

# Education-Job Match: Investigating Labor Market Alignment Challenges Encountered by College of Education & Arts Graduated Students at University of Tabuk

تحديات المواءمة مع سوق العمل السعودي التي تواجه خريجي  
و خريجات كلية التربية والآداب بجامعة تبوك (دراسة نوعية)

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## **Abstract:**

**Background:** This research investigates labor Market alignment challenges encountered by University of Tabuk (UT) of Education & Arts graduated students from 2017 to 2019. The researchers adopted a qualitative approach and used a developed questionnaire, interview, and document analysis to triangulate the data. The developed questionnaire using a five point Likert-scale were administered to all 522 respondents whilst interviews were conducted with 10 professors. In addition, document analysis was conducted on the Strategic Plan of UT College of Education, eight

*program specifications and random syllabus used for the 50 courses in eight programs.*

***Materials and Methods:*** *The researchers adopted a qualitative approach and used a developed questionnaire, interview, and document analysis to triangulate the data. The developed questionnaire using a 5 point Likert-scale were administered to all 522 respondents whilst interviews were conducted with 10 professors. In addition, document analysis was conducted on the Strategic Plan of UT College of Education, eight program specifications and random syllabus used for the 50 courses in eight programs.*

***Results:*** *Data analyses indicated five main challenges faced by UT graduated students namely: organizational challenge, labor market requirements challenges, educational challenges, social challenges, and self-domain challenges.*

***Conclusion:*** *Based on the findings, it was suggested that UT College of Education should emphasize on filling the gap between UT graduated students' studying experience in all the above-mentioned domains.*

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***Key Word:*** *Labor Market Alignment, Undergraduates Students, Graduate Students, College of Education, Tabuk, Saudi Arabia.*

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## **I. Introduction**

Labor market alignment (LMA) can be simply defined as the way in which tertiary education aligns with the demands found in the labor market. It must be noted that many fields of scholarly

and political literature do actually provide insight into understanding this labor market alignment. Ultimately, aspects such as economic-development, career pathways, work-based learning and educational pathways are all considered holistically under a broad umbrella concept of the higher education's LMA (Cleary & Van Noy, 2014, p.2). The crux of the argument is that since the beginning of LMA associated research, Saudi Arabia has made several attempts to meet the needs of the labor market and has worked to produce graduates ready to add value to their labor market.

Saudi is determined to change the way in which education is disseminated throughout the country, hence the country now seeks to change the expertise and experience of its teachers. They believe that the way the teachers of the past studied can no longer be an acceptable means of studying for those pursuing the teaching career path today. As such, there is a need to rework the way that Saudi instructs teachers to actually educate others. There is also a need for newly graduated teachers to be able to see the world differently (Pennington, 2017).

Along with these recent developments, Saudi has also gone a step further and adopted a policy of Saudization wherein which the country relies more on the work of local citizens rather than extending its workforce reach by employing foreign manpower. The last attempt made by the country, involves analyzing the labor market in Saudi in relation to the country's economic structure, labor market structure and the problems that arise due to the

country's labor market structure (Al-Asmari, 2008). However, research falls short when it comes to analyzing the extent to which the labor market and the tertiary educational practices actually align. Furthermore, research lags in the area of whether the Saudi educational system is preparing graduates to be competitive at an international level as well as at a domestic level (Al-Asmari, 2008).

The research with regards to the social, personal and educational challenges that are encountered by graduates, particularly from the College of Education, has not been conducted in depth and this research is aimed at gaining the necessary information with regards to the tribulations faced by college students in the educational and Arts field in their entirety. By approaching the students within the various educational faculties and departments along with students from the literature department, this study intended to comprehensively outline where the students feel the tertiary educational system is falling behind in achieving the labor market readiness that the courses and the tertiary institution itself aims to provide. This study additionally aimed to determine the differing students' needs with regards to students who are studying for the first time, those who are changing their career paths and those students who are studying to broaden their skills set in readiness for the labor market. A richer overview from the students themselves, particularly those in Saudi universities, is needed to establish the extent to which tertiary education actually aligns with labor market demands. Therefore,

students working towards graduation at the University of Tabuk were used as the designated study group. This was decided upon so that this study could possibly aid in establishing the university's overall contribution to the social and political vitality of its community in Saudi, as has been previously outlined by an American based tertiary education study conducted by both Cleary and Van Noy (2014, p.3).

