

Student Employment and Stay at Home Orders

Austin Seung-Hun Ro

Abstract

This paper uses a qualitative approach to understand what changes have resulted from the stay-at-home orders regarding employment for students and recent graduates. Using a semi-structured interview on the sample population (n=5), it was found that there was an increase in difficulty in finding and obtaining employment, and a shift to online interviewing. It was also found that employment is an important factor in student's and graduate's lives and acts as a means for financial security and a better quality of life. Additionally, students or graduates from the tech-related studies seemed to be at a better position in terms of employment compared to other fields of studies.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Introduction	1
Literature Review	1
Research Method	3
Research Topic/Research Questions	3
Research Goals/Objectives/Purposes	4
Research Design.....	5
Reliability & Validity	6
Limitations	7
Generalizability.....	8
Research Ethics	8
Role Considerations.....	11
Reflexive Analysis	11
Research Findings	11
Field of Study	12
Different experiences with Different Majors.....	12
Employment	13
Interest in Finding Employment.....	14
Difficulty Finding Employment.....	15
Online Interviewing	16
Emotions	16
Possible Amendments.....	17
Discussion/Policy Implication	18
Conclusion	19
References.....	21
Appendix A. Ethical Approval: TCPS2 Ethics Course Completion Certificate & Instructor's Written Approval Comments	23
Appendix B: Informed Consent Form	24
Appendix C: Data Collection Instrument	26
Appendix D: Conceptual/Thematic Framework/Index	28
Appendix E: Electronic Supplemental File (First Pages of Journal Articles Cited, Raw Data & Evidence of Analysis).	29

Introduction

A stay at home order has been placed by the government across the country to protect the public from the COVID-19 pandemic, and to maintain social distancing in order to decrease the impact of the pandemic. The stay at home orders has impacted our everyday lives of going to work, school, and socializing. Therefore, as a student who is facing graduation a question that is raised is how has employment changed for post-secondary students and recent graduations from different fields of study due to the stay at home orders?

The main objective of this research paper is to understand the opinions and experiences of current graduates, and university student's experience with employment after the stay-at-home orders. Therefore, as Hesse-Biber (2017) describes, this research paper will be a qualitative exploratory research project due to the lack of research on student employment during COVID-19 (Hesse-Biber, 2017:13 PDF). Additionally, this study is significant because understanding the effects of a pandemic on employment for students and recent graduates help us prepare for any potential risks such underemployment.

Literature Review

There are several studies that have touched upon employment for students and recent graduates. In one study, the researchers studied the effects of graduating into a recession where the results show that young graduates with no work experience face disadvantages in terms of employment (Oreopoulos, Wachter, & Heisz, 2012:26). Additionally, it was also noted that graduates with different majors or from different

institutions may have different experiences regarding employment (Oreopoulos et al, 2012:1-2).

Also, in a more recent project, it was found that due to the COVID-19 and stay at home order, unemployment has increased, which I believe will result in more difficulties in gaining employment for recent graduates and students (Beland, Brodeur, & Wright, 2020:1). Another study by Larue (2020) has shown that due to COVID-19 and the stay-at-home orders, the unemployment rate has increased substantially, which was further supported by the Prime Minister's announcement that there was "a weekly increase of 500,000 unemployment insurance (UI) claims." (Larue, 2020:231). Therefore, there may exist a relationship between the large number of unemployment and the difficulty in employment for students and recent graduates. Furthermore, unemployment has also been studied previously regarding recent graduates where factors such as the field of study a student is in may affect employment (Scurry & Blenkinsopp, 2011:654). It is also important to mention in the context of the stay-at-home orders, that most work and even education have been completed from home to maintain social distancing between workers and students (Kramer, & Kramer, 2020:2). This may allow for potential changes to occur in terms of employment for students and graduates.

Additional research has also been done on the psychological effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the stay-at-home orders where most individuals had negative experiences due to the stay-at-home orders such as increased worrying of an individual's finance during the time of COVID-19 and stay-at-home order (Tull, 2020:5). Furthermore, a study on Chinese college students showed that they are exhibiting anxious behaviour or thoughts due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and their employment opportunities (Wang et al., 2020 as cited in Cao, Fang, Hou, Han, Xu, Dong, & Zheng., 2020:3). Therefore, I believe when we are looking in the context of Canadian post-

secondary students and recent graduates, we can assume that they may be experiencing similar emotions as the Chinese college students.

To summarize in a more general context, unemployment for post-secondary students and recent graduates reside has been a persistent issue, even before the COVID-19 pandemic and the stay-at-home orders (Oreopoulos et al, 2012:26). With the stay-at-orders during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, students are exhibiting more anxiety and worrying about employment and financial well-being (Wang et al., 2020 as cited in Cao et al, 2020:3; Tull, 2020:5). With more people being unemployed due to the stay-at-home order(Larue, 2020:231), it leads to more people finding jobs which may cause an increase in difficulty for employment, especially students or graduates with less experience (Oreopoulos et al, 2012:26).

