

Job Search and Graduate Employment in Ethiopia: Implications for Program Improvement

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Context

- Rapid expansion of higher education

Higher Education Expansion	1991	2011/12
Number of Universities	2	35
Number of Students	20,000	494,110
Number of Graduates	5,693	78,144

Source: Ministry of Education: 2011/12

Context and Background...

Rational for expansion

- Rapid economic transformation requires more knowledgeable workers

Problem

- More than 70,000 graduates enter a very competitive labor market each year
- No automatic employment like before, but graduates undergo a prolonged job search process
- Opportunities for employment are becoming low and the government advocates for alternative employment
- Employers complain of quality and highly selective

Context and background...

Addis Ababa University

- Graduates of Addis Ababa University face same stiff conditions for employment like graduates from all other universities.
- Previously, employment was automatic upon graduation, but job search is becoming a norm.
- So far no tracer study was conducted to understand problems of job search and employment

Purpose and objectives of the study: The objectives of the study were to:

- Explore the job search process that graduates undergo in order to get employment, and
- Analyze the employment and work situations of graduates.

Focus of Analysis

Simplified INCHER-Kassel Model of Graduate Surveys:

Higher Education

Competencies

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graph TD; HE[Higher Education] --> C([Competencies]); C --> TP[Transition Process]; C --> EW[Employment and work]; TP --> EW;
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Transition Process

- Start of job search **before/after** graduation
- Modes of job search
- Employers criteria for recruitment
- Employers contacted
- Time spent on job seeking
- Graduate criteria for job selection
- Additional course taken for the job

Employment and work

- Current employment
- **Type** of current employer

Research Methodology

Design

- A cross-sectional survey approach was employed for the study.
- Cohort of 2008/09 graduates were focused for this investigation
- This presentation is one part of the main study which investigated different processes:
 - Socio-biographic,
 - Education and work before study,
 - Study conditions and provisions,
 - Job search and transition to work, and
 - Employment and work

Research Methodology...

Sample selection

- Of the eight colleges of Addis Ababa University, Commercial College has been purposively selected considering the availability of well managed database of graduates and accessibility of the graduates for data collection.
- A sample of 250 graduates was included in the survey by employing a purposive random sampling procedure.
- The cohort of graduates included was limited to graduates of year 2008/09 assuming that the two years after graduation would give them sufficient time to get employment.
- Graduates were included in the survey based on their willingness as well as the willingness of their employers to fill in questionnaires.

Research Methodology...

Instruments and Data collection

- A structured survey questionnaire was developed and used for data collection.
- A paper-based questionnaire was administered due to the underdevelopment of internet services and the low level of utilization of online technologies in Ethiopia.
- Before the instrument was fully used, a limited piloting was conducted on some graduates in order to check the appropriateness of instrument for data collection.
- Instruments were administered by highly experienced and trained staff members of the college of commerce and Addis Ababa University.
- In order to overcome delays in responses, frequent telephone calls, physical supervisions or persuasions were made and permissions from employers were secured.

