

The Role of Najran University in Enhancing the Employability of Graduates from the Point of View of Faculty Members and Students

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Abstract

The study aims to explore the reality of the role of Najran University in enhancing employability from the perspectives of faculty members and students. The descriptive-analytical approach was employed to analyze literature and fieldwork. The study was applied to 92 faculty members and 202 students at Najran University, and classified into five dimensions. The opinions of faculty members and students were surveyed, revealing that faculty members strongly agreed with the third dimension (scientific research and community partnership) and the first dimension (initiatives and institutional projects) in rank. They showed moderate agreement with the fourth dimension (providing effective channels for communication with production institutions and employment entities), followed by the second dimension (specializations and available academic programs). In the students' survey, the fourth dimension came first, followed by the first, then the fifth, the third, and finally the second. Results indicated no significant gender impact on faculty responses but a significant impact on their specializations, favoring scientific disciplines. There was also a gender impact on student responses, favoring female students in terms of agreement levels. In addition, there was a specialization impact favoring scientific disciplines. Based on these findings, the study recommended a reconsideration of academic specializations and programs, raising student awareness of university initiatives and projects, and implementing measures to enhance other roles identified in the study.

Keywords: *Najran University, employability, faculty members and students.*

Introduction

The vision of Saudi Arabia for the year 2030 aims for the Kingdom to be successful and a leader in all aspects, especially in the areas of investment in human capital. This is envisioned to achieve sustainable professional and economic development. The Saudi 2030 vision emphasizes the empowerment of human resources with skills and experiences that align with successive developments and changes. This is considered one of the key components for realizing the vision. Therefore, educational institutions in the Kingdom, as part of their concerns, focus on building the students' character by imparting knowledge and skills that qualify them to be independent individuals characterized by initiative, perseverance, and leadership. They should possess sufficient levels of self-awareness, social awareness, and cultural understanding, along with the ability to adapt to

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successive changes. This imposes a significant role on educational institutions, especially universities, to actively plan and implement initiatives and strategies that contribute to fulfilling their role in achieving the vision's objectives.

Competitiveness has become a fundamental indicator for evaluating the quality of all sectors, especially higher education. Employability has emerged as a key criterion for competitiveness, garnering increased attention in assessing the quality of graduates and their ability to meet the requirements of professions and future jobs. It has become one of the most important metrics for judging the quality of university outputs. This was affirmed by Smith et al. (2018), who noted that the employability of graduates serves as a gauge for assessing the quality of universities, their outputs, and the processes they undertake. Some countries, such as the United Kingdom and Australia, have tied government funding for universities to the employment outcomes of graduates. Currently, many countries are leaning towards adopting this approach, prompting universities to develop policies and provide systems and mechanisms that enhance graduates' opportunities for suitable employment.

Universities, as educational and pedagogical institutions, are considered one of the fundamental pillars contributing to the professional development of students. This qualification enables them to be active contributors to the construction of their nation and enhances its strength in various dimensions. According to Al-Ruwaili (2021), after analyzing the content of the visions adopted by universities in Saudi Arabia, these institutions unanimously aim to build knowledgeable communities capable of dealing with future challenges. This objective is one of the pillars and goals of the strategic plans of these universities. The literature points out the prominent role of universities in achieving professional and economic sustainability. A study by Zalienene and Pereira (2021) emphasized the vital role of universities in achieving professional and economic sustainability, as they are the most important institutions concerned with preparing future professionals and graduates who contribute to the achievement of sustainable development goals. Williams (2019) confirms that modern technologies and the knowledge economy have posed numerous challenges in the field of employment, notably the instability of professions and jobs. Consequently, universities are compelled to go beyond developing their programs, specializations, and educational curricula. They must strive for a comprehensive approach to the development process, encompassing all aspects at the institutional planning level, systems, programs, specializations, professional development, and qualification for graduates, as well as methods, systems, and mechanisms of implementation.

In the same context, Bowen (2018) affirmed that successive changes have posed challenges related to employability. Universities should reconsider their policies, systems, and practices to enable them to respond to these changes and developments. Some mechanisms that universities can benefit from to enhance employability opportunities include incorporating strategies for core issues such as integrating and combining specializations, promoting higher-order thinking skills, and diversifying specializations. Concepts such as sustainability, employability, and the skills required for future professions and jobs should be key elements in educational programs and curricula. Deloitte (2017) and Li et al. (2018) expressed concerns about the changing nature of the labor market and the needs of professions and jobs in the future amid advanced economies and successive digital transformations. They emphasized the necessity of activating the role of universities in preparing for these transformations, introducing new specializations, programs, initiatives, and methods for partnering with professional communities and employment institutions. Both Kayembe and Nel (2019) emphasized the importance of groups focusing on developing their systems to respond to challenges arising from digital changes and successive industrial revolutions. In agreement, Hahn et al. (2020) stressed the university's efficient role in acquiring entrepreneurial skills for its

students to ensure alignment with the requirements of integration into the future job market.