Therefore, my research potentially allows for further understanding of how employment has changed for post-secondary students and recent graduates in Canada. By listening to their experiences with finding employment and their thoughts on how the stay-at-home order will affect their employment experience, it will provide useful insight. Furthermore, this will be satisfying the research agenda suggested where it states that a potential research should “focus on understanding unemployed youths’ perception of their situation” with the stay-at-home orders (Blustein, Duffy, Ferreira, Cohen-Scali, Cinamon, & Allan., 2020:3).

Research Method

Research Topic/Research Questions

The main research topic of this paper is student employment and the research question will focus on: how has employment changed for post-secondary students and

recent graduates of different fields of study due to stay at home orders? The researcher anticipated that students and recent graduates have experienced more difficulty in employment due to stay at home orders. Also, to further clarify, the context of the term used throughout this paper, the term “student employment”, covers current post-secondary students and recent graduates in Canada. Additionally, what the researcher means with the term, “stay-at-home order”, is that it is the Canadian government’s order and advice for the general public to remain home and refrain from going outside due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Research Goals/Objectives/Purposes

With this study the researcher is hoping to achieve results where, learning the experiences with current students and recent graduates on how employment opportunities and processes have changed for them in the time of a stay-at-home order due to COVID-19, allows for better understanding of the struggles and some obstacles that students face. Furthermore, the objective of the research is an exploratory research which focuses on “underresearched aspect of social life” (Hesse-Biber, 2017:13 PDF). I would like to further explain that since stay-at-home order is a new phenomenon that has not been experienced by society before, there is a lack of research regarding on how these orders may affect students and recent graduates in terms of employment. The purpose of this research to further improve the understanding of how the stay at home orders affects university students and recent graduates because of the lack of research there is currently regarding this situation.

Research Design

The design this research follows is a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is defined as a study that goes in-depth into a social phenomenon that is being researched and to gain a better understanding (Labuschagne, 2003:100). The unit of analysis for this research are university students, and graduates who are considered individuals at the micro-level and their perceptions towards how stay-at-home orders affects experiences with employment (Fennig, 2020a).

The data source for this research will be semi-structured interviews which “rely on a certain set of questions and try to guide the conversation to remain, more loosely, on those questions” (Hesse-Biber, 2017:146 PDF). Therefore, rather than being strict with the order and presentation of the questions being asked like structured interviews, this type of interview seems more beneficial for this research because it offers more flexibility to the interviews (Hesse-Biber, 2017:146 PDF; Fennig, 2020c). To gain access to the data sources, the researcher has reached out to family and friends who are either currently in university or have graduated recently in the past 2 years. After reaching out, the research managed to secure five participants who are willing to participate in the research study and have filled out the informed consent form (see Appendix B).

Furthermore, the sample size of the research is $n = 5$, which is a small sample but is characteristic of a qualitative approach because with a smaller sample size allows for more in-depth information regarding the participants experience (Hesse-Biber, 2017:63 PDF). To add on, the sampling procedure for this research is a non-probabilistic sampling with a purposive sample (Fennig, 2020b). To clarify, the sampling procedure is “the variety of sampling methods employed to collect data in any given research project” (Hesse-Biber, 2017:61 PDF), and since the study implements a non-probabilistic sampling technique it

is a non-random selection of the sample population (Fennig, 2020b). The study also implements a purposive sample because the participants were chosen with the criteria of being a university student or a recent graduate (Hesse-Biber, 2017:61 PDF). Also, to conclude, the data collection instrument that will be used for this research would be the interview schedule which is provided under appendix C, and this research will utilize the data analysis technique of code by theme which is aiming to find recurring themes in the data retrieved from the data sources (Fennig, 2020,c).

Reliability & Validity

It is important to note that reliability is actually a part of a quantitative approach because it is “the degree to which repeated observation of a phenomenon...yields similar results” (Palys, 1997:424 as cited in Fennig, 2020b). In the context of a qualitative research, it does not aim for replicability but aims for dependability (Fennig, 2020b). There exists high dependability throughout this research study because a detailed research methods section was maintained where the researcher aimed to be as detailed and transparent regarding the research question, topic, objectives, goals, purpose, and the design of the overall research study (Fennig, 2020b).

