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The Economics of Education in Lebanon: Implications for a Brighter Future for Lebanese Students

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Abstract

Choosing to enrol in a university and earn a degree is a decision that all high school graduates have to face. The options and opportunities available in the work field are too diverse and each student has to make a decision, whether to enrol in a university or not. The decision is based on a cost-benefit method, which transforms the pursuance of higher education into an economic matter. Therefore, after finishing high school, a student will utilize a cost-benefit procedure to arrive at the right decision. This leads to the serious question; do the benefits of university education outweigh the costs for Lebanese students? To answer this question a survey comprised of 1000 questionnaires along with ten hypotheses to be tested and analysed was adopted. Responses were divided into two groups. Some believed that, university education is a necessity and considered it as important as school itself for the growth, maturity, and the bright future of each person. Others, however, thought that it is a disadvantage not to enrol in a university and pursue higher education. Based on the results of this paper, a high percentage of Lebanese believe that the university offers an added value, and it is important for employment in the country. However, 53% believe that a non-graduate can perform the same job as a graduate, and finally, 60% believe that skills are more important than a degree when recruiting a new employee. Therefore, it is quite clear that university education is a necessary condition but not a sufficient one to guarantee a successful career. Hence, university education is as important as job experience and skills that add to the person's assets.

Keywords

University education, Lebanese students, cost-benefit analysis, employment, skills and abilities, successful career

1. Introduction

Choosing to enrol in a university and earn a degree is a decision that all high school graduates have to face. The options and opportunities available in the work field are too diverse and each student has to make a decision, whether to enrol in a university or not. Students, parents and peers have to assess the perceived benefits of enrolling in a university and the added value of earning a degree, as well as the perceived cost of education, versus not enrolling in a university at all.

Cost-benefit analysis is a tool used in decision making. It helps to assess the goals and the most efficient and effective way to reach these goals. Hence, when conducting a cost-benefit analysis, both costs and benefits are taken into consideration, making it an economic matter. Moreover, for the education system, cost-benefit analysis is used to decide which programs are the most efficient to reach certain goals. Hence, after finishing high school, a student will perform a cost-benefit analysis to help him/her in taking a decision. This yields the big question; do the benefits of university education outweigh the costs?

2. Objective the Study

The sluggish Lebanese economy forced many parents to question the benefits of pursuing a university degree to better the employment prospects of their children. Hence, this research aims at finding out how the Lebanese parents and students view university education and its relation to employment opportunities available in the country.

3. Literature Review

Universities are growing so fast due to the increase in the number of students interested in applying and pursuing higher education. In recent years, universities have changed to cope with this growth, considering that men are looking for higher degrees and the number of women enrolling in universities is increasing. It is obvious that university degrees are essential nowadays for future economic achievements, with more men and women realizing the need to enrol in a university, learn, and get degrees to be eligible for landing decent jobs. The high competition between universities reflects this change, universities work hard to be more prestigious or to have programs unavailable elsewhere that address the job market and attract more students (Schoenherr, 2009).

Many criteria are taken into consideration when choosing a university such as its rank in the country, safety, scholarship and financial aid, location, faculty and staff, number of students enrolled, programs offered, tuition cost and its effect on future employment (Choosing the Right University, 2010).

One of the many models used by students in order to make a decision to choose a university is called the econometric model, developed by Kotler and Fox in 1985. It reflects the choice of enrolling in a university where the benefits are perceived to outweigh that of others (Schoenherr, 2009).

Mcfadden (2015) listed five factors for the student's preference of a specific university over the others. He stated that 72% of American students pick universities located in the state where they live, making

location one of the major factors looked for while searching for a university. Moreover, he added that 48% of students' choices are affected by the cost of university education, and by Parents and peers who are considered the other important factors that affect the decision of choosing a university to enrol in (60% of students make this decision with their parents and peers). The last two important factors that affect the choice of a university by students according to McFadden are the marketing success and the good reputation of the university considered.

3.1 Cost of Education

Schoenherr (2009) studied the criteria that affect the students' choice of a university. She looked at multiple factors including the socioeconomic status of the students, the financial position, and the influence of others, i.e., parents, peers, and friends. She indicated that even though the university's reputation played a big role in the decision making process of choice, however, she found that the financial aid factor was just as important as all the other factors combined.