While the concept of employability encompasses multi-dimensional content, given its characteristics of continuity, flexibility, adaptation, and alignment with transformations and changes, universities remain the cornerstone in enhancing employability opportunities. This is because they establish the skills required for professions and jobs in light of the needs of the job market. The ability of universities to promote employability opportunities is determined by several factors: educational and learning practices, the nature of classroom and extracurricular activities, mechanisms for developing programs and specializations, as well as guidance and counseling initiatives and programs.

Zaleniene and Pereira (2021) highlighted several roles that institutions can practice to meet sustainability requirements and enhance employability opportunities. These roles include improving sustainability through the development of projects and initiatives in university education and research centers, integrating sustainability across disciplines, establishing high-quality activities and initiatives, promoting a corporate culture oriented towards active professional development, and aligning with future requirements. In addition, the inclusion of sustainable development, knowledge economy, and future professions in academic programs and specializations was emphasized. Chankseliani and McCowan (2021) mentioned that universities have a role in enhancing employability opportunities by establishing research centers focused on sustainable development, planning to meet its requirements, and outlining mechanisms that ensure an understanding of its goals, programs, and how to achieve them. Abelha et al. (2020) emphasized the challenges posed by technological and digital developments on employment mechanisms, requiring investment in personal skills that qualify graduates to keep pace with future professions and jobs. They also mentioned that universities can play several roles, such as promoting employability concepts and requirements in academic specializations, curricula, and extracurricular activities. Mian et al. (2020) confirmed that various transformations, especially related to digitization, automation, and the integration of professions and jobs, necessitate a shift in reliance on human resources. Universities can actively contribute by having effective financial planning, providing qualified human resources with the necessary skills, increasing and diversifying partnerships, providing suitable infrastructure, reviewing specializations and curricula, and offering efficient professional development programs aligned with labor market requirements. Jackson and Bridjstock (2021) emphasized the planned interaction with professional organizations and employers, contributing to employability opportunities. They suggested roles for institutions, including aligning learning outcomes with professional practices required by job markets, adopting integrated education approaches with work, establishing effective collaboration pathways between universities, professional associations, and recruitment institutions for talent and future skills development, and providing both classroom and extracurricular activities that enhance skills required for future professions and jobs.

Despite the concerted efforts of universities to enhance employability opportunities, it remains crucial to uncover the effects and relative importance of these efforts, especially in equipping students with the appropriate skills for securing suitable employment. This necessitates the imperative to investigate the outcomes and impacts of these efforts.

Statement of the problem

The Vision 2030 of the Kingdom emphasizes the necessity for universities to invest in building the competencies required to achieve its ambitious goals, aiming to maintain competitiveness. Employability and readiness to meet future needs in professions and jobs have become key indicators in evaluating universities. Several studies, including those conducted by Abdel Latif (2019), Ahmed (2020), and Abed Qader (2021), confirm the vital role of universities in implementing the Vision 2030. They emphasize the

importance of equipping the human workforce with qualifications that align with the requirements of future professions. Smith et al. (2018) assert that employability has become a crucial metric in assessing the quality of university outputs. Abelha et al. (2020) add that despite universities' efforts to enhance and develop the necessary competencies for employment, they face criticism for inadequately preparing graduates compared to the required professional practices. In addition, Mian et al. (2020) point out that rapid and successive transformations necessitate new roles for universities concerning the quality of their outputs and the skills graduates acquire.

Universities are making efforts to implement mechanisms and initiatives that contribute to preparing their graduates for the job market. Lopez-Meneses et al. (2020) highlighted the universities' focus on students acquiring digital competencies in various fields to prepare them for future professions. Hahn et al. (2020) investigated the role of the university in equipping students with entrepreneurial skills to ensure alignment with the requirements of the job market. Bowen (2018) explored the monitoring of the university's role in meeting sustainability requirements and the initiatives taken in response to successive changes and developments. Jackson & Bridjstock (2021) conducted a study identifying some of the roles of universities in enhancing employability opportunities through both classroom and extracurricular programs.

