

The Pandemic Job Market from the Perspective of Female Languages and Translation College Graduates in Saudi Arabia: Crisis or Opportunity

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Abstract. The COVID-19 outbreak early 2020 has had a considerable impact on the global labor market. Many businesses closed down, constrained their working hours, reduced their staff, and/or limited their new recruitments. Many employees have been obliged to work remotely and interact digitally. Due to the Pandemic, the unemployment rates have gone up to unprecedented rates in all countries. This study investigates the status of unemployment in Saudi Arabia in May 2021 among languages and translation graduates and whether Saudi universities have adapted their curricula to equip languages and translation graduating seniors with the necessary skills needed for the Pandemic and Post-pandemic job market. Most participating graduates, instructors and administrators in the sample reported lack of jobs for language and translation graduates and that universities have not adapted their curricula nor offered any training courses or seminars in job search techniques and digital and interpersonal skills necessary for the new Pandemic job environment. The study recommends that Saudi universities offer online workshops and seminars to train graduating seniors in preparing a CV, writing a letter of purpose and cover letter, filling a job application form, answering online vocational interest surveys, where to look for a job online, joining online business communities, getting ready for job interviews, raising students' awareness of recruitment and job advertisement websites/pages, and training students in effective communication, interpersonal, and digital skills needed for a remote job environment. Students are also advised to do volunteer work and take training courses while waiting to be recruited.

Keywords: Covid-19; coronavirus; pandemic job market; post-pandemic job market; labor market; languages and translation; graduate recruitment; graduate unemployment; Saudi Arabia.

1 Introduction

The COVID-19 outbreak early 2020 has had a considerable impact on the global labor market. Many businesses around the world closed down or constrained their working hours, reduced their staff, and/or limited their new recruitments. The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training reported that, due to COVID-19, a large part of the workforce has been obliged to work remotely due to home confinement and social distancing measures and reported that employees have been working and interacting digitally (Cedefop, 2020a).

The impact of the COVID-19 closure on the labor market has been very unequal across industries, occupations, and levels of educational attainment. Job losses between mid-March and mid-April 2020 were concentrated in professions that primarily employ people with lower levels of education, i.e., professions such as leisure and hospitality, retail trade, manufacturing,

construction, and personal services. Eight of 10 jobs that were lost between mid-March and mid-April 2020 occurred in professions characterized by below-average skill requirements and weekly wages. This means that individuals with lower levels of education have borne a disproportionate share of the costs of the closure (Fogg & Harrington, 2020). In the education field, the pandemic has impacted teacher supply, demand, shortages, and diversity. On the contrary, there has been high demand for jobs in the health and medical sciences, IT and business fields, and home delivery jobs during the pandemic.

In addition, the Covid-19 Pandemic resulted in economic problems such as high rates of unemployment, disruption in the labour market and change in the work environment especially in the first few months after the outbreak of the Pandemic. A review of the literature revealed numerous studies that investigated the status of unemployment during the first few months of the Pandemic. For example, Bhattarai (2020) indicated that the employment sector has been invariably affected by the current global crisis. Economists have projected that unemployment could rise as high as 20%, compared to 3.5% in February 2020. A survey conducted in mid-April 2020 by Strada Education Network found that 62% of Americans worried about losing their jobs and 34% believed they would need more education to find a comparable job if they lose their current one (Fogg & Harrington, 2020). Between March and May of 2020, over 20 million Americans lost their jobs and the unemployment rate rose up to 14.7%, which is the highest since the Great Depression in the 1930s. The US gross domestic product shrank at an annual rate of 32.9% (Vankudre & O'Kane (2020). In March and April of 2020, 36 million Americans filed for unemployment (Sommers, Blyth, Galbraith & Sosa, 2020).

In Jordan, a report published by the Department of Public Statistics showed a marked rise in Jordan's overall unemployment rate to 23% in the second quarter of 2020, which is nearly four points higher than that for the same period the year before, and the same as the first quarter of 2020 (Shtaiwi, 2020).