In Lebanon like the rest of the world, the cost of university education varies wildly from university to another and from a region to another, and it also varies depending on the program in which the student is enrolled in. Therefore, the financial aid factor becomes a must for some brilliant students, who like to pursue higher education but lack the necessary funds for enrolment (Hamdar, 2016).

3.2 Benefits of University Education

Ciriaci (2010) studied the effect of university reputation on employment in Italy and found that the better the rank, the more likely students to find jobs. In addition to the university's reputation, employment depends on three main factors: the personality of the student applying for a job, the area in which he is applying to join, and the field of study itself.

Psacharopoulos (2016) stated that since 1970, unemployment rates have been a serious issue, affecting urban areas and females in general, especially in the young age groups compared to other age groups. However, while studying the relationship between education and unemployment, results revealed a negative correlation. Moreover, Psacharopoulos links unemployment to other factors such as the number of youngsters looking for jobs, the technics used by students to apply for jobs, and the duration on the job (youngsters tend to quit jobs more often). One of the reasons for the negative correlation between education and unemployment is the fact that graduates tend to take job searching lightly, and they step back when they fail to find a job, while school dropouts search harder. These factors should be taken into consideration when assessing the benefits of education on future employment.

3.3 Costs-Benefit Analysis

In order to calculate the cost and benefits of education, Psacharopoulos quantifies the net benefits and discount them to the present, and then he uses the net present value to weigh the cost and benefits of university education. Moreover, he considers the benefits to be the difference in the salary scale between graduates and non-graduates, while the costs are based on the tuition fees and the opportunity cost of the work forgone (Psacharopoulos, 2014).

Wood Hall (2004) indicates that the difference in earning is not enough to calculate the cost-benefit of

education. She argues that for workers, abilities, skills, and many other factors affect the wage they receive, including the productivity level and the unemployment rate. However, university degrees have the major effect on earnings. She also states that university degrees simply help employers filter the candidates for a job, but this means that the actual experiences and the lessons learned at a university do not matter, and what does matter is just carrying a degree at the end.

Jamil (2014) assures that attending university repays itself years after graduating. Moreover, Jamil does not believe that students should look for prestigious universities or universities that they cannot afford just for the sake of getting a degree. In fact, he believes that enrolling in all courses, and gaining knowledge and technical skills is more important than the rank or the image of the university concerned.

The additional benefits of having a university degree is the fact that the unemployment rate is always lower, and degree holders are not affected by recession as much as those with no university degrees (Weiner, 2014).

In the US, students feel that the value of their education is not worth the cost they pay at the university, especially, if they need to pay for it via loans. However, statistics show that the number of high school graduates attending university has increased from one out of two students to two out of three. Moreover, the benefits of university education are not only valued by the cost of education, university graduates explain that university education helped them grow, and become more mature, and that should not only be expressed financially (Weiner, 2014).

Higher education and health have a positive relationship given that more educated people take better care of themselves, and they are more interested in taking precautions to prevent a deteriorating health (Levin, Belfield, Muennig, & Rouse, 2007).

In the 1970's university education had a 15% return on investment (considering the cost of education is an investment), Since that date, university tuitions have increased and wages have decreased, but the return on investment remains high, because even though wages of workers do not hold degrees have decreased, however, wages of degree holders have increased (Abel & Deitz, 2014).

3.4 Education in Lebanon

The researchers of this paper consider 34 universities in Lebanon as the basis of the questionnaire as follows:

American University of Beirut

Lebanese American University

Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth

Université Libanaise

Beirut Arab University

American University of Science and Technology

Notre Dame University

Université Saint-Esprit de Kaslik

Middle East University

University of Balamand

Haigazian University

Université Antonine

École Supérieure des Affaires

Lebanese international university

Global University

Al Imam Al-Ouzai University

Jinan University of Lebanon

Al-Manar University of Tripoli

Université la Sagesse

Arts- Sciences and Technology University in Lebanon

Modern University for Business and Science

Islamic University of Lebanon

American University of Culture and Education

Rafik Hariri University

Matn University

American University of Technology

Université Libano-Canadienne

Université Libano-Française de Technologie et de Sciences Appliquées

Lebanese German University

Beirut Islamic University

Université du Tripoli

Université Al-Kafaat

Makassed University of Beirut

Université Sainte Famille

Based on this list, 34 universities of Lebanon were considered in this study. The cost of education ranges from almost $0/credit hour at the Lebanese university (a public university), to an average of $435/credit hour at the private universities (Balamand, 2017).