In terms of validity, in the context of qualitative research, it is how much the results of the research accurately reflects the social context of the issue that is being studied (Lewis & Ritchie, 2003:286 as cited in Fennig, 2020b). Additionally, this research also has high validity because it is in alignment according to Chenail’s (1997) “research plumb line” (Chenail, 1997:3) which lists four components which are “area of curiosity, mission question, data to be collected, and data analysis procedure” (Chenail, 1997:3). Regarding the first component in the context of this research study, “area of curiosity” (Chenail, 1997:3), it is the stay-at-home order and student employment (Chenail, 1997:3). Secondly,

the “mission question” (Chenail, 1997:3) or the research question is how employment has changed for post-secondary students and recent graduates of different fields of study due to stay-at-home orders (Chenail, 1997:3). Thirdly, the “data to be collected” (Chenail, 1997:4) is semi-structured interviews of current university students and recent graduates on their experiences with employment before and after the stay-at-home order (Chenail, 1997:4). Lastly, the “data analysis procedure” (Chenail, 1997:4) is also stated which is code by theme (Chenail, 1997:4). Therefore, it can be argued that the current research is in alignment as shown by the Chenail’s (1997) “research plumb line” therefore has high validity (Chenail, 1997:3; Hesse-Biber, 2017:63). Furthermore, the research maintains high validity through interpreting the transcripts of the interviews to find data that is most related to the research topic to ensure alignment (Joppe, 2000:1 as cited in Golafshani, 2003:599).

Limitations

Some limitations of this qualitative research would be the lack of diversity due to a small sample size, and the use of a purposive sample. (Hesse-Biber, 2017:60-61 PDF; Fennig, 2020b). To further explain the first limitation with lacking diversity due to a small sample size, in the context of this study, the sample of the study is limited to Asian students and graduates of B.C. schools. Therefore, it lacks the diversity within the target population of university students and recent graduates all over the world which results in a skewed sample (Hesse-Biber, 2017:60 PDF). Secondly, by using a purposive sampling method, the current study is limited in terms of generalizability because it is not completely representative of the target population which in this study is university students and recent graduates (Fennig, 2020b; Hesse-Biber, 2017:60 PDF).

Generalizability

Generalizability is the ability to generalize the research findings back to the target population and is achieved through representative and random sampling (Hesse-Biber, 2017:60 PDF; Fennig, 2020b). With this definition of generalizability, this research's findings are not generalizable because the study utilizes a non-probabilistic sampling method, and has a small sample size which is limited to university students and recent graduates in B.C, and therefore not representative of the population (Hesse-Biber, 2017:60 PDF; Fennig, 2020b). However, in Hesse-Biber (2017), the author mentions a form of generalizability that qualitative research's use which is called analytic generalizability and it is "the discovery of underlying social forms" (Hesse-Biber, 2017:60-61 PDF). Therefore, in the context of analytical generalizability, the ability to generalize the research findings is possible if applied back to theory rather than the population but this current research study does not implement theory which means that the study does not aim for analytic generalizability. (Fennig, 2020b). Overall, the research findings are limited in terms of its ability to generalize back to the population and theory.

Research Ethics

In terms of the potential ethical issues that may arise from the study, the researcher ensured several considerations that help limit the ethical issues that may arise. Participation or consent to participate in the research study was completely voluntary and the participant had the right to withdraw from the research study at any time of the research and was provided with the option of their data to be not included in the research study if they wanted to, this is provided for in the informed consent form. Furthermore, voluntary consent of the participants are important because it allows for the integrity of the data received to be legitimate in terms of the participant's willingness to participate and share

their experiences (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, & Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 2018:28).

Privacy and confidentiality are also important to maintain ethical research studies and to respect and protect the research participants (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2018:57). Therefore, in this research study, privacy of the participant's personal information was maintained through alphanumeric coding, and this is provided for in the informed consent form (Hesse-Biber, 2017:75 PDF). To add on, the data received from the participants was kept in a safe place and the copy of the interview recording was destroyed after completion of the research study to ensure confidentiality (Hesse-Biber, 2017:77 PDF). In the context of confidentiality, this research study ensured that participants will be protected with unlimited confidentiality which completely protects the participants data from being released in all circumstances (Fennig, 2020a).

Foreseeable ethical risks that may have been present within the study were potential subject matters or questions that may trigger a negative psychological reaction from the participants, such as economic questions which participants may be struggling with and COVID-19 related questions (Fennig, 2020a). The probability of the risk from arising is extremely low because the researcher has avoided questions that touch upon the economic circumstances of the individual. Regarding the magnitude of the risk it is argued to be minimal because the participants will only experience the inconvenience of participating in the interview but they also have the option to opt out for any reason which ensures voluntary consent (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2018:21).

The researcher took multiple steps to minimize the potential risks that this research study may impose on the participants by careful selection of participants who the

researcher is aware of that is not suffering economically, and have not been negatively affected by COVID-19. Additionally, the use of the Informed Consent Form in Appendix B also allows for minimizing the potential risks that the study imposes for both the researcher and the participants by allowing participants to be aware on how their data is going to be handled, and letting participants know what the research study is on and how participation may affect them (Hesse-Biber, 2017:74 PDF). Furthermore, the researcher, as mentioned previously, avoided asking sensitive questions that are related to COVID-19 or economic status because it may result in negative emotional reactions therefore these types of questions were not included in the interview schedule in Appendix C or asked directly during the interview. Regarding if the benefits outweigh the potential risks, it is argued that the current research study allows for advancements of knowledge regarding the impact of the stay at home orders for students and graduates in terms of employment (Fennig, 2020a).