Similarly, the Saudi General Statistics Authority (2020) reported that the unemployment rate among Saudis rose to 15.4% in the second quarter of 2020 compared to 11.8% earlier. Strikingly, the unemployment rate among Saudi women rose to 31.4% in the second quarter of 2020, with an increase of 3.2% points over the first quarter. In addition, more than 284,000 non-Saudi workers left their jobs during the second quarter, including 60,000 workers who resigned.

As for unemployment among college graduates during the pandemic, the Office for Budget Responsibility predicted that unemployment could rise to 10% in 2020 with 6% lower earnings for graduates. More than 25% of graduate employers are reducing the number of graduates they are recruiting in 2020. This adds up to a challenging labour market, not only for this year's graduates, but also for those undergraduates looking to gain work experience during their studies and attempting to find a job after university and their understanding of the skills they will need to succeed in the workplace and to have a rewarding career (Hewitt, 2020).

In Canada, the NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) indicator for Canadians aged 15 to 29 during the first two months of the Pandemic increased to unprecedented levels. The increase in the NEET rates was due to a decrease in employment. Young people aged 25 to 29 years with a trades diploma showed the largest increase in NEET rates (Brunet, 2020).

In the UK, some academics predicted that the youth unemployment rate could go above 25%, with fewer opportunities available to graduates, less access to jobs, and consequently on social mobility. The pandemic has impacted the internship and work experience opportunities which are an important route into the professional labor market for young people. If a large number of these job opportunities are cut, many young people will miss a vital step into the professional world (Holt-White & Montacute, 2020).

The unemployment rate for university graduates in Jordan is 26.6%, which means that one in four university graduates is unemployed, but the unemployment rate for females holding a

B.A. degree is 78.2%, i.e., 8 out of 10 female B.A. holders are unemployed. Furthermore, the most serious indicator of unemployment in Jordan is the unprecedented rise in unemployment rates for the age groups between 15-20 years old, with an average unemployment rate of 57.3%, which means that 6 out of 10 people in this age group are unemployed. This is an indication of the poor generation of new jobs in the Jordanian economy, but also carries a serious risk in terms of youth unemployment being associated with social problems such as crime, poverty, drug abuse and others as a result of despair and frustration (Shtaiwy, 2020). Shtaiwy raised questions about the relationship between higher education and unemployment and questions about the expansion of higher education in Jordan and the continuation of some academic programs at Jordanian universities that provide students with skills other than academic education.

Likewise, the Saudi General Statistics Authority (2020) reported that 63.1% of the unemployed Saudis are in the age group 20-29 years old. 56.6% of unemployed Saudis have a bachelor's degree, and 24.6% of them are specialized in the humanities and social sciences. 71.1% of unemployed Saudi males and 94% of unemployed Saudi females have never worked before.

Higher Education institutions are one of the largest sources of employment in many countries around the world. They play a major role in preparing college students for the job market. The COVID-19 Pandemic has created many challenges for higher education institutions such as: how to keep students engaged in their professional development, business-related internships influencing students' engagement in professional development and anticipated employment upon graduation. The professional development engagement encompasses internship search support, involvement in student professional organizations, professional development coaching, and job search assistance (Blau, Snell & Goldberg, 2021).

Like other countries, the Covid-19 Pandemic has imposed many challenges on higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia in preparing graduating students for the labor market which is witnessing rapid changes in integration of technology and communication and fewer job opportunities than period before the Pandemic. The Pandemic has imposed more responsibilities on higher education institutions in providing professional and skilled workers for the Saudi job market during the Pandemic.