Although the benefits of a university education in Lebanon are similar to those abroad, and the cost of education is known, however, there is no clear study conducted on the effects of university education on the future pay scale of jobs. Hence, this research paper aims at quantifying the effect of education on university graduates in order to sort out the benefits of university education compared to the costs incurred.

4. Methodology

4.1 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is an exploratory research, generally conducted in order to understand the motive behind certain problems, behaviour, and opinions. This type of research doesn't use algebras and graphs in the analysis; instead it is based on open ended questions and interviews. For this paper, no interviews were conducted. However, 1000 questionnaires were distributed and filled out by respondents to answer the basic question of this research paper "*Do you believe that the benefits of university education outweigh the costs*?" responses were divided into two segments. Some believed that in general, university is a necessity and consider it as important as school itself for the growth, maturity and the professional future of each person. Others, however, thought that it is a disadvantage not to enrol in a university, whether it is because of financial issues or simply no interest exists to pursue higher education.

4.2 Quantitative Research

Researchers look for relationships between variables in the form of statistical models that allow the researchers to generalize the results on a population. Results are either answers to hypotheses or prediction of future behaviour and events in a more accurate way. In this research paper a questionnaire was distributed as mentioned earlier and the outcomes were generated by using SPSS 16.0 for Windows.

1000 questionnaires were distributed based on the following criteria:

- Individuals from all the geographical locations of Lebanon can enrol in universities and work at the same time. However, the data show that in many small regions such as in Beqaa (east of Lebanon), and in the north and south of Lebanon, people choose to skip higher education and work instead.
- Respondents should be in a specific age bracket to be university graduates; which is why the questionnaire targeted individuals over the age of 21.
- The target population should equally represent the diverse income levels of the job market in Lebanon.

4.3 Data Collection

Data were collected using a questionnaire that was divided into four parts as follows:

-The first part covered the knowledge assessment, awareness, university education benefits, costs and added value. It consisted of seven questions using dichotomous questions of yes and no and multiple choice questions.

-The second part is the attitude and behaviour assessment. This part aimed at identifying the respondent's behaviour and attitude towards university education and whether it had helped in finding a good career. It consisted of five-point Likert scales that allowed the respondents to rate the level of agreement or disagreement as per the following: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.

-The third part assessed the implementation, it directly targeted people's attitude towards university

education and whether people were interested in higher education. It consisted of four dichotomous questions.

-The fourth and final part tackled the demographics. It consisted of nine questions that determined respondents' socio-economics status.

An open ended question is inserted at the end of the questionnaire to better understand the respondent's opinions on the topic of the survey.

4.4 Hypotheses of the Research

Hypothesis 1: there is a relationship between the highest degree earned and employment.

Hypothesis 2: there is a relationship between the highest degree earned and earnings after employment.

Hypothesis 3: there is a relationship between the highest degree earned and the degree helps to get a better job.

Hypothesis 4: there is a relationship between the highest degree earned and promotion.

Hypothesis 5: there is a relationship between the degree's effect on higher salary and better job.

Hypothesis 6: there is a relationship between the degree's effect on higher salary and getting a promotion.

Hypothesis 7: there is a relationship between the degree's effect on getting a higher salary and earning more respect.

Hypothesis 8: there is a relationship between the degree's effect on getting a better job and a promotion.

Hypothesis 9: there is a relationship between the degree's effect on getting a better job and earning more money.

Hypothesis 10: there is a relationship between the degree's effects on getting a better job and earning more respect.

5. Presentation of Data and Interpretation

5.1 Descriptive Analysis: The Responses of the Target Group of This Paper are Presented as Follows

Table 1. Statistics of the Targeted Group

		Awareness of the Cost of College Education	College Degrees are Important for Future Employment?	Enrolling in a University has an Added Value	Employees with no University Degree are Considered Capable to Perform the Same Jobs as Degree Holders	Abilities and skills are More Important Criteria when hiring than Degrees Held?
N	Valid	1000	1000	1000	1000	970
	Missing	0	0	0	0	30
Std. Deviation		.349	.359	.423	.502	.465

Table 1 shows the statistics of the following variables: awareness of the cost of college education, college degrees are important for future employment, enrolling in a university has an added value, employees with no university degree are considered capable to perform the same jobs as degree holders, and finally, abilities and skills are more important criteria when recruiting than degrees held.

