."

During Randle's first six months on the job, everything seemed to be going fine. Gilmore would give Randle assignments and, not hearing anything to the contrary, would assume that the projects were being done. As far as Gilmore knew, all was well.