One would wonder what kinds of challenges the graduating class of 2020, 2021 and beyond are currently facing in entering the Pandemic and Post-pandemic labor markets in Saudi Arabia especially for graduates specialized in languages and translation. Therefore, the purpose of this study is threefold: (i) to explore the employment status of college graduates majoring in languages and translation in Saudi Arabia, in May 2021, i.e., 3 semesters after the outbreak of the Pandemic. What kinds of jobs are available for languages and translation graduates in the Pandemic and Post-pandemic labor market in Saudi Arabia and where do they work? Are there any jobs offered to languages and translation graduates by the Saudi higher education institutions during the pandemic? What kinds of skills are required for the Pandemic and Post-pandemic labor market? What kinds of efforts are graduates putting forth in searching for a job? What role is played by the community in the job hunt during the pandemic? (ii) to find out whether Saudi universities have made any adaptations in their curricula. Are Saudi higher education institutions offering any training courses to equip their students with the new skills needed for the Pandemic and Post-pandemic labor market? (iii) to propose a model for expanding the Saudi university role in preparing graduates for the Pandemic and Post-pandemic labor market and to delineate the skills needed for it.

This study will show stakeholders in the Public and Private sectors in Saudi Arabia the need to adapt to new conditions and challenges imposed by the Pandemic and the pressing need for services that address the mental, social, and emotional impacts of job search on job seekers in the field of languages and translation.

2 Methodology

2.1 Participants

The participants consisted of 115 Saudi female college graduates and 55 female instructors, and administrators from Languages, Translation, Linguistics and English Literature Departments and English Language Centers. They were selected from a population of 15,000 contacts and followers of the author on WhatsApp, Telegram, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. The participants represent 10 Saudi universities: King Saudi University, Princess Noura University, Prince Sultan University, King Abdul-Aziz University, Taif University, Umm Al-Qura University, Imam Abdul-Rahman Bun Faisal University, Tabuk University and Taibah University.

2.2 Data Collection

All female participants responded to a survey with open-ended questions that asked them about the availability of jobs for college graduates majoring in Languages, Translation, Linguistics and English Literature during the Pandemic (between March 2020 and May 2021), kinds of jobs available during the Pandemic, job requirements, whether their departments made any adjustments in their curricula, whether the graduates were trained and prepared for the Pandemic and Post-pandemic labor market, and what type of training they have received.

In addition, the author collected data and statistics related to the issues investigated in this study from Twitter job announcement pages, newspaper reports, and recruitment websites. She searched Twitter for employment and recruitment pages or pages that advertise jobs for languages and translation graduates such as the following:

- The National Job Portal TAQAT:
- https://eservices.taqaat.sa/Eservices_Individual/Home.aspx
- Taqat Recruiting ... Taqat Jobs <https://twitter.com/wadhaefsaudia>
- Tamheer for On-the-job training:
- https://eservices.taqaat.sa/Eservices_Individual/ProgramDetails.aspx?Id=4
- Your Job on Us: <https://twitter.com/wdeftksa/status/1396554786967891970>
- Rayan Recruitment help page: <https://twitter.com/Rayanhr9>
- Riyadh Jobs Now: <https://twitter.com/Riyadhjobs6>
- Women's Jobs: <https://twitter.com/womenjobstoday>
- Remote Jobs: https://twitter.com/WFH_KSA
- Saudi Jobs 24: https://www.saudijobs24.com/tags/تدریس_تدریب
- Hadaf (Human Resources Development Fund):
- <https://twitter.com/HRDFNews>

2.3 Data Analysis

Responses to the surveys were compiled and categorized according to the questions, and then quantified. Percentages of participants giving the same response were calculated. Responses are also reported qualitatively. Where necessary, quotations of some participants' responses are given.

As for the Twitter pages, the author skimmed through the tweets in the recruitment and job advertising Twitter pages, especially those that were published between March 2020 and May 2021 to find out whether they have any advertisements for job vacancies in the language and translation fields. The author analyzed the languages and translation job advertising tweets.