As for the first variable, there were 1000 valid inputs, 0 missing inputs and a standard deviation of 0.349. Similarly all other variables can be read from Table 1.

Table 2. Awareness Regarding the Cost of College Education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	860	86.0	86.0	86.0
	No	140	14.0	14.0	100.0
	Total	1000	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 shows that 86% of the respondents are aware of the cost of university education in Lebanon, while 14% are not.

Table 3. College Degrees are Important for Future Employment

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	850	85.0	85.0	85.0
	No	150	15.0	15.0	100.0
	Total	1000	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 shows that 85% of the respondents believe that university degrees are important for future employment, while 15% do not believe that.

Table 4. Attending University Has an Added Value

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	770	77.0	77.0	77.0
	No	230	23.0	23.0	100.0
	Total	1000	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 shows that 77% of the respondents believe that attending university has an added value, while 23% do not believe that.

Table 5. Employees with no University Degrees Considered Capable to Perform Same Jobs as Degree Holders

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	530	53.0	53.0	53.0
	No	470	47.0	47.0	100.0
	Total	1000	100.0	100.0	

Table 5 shows that, 53% of the respondents state that employees with no university degrees are considered capable to perform the same jobs as degree holders, while 47% do not believe that.

Table 6. Abilities and Skills are More Important Criteria When Hiring than Degrees Held

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	670	67.0	69.1	69.1
	No	300	30.0	30.9	100.0
	Total	970	97.0	100.0	
Missing		30	3.0		
Total		1000	100.0		

Table 6 shows that 69.1% believe that abilities and skills are more important criteria when hiring than degrees held, while 30.9% do not believe that.

This section will introduce 10 different variables that are assumed to affect the choices that Lebanese students make when picking a university to pursue higher education.

Table 7 introduces the 10 variables as per the questionnaire of this paper as follows:

Table 7. Statistics on the 10 Variables Considered in the Choice of a University in Lebanon

		Rank in the country Affects my Choice of a University	Safety Affects my Choice of a Uni.	Scholarship Affects my Choice of a Uni.	Financial Aid Affects my Choice Of a Uni.	Location Affects my Choice of a Uni.	Faculty and Staff Affects my Choice Of a Uni.	Number of Students Affects my Choice of a Uni.	Program Offered Affects my Choice of a Uni.	Tuition Fees Affects my Choice of a Uni.	Effect on Future Employment Affects my Choice of a Uni.
N	Valid	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Std. Deviation		.479	.402	.456	.485	.498	.394	.314	.441	.502	.502

Table 8. Rank in the Country Affects My Choice of a University

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	650	65.0	65.0	65.0
	No	350	35.0	35.0	100.0
	Total	1000	100.0	100.0	

Table 8 shows that 65% of the respondents believe that the rank of a university in the country affects their choice, while 35% do not believe that.

Table 9. Safety Affects the Choice of a University

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	200	20.0	20.0	20.0
	No	800	80.0	80.0	100.0
	Total	1000	100.0	100.0	

Table 9 shows that 20% of the respondents believe that the safety on campus affects the choice of a university, while 80% do not believe that.

Table 10. Scholarship Affects the Choice of a University

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	290	29.0	29.0	29.0
	No	710	71.0	71.0	100.0
	Total	1000	100.0	100.0	

Table 10 shows that 29% of the respondents believe that the scholarship affects the choice of a university, while 71% do not believe that.

Table 11. Financial Aid Affects My Choice of a University

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	370	37.0	37.0	37.0
	No	630	63.0	63.0	100.0
	Total	1000	100.0	100.0	

Table 11 shows that 37% believe that financial aid affects the choice of a university, while 63% do not believe that.

Table 12. Location Affects My Choice of a University

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Yes	430	43.0	43.0	43.0
Valid	No	570	57.0	57.0	100.0
	Total	1000	100.0	100.0	

Table 12 shows that 43% of the respondents believe that the location of campus affects the choice of a university, while 57% do not believe that.

Table 13. Faculty and Staff Affects My Choice of a University

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Yes	810	81.0	81.0	81.0
Valid	No	190	19.0	19.0	100.0
	Total	1000	100.0	100.0	

Table 13 shows that 81% of the respondents believe that faculty and staff of a university affect the choice of a university, while 19% do not believe that.