Another important aspect of ethics in research is whether or not a research study is minimal risk. Minimal risk, in the context of research, is that the risks associated with the participation in a research study and are equal or lower to what an individual will experience in their everyday lives (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2018:22). Regarding minimal risk and the current research study, this research study is minimal risk because the participation was completely voluntary, participants were aware of research topic and the researcher took several measures to ensure that the possibility and magnitude of the risks were minimal (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2018:22). This is further shown with the completion of the TCPS2 Ethics Course Completion Certificate (Appendix A), the course instructors' written approval, the informed consent form (Appendix B), and the interview schedule (Appendix C).

Role Considerations

There were several role considerations with this research study because of the researcher's overlapping role as a principal investigator, student, friend/family of the participant. Therefore, to minimize and potential conflict of interest, the researcher utilized the Informed Consent Forms, followed the ethical procedures learned with the completion of the TCPS2 Ethics Course Completion Certificate and made an effort to stay within the role of the principal investigator role while interviewing the participants to minimize potential conflict of interest (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2018:96).

Reflexive Analysis

Previous to the completion of the research study, the researcher anticipated that the research findings will show that students and recent graduates will face difficulties with employment due to the stay-at-home orders (International Labor Organization, 2020b as cited in Blustein et al., 2020:3). Furthermore, regarding on how the researcher may influence the research or data collection, the researcher has an ongoing relationship with all the participants who volunteered for this research study therefore, during data collection, the discussion may go out of alignment, and rather than being consistent towards each participant biases may appear for each different participants (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2018:96). The research aimed to reduce these threats by using a semi-structured interview to guide the data collection process in a consistent matter that is in alignment with the research while being as professional as possible (Hesse-Biber, 2017:146 PDF).

Research Findings

With the analysis of the data gathered through the interviews of the sample (n=5), four main themes emerged as a result which are the field of study, employment, emotions, and amendments.

Field of Study

The first theme that I will discuss is the field of study of the participants and how the experiences differ for individuals in different fields of studies. It is also important to keep in mind what Scurry & Blenkinsopp (2011) states in terms of how the choice of a degree can be a mitigating factor in employment (Scurry & Blenkinsopp, 2011:654). The participants had different degrees or majors that ranged from data science, international relations, education, and criminology.

Different experiences with Different Majors

In terms of the experience with the participant who studies data science in terms of employment, Participant 313 states:

“I think the availability of employment for recent graduates is not too bad these days in my field at least. A lot of companies have started adjusting to COVID and are posting more job postings” (Interview 313:4-5).

Therefore, when interpreting what the participant has said, it made me assume that students or recent graduates who are in fields that are related to technology, such as computer science or data science, are more advantageous in terms of employment during the time of stay-at-home orders, and are less affected by the orders in terms of employment. As participant 313 states, “For technology field, it’s honestly not bad and there are a lot of opportunities to my knowledge” (Interview 313:5).

To further address this theme, I saw that there was a pattern that emerged in terms of the views of participants who studied in mostly non-tech related fields and this pattern can be shown by what participant 731 says:

“I think that for people in like engineering or computer science its easier to get a job, before and after the COVID but for other studies I feel that it got much harder to find jobs but that’s just my personal experience” (Interview 731:5).

Therefore, when contextualizing the findings to the research question, I concluded that the stay-at-home orders have had a different impact on students or recent graduates who majored in different fields of study and that those who are involved in tech-related studies were less negatively affected in terms of finding employment or availability of employment while those who studied non-tech related studies were more affected.

Employment

Another important theme that emerged was employment. Majority of the participants had a view that employment is essential in their lives. As participant 313 explains:

“Oh okay, well, employment means a lot to me. I didn’t go to school for nothing, and the reason why I went to university was to get employed or get a good job that pays well. Like you need to have money to live so I think employment is a big part of my life right now.” (Interview 313:2).

Like what this participant said, employment was a big part of many participants lives except participant 731 who stated

“I think that employment for me doesn’t mean a lot. I never really wanted to work and if I can live without working, I think that I won’t work. So, basically, I think that employment is just a tool for me” (Interview 731:5).

However, I think it is similar in what these participants are trying to state or point out that employment is a part of life that is needed to be financial sustainable and a tool to enjoy

life. To further explain, participant 844 stated that “employment means that I’m able to obtain a better life quality. I believe that employment allows me to be well, both financially and mentally” (Interview 844:1). Therefore, regarding the research question, the findings on the participant’s view on employment contributed in increasing our understanding of the significance of employment for students and graduates. This also leads to the topic of whether there was an interest in finding employment amongst the participants.

Interest in Finding Employment

Regarding the interest in finding employment, only two participants have had successful employment and other participants were students who were interested or wanting to find employment but school has had an impact on them, and it is also important to note that the two successful participants were graduates. As shown by the following excerpt:

Interviewer: Alright, so are you currently looking for work right now?