Findings of the tweet analysis are reported qualitatively and where necessary, some quotations are given.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 The Status of The Pandemic and Post-Pandemic Job Market as Reported by Instructors

95% of the instructors and administrators in the sample reported lack of job openings for college graduates majoring in languages and translation at their universities due to the pandemic. However, 5% reported a limited number of jobs at their departments. An instructor at King Abdul-Aziz University reported a limited number of jobs available for few graduates as English teachers in private schools and few more as T.A.'s and language instructors at the Language Center. During the pandemic, those new female recruits were all Saudi. Another administrator indicated that few graduates were recruited by the National Center for eLearning, but no job openings are currently available at Prince Sultan University, which is a private university.

No matter how many jobs are offered, the number of graduates is far beyond the number of jobs available.

3.2 The Status of The Pandemic and Post-Pandemic Job Market as Reported by Graduates

Most college graduates in the sample declared that there are no job openings for languages and translation graduates in both the public and private sectors. There are very limited translation jobs at hospitals. In general, translation graduates do not work as translators, but in fields such as marketing and human resources. Some reported:

Samia: The government sector depends on preference points and area of specialization such as business and technology, whereas the private sector requires experience. The preference points consist of points for each year after graduation and for high college GPA. Points are also given to professional skills such as digital skills.

Nada: Private schools require at least 2 years of teaching experience and I only have one semester of experience.

Hana: I posted several advertisements in several websites about my translation services, but I have not been receiving any responses from customers.

Muneera: There aren't any jobs in Buraida although I have a B.A. degree in English, finished a training course in computer and human resources and a 6-month experience as a translator. Although the pandemic job market scene looks unpromising for many, very few graduates managed to get a job.

Alia said: I have not found any jobs as a translator. However, being specialized in translation added to my preference points. In addition to translation, I am interested in human resources, and working on the Arabic language content on the Internet. I have been searching for a job so hard in these 2 areas. I was checking job advertisements on Twitter, Snapchat, and LinkedIn daily. I contacted some companies, marketed myself and request a job even if they are not advertising any job vacancies. Within a week, I was called for an interview and sometimes, I had a couple of interviews per day. Fortunately, I was offered a job in human resources, and I will start my new job in a month.

3.3 Job Announcements and Recruiting on Twitter and Other Websites

The author found a very limited number of job announcements in the language and translation fields on Twitter. Those few jobs are available as English language schoolteachers at a few private schools. Most schools kept the teachers that were already working for them especially that all classes are being delivered online and if there is shortage, the shortage is being covered by merging classes.

A recruiter on Twitter revealed that he receives over 100 job applications a day, and he rejects all of them because the applicants' CV's are not professionally prepared. Other recruiters for the private sector indicated that applicants are new college graduates with no experience at all and no remote-job digital skills.

3.4 The Pandemic and Post-pandemic University Curricula as Reported by Instructors

All of the instructors and administrators in the sample reported that no adaptations have been made in the languages, linguistics, literature and translation college curricula. The set of courses in the college program before the Pandemic, when classes were held face to face, are the same as those offered after the outbreak when classes shifted to distance learning. The content of the course is the same. The only difference is in the delivery mode. Some indicated that the set of courses and their course descriptions cannot be easily modified, changed or added to as those were approved by the Department, College and Academic councils at the University and any changes to be made should be approved by the aforementioned councils. Due to remote working, it is not easy, nor possible to make changes even if those changes are necessary.

Regarding the Teaching Practicum courses, which some department have for students who plan to become English teachers, before the Pandemic student-teachers went to the schools and practiced teaching in the classroom face-to-face. After the outbreak of the Pandemic, Teaching Practicum courses shifted to online microteaching. An instructor at King Abdul-Aziz University said:

Before the Pandemic, we have had a Teacher Mentoring Program, in which new instructors and graduates receive training in the principles of teaching, how to interact with students, how to use Blackboard in language teaching, and how to design tests and homework-assignments. The program is still open during the Pandemic, but the training period has been reduced to one month only.