Table 14. Number of Students Affects My Choice of a University

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Yes	110	11.0	11.0	11.0
Valid	No	890	89.0	89.0	100.0
	Total	1000	100.0	100.0	

Table 14 shows that 11% of the respondents believe that the number of students affects the choice of a university, while 89% do not believe that.

Table 15. Program Offered Affects My Choice of a University

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Yes	740	74.0	74.0	74.0
Valid	No	260	26.0	26.0	100.0
	Total	1000	100.0	100.0	

Table 15 shows that 74% of the respondents believe that the program offered affects the choice of a university, while 26% do not believe that.

Table 16. Tuition Fees Affect My Choice of a University

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	510	51.0	51.0	51.0
	No	490	49.0	49.0	100.0
	Total	1000	100.0	100.0	

Table 16 shows that 51% of the respondents believe that tuition fees affect the choice of a university, while 49% do not believe that.

Table 17. Effect on Future Employment Affects My Choice of a University

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	510	51.0	51.0	51.0
	No	490	49.0	49.0	100.0
	Total	1000	100.0	100.0	

Table 17 shows that 51% of the respondents believe that the university's effect on future employment affects the choice of a university, while 49% do not believe that.

6. Correlation Analysis

The following part will introduce the testing of the hypotheses utilized by this paper as follows:

Hypothesis 1: there is a relationship between highest degree earned and employment.

Table 18. Crosstabs

		Job Title of Respondent							Total
		Intern	Entry Level	Experienced	Team Leader	Manager	Senior Manager	Other	
Highest Degree Earned by Respondent	High School Diploma	10	10	50	10	30	0	0	110
	Bachelor degree	60	50	310	10	70	20	20	540
	Master's degree	20	50	210	0	30	10	0	320
	Doctorate Degree	20	0	0	0	10	0	0	30
Total		110	110	570	20	140	30	20	1000

Table 19. Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error[a]	Approx. T[b]	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	-.131	.103	-1.306	.195[c]
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	-.133	.103	-1.332	.186[c]
N of Valid Cases		1000			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.

Table 19 shows that there is a sort of an indirect relationship between the highest degree earned and employee job title, the Pearson's R is -0.131 which is low. In addition, it is statistically insignificant since app. Sig = 0.186 > α = 0.05.

Hence, hypothesis 1 is rejected and there is no relationship between the highest degree earned and the job title.

Hypothesis 2: there is relationship between highest degree earned and earnings after employment.

Table 20. Crosstabs

		Total Income Per Month of Respondent					Total
		Less Than a 1000	1000-2499	2500-4999	5000-10000	Above 10000	
Highest Degree Earned by Respondent	High School Diploma	30	80	0	0	0	110
	Bachelor degree	60	370	100	0	10	540
	Master's degree	20	200	60	30	0	310
	Doctorate Degree	0	20	0	10	0	30
Total		110	670	160	40	10	990

Table 21. Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error[a]	Approx. T[b]	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.265	.095	2.708	.008[c]
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	.250	.091	2.543	.013[c]
N of Valid Cases		990			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.

Table 21 shows that there is a direct relationship between the two variables highest degree earned and income after employment, but this relationship is not a strong one since Pearson's R is .265, however, it is statistically significant since approximate significance is $0.013 < \alpha = 0.05$.

Hence, hypothesis 2 is accepted and there is a relationship between degrees earned and income.

Hypothesis 3: there is a relationship between highest degree earned and the degree helps to get a better job.

Table 22. Crosstabs

		College Degree Helped me Get a Better Job					Total
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Highest Degree Earned by Respondent	High School Diploma	10	20	10	40	30	110
	Bachelor degree	50	220	100	130	40	540
	Master's degree	30	220	20	30	20	320
	Doctorate Degree	0	10	20	0	0	30
Total		90	470	150	200	90	1000

Table 23. Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error[a]	Approx. T[b]	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	-.274	.095	-2.819	.006[c]
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	-.271	.097	-2.784	.006[c]
N of Valid Cases		1000			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.

Table 23 shows that there is an indirect relationship between the two variables highest degree earned and that the degree helped respondents to get a better job, i.e., Person's R is -0.274, in addition, it is statistically significant since approximate significance is $0.006 < \alpha = 0.05$.

Hence, hypothesis 3 is accepted and there is a relationship between highest degree earned and the degree helps to get a better job, however, this relationship turned out to be a negative one.

Hypothesis 4: there is a relationship between highest degree earned and promotion.