Participant 251: No, I am preparing for my fall semester right now. But I did try to get a summer job but COVID happened.

Interviewer: What type of job were you looking for?

Participant 251: I was looking for an internship or something that is different from sales or server because I wanted to build the skills needed to get hired. (Interview 251:1-2)

From this, it was noted that most of the student participants were looking for employment or co-op that would allow them to build the experience needed to get hired. As Oreopoulos et al (2012) stated, students or graduates with little to no work experience are less likely to be employed (Oreopoulos et al., 2012:26). However, although there were interest in finding jobs it was difficult to measure the effort the participants have made in order to gain employment, but one factor that is repeated is the impact of the stay-at-home orders impacting the ability to find employment opportunity. This factor itself answers the

research question directly because from the findings, it is assumed that due to the stay-at-home orders influenced many of the participants ability to find employment. This leads to the one of the main themes of the research which is changes in employment that lead to difficulties for students and graduates due to the stay-at-home orders.

Difficulty Finding Employment

With the introduction of the stay-at-home orders, unemployment has risen in unprecedented matter and has affected a lot of people (Larue, 2020:231). The participants of this study have also been affected similarly in terms of employment and the main influence of the stay-at-home orders was the increase in difficulty of finding employment which is one of the themes that arose during the data analysis. Participants expressed their difficulty in terms of finding employment opportunities after the stay-at-home orders were introduced, as participant 920 described, "It is tough to be honest. It was tough even before COVID hit but ever since the stay-at-home order it is even harder to secure full-time employment" (Interview 920:3). From this statement, I saw that even before the stay-at-home orders, employment was not an easy task for both students and graduates, but it seems as though that the stay-at-home order has increased the difficulty in finding employment opportunities. To further support this, participant 251 also expressed their difficulty by saying that "...there was just more positions or internship positions available. Right now, there's very little opportunity especially for internships." (Interview 251:3) Therefore, in relation to the research question, I believe that after the stay-at-home orders were introduced employment opportunities have decreased for students and graduates which results in increased competition for the limited availability of employment and an increased difficulty in terms of finding employment. However, one topic of interest that showed some positive reactions from the participants was online interviewing.

Online Interviewing

Regarding the shift from in-person interviews to online interviews, the participants stated several benefits and weaknesses that applied to online interviewing. Participant 920 expressed that “online interviewing definitely has its perks. It’s more casual in some sense like you can only dress the upper half of your body, and it’s not as intimidating” (Interview 920:2). The general pattern that I observed from the data were similar to what this participant stated in that the main benefits of online interviewing were that it was more casual, and that one does not have to go all the way to the company for the in-person interview. However, some participants mentioned some issues or weaknesses with online interviewing where one stated that “it might be hard to transition or like get used to online interviewing at first. You need practice.” (Interview 313:4). Therefore, I think that the time saving, and casualness of online interviews are appealing for the students and graduates but since most are not accustomed to the process, after several adjustments made, it may be a more preferable method of interviewing. Subjectively, in terms of this finding on the opinions on online interviewing also answers the research questions, in terms of changes that occurred due to the stay-at-home order. I believe that interviews are an essential part of the employment process and interviews have shifted from physical to online methods due to the stay-at-home orders which have affected students and recent graduates but in a beneficial way.

Emotions

To briefly state, another theme that is worth mentioning was emotions, or more specifically, emotions towards the impact of the stay-at-home orders. From the findings, all the participants experienced some negative experiences with the stay-at-home orders, and one participant’s statement best represented the sample (n=5). Participant 313 stated:

“uhm.... Let me think... well... I think I have mixed emotions right now about the stay at home orders and well COVID I guess. Like I think we're in phase 3 in B.C. so its been getting better, but I just saw the news saying that there have been an increase again so I don't know. But, like its pretty tough because a lot has changed like I can't go enjoy a beer at a pub right now but I understand and comply with the orders because its dangerous and risky. I also wanted to travel after I graduate but I think that's out of the question.” (Interview 313:3).

It seems that the all the participants missed the socializing aspect that was available before the stay-at-home orders. I think that understanding the emotional changes that occurred due to the stay-at-home orders for the participant is important to mention because it allows us to understand how the participants view the stay-at-home orders, which most of the participants agreed that it is needed but the restrictions had been a negative experience. Therefore, I believe that the emotional changes also contribute to the research question because due to the stay-at-home order students and recent graduates have experienced changes in emotions which may also adversely affect employment.