Again, it must be noted that change can ultimately come about at both the macro and micro levels. In this manner, this study wishes to limit the research to a micro level view by analyzing certain departments (Educational Department and Art Department), within which there are various programs (psychology, education, curriculum, management and so on) and to analyze the different skills being imparted from the diverse courses within this department (Cleary & Van Noy, 2014). By grasping the views of students from the educational and arts field only, assumptions can be made about the roles and what the "alignment actors" within this specific field are actually doing to meet the job vacancy alignment and skills alignment required to secure jobs within this educational field (Cleary & Van Noy, 2014). This micro level view appropriately narrows the data to be collected, skewing the data in favor of the educational department and arts at a specific university level only. Consequently, it must be remembered that the data obtained from this study cannot be extended to the study of the institution at the macro level as a

whole, nor can the study be used to explain other institutional departments or other universities in Saudi.

The purpose of this study is thus ultimately to deduce what challenges for labor market alignment are encountered by the graduates of the College of Education within the organizational and political, educational, social, labor market and self domains. This purpose is achieved using data collected via a set questionnaire that is intended to be completed by 1500 graduates of the education and art fields so as to acquire accurate data about the issue at hand. The research questions are:

1. To what extent do the organizational challenges encountered by College of Education graduated students?
2. To what extent do the educational challenges encountered by College of Education graduated students?
3. To what extent do social challenges encountered by College of Education graduated students?
4. To what extent do labor market challenges encountered by College of Education graduated students?
5. To what extent can the status of work explain the variations in these challenges?

### ***Theoretical framework***

The work of Cleary and Van Noy (2014) was used as a departure point for this study. According to this research duo, LMA can be defined as any activities and associated outcomes with the goal of making sure that higher educational institutions

produce the correct number of graduates with the required skills to take on the labor force in its totality (Cleary & Van Noy, 2014). This definition of LMA was used when researching the selected educational graduates. Using the study conducted by these researchers, job vacancy alignment and skills alignment were considered vital consideration factors when undertaking this research. Job vacancy alignment studies would arise from the study conducted with graduates from the educational and art fields to assess whether the quantitative demands for educators aptly meet the demands of the educational field. The use of a questionnaire to obtain educational graduate responses about the challenges that they experience at a college level, allowed for predictions about whether or not the number of graduates successfully generated, would-be sufficient to meet the number of job openings available. For job vacancy alignment, skills such as the skill to keep up with the pace of the labor market, skills diversity required for the labor market and the benefits offered to these graduates from the labor market were addressed. This strategy can also be used to assess whether these education graduates believe that they meet the needs of the labor market, based on their respective education levels and how they feel their universities have prepared them on a personal, social and educational level. Secondly, skills alignment is important to determine whether these education graduates have acquired the appropriate skills required by employers and recruiters from this educational and arts field (Cleary & Van Noy, 2014).

When it comes to the students who are being examined, another point from this study stands out. Students approach the tertiary educational field with diverse needs, depending on when they are entering the labor market. This is a situation which clearly demonstrates that first time students have different needs from those students who are changing their careers or those who are working and learning. Due to this factor, it was vital to consider the needs of every participant in this particular study. Lastly, this study was conducted at a micro level as the research by these two scholars pointed out that the LMA can occur at various levels; being both the macro and micro levels (Cleary & Van Noy, 2014).

Another vital consideration for this specific study was whether or not participants felt that curricular and co-curricular areas of higher education supported labor market alignment (Cleary & Van Noy, 2014). For this point, curriculum development, instructional strategies, work based learning, student advisement and support services all needed to be considered (Cleary & Van Noy, 2014). As per the shortfalls of many previous studies, ideally students could be potential LMA actors who help the educational department with the creation of more appropriate programs for the LMA. Also, the educational department can leverage organizational and learning activities based on these students' needs as obtained from the data collection process (Cleary & Van Noy, 2014).