Table 24. Crosstabs

		College Degree Helped me Get a Promotion					Total
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Highest Degree Earned by Respondent	High School Diploma	10	0	10	50	40	110
	Bachelor degree	0	110	140	170	120	540
	Master's degree	20	80	90	110	20	320
	Doctorate Degree	0	10	20	0	0	30
Total		30	200	260	330	180	1000

Table 25. Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error[a]	Approx. T[b]	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	-.287	.092	-2.970	.004[c]
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	-.293	.090	-3.035	.003[c]
N of Valid Cases		1000			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.

Table 25 shows that there is an indirect and weak relationship between the two variables highest degree earned and degree helped respondents get a promotion, since Person's R is -0.287, however, is statistically significant since approximate significance is $0.003 < \alpha = 0.05$.

Hence, hypothesis 4 is accepted and that there is a relationship between highest degree earned and the degree helps to get a promotion, however, this relationship turned out to be a negative one.

Hypothesis 5: there is a relationship between the effect of degree on higher salary and better job.

Table 26. Crosstabs

		College Degree Helped me Get a Better Job					Total
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
College Degree Helped me Get a Higher Salary	Strongly Agree	30	20	0	0	50	100
	Agree	0	320	10	50	0	380
	Neutral	10	70	90	30	0	200
	Disagree	50	60	40	100	0	250
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	10	20	40	70
Total		90	470	150	200	90	1000

Table 27. Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error[a]	Approx. T[b]	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.246	.130	2.513	.014[c]
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	.253	.124	2.589	.011[c]
N of Valid Cases		1000			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.

Table 27 shows that there is a direct relationship between degree's effect on higher salary and its effect on getting a better job, since Pearson's R is 0.246, moreover, it is statistically significant since approximate significance is $0.011 < \alpha = 0.05$.

Hence, hypothesis 5 is accepted and that there is a relationship between the degrees' effect on salary and on a better job.

Hypothesis 6: There is a relationship between degree's effect on higher salary and getting a promotion.

Table 28. Crosstabs

		College Degree Helped me Get a Promotion					Total
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
College Degree Helped me Get a Higher Salary	Strongly Agree	20	0	30	20	30	100
	Agree	10	170	70	90	40	380
	Neutral	0	10	110	60	20	200
	Disagree	0	20	30	160	40	250
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	20	0	50	70
Total		30	200	260	330	180	1000

Table 29. Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error[a]	Approx. T[b]	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.359	.097	3.814	.000[c]
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	.342	.101	3.598	.001[c]
N of Valid Cases		1000			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.

Table 29 shows that there is a direct relationship between degree's effect on higher salary and getting a promotion, since Pearson's R is 0.359, in addition, it is statistically significant since approximate significance is $0.001 < \alpha = 0.05$.

Hence, hypothesis 6 is accepted that there is a relationship between degree's effect on higher salary and getting a promotion.

Hypothesis 7: there is a relationship between degree's effect on getting a higher salary and earning more respect.

Table 30. Crosstabs

		College Degree Helped me Earn More Respect at Work					Total
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
College Degree Helped me Get a Higher Salary	Strongly Agree	0	20	20	60	0	100
	Agree	0	140	130	80	30	380
	Neutral	0	20	90	80	10	200
	Disagree	10	0	40	160	40	250
	Strongly Disagree	0	10	0	10	50	70
Total		10	190	280	390	130	1000

Table 31. Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error[a]	Approx. T[b]	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.386	.097	4.140	.000[c]
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	.390	.093	4.192	.000[c]
N of Valid Cases		1000			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.

Table 31 shows that there is a direct and relationship between degree's effect on higher salary and earning respect at work, since Pearson's R is 0.386, and hence, it is statistically significant since approximate significance is $0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$.

Hence, hypothesis 7 is accepted and that there is relationship between degrees' effect on higher salary and earning respect at work.

Hypothesis 8: there is a relationship between degree's effect on getting a better job and a promotion.

Table 32. Crosstabs

		College Degree Helped me Get a Promotion					Total
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
College Degree Helped me Get a Better Job	Strongly Agree	20	0	30	40	0	90
	Agree	0	160	110	130	70	470
	Neutral	0	10	80	50	10	150
	Disagree	10	30	10	110	40	200
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	30	0	60	90
Total		30	200	260	330	180	1000

Table 33. Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error[a]	Approx. T[b]	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.309	.096	3.217	.002[c]
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	.289	.096	2.990	.004[c]
N of Valid Cases		1000			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.