Possible Amendments

Another interesting theme that arose from the interviews was the theme of amendments. Specifically, the amendments that the participants believe are needed to improve the current employment issue with students and graduates during stay-at-home orders (Beland et al., 2020:1). There were several interesting suggestions made by the participants, one of which was to “restructure courses to be more industry (business) focused” (Interview 313:9). To further explain, participant 313 further stated that “theory is important, but it would be useful for students with no work experience” (Interview 313:5). Therefore, I think that the participant was arguing that it is more beneficial for students to gain work experience through school courses, rather than just learning theory. Another suggestion by participant 251 was to have courses that help develop employment skills

such as improving resume writing, and interview strategies (Interview 251:4). Overall, it seems that the general consensus of the participants is that amendments are needed to help improve the current employment situation that students and recent graduates are in.

Discussion/Policy Implication

The findings of the research study allowed for a better understanding on how an individual's experience differs depending on their field of study. As Scurry & Blenkinsopp (2011) discussed, an individual's major can influence employment opportunity (Scurry & Blenkinsopp, 2011:654), and the findings from this research made further advancements to this argument where the technology related majors were shown to have a more positive or advantageous experience compared to other field of studies such as criminology during the time of stay-at-home orders (Interview 731:5).

Furthermore, the findings helps us better understand how important employment are for students and recent graduates. As participant 844 stated that employment allows for financial security and a better quality of life (Interview 844:1) which is essential in order to live in current society because without money, an individual's quality of life can be drastically reduced (Easterlin, 1973:3). Additionally, the findings allowed for an advancement in the understanding of the difficulty students and recent graduates faces during the stay-at-home orders in the context of employment. As shown in Larue (2020), unemployment rates have been increasing ever since stay-at-home orders have been placed (Larue, 2020:231), and this is correlated to the findings in terms of the increased difficulty in finding employment for students and graduates after the stay-at-home orders were implicated (Interview 731:3). It is also important to mention the importance of the findings on online interviewing. As shown in the literature provided previously, online interviewing was not a topic of interest for the studies, and I argue that the findings from

this research allowed for new understanding on students and recent graduates perspectives on online interviewing.

In terms of policy implications that can be derived from the findings are the changes needed to provide help to students and recent graduates in terms of employment. As mentioned, several suggestions were provided by participants of the research study such as shifting the focus of study from theories to work experience for school courses, and to implement mandatory courses that help with resume building, and interviewing (Interview 313:5; Interview 251:4). I argue that this is important to consider because the suggestions from the participants are based off of their experiences and what they believe is needed to help other students and graduates succeed in terms of employment.

Some limitations of the research are, that the research cannot be generalizable or analytically generalizable back to the population because firstly, its sample was not a result of probabilistic sampling, and the research did not incorporate a theory (Fennig, 2020b; Hesse-Biber, 2017:60-61 PDF). I believe that further research on the experiences of students and graduates on a larger scale in terms of both time, sample size, and the inclusion of theory, may help further the understanding of the issues associated with employment difficulty during times of the stay-at-home orders and allow for systemic changes to occur to make positive amendments to this issue.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there was a significant impact on students and recent graduates in terms of employment and this was shown by the research done on the sample (n=5) on several students and recent graduates and their experiences with the stay-at-home orders and employment. There were some significant changes to the employment experiences

for students and recent graduates after the stay-at-home orders were placed such as the increased difficulty in obtaining, or finding employment (Interview 920:3), and the shift from face-to-face interviews to online interviewing (Interview 920:2). Overall, employment is an important life goal for many students and recent graduates, and the stay-at-home orders have made the processes for employment more difficult for students and graduates. However, the stay-at-home orders has also introduced new positive aspects such as online interviewing.

References

- Beland, L.P., Brodner, A., & Wright, T. (2020). The Short-Term Economic Consequences of COVID-19: Exposure to Disease, and Remote Work and Government Response. *Institute of Labor Economics*. 13159. 1-90. Retrieved from : <https://www.iza.org/publications/dp/13159/the-short-term-economic-consequences-of-covid-19-exposure-to-disease-remote-work-and-government-response>
- Blustein, D.L., Duffy, R., Ferreira, J.A., Cohen-Scali, V., Cinamon, R.G., & Allan, B.A. (2020) Unemployment in the time of COVID-19: A Research Agenda. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 119, 1–4. DOI : <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2020.103436>
- Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, And Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, December 2018.
- Cao, W., Fang, Z., Hou, G., Han, M., Xu, X., Dong, J., & Zheng, J. (2020). The psychological impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on college students in China. *Psychiatry Research*, 287(112934), 1-4. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2020.112934>
- Chenail, R.J. (1997) Keeping Things Plumb in Qualitative Research. *The Qualitative Report [On-line serial]*, 3(3), 1-8. Retrieved from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol3/iss3/6>
- Easterlin, R.A. (1973). Does Money Buy Happiness? *The Public Interest*, 30, 3-10. Retrieved from <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/docview/1298112841?pq-origsite=gscholar&fromopenview=true&imgSeq=1>
- Fennig, T.H. (2020a). Lecture. Criminology 321: Research Methods in Criminology, June 01, 2020. Burnaby, BC: Simon Fraser University.
- Fennig, T.H. (2020b). Lecture. Criminology 321: Research Methods in Criminology, June 08, 2020. Burnaby, BC: Simon Fraser University.
- Fennig, T.H. (2020c). Lecture. Criminology 321: Research Methods in Criminology, June 22, 2020. Burnaby, BC: Simon Fraser University.
- Golafshani, N. (2003). Understanding Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research. *The Qualitative Report [On-Line serial]*, 8(4), 597-607. Retrieved from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol8/iss4/6>
- Hesse-Biber, S.N. (2017). *The Practice of Qualitative Research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. PDF VitalSource.