## **II. Literature Review**

“The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia places great importance on education, as it is the primary field, which prepares future generations who are the nature’s true fortune” (Alnahdi, 2014, p.1). Among the reasons presented for the need to adapt educational practices at college level, is the fact that tertiary education is often needed to secure a job. University fees are escalating and if universities are not providing the skills required, this could be detrimental to the individual and the economy and eventually affect the number of students who choose to study or the number of women who choose to work. Further, numerous employers take to the media and discover that skilled employees are not easy to find despite the vast number of graduates produced per year (Cleary & Van Noy, 2014). Again, when accessing labor market alignment, various role players involved in the labor alignment process must be considered and this includes students, employers, higher educational institutions and other external stakeholders who should all be considered and have their views taken into account for the labor market alignment discussion (Cleary & Van Noy, 2014). Plans proposed by Saudi and the Gulf should also be considered and used as a starting point.

### **1) College of Education at University of Tabuk**

The University of Tabuk is located in the Northwest of Saudi Arabia and was established in 2006. There are about 40,000 undergraduate and graduate students completing their degrees in

62 programs ( University of Tabuk, 2019). On the other hand, College of Education and Arts is established in 2006. There are eight departments, which are Department of Education and Psychology, Department of Arabic, Department of Language and Translation, Department of Islamic Studies, Department of Educational Leadership, Curriculum and Teaching, and Department of Special Education. Around 5000 undergraduates and graduate students completing their degrees in 10 programs ( University of Tabuk, 2019) which are

Undergraduate Programs:

- Bachelor of Languages and Translation
- Bachelor of Arabic Language
- Bachelor of Islamic Studies
- Bachelor of Special Education
- Graduate Programs
- Master of Science of Hadith
- Master of Arabic Language.
- Master of Educational Foundations.
- Master of Measurement and Evaluation.
- Master of Clinical Psychological Science.
- Master of Curriculum and Teaching Methods.
- Master of Educational Leadership and Planning.

## **2) The Dynamics of Change in College of Education at Saudi Higher Education**

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Change sounds tremendously intriguing but the change needs to be adopted at a tertiary level as well, affecting the way that students approaching graduation are taught. Yet, it is vital to find out the extent to which Saudi students feel settled in their colleges and universities. American based studies conducted have shown that tertiary students are far from feeling settled in universities and colleges (Barnett, Jenkins et. al, 2012). In fact, research points out that respective students tend to feel overwhelmed at colleges due to their lack of knowledge of college related procedures and realistic pathways to graduation. As startling as this evidence is, tertiary students in American States also took to complaining about the rigidity of study programs. Most courses these students argued, tended to be too prescriptive, offering them limited choices and preventing any room for error, thus making it literally impossible for these students to succeed. Additionally, community colleges were taken to task in the research accumulated as it was stated that due to weak advisory boards who barely met to discuss the futures of graduates, strong labor market linkages were seriously lacking (Barnett et al, 2012). From these points listed by American graduates, it ought to be accepted that further research needs to be undertaken using Saudi college and university graduates who having firsthand experience, can air out any grievances' and discuss where they think university programs are falling short or what organizational areas may require improvements. A further issue that needs to be addressed is that of English tutoring in Saudi. Studies illustrate that within universities

in Saudi, quality English is required and evidence proves that private institutions deliver better English education than public institutions (Evo Sys, 2015).

The reason this study was undertaken is because the bulk of information that this research initiative sought, is in alignment with the vision of growth that Saudi is promoting. Vision 2030 is a plan that will be reviewed every five-years and is the reason for much educational change aimed at fostering forward based critical thinkers from university goers (Pennington, 2017).

The need for this vision arose as in the past, the education system worked rather well in fostering a generation of graduates fully capable of meeting the local labor market needs. However, current research indicates that the new graduates arise from an educational system that is not fully capable of meeting the present and future labor needs of the market (Magdali & Taylor, 2015). As per the Saud Vision 2030, a factor that must be noted is the country's wish to lower unemployment rates from the current 11.6% to 7% (Ministry of Education, 2019). The country aims to improve the employment rates within its borders by developing its human capital to align with the needs of the labor market. This ambitious goal can be potentially accomplished through the fostering and building of a life-long learning journey, improving on equality issues when it comes to accessing education and thus, give Saudi citizens from the rural areas a fair chance to acquire an education, improve fundamental learning outcomes, better the ranking of educational institutions, make sure that educational

outcomes are aligned with market needs and ensure that the brightest of minds are developed in major priority fields.