Table 33 shows that there is a direct relationship between degree's effect on getting a better job and a promotion, since Pearson's R is 0.309, and moreover, it is statistically significant since approximate significance is $0.004 < \alpha = 0.05$.

Hence, hypothesis 8 is accepted and there is a relationship between degree's effect on getting a better job and a promotion.

Hypothesis 9: there is a relationship between the degree's effect on getting a better job and earning more money.

Table 34. Crosstabs

		College Degree Helped me Earn More Respect at Work					Total
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
College Degree Helped me Get a Better Job and more money	Strongly Agree	04	20	10	50	10	90
	Agree	0	120	190	140	20	470
	Neutral	10	20	40	60	20	150
	Disagree	0	20	40	80	60	200

	Strongly Disagree	0	10	0	60	20	90
Total		10	190	280	390	130	1000

Table 35. Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error[a]	Approx. T[b]	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.286	.092	2.950	.004[c]
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	.282	.096	2.914	.004[c]
N of Valid Cases		1000			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.

Table 35 shows that there is a direct and relationship between degree's effect on getting a better job and a earning more money, since Pearson's R is 0.286, in addition, it is statistically significant since approximate significance is $0.004 < \alpha = 0.05$.

Hence, hypothesis 9 is accepted and there is a relationship between degree's effect on getting a better job and earning more money.

Hypothesis 10: there is a relationship between the degree's effects on getting a better job and earning more respect.

Table 36. Crosstabs

		College Degree Helped me Earn More Respect at Work					Total
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
College Degree Helped me Get a more respect	Strongly Agree	0	20	0	0	10	30
	Agree	0	120	50	30	0	200
	Neutral	10	50	130	50	20	260
	Disagree	0	0	100	190	40	330
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	120	60	180
Total		10	190	280	390	130	1000

Table 37. Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error[a]	Approx. T[b]	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.615	.079	7.711	.000[c]
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	.637	.071	8.178	.000[c]
N of Valid Cases		1000			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.

Tables 37 shows that there is a direct and strong relationship between degree's effect on getting a better job and earning more respect, since Pearson's R is 0.615, in addition, is statistically significant since approximate significance is $0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$.

Hence, hypothesis 10 is accepted and there is a relationship between the degree's effect on getting a better job and earning more respect.

7. Conclusion

Based on the results of this paper, a high percentage of Lebanese believe that universities offer an added value, and this is important for employment in the country. However, 53% also believe that a non-university graduate can perform the same job as university graduates, and 60% stated that abilities and skills are more important than a degree when recruiting a new employee. Based on these results, it is quite clear that university education is a necessary condition, but it is not a sufficient one to guarantee a successful career. Hence, university education and a degree are as important as job experience and activities that add to the person's assets.

Most respondents indicated that university education is important for employment, it guarantees higher earnings, and moreover, communication skills are developed through university education. However, skills and knowledge acquired did not top the list of benefits.

Rank, faculty and staff, and programs offered by a university are the major criteria that students look for when choosing a university to attend. However, scholarships, tuition fees, employees, number of students, and location are criteria that do not attract students that much. This means that most students would prefer to enrol in a university that does not just offer a degree, but the one that has added value and benefits to their future career.

Most respondents indicated that they chose to enrol in a university and they made their own education decisions. Furthermore, most respondents also agreed that the university helped them build their characters and that enrolling in courses is valuable. However, the respondents indicated that the effect of university education on their careers was not strong, and did not help them in getting higher salaries or promotion, but it did help them in getting better jobs. On the other hand, most of the respondents stated that university education was essential for their job performance, but that they did not learn the skills they use at work from university education. This affirms the previous conclusion that university education and skills should go hand in hand.

According to the respondents of this paper, university education benefits outweigh the cost, i.e., 66% of the respondents agreed on the outweighing of the benefit of education to that of cost. Moreover, 53% of the university graduates still strongly consider earning a higher degree is a prerequisite for the

betterment of the standard of living and the social welfare level.

Cross tabulation analysis proved that there is a relationship between earning higher degrees and employment, income and promotion, as well as earning respect and getting better jobs. However, the relationship was not that strong.

In conclusion, university education benefits do outweigh the costs. However, a mature character and professional skills are solid additions to guarantee good employment, higher income, and promotion.

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