Kramer, A., & Kramer K.Z. (2020). The potential impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on occupational status, work from home, and occupational mobility. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 119(103442), 1-3. DOI : <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2020.103442>

Labuschagne, A. (2003). Qualitative Research – Airy Fairy or Fundamental? *The Qualitative Report*, 8(1), 100-103. Retrieved from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol8/iss1/7>

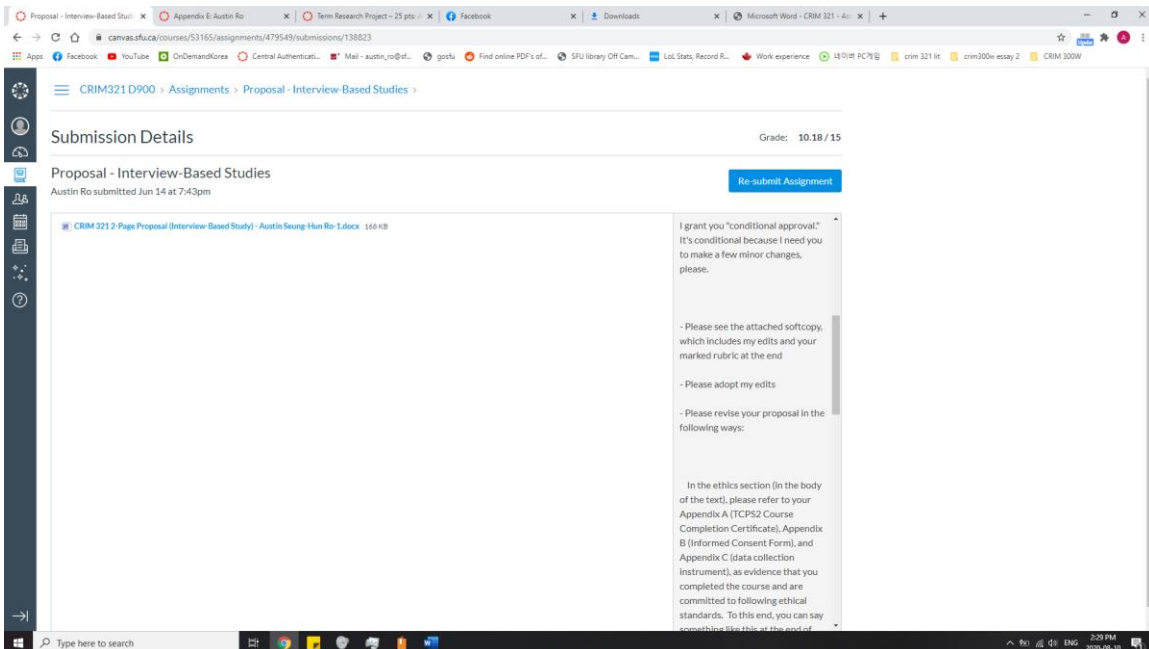
Larue, B. (2020). Labor Issue and COVID-19. *Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 68(2). DOI: 10.1111/cjag.12233

Oreopoulos, P., Wachter, T.V., & Heisz, A. (2012). The Short- and Long-Term Career Effects of Graduating in a Recession. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 4(1), 1-29. DOI: 10.1257/app.4.1.1

Tull, M.T., Edmonds, K.A., Scamaldo, M.K., Richmond, R.J., Rose, J.P., & Gratz, K.L. (2020). Psychological Outcomes Associated with Stay-at-Home Orders and the Perceived Impact of COVID-19 on Daily Life. *Psychiatry Research*, 289, 1-6. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2020.113098>

Scurry, T. & Blenkinsopp, J. (2011). Under-employment among recent graduates: a review of the literature. *Personnel Review*, 40(5), 643-659. DOI: 10.1108/004834811111154487

Appendix A. Ethical Approval: TCPS2 Ethics Course Completion Certificate & Instructor's Written Approval Comments



Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

Stay at Home Orders and Student Employment

DATE: June 10th, 2020

This research is being conducted for an undergraduate research methods class (Criminology 321: “Qualitative Research Methods in Criminology”), under the permission of the Course Instructor and the Simon Fraser University (SFU) Research Ethics Board (REB). The chief concerns are for the health, safety, and psychological well-being of research participants.