Another instructor at the English Department, King Saud University wrote:

Before the Pandemic, senior students were required to take a Teaching Practicum course where they practice teaching face-to-face, but during the Pandemic the students attended their Teaching Practicum twice a week as it was before the Pandemic.

A department head at Prince Sultan University indicated:

Before the Pandemic, we had a Cooperative Training Program (Coop) for linguistics and translation students. During the Pandemic, this Coop is still required although training opportunities for the students are very limited. Working face-to-face or remotely (during the Pandemic) depends on where the student is doing her training.

A translation instructor at King Saud university added:

Graduating seniors have a choice to translate a book or go for field training. Some students used to go for training to King Abdullah Bureau for Translation and Arabization, Ministry of foreign Affairs, Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs, some marketing firms, some hospitals, the Deanship of Research, and others. But during the Pandemic, the students were asked to translate 14,000 words at home (i.e., remotely) instead of going to the office and working face to face.

A teaching practicum instructor commented:

There is teaching practicum at our department during the pandemic. Our student teachers practice distance teaching. They use the Ministry of Education's Madrasati Platform to practice teaching. They use the class teacher's login credentials to access the courses delivered on Madrasati and teach the children.

Furthermore, some instructors pointed out that before the Pandemic, some lectures and workshops on employment issues were offered as extracurricular activities. But during the Pandemic and distance learning, no lectures, workshops, seminars, or training courses have been offered to train students in job searching skills, and to prepare them for the Pandemic jobs market.

3.5 The Pandemic and Post-pandemic University Curricula as Reported by Graduates

Graduates in the sample confirmed what the instructors mentioned about the college courses. They asserted that they received no instruction or training in online job searching, resume preparation, translation job websites, digital skills, interpersonal skills, computer skills for business, remote communication, and others.

3.6 Lack of Skills and Experience Needed for the Job Market as reported by Graduates

The majority graduates in the sample indicated that they do not know what to include in a CV, what to include in a job portfolio, how to write a letter of purpose or a cover letter, and how to get ready for a job interview. The author noted that many graduates in the present study do not know how to search Google for jobs. When I tell someone "Why don't you work as a teacher online? Why don't you translate texts for people in other countries online?", she would immediately say "Can you give me some links to students or online translation jobs?". They do not know that in the age of technology, distance education and remote jobs, they do not need to be physically present in an office or classroom to work as a translator or language teacher and that they do not have to apply for a teaching or translation job in Saudi Arabia. They can apply for a job in any country since they will be working online and communicating with customers digitally.

3.7 Training Offered by the Private Sector

An examination of the tweets and posts in job advertising and recruitment pages and websites showed a limited number of training courses offered to language and translation graduates such as basic computer skill courses (ICDL) or few translation errors or text translation tips. Most announcements are about marketing and human resources.

4 Discussion

Findings of the present study about the status of employment of languages and translation graduates in the pandemic job market in May 2021 are consistent with findings of other studies about the status of unemployment during the Pandemic in other countries. They are also consistent with findings of two studies by Al-Jarf (2009) and Al-Jarf (1999) when the job market was normal, i.e., before that Pandemic. Al-Jarf (2009) surveyed a sample of 188 female translation graduates and found that only 10% work as translators or interpreters. The majority teach English and some work at hospitals, banks, firms, as journalist, secretaries, and computer operators, and at customer service. 5% are pursuing their graduate studies abroad. 35% do not know where translation jobs are available. 72% indicated that translation jobs are not advertised