### **3) *Saudi Labor Market Alignment***

Evo Sys (2015) published a study aimed to highlight "the need to align education with labor market needs to increase employability of youth in Saudi Arabia and bridge the skills" (p. 3). The major resound that the most students chose to attend university was merely their need for job placement (Evo Sys, 2015, p.10). University degrees need to be assessed to determine whether the program offers potential students and already enrolled students, the advice and support to help them thrive in the lucrative job environment. The questions about the extent of information available to students and the degree to which students feel supported, could only be answered by university students themselves, based on their personal experiences (Barnett et al., 2012).

From studies that had already been conducted, it was found that Saudi university courses such as medicine, management, commerce, IT and engineering produced the greatest number of graduates who were employed almost immediately into the job market (Mishrif & Alabduljabbar, 2018). Yet despite this evidence, students still preferred to study something in the field of humanities. There is such an uneven distribution of students among the various disciplines offered by universities. In order to bridge the gaps between tertiary education and the labor market,

researchers are being funded in order to undertake research that will enable Saudi to become a more knowledge country overall (Evo Sys, 2015). Judging from the youth unemployment rate in Saudi and the launch of the Nitaqat program that came about in 2011, Saudi still has a long way to go to bridge the gap between tertiary education and labor market alignment (Mishrif & Alabduljabbar, 2018).

As per the research undertaken by Barnett, Jenkins and others in America, a framework structure was developed as a result of utilizing earlier studies. This framework structure needs to be extended to other countries like Saudi to see if the tertiary educational sector is achieving what it actually sought out to achieve. Of the framework, the four dimensions that are regarded as critical to the successful graduation of students, encompass the alignment of study programs, the element of prescription, the quality of the information provided and the extent of the use of active programs employed to both advise and support the student component (Barnett et al., 2012, p. 3). Program alignment deals with the extent to which a program aligns with educational outcomes. Program prescription on the other hand, deals with the amount of flexibility that students have in relation to the program. Information quality refers to the form in which informational resources are availed to students. Lastly, the fourth dimension, namely active advising, discusses the extent to which a university or college helps students by providing information, support and various types of assistance to students (Barnett et al., 2012). All

these dimensions must be considered when thinking about whether an educational programs is actually meeting the needs of college and university students in Saudi.

When it comes to program alignment, most university study programs often promote the ideal that they are catering to the need to enable students to adapt to the world of work. With regards to the College of Education, it was analyzed whether Saudi educational faculties offered programs that would allow the students to adequately fit into the requirements of the world of teaching (Barnett et al., 2012). The universities in the Saudi programs also need to be seen in terms of whether or not they offer hands on experience for new teachers during the course.

The University College of Education programs additionally had to be assessed to determine whether they offered new graduates job seeking skills and job placement skills. These programs further needed to be viewed in terms of whether or not they included job placement skills for the respective jobs available in alignment with the curriculum. If job placement skills were not actually included in the curriculum, a vital observation would be to see to what extent university staff members and faculty members actually assisted graduates to find employment once they had succeeded in obtaining their degrees (Barnett et al., 2012).

Nadia Yusuf (2016) conducted a study at the King Abdul Aziz University with 350 professionals in the educational sector. From this particular study it was found that almost 45% of the population sampled felt the Saudi education system is rather

competitive and developed enough to address the complex needs of the population (Yusuf, 2016, p.193). There was only about 10% of the educational professionals who felt that the educational system in Saudi had been neglected from both a domestic and an international point of view. These findings inevitably led to the point that the education system could no longer meet the demands of the labor market. Participants also pointed out that drastic improvements to the educational system were needed in order for unemployment rates to decrease. This study also identified a lack of female participation in the country's labor force. The reason the study found that women were less involved in the labor force was solely because of the social structure and cultural practices prominent in the country (Yusuf, 2016).

### **III. Material And Methods**

The study adopted a qualitative approach to collect data of five types of challenges (organizational, educational, social labor market and self domains) faced by graduates of college of Education in University of Tabuk since 2017 till 2019. The very strength of qualitative study is its exploratory nature. In this study, the researchers used open-ended questionnaire, interview questions, and document analysis to collect data.

A developed questionnaire using a 5 point Likert-scale scale was administered to all 1945 graduated students since 2017, 2018, 2019 from eight departments which are Department of Education and Psychology, Department of Arabic, Department of Language



and Translation, Department of Islamic Studies, Department of Educational Leadership, Curriculum and Teaching and Department of Special Education.