Study Team

Principal Investigator: Austin Seung-Hun Ro

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Tamie Helana Fennig, Sessional Instructor, School of Criminology, SFU, thfennig@sfu.ca

Invitation and Study Purpose: Anyone interested in the participating and answering questions pertaining to the stay at home orders and employment opportunities for university students and recent graduates are welcome to join.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time, including during the interview, without any prejudice.

Study Procedure: This is an interview-based research study. The interview is expected to take about 60 minutes. You will be asked questions regarding job finding, job opportunity, work from home, and changes in interviewing due to stay at home orders over online call. There will be a use of a digital recording device to record the interview for future referencing for a transcript and research and will be destroyed after completion of the research.

Potential Risks of the Study: As per SFU Ethics Policy R20.01(s. 2.3), the risks associated with participating in this study are expected to be no greater than those you encounter in your everyday life. I will be avoiding questions that may cause distress and negative feelings for participants and allow participants to refuse to answer questions.

Potential Benefits of the Study: The benefits of the study allow an advancement in understanding how the stay at home orders have affected university students and recent graduates in terms of employment. It will help us understand if there is work needed to allow for more employment opportunities for recent graduates and students.

Anonymity/Confidentiality: Throughout the study, your identity will remain confidential. I will not be recording your name on the field notes, and I will use alphanumerical coding to refer to your interview data in my final research report. I promise you unlimited confidentiality. Only Dr. Tamie Fennig (Course Instructor), Ms. Ashley Peckford (Course Teaching Assistant (TA)), and Ms. Michaela McGuire (Course Teaching Assistant (TA)) will have access to the data. These records will be stored in a safe/secure file cabinet at all times. Records of raw data (i.e., digital voice recordings and field notes) will be

destroyed once I have obtained a final grade in Criminology 321 (approximately August 31, 2020).

Withdrawal: If you wish to end your participation in the study at any time, you may do so without providing a reason, and without any negative consequence.

Study Results

The data collected from this study will be used to prepare the final research paper due in Criminology 321. The final report will be read by Dr. Tamie Fennig (Instructor), Ms. Michaela McGuire (TA) and/or Ms. Ashley Peckford (TA).

Contact for Information about the Study

E-Mail: aro@sfu.ca

Phone Number: 778 869 3537

Contact for Complaints

If you have any concerns about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, you may contact:

Dr. Tamie Helana Fennig
Sessional Instructor
School of Criminology
Simon Fraser University
8888 University Drive
Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6
thfennig@sfu.ca

Participant Consent and Signature Page

Taking part in this study is entirely up to you. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to take part, you may choose to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without any negative impact on your employment opportunity or educational studies.

- Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records, and that you consent to participate in this study.*
- You do not waive any of your legal rights by participating in this study.*

Signature of Participant
(yyyy/mm/dd)

Date

Printed Name of Participant

____ Signature of Researcher
(yyyy/mm/dd)

Date

Appendix C: Data Collection Instrument

Interview Schedule

1. Hello, I would like to thank you for participating in my study, before we start I would like to remind you that you don't have to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable, and if you do feel uncomfortable at any time during the interview please let me know. Also, if you are not sure on what I am asking feel free to ask me to clarify. If you are ready than we can start.
2. What is/was your field of study?
3. Why did you go into your field of study?
4. What does employment mean for you?
5. Are you currently looking for employment?
6. When have you started looking for employment?
7. Can you describe the process associated with obtaining employment for your previous or current job?
8. How do you feel about the stay-at-home orders that are in place right now?
9. If you were to look for employment right now, how do you think that the stay-at-home orders will affect you?
10. Compare the experience you have had pre- and post-stay-at-home orders, which would you prefer in terms of finding or obtaining employment?
11. How do you feel about online interviewing?
12. How do you feel about the availability of employment for students and recent graduates?
13. Do you think that there could be improvements to help students and recent graduates with employment?
14. How has employment changed for post-secondary students and recent graduates of different fields of study due to the stay-at-home orders?
15. Would you like to add anything else that's related to the study?
16. Thanks so much for your time, it is greatly appreciated.

Deductive Themes

- Difficulty gaining employment (Oreopoulos et al., 2012:26).
- Lack of experience. (Oreopoulos et al., 2012:1).

- A lot of unemployment (Larue, 2020:231).
- Choice of degree (Scurry & Blenkinsopp, 2011:654).
- More anxious (Tull, 2020:5).

Inductive Themes

- More difficult employment process.
- Online interviewing.
- Mixed feelings.
- Improvements needed.
- Meaning of employment.
- Lack of availability in terms of employment.

Appendix D: Conceptual/Thematic Framework/Index

- 1. Field of study**
 - a. Different experiences with different majors.
- 2. Employment**
 - a. Interest in Finding Employment
 - b. Difficulty Finding Employment
 - c. Online Interviewing
- 3. Emotions**
- 4. Possible Amendments**

Appendix E: Electronic Supplemental File (First Pages of Journal Articles Cited, Raw Data & Evidence of Analysis).

Please see the supplemental files uploaded to Canvas.