on T.V., in newspapers and magazines. 62% applied to the Ministry of Civil Service. 19% used forms of unsolicited application such as walk-ins, call-ins, and write-ins. 7% posted questions about translation job availability in online discussion forums. 5% searched the Internet. In addition, findings showed that the majority did not know what to include in a CV, did not know what to include in a job portfolio, did not know how to write a letter of purpose, or a cover letter. The graduates surveyed in 2009 revealed that they received no instruction or training in online job searching, resume preparation, and translation job websites prior to their graduation from the university. Similar results were found by Al-Jarf (1999) in which 90% of female Saudi translators, who graduated between 1990 and 1996, were not working as translators. Although translation jobs were available at hospitals, translation bureaus, and embassies. Many female graduates found the jobs open for women unsuitable because of working conditions, stringent qualifications, staff policies, salaries, and benefits. Others disliked the nature of the work and cited insufficient information about employment opportunities, lack of motivation, and familial, social, and cultural factors as reasons for unemployment. The Pandemic seems to have aggravated the unemployment situation although the candidates have access to all kinds of technologies.

5 Recommendations and Conclusion

The COVID-19 Pandemic has spotlighted and accelerated the demand for new skills and competencies, especially digital skills, from workers at every level. It has created vast opportunities of learning and working digitally. A large number of workers have been obliged to work remotely, and to work and interact with colleagues and customers digitally. Therefore, it is important to invest in upskilling strategies that can help new jobseekers who are preparing for employment at a particular job (Bergson-Shilcock, 2020). Therefore, Saudi college graduates seeking employment need to acquire online work skills whether they are planning to work as translators or language teachers. They also need a more flexible work arrangement that might combine a remote working environment mixed with an office environment.

Since no special courses, workshops, seminars, or webinars have been officially offered by Saudi universities during the Pandemic to prepare language and translation graduates for the Pandemic and Post-pandemic job market, the present study recommends the following:

1. languages and translation departments at Saudi universities can organize a job orientation program for graduating seniors in which they train graduates in the following:
 - Searching Google using specific search terms to locate translation job directories, firm directories, human resources, contact information, and translation job websites.
 - Searching the internet to get information about job requirements, duties and responsibilities, benefits, working hours, type of translation required, submitting applications.
 - Where to look for a job online: in mailing lists, online translation and recruiting forums and services.
 - Preparing a job portfolio which contains a job application form, a CV, letter of purpose, cover letter, diplomas, a grade report, recommendation letters, proof of prior work experience, copy of the national ID card, and training certificates.
 - Preparing the CV: What to include, organizing, typing, and printing a CV. A CV should be neat, free from grammatical and spelling errors. MS WORD or Infopath can be used in preparing the CV.
 - Creating digital copies of all documents.
 - Answering online career planning tests or vocational interest survey such as: <http://www.jvis.com/>.

- Joining online business communities such as LinkedIn, Zoom Info, Facebook groups or creating a personal page on social media such as LinkedIn, ZoomInfo, Xing, Facebook, Twitter, and others and expanding the candidate's professional network.
 - Getting ready for the job interview.
 - Raising students' awareness of things to avoid in an interview such as gestures and verbal behavior that reflect lack of self-confidence or anxiety like moving the body, chewing gum, praising oneself, arguing, criticizing, attacking interviewers, speaking very fast, giving information about weaknesses unless asked for, joking, taking notes, negotiating salary or work conditions and benefits, staying until the end of the interview, coming late or leaving early with or without an excuse, and determination to get the job.
 - Raising students' awareness of things to do during the interview such as smiling and eye contact, sitting upright, bending a little forward, taking her time in answering the questions, showing enthusiasm, speaking loud enough, thinking carefully before answering, expressing ideas clearly, answering questions one by one, answering directly and honestly.
 - Raising students' awareness of common questions asked during an interview such as what contributions or improvements can you make, why should we employ you, preferred working hours, do you prefer working individually or in a team, expected salary, when will you be ready for the job, do you have any questions, what do you know about us, why do you want to work for us, career goals, where do you see yourself in 5 years, academic performance in college, benefits gained from the job, self-image and others.
 - Raising students' awareness of some recruitment and job advertisement websites such as:
 - <https://careers.un.org/>
 - <https://careers.icrc.org/>
 - <https://www.proz.com>
 - <http://www.gulfjobsites.com>
 - <http://my.monstergulf.com/>
 - <http://www.wazifas.com>
 - <https://www.jobs.com>
 - <https://www.btalah.com/>
 - <https://www.mihnati.com>
 - Training students in effective communication such as listening to online conversations, straight talking, writing digitally, how to communicate visually, non-verbal communication, stress management and emotion control.
 - Training students in digital communication skills which include: (i) Hard skills such as how to effectively navigate and use social media and digital platforms like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram); how to use image editing software, video conferencing, digital platforms, how to use collaborative project management tools such as Dropbox and Basecamp. (ii) Soft skills needed to communicate confidently, clearly, and successfully with various online contacts and stakeholders.
 - Training students in digital skills needed for business such as working with documents, project collaboration, digital etiquette, attention management, platform flexibility, search and research, security, and privacy (Falco, 2015).
2. The Covid-19 crisis unemployed college graduates can productively spend their time acquiring skills to prepare themselves to enter or re-enter the workforce when the economy enters a recovery phase (Sommers, Blyth, Galbraith & Sosa, 2020). They can engage in volunteer work to gain some experience and skills in a field of interest to them. It is advisable that students start joining some kind of job even as a volunteer during their summer holiday