In regard to interviews, researchers interviewed 10 professors working in College of Education for 5 years and above. Additionally, the researchers conducted document analysis on the Strategic Plan of College of Education, eight program specifications and syllabus used for the 50 courses in eight programs. Before the researcher embarked on the study, the researcher wrote to the relevant instructors to seek permission to conduct interviews. Two senior professors in College of Education validated the qualitative data collected.

#### **IV. Result and Discussion**

##### ***1) General Challenges Encountering Graduates of College of Education***

The data was collected using open-ended questions and interview. The data was triangulated to enhance the reliability of the data. Basically the answers provided by respondents indicated that there were five common challenges faced by College of Education graduated students at University of Tabuk namely: organizational domain, labor market domain, educational domain, social domain and self-domain.

##### ***2) Organizational Program and Political Domain***

To determine what extent do the organizational challenges encountered by male and female graduated students from the

College of Education affect labor market alignment, the total means of men and women groups for organizational challenges were calculated and t-Test was conducted.

Table 3: Organizational Challenges Items ranked by Means Score

<b>Rank by Mean</b>	<b>Organizational Challenges Items</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
1	Lacking in the financial support for professional and career development programs for addressing the issue of labour market Alignment for the Faculty of Education and Arts graduates.	4.52	.870
2	Excluding employers' opinions from for addressing the issue of labour market Alignment for the Faculty of Education and Arts graduates	4.41	.966
3	Discouraging the role of the Student Advisory Committee for address the issue of labour market Alignment for the Faculty of Education and Arts graduates.	4.25	1.021

As per the organizational and political domain, it can be accepted that the College of Education and Arts programs' strategies seem to be devoid of any initiatives in relation to labor market alignment, in the opinion of the sampled graduates as the majority of the students, 38% and 37%, strongly agreed and agreed with this statement whilst only a bare minimum of 3% of students disagreed and 5% of students strongly disagreed.

The items involving different organizational challenges were documented with their mean and standard deviations. The lack of financial support for career and professional development

programs to address the labor market issue is the critical organizational challenge with mean of 4.52, and a standard deviation of .87.

Another item involving the exclusion of employees' opinions from influencing the labor market issue having a mean of 4.41 and a standard deviation of .966 was moderate as the values were sparingly close to the mean of the dataset. At the same time, the item involving the discouragement of the role of the Student Advisory Committee had a higher standard deviation of 1.021 and a mean of 4.25, which means the values are spread out over a wider range. The spread out value is also similar to the organizational challenge involving the lack of reliable information that has a mean of 4.25, and a standard deviation of 1.117.

Based on interviews, two out of ten Professors interviewed voiced their concern that the pace of administrative plans and academic programs in the College of Education to achieve labor market alignment was slow. Also, three professors felt there was a weakness when it came to professional career development programs that address the issues of labor market alignment in both courses.

Hence, overdependence on the plans and policies guiding the growth of organizations are considered as great challenges (Aljaber, 2018). Especially to graduates of College of Education in University of Tabuk. especially for the new graduates who are motivated to work in foreign organizations given the obstructions brought about by various governmental policies.

### 3) *Labor Market Requirements Domain*

To determine what extent do the labor market requirements encountered by male and female graduated students from the College of Education affect labor market alignment, the total means of men and women groups for labor market requirements were calculated.

Table 4: Labor Market Requirements Domain Items Ranked by Means Score

Rank by Mean	Labor Market Requirements Domain Items	Mean	SD
1	The lack of accurate data on the needs of the labour market helps graduates of the Faculty of Education and Arts to meet the requirements of the labour market.	4.31	1.02
2	Accelerated change in recruitment requirements to align with labour market requirements.	4.30	0.91
3	Lack of accurate labour market indicators for the targeted occupations of graduates of the Faculty of Education and Arts to meet the requirements of the labour market.	4.29	0.98

The domain for the labor market requirements are characterized by various challenges facing graduates at the College of Education. One of the challenges based on the findings is the lack of accurate data regarding the labor market needs, and it is shown by valid observations documented having a mean of 4.31 and a standard deviation of 1.02. Another challenge is the accelerated changes based on the recruitment requirements the Saudi graduates are expected to have, and it has shown a mean of 4.30 and a standard of 0.91. The lack of accurate indicators of the labor market is another challenge facing graduates, and it has a

mean of 4.29 and a standard deviation of 0.98. Lastly, it was determined that the weak intelligence level of the labor market is evident among the Saudi graduates.