Findings of the Study

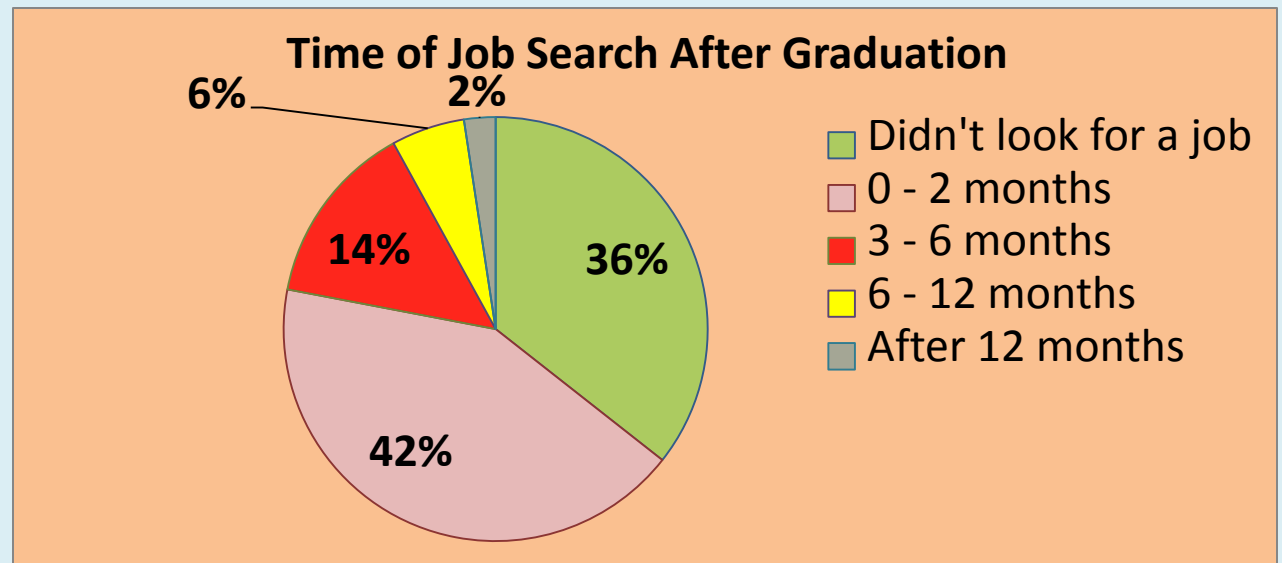
- Start of Job search before graduation (Q. When did you start looking for a job before graduation?)
 - Only a very small proportion of graduates look for job before graduation

Start of job search before graduation	N	%
Didn't look for a job	231	92.4
0 - 2 months	15	6.0
3 - 6 months	1	0.4
6 - 12 months	3	1.2
before 12 months	0	0

Findings of the Study...

Start of Job search after graduation (Q. When did you start looking for a job after graduation?)

- 42% (N=250) of the graduates started job search within two months after graduation, where as 36% did not look for a job.



Findings of the Study...

Modes of job Search after graduation(Q. How did you look for your first job after graduation?)

- Advertisement, direct contact with employers, internet and social relations were used by many students

Mode of job search after graduation	N	%
Advertisement in newspaper/magazine, fliers	163	67.1
Directly contacting employers without vacancies	63	25.9
Through the internet	57	23.5
Contacted by the employer	23	9.5
Through a state working agency	17	7.0
Information from student affairs office	12	4.9
Relations (e.g. parents, relatives, friends, etc.)	56	23.0

Findings of the Study...

Employers criteria for recruitment(Q. In your view, which of the following aspects are important for the employer in recruiting someone for the first employment?)

- Employers focus on personal competencies of graduates such as Grades, computer skills and relevance of field of study.

Employers criteria for recruitment	N	%
Relevance of field of study	80	33.2
GPA/Grades	149	61.8
Work experience while studying	71	29.5
Reputation of higher education institution	25	10.4
Internship during study	28	11.6
English proficiency	66	27.4
Computer skills	108	44.8
Third party's recommendation	25	10.4

Findings of the Study...

Employers contacted and time spent on job seeking (Qs.

How many companies/institutions/ did you contact before you got your first job?
How many months did you spend before/after graduation to seek for your first job? How many employers responded to your application?)

- A graduate contacted about 8 employers and spent about 5 months on average

Employers contacted, time spent job seeking, employers responded	N	Mean
Number of employers contacted	213	8.4
Months of Job seeking (before and after graduation)	196	4.9
Number of employers responded	197	4.1

Findings of the Study...

Criteria considered by graduates for job selection (Q.

Which aspect did you consider most in selecting your first job offer?)

- Salary was considered as the prime criterion for job selection by 51% of the graduates rather than match of field of study with the job and challenges in the job.

Graduates criteria for job selection	N	%
Salary	122	58.1
Proximity to house	5	2.4
Matching with field of study	29	13.8
Challenges in the job	28	13.3
Benefits (housing, transportation, overtime)	14	6.7
Scholarship opportunity	12	5.7
Total	210	100.0

Findings of the study...

