**Introduction:**

Globally youths seek higher education for the opportunity to seek better employability in the labour market. These new higher educational graduates pursue opportunities to join the workforce to begin their journey of developing a career, better paying positions, and job stability compared to others with less or no educational credentials (Strauss & Leuze, 2013). However, there are various factors that influence the employability of graduates out of university (Finch, Hamilton, Baldwin, & Zehner, 2013). The factors that are explored are grade point averages (GPA) of graduating students, Gender, and extra-curricular activities, internships, and work-integrated learning (WIL)

**Aim:**

This selective literature review aims to explore peer-reviewed and evidence-based specific factors that influence graduates’ employability with statistics of different research conducted on graduates all over the world.

**GPA effect on employability**

As mentioned previously, graduates’ employability is defined by an individual’s willingness and capability to become relevant and attractive in labour markets (Fenta, Asnakew, Debele, Nigatu, & Muhaba, 2019). The majority of literature acknowledges the significance of attaining a high GPA appears more desirable to recruiters (Li, & Zhang, 2010; Mehmetaj, & Alili, 2021; Fenta, Asnakew, Debele, Nigatu, & Muhaba, 2019). GPA is an academic achievement measured as a metric index that assists employers to predict a graduate’s performance and success of the position (Mehmetaj, & Alili, 2021). In the study of Mehmetaj et al. (2021) and Li et al. (2010), they highlighted that employer’s favoured graduates’ higher GPA leading to higher employability and having more opportunities to receive better paying positions in well-established firms. The study by Mehmetaj et al. (2021) analysed survey questions of graduates from 2009 until 2019. These surveys were conducted in two different countries where one was at the university of Luigj Gurakuqi (LGU) in Albania and the other at South East European University (SSEU) in North Macedonia. They were aimed to evaluate the relationship between graduates’ employability and predictor variables through multivariate logistic analysis. The study found that graduates from LGU that achieved a GPA of 9 out of 10 and above were mostly employed compared to graduates that achieved a GPA 5-6 which were mostly unemployed. However, it was found that SSEU graduates had no noticeable favouritism of employability associated with higher GPA.

The study by Li et al. (2010) supports the initial findings of Mehmetaj et al (2021) as the study affirms the importance of high GPA in relation to employability. The study followed similar analysis of two colleges but in China for graduates in 2005. The results were based off a probit regression model where it indicated job-seeking graduates with high GPA are less likely to be unemployed and are more likely to enter highly desired foreign firms. In both analysis GPA is not the only influencing factor of employability and all other factors should be considered in a bigger model.

**Gender effect on employability**

Employment discrimination due to gender appear to be contradicted as it varies on the location of study (Fenta, Asnakew, Debele, Nigatu, & Muhaba, 2019). The study of Fenta et al. (2019) showed no bias for employability due to gender when analysing graduates’ employment rates from Bahir Dar University between 2015 to 2016. Statistics of the Chinese labour market in 2007 to 2008 showed 38.87% and 36.48% of those recruiting male applicants compared to the 35.99% and 33.65% recruiting females. However, these statistics were reflected poorly as a survey conducted showed that respondents who claimed to have no gender preference favoured male graduates by 42.68% compared to the 7.14% that favoured females (Li, 2010). The model of Kong (2013) on Chinese graduates showed that males were likely to be unemployed for an average of 7.26 months compared to females 7.14 month. While Mehmetaj et al (2021) study showed that the odds of male unemployability was 31.5% and therefore, have higher probabilities to be employed compared to females. As these studies have geographical bias, certain statements are not particular realistic for other regions due to several other influencing parameters such as the culture of the country (Alatrista-Salas, Esposito, Nunez-del-Prado, & Valdivieso, 2017).

**Employability effected by experience**

Studies have offered solutions that developed instruments that measure graduate employability skills through a situational judgement test (SJT) that analyses, communication skills personal quality, critical thinking in problem solving, morality and ethics before entering the labour market (Hafiz, Bidin, & Suzilah,2014). University students that seek extra-curricular activities, internships, work integrated learning (WIL) and work experience appear to be more desirable by employers (Jackson, & Bridgstock, 2020). Several studies have supported that relative work-experience, internships, and extra-curricular activities contribute to graduates’ employability in the labour market demands (Byrne, 2022; Jackson, & Bridgstock, 2020; Jackson, & Collings 2017). Exposure to pre-employment valuations from internships allows graduates to practise and develop their personality test. High score tests were found to trend towards better job performance compared to those that scored low (Lanyon, & Goodstein, 2016). Employment outcomes of new graduates that have completed WIL indicated an improved full-time employment outcome of 57.3% in comparison of those that did not at 47% initially (Jackson, & Collings 2017). Internships and extra-curricular activities where highly sought after as a criterion among other graduates’ employment. Employers typically offered positions to intern’s that have completed their duration for the company as full-time employees after the completion of their degree (Jackson, & Bridgstock, 2020). Inexperienced graduates were thought to have a lack of intellectual skills and critical thinking by employers (Hossain, Alam, Alamgir, & Salat, 2020).

**Discussion/Conclusion:**

This selective literature review aimed to analyse and examine literature relating to graduate employability due to GPA, gender, and work experience. It is known from the review that higher GPA (Mehmetaj et al. (2021), and work experience such as internships, WIL and extra-curricular activities lead to not only more employment opportunities but possible better paying jobs (Byrne, 2022; Jackson, & Bridgstock, 2020; Jackson, & Collings 2017). GPA and work experience showed strong correlation to employability regardless of geographical area and is highly valued by all employers. Employer discrimination due to gender varied dependant on geographical area, study group and graduation year (Fenta, Asnakew, Debele, Nigatu, & Muhaba, 2019). Serval studies indicated mix results with no define answer, there are possibilities that there is secretly bias during recruitment (Li, 2010). Due to the limitations of this selective literature review, not all aspects were covered in discovering the employability of graduates and only a few selected employability factors were identified and examined. Independent factors are typically not decisive in terms of employability but although do increase graduates’ opportunity, it is a combination of factors that determine the right candidate for the position.

This review highlights the significance of factors that may or may not affect graduate employability. GPA and work experience was valuable to all employers regardless of geographical area and gender varied dependant on countries and study groups. Due to the nature of numerous factors on surface or hidden, graduates can contribute to presenting themselves more desirable to employers if they focus on their academic achievements and work experience.

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