In addition, seven professors interviewed stated "because there is no an effective agreement conducted between College of Education and employers, there has been low benefits offered by lobar market to graduated students of College of Education and Arts.

Given the above findings, Al-Asmari (2008) argues that the plans by Saudi Arabia is targeted at achieving various educational development efforts. This means the above challenges would be solved by ensuring various education initiatives under the National Transformation Program 2020 are implemented by the government, but with a lot of focus targeted at the Saudi graduates. The challenges are associated with the inadequate job opportunities, and that the labor market requires significant challenges (Mitchell & Alfuraih, 2018). The above results are the indication of the extent the Saudi graduates at the College of Education go through as they navigate the labor force market.

#### ***4) Educational Domain***

To determine what extent do the Educational challenges encountered by male and female graduated students from the College of Education affect labor market alignment, the total means of men and women groups for educational challenges were calculated.

Table 5: Educational Domain Items Ranked by Means Score

Rank by Mean	Educational Domain Items	Mean	SD
1	The weakness of the level of professional extension services in the implementation of training programs to enhance the personal characteristics of the graduates of the Faculty of Education and Arts, commensurate with the requirements of the labour market.	4.31	1.09
2	Poor coordination between the college and the labour institutions to train and qualify graduates to the requirements of the renewable labour market.	4.24	1.09
3	The imbalance between theoretical and practical aspects in designing the programs of the Faculty of Education and Arts to meet the requirements of the renewed labour market.	4.22	1.012

The educational domain is considered a challenge by graduate students at the College of Education. The results on the educational domain is presented in form of items comprising organizational challenges. For instance, the dataset with a mean of 4.31 and a standard deviation of 1.09 demonstrated a weakness in terms of implementing various training programs. The challenge based on the education domain is attributed to the poor coordination between the labor institutions and the college as they attempt to train graduates in line with the labor market requirements. The mean of 4.24 and a standard deviation of 1.09 affirmed this as a major challenge. Lastly, with a mean of 4.21 and a standard deviation of 1.01, it was determined that there was a weakness of the professional extension services level, which means training programs require implementation.

Based on the findings above, it is evident that labor force, as argued by Mitchell & Alfuraih (2018), is an extensively accepted

concept involving all the employed people or are self-employed. In Saudi Arabia, for instance, the findings above are an affirmation that the labor force was some an application before oil discovery, which means no classes were distinctively divided. At the same time, the challenges under educational domain are based on the understanding that the labor force in Saudi Arabia, for instance, do not consider fresh graduates as the Saudi planners' efforts to prepare the required manpower have to meet the various development prerogatives (Al-Asmari, 2008), both economic and social, and are not limited to only the formal education.

### 5) *Social Challenges Domain*

To determine what extent do the social challenges encountered by male and female graduated students from the College of Education affect labor market alignment, the total means of men and women groups for social challenges were calculated.

Table 6: Social Domain Items Ranked by Means Score

Rank by Mean	Social Domain Items	Mean	SD
1	Weak equal opportunities between graduates of the Faculty of Education and Arts to adapt them to the requirements of the labor market	4.20	1.14
2	Employers' preference for hiring non-Saudis for graduates of the Faculty of Education and Arts.	4.18	1.18
3	Preference of employers for graduates of the Faculty of Education and Arts based on specialization	4.17	1.08

The social challenges domain comprised various aspects for the graduates of the College of Education encountered. The findings were that the weak equal opportunities for these graduates to adapt in meeting the labor market requirements, especially among the valid observations registered a 4.20 mean, and a standard deviation of 1.14. At the same time, the preference of employers to hire non-Saudis had a mean of 4.18 and a standard deviation of 1.18. The employees' preference for graduates based on specialization posed a major challenge, and it had a mean of 4.17 and a standard deviation of 1.08. Lastly, part of the challenge facing all valid observations registering a 4.10 mean and a standard deviation of 1.18 involved a weakness of the media's role in educating the graduates.

When discussing the issue of the weak equal opportunities to enable graduates of college of Education and Arts to become adaptable to the labor market, the majority of the interviewees (8 professors) strongly agreed. Moreover, three professors stated that " courses does not provide any information about the requirements of the Saudi labor market.