since they are freshmen to build up some experience and skills. They can also take some relevant training courses which will add up to their preference points.

3. Universities should scaffold simulated work-integrated learning experiences into core undergraduate design curriculum to promote deep, authentic, transformational learning, fostering broader student employability. This will help develop the professional skills required by job market and better prepares students to navigate the dynamic real-world problems that societies face, particularly during the pandemic (Tezcan, Durakovic, Lloyd, & D'arcy, 2020).
4. Saudi higher education institutions should develop a comprehensive skill set for their graduates, including technical skills and interpersonal skills to help them with more dynamic career trajectories (OECD, 2020).
5. Combining work-integrated learning (WIL) focusing on student employability and career development to strengthen students' experiential learning, preparing them for meaningful careers and supporting them in navigating the challenges of the current labour market conditions created by COVID-19 (Tezcan, Durakovic, Lloyd, & D'arcy, 2020; Andrews & Ramji, 2020).
6. Reimagine and redesign training programs with an equity lens and a shift to remote delivery in training programs taking into account 5 issues: (i) Thinking critically about the use of technology; (ii) expanding options for re-employment; (iii) adopting flexible programming models; (iv) supporting program staff; and (v) embracing partnerships (Bennett, Lee, McDonnell & Ostrye, 2020).
7. A paradigm shift in the present way of intervention in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector through short- and long-term strategies (Bhattarai, 2020).
8. Recruiters should use new and effective approaches and practices in hiring and interviewing such as conducting remote web-based video interviews using a variety of innovative techniques to save time and expenses (Jewkes, Swinton, Cromwell, Schramm, & Brower, 2020).
9. Reimagine workforce development and education policy by developing a comprehensive agenda and implementing a policy framework to prepare every worker for the 21st century workplace. (Ash & Rahn, 2020).
10. Adapting career guidance policies, systems and services to cope with the growing negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on national labour markets and people's lives and livelihoods (Cedefop, 2020b).
11. Building a social partnership approach to help deliver the government's aim of levelling up skills and prosperity after the coronavirus crisis (Dromey, 2020).
12. Building communities of care to support the social and emotional needs of job seekers during the Pandemic and aggregating resources and services to address the unemployment needs, and the creation of safe, welcoming, inclusive spaces where people searching for work can experience connection and belonging. There is a pressing need for services that address the mental, social, and emotional impacts of job search on job seekers. "Building Communities of Care in Workforce Development Programs, dealing with a range of barriers that impede job search and overall well-being (Volpe & Holcomb, 2021).

Finally, this study recommends that future research studies survey samples of college graduates who managed to get a job during the pandemic and report their experiences in searching and applying for a job so that other unemployed graduates learn from their experiences and follow their example.

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