- **Additional course taken for job preparation** (Q. When you were studying at the university and after the graduation, did you take any course in order to make yourself prepared or more equipped for the workplace? What kind of courses did you take AFTER you graduated from university?)
- Most students took courses in Computer operations and leadership

Type and additional courses taken	N	%
Did you take additional course after graduation		
<i>Yes</i>	125	51.2
<i>No</i>	119	48.8
Type of additional course taken		
<i>Computer operation (MS Office and the like)</i>	86	50.3
<i>Computer application software (</i>	24	14.0
<i>English language skills</i>	26	15.1
<i>Leadership</i>	34	19.8
<i>Entrepreneurship</i>	17	9.9

Findings of the study...

Current Employment (Q. Are you currently employed (including part-time employment and self-employment?))

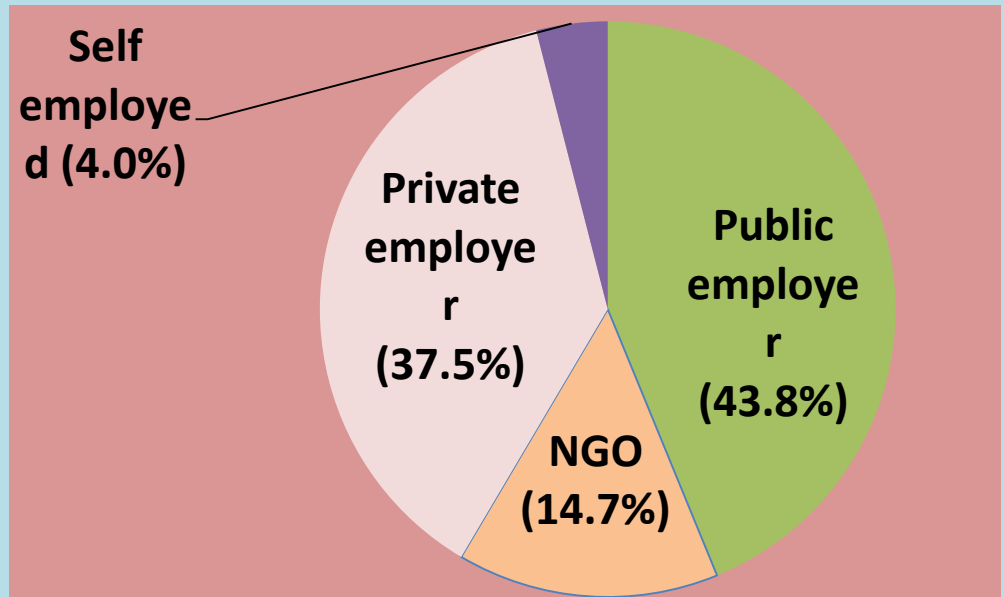
	N	%
Are you currently employed?		
<i>Yes</i>	213	86.6
<i>No</i>	33	13.4

- About 87 percent of the graduates said they were employed including self-employment

Findings of the Study...

Type of Current employer (Q. Please state the kind of your current employer/institution.)

- Government was the main employer of graduates followed by the private sector.



Summary of findings and Implications

- Most students do not start to search for jobs before graduation, and after graduation majority of the graduates start job search within two months where as 36% did not look for jobs.
- Many students predominantly used traditional channels to search for a job including advertisement, direct contact with employers, social relations etc.
- Employers focus on personal competencies of graduates for recruitment, but salary is a top priority for job selection by graduates.
- Most students take additional courses to be prepared for the world of work.

Summary of findings and Implications

- Most graduates find jobs after graduation with the public and private sectors being the main employers.
- This study provides an exploratory information of graduate employment only in one college. It is important that such studies are conducted in all colleges.

Summary of findings and Implications

- Tracer study has to be institutionalized to provide inputs for program review and development
- There are implications for program review and development:
 - Developing student job search skills
 - Rethinking the role of career guidance offices at the university
 - Reviewing how to greatly use the Ministry of labor and social affairs
 - Diversification of contacts to include several employers
 - Curricular review/s to include additional courses

Thank You!