Based on the above findings, Al-Asmari (2008) argues that the primary function of the school is fostering the intellectual growth of the student, especially in various subject matters worth studying. At the same time, the orientation of the cognitive processes emphasizing the curriculum functions is guiding graduates to learn and improve the intellectual abilities. Therefore, based on the data/findings above, it is evident that when graduates



are presented with weak equal opportunities, they tend to struggle to adapt with the requirements aligned to the labor market. The high standard deviation implies that the values of far from the mean, which means a higher number of graduates, especially the non-Saudis, fall short of being hired upon completion of their education.

### 6) *Self-Challenges Domain*

To determine what extent do the self-challenges encountered by male and female graduated students from the College of Education affect labor market alignment, the total means of men and women groups for organizational challenges were calculated.

Table 7: Self-Domain Items Ranked by Means Score

Rank by Mean	Self-Domain Items	Mean	SD
1	The early identification of the career tendencies of graduates of the Faculty of Education and Arts to meet the requirements of the labour market.	4.16	1.08
2	The low level of awareness of the graduates of the Faculty of Education and Arts of the importance of self-development during their university studies to keep pace with the requirements of the labour market.	4.07	1.29
3	The weakness of the professional culture of graduates of the Faculty of Education and Arts to meet the requirements of the labour market.	3.96	1.23

Self-domain challenges evident from the above findings is an indication that graduates, following the completion of their

curriculum, draws a lot of attention to two major social imperatives namely social reconstruction and social adaptation (Aljaber, 2018). Given the varying number of values in relation to the graduates in the College of Education, these challenges are attributed to the pressure to conform to existing values, including the need to ensure graduates consider their personal and social orders as they handle the ills the society has as they struggle to alleviate their personal weaknesses and challenges. Again, the findings demonstrate that graduates in Saudi must develop critical consciousness whereby they will be readied to handling all societal ills and pressures directed their way.

Drawing from the study conducted in the United Kingdom, the results indicated that it was of utmost importance to produce graduates who are not only interested in acquiring a job but graduates who are interested in acquiring the necessary skills to lead sustainable lives. These skills include self-development, such as self-directed learning, lifelong learning, personal development skills and vital skills that will assist these graduates to develop the society in which they operate (Magdali & Taylor, 2015).

### ***7) Personal Characteristics of Graduated Students***

To determine the extent with which the gender and status of work explain the variations in these challenges; t-test and an analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used.

## Gender

With respect to challenges encountering graduated students of college of education and arts, Table 8 shows that female scored lower on most challenges.

**Table 8: t-Tests Results Comparing Male and Female graduated Students on Challenges**

Scales	Gender		t	df	P	r <sup>2</sup>
	Male Graduated Students (N=159)	Female Graduated Students (N=363)				
	M (SD)	M (SD)				
Organizational	4.39 (0.50)	4.13 (0.80)	4.44	520	.000**	.025**
Educational	3.72 (1.12)	4.17 (0.77)	-2.46	520	.02	.015
Social	3.62 (1.18)	4.09 (0.76)	-4.52	520	.000**	.054**
Self	3.30 (1.26)	3.98 (0.93)	-6.00	520	.000**	.082**
Labor Market	3.73	4.34	-9.28	520	.000**	.142**

*Table 8: t-Tests Results Comparing Male and Female graduated Students on Challenges*

(0.89)

(0.57)

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\*\* Significant at level .01.

The findings above demonstrate the extent with which these challenges face the graduates at the College of Education are also based on gender. Based on results above, an independent sample t-test indicated that all five challenges were statistically significant between male and female graduated students. Male graduated students encountered organizational challenges more than female graduated student. On the other hand, female graduated students faced educational, social, self and labor market challenges than male graduated students.

Given the above t-test results for gender-based challenges facing the graduate students at the College of Education, it is clear that the male graduates are significantly under a lot of pressure ranging from the labor force to organizational issues. According to Aljaber (2018), the Saudi males have enormous responsibility for personal and economic development of their country, as there have been a need to increase the supply of qualified Saudis through the labor force participation. However, as shown above, numerous challenges are experienced by the Saudi males due to the limited participation of the females/women in various economic sectors (Al-Asmari, 2008). As a result, the male gender, especially the graduates, are left to battle these challenges alone.

## The Status of Work

To determine the extent with which the status of work explain the variations in these challenges; an analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used.

