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**Panel T17P05 Sectorial Policy Topics, Session 1**

**Educational Policies, its Tensions, Agendas and Developments: What Can We  
Learn from the International Experience?**

**THE ROLE OF TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION IN YOUTH MOBILITY IN UZBEKISTAN:  
HOW PRESTIGE AND REPUTATION OF IBCs AFFECT LABOUR MARKET RETURN FOR  
RECENT GRADUATES?**

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The impact of global trends and globalisation of education planted expectations of different teaching and learning experience and a hunger for enhanced mobility and initiatives. Newly emerging trans-border higher education institutions across the globe offer a range of opportunities for host countries although they experience hindrances in the areas of management and academic affairs. The transnational education in countries in transition, namely, in post-Soviet space continues to challenge the educational system of host countries and governmental approaches to educational development. Studies analysed reputational ratings of graduate programs in major universities and few studies examined the reputation at the undergraduate level. The earlier research suggests that efforts as institutional size and selectivity are key dominances of reputation for educational entities. (Volkwein & Sweitzer 2006) Astin et al. indicate that institutions with large enrollment and high entering test averages for freshmen gain the greatest prestige. Recent studies have endorsed these findings and added new conclusions that reputational ratings associate with variables as "average high school class standing of entering freshmen, admissions acceptance rates, instructional budget per student, percentage of faculty possessing Ph.D.'s, faculty publication rates, average cost of tuition, room, and board, and retention/graduation rates." (Volkwein & Sweitzer 2006)

The level of unemployment among youth in Uzbekistan between the ages of 16 to 25 years old makes 12,7 %, that is twice higher than the average number of unemployed in the country. The young people make up nearly half of the all unemployed. The number is higher for women, in particular, reaching 60% of all jobless population. (Khodjaev 2011)

There is a lack of literature on the impact of reputational ranking and prestige of the IBCs on the employability rate of graduates in post-Soviet countries. Bertrand and Mullainatha (2003) in their field experiment studied the different types of discrimination in the labour market using the African-American and White names to measure the callback rate. The study reveals that there is a racial discrimination against African-Americans in the labour market. Besides, the job applications of White Americans with higher quality received more callbacks than resumes of Whites with lower quality whereas the resume quality had smaller effect on African-Americans. Having higher quality of resumes for African-Americans did not minimize the racial discrimination making the employability harder for them.

This study seeks to investigate the influence of transnational education, namely, the impact of International Branch Campuses (IBC), their reputational rankings and prestige on employability rate and labour market return for recent graduates in Uzbekistan. The IBCs in Uzbekistan have certain reputational standing and socially perceived prestige in the country and there is a perception that the graduates of these institutions have better chances for employment in prestigious jobs. The market oriented curriculum, access to exchange programs, academic quality, foreign award type, admission criteria and reputational status of the IBCs in Uzbekistan make them more attractive than state owned institutions that run under the framework set by the government. The institutional attractiveness of these IBCs has created a competition in the labour market for higher education state owned institutions, which have little or no autonomy over academic affairs and dated teaching methods.

### **Research Questions:**

Is there higher labour market return for IBC graduates than graduates of national institutions? Do IBCs contribute to youth social mobility and graduate employability?

### **Data and Method:**

To measure the response rate to the graduate applications in the local labour market the data for graduates of three IBCs (WIUT, MDIST and Turin Polytechnic University) and three local state-owned institutions are used to examine the discrepancy. The data is to be gathered through labour market i.e. through applying for available job vacancies on behalf of graduates of undergraduate level. To do so, a series of fictitious resumes will be created with equal qualifications of graduates from both local and IBC institutions. The Economics and Computer Science are selected areas as target groups. Employers may have their expectations and preferences while recruiting graduates

of IBCs and local institutions and it will help us investigate to what extent the reputation and prestige of western education systems matter in recruitment practices in the labour market.

Constructing the resumes:

We created a series of fictitious resumes were created to apply for real job vacancies for graduates of IBCs in Uzbekistan and local institutions. The identities of applicants are different except but with similar qualifications and same age range. They have different names, telephone contacts and emails to reply to employers. All applicants have 2 years of job experience and their resumes are with same qualifications but graduated from different educational institutions. This is to avoid having overqualified or overeducated candidate profiles. The job applicants, the graduates of Economics and Computer Science courses from different institutions (IBC/national) have equal qualifications, language skills and professional background.

Selecting the jobs:

In Tashkent, a substantial proportion of job seekers search for vacancies in the job postings published every day in job-search websites such as [uzjobs.uz](http://uzjobs.uz) and [Head Hunter hh.uz](http://HeadHunter.uz). Many positions in the public sector are even required to publicly announce their vacancies. To make easier our analysis, we classified the job vacancies in one category - professional (requiring at least a University degree, which takes no less than 4 years in Uzbekistan). This classification is instrumental for the data analysis.

Criteria for jobs:

(i) Vacancies should not ask for salary expectations; (ii) nor should they ask in-person delivery of the CV; (iii) The vacancies should not be biased toward any particular sex (e.g., job ads requesting only females were excluded); and (iv) The email address of the contact person (employer) should show the company's domain. We excluded employment agencies for two reasons: they recruit employees for several companies at the same time (thus, they may not necessarily reflect the preferences of the employers), and we could be vulnerable to their discovery of our fictitious candidates (since, at some point, we have the same cell phone number for several job candidates).

### **Preliminary results**

The hypothesis was about graduates of IBCs with market-oriented curriculum and career growth opportunities having higher rate of employability and the experiment is ongoing to test it. The experiment shows that the graduates of IBCs are getting earlier callbacks for applied job vacancies, whereas, the graduates of local state-owned HE institutions are receiving later and fewer callbacks. However, it is early to assume that there is a lower labour market return for graduates of the local, state-owned universities. Because, a graduate of Tashkent Finance Institute, a local institution, received a call from an employer who is seeking for an Economist whereas, graduates of IBCs received no calls so far. Nevertheless, it can be presumed that there is a demand for graduates of IBCs in the country.

Another interesting outcome is that the graduates of first international university, which is WIUT and known as a leading institution in the country, are receiving first calls. It was interesting to explore that the graduate of WIUT received a call from an employer who is seeking for IT specialist first, then a day later, the graduate of another IBC, Turin Polytechnic University and at the end of a next week the graduate of TIUT, which is a national institution.

As the empirical part of the research is still ongoing, the final analysis of results will be delivered after completing the data collection through experiment applied. The above are the preliminary outcomes from the experiment that has started in early April 2017. For final version, econometrical methods of analysis will be applied to examine the results.

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