Table 9: Analysis Of Variance of Graduated tudents' The Status of Work

Challenges	F	Sig.
Organizational	2.361	.095
Educational Domain	14.124	.000**
Social Domain	11.800	.000**
Self-Domain	12.491	.000**
Labor Market Domain	10.323	.000**

\*\* Significant at level .01.

Based on Table 9, An one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) shows that there were statistically significant between graduated students' status of work and for types of Challenges (Labor market Domain, Educational Domain, Social Domain and Self-Domain).

Results showed that the graduates" status of work on Labor Market Domain,  $F(2,519) = 10.32$ ,  $p = .000$ ; Educational Domain,  $F(2,519) = 14.12$ ,  $p = .000$ ; Social Domain,  $F(2,519) = 11.80$ ,  $p = .000$ ; and Self-Domain,  $F(2,519) = 12.49$ ,  $p = .007$ .

Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé post hoc criterion for significance indicated that the not working graduates was significantly facing more educational ( $M = 4.01$ ,  $SD = .47$ ), labor

market ( $M = 4.15$ ,  $SD = .59$ ) and self-domain challenges ( $M = 3.76$ ,  $SD = .93$ ) more than working in the same or different specialist. Also, graduates who is working in different specialist encountered social challenges ( $M = 3.98$ ,  $SD = .86$ ) more than graduates who is working in the same specialist

Based on the above findings, the social domain challenge is demonstrated through the Saudi social spectrum where women or female gender (graduate) are ignored, and their economic and social roles restricted in spite of the increasing demand for labor force (Aljaber, 2018). According to Mitchell & Alfuraih (2018), the female labor force in the Saudi urban areas contributes approximately 1% of the country's economy, and they only work in social institutions. This explains the low significance probability, especially under the social and labor market domains.

## **V. Conclusion**

The purpose of this study is thus ultimately to deduce what challenges for labor market alignment are encountered by the graduates of the College of Education within the educational, program and political, social and self domains. This purpose is achieved using data collected via a set questionnaire that is intended to be completed by 1500 graduates of the education and art fields so as to acquire accurate data about the issue at hand.

The descriptive statistics provide a brief coefficients describing various dependent challenges. The data demonstrated the different challenges with varying data points, and is an indication that the

valid observations experience different challenges within a given setting. There was also an overdependence on the plans and policies guiding the growth of organizations, and that there is massive pressure, especially for the new Saudi graduates. Table 3, for instance, affirmed that the labor force was some an application before oil discovery, which means no classes were distinctively divided.

The statistics in table 4 emphasized that when graduates are presented with weak equal opportunities, they tend to struggle to adapt with the requirements aligned to the labor market. Accordingly, the self-domain challenges showed that they are an indication that graduates draws a lot of attention to two major social imperatives namely social reconstruction and social adaption. Therefore, these challenges are associated with the inadequate job opportunities, and that the labor market requires significant improvements.

To overcome these challenges facing the Saudi graduates, one of the recommendations is that College of Education in the University of Tabuk requires a long period before they will aptly be able to meet the desired outcomes of the Saudi Vision 2030 and other educational reforms. Another recommendation is to enroll in vocational training before or after graduating. This way, the graduates should be able to attain the necessary training to meet industrial industries. The graduates will also have an opportunity to upgrade, and acquire technical skills, take advantage of provide opportunities for potential employees, and meet industry

requirements for qualified manpower. The “Saudization” policy should be advanced further since besides the human capital development, the policy should provide an opportunity to include other development aspects that will nationalize various foreign firms in Saudi Arabia in an indirect way.

However, further research, needs to be conducted on other Saudi universities before an overall conclusion can be drawn. Furthermore, , future research should center on the implications of the labor market from a policy perspective to establish ways in which the Saudi economic growth and Saudi Vision 2030 would be sustained to generate more employment opportunities for new Saudi graduates.

A challenge not only for the University of Tabuk but also for all universities in Saudi, remains the amount of time required for the adoption of various practices in order to align the educational system to the labor market and meet the demand and supply issues that Saudi is currently facing. Despite this challenge, integrating various strategies within the educational system will work wonders in fostering the ideal conditions for change (Magdali & Taylor, 2015). A valuable suggestion would be to focus on the five domains identified in the study and to customize the Saudi’s tertiary education sector by drawing inspiration from universities that are thriving in Western countries.



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