On the national level, the Ministry of Education issued its report in 2016, identifying several obstacles facing the preparation and readiness of students for the job market. These obstacles include a lack of motivation, creativity, and innovation in learning environments, weak personal skills, and critical thinking skills among students, as well as a negative perception of the teaching profession and a decrease in the quality of curricula. Numerous studies have been conducted to investigate and activate the role of universities in achieving the goals of Vision 2030. Al-Obeid (2016) aimed to activate the role of universities in developing social responsibility. Al-Fawzan (2018) explored the role of Shaqra University in promoting security awareness. In addition, Al-Arifi (2019) focused on the role of student affairs deanship in developing leadership skills in Saudi universities in light of Vision 2030. Al-Ahmadi (2020) conducted a study to investigate the role of Saudi universities in fostering a culture of intellectual creativity. Al-Ghamdi (2018) aimed to activate the role of Saudi universities in raising students' awareness of terrorism. Despite these efforts, challenges and criticisms persist regarding the readiness of graduates to meet the requirements of future professions. Therefore, there is a need for further research, especially concerning the skills and competencies required for the future job market. This is what the current research attempts to explore by identifying the proposed roles of the university in enhancing employability opportunities for graduates.

From the above, the research problem can be formulated in an attempt to understand the methods and efforts exerted by the university to enhance employability. Thus, the research problem is framed in the following two questions:

1. What is the actual role of Najran University in promoting employability according to the perspectives of the faculty and students?
2. Does the variation in gender and specialization among the study samples impact their level of agreement on the university's role in enhancing employability?

Objectives of the study

The research aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To examine the actual role of Najran University in enhancing employability from the perspectives of both the faculty and students
2. To investigate the impact of gender and academic specialization differences within the study samples on their agreement levels regarding the university's role in enhancing employability

These objectives will guide the research in exploring the university's efforts in employability enhancement and understanding how different demographic factors may contribute to diverse perspectives among faculty and students.

Significance of the study

- Discussing and identifying the role of Najran University in enhancing employability for its students from the perspectives of faculty and students.
- The researchers hope that the results of this study will contribute to providing the Vision Realization Office at the university with an understanding of the roles and efforts made to enhance employability and prepare students for the requirements of future professions. In addition, the study aims to comprehend the viewpoints of both faculty and students regarding the roles and efforts exerted by the university in this matter.

Methods

The descriptive-analytical method was used in this study, involving an analysis of relevant literature. The field study included a questionnaire aimed at understanding the roles of Najran University in enhancing employability opportunities from the perspectives of both faculty members and students at Najran University. After validating the questionnaire, the final version was developed. Two versions of the questionnaire were prepared. The first version included only four dimensions, with the dimension related to academic leadership and faculty being excluded to ensure neutrality in responses. The second version, consisting of five dimensions, was presented to students. The questionnaire was distributed through online platforms, social media, email, and Blackboard. Following data collection, the results were processed and analyzed.

Validity and reliability

The current research utilized a questionnaire as a data collection tool from the perspectives of students and faculty. The questionnaire was presented in two versions. The first version was dedicated to faculty and included four dimensions (institutional initiatives and projects, currently available academic specializations and programs, scientific research and community partnerships, providing effective channels of communication with production institutions and employers). The second version, tailored for students, comprised the same four dimensions plus an additional fifth dimension (academic leadership and faculty). The validity and content accuracy of the questionnaire were verified by consulting with a group of specialists and academics to ensure the linguistic accuracy of the questionnaire paragraphs. The reliability of the questionnaire was also confirmed by calculating internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha

Domain	University's roles	No of items	Cronbach's alpha Coefficients
First dimension:	Institutional initiatives and projects	12	0.712
Second dimension	Currently available academic specializations and programs	7	0.823
Third dimension	Scientific research and partnership with society	6	0.891
Fourth dimension	Providing effective channels of communication with productive institutions and employers.	5	0.876
Fifth dimension	Academic leaders and faculty	6	0.831

Scale	36	0.868
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Table 1 shows that the consistency coefficients for the questionnaire dimensions ranged from 0.712 to 0.891, indicating consistency among the questionnaire dimensions. The Cronbach's alpha value for the entire tool was 0.868, demonstrating a high level of homogeneity and consistency for the questionnaire. Pearson's correlation was calculated between the items of each dimension and the dimension to which they belong, as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2. Pearson's correlation between the items of each dimension and the dimension to which they belong

First dimension:				Second dimension		Third dimension		Fourth dimension		Fifth dimension	
Items	Per.Corr	Items	Per.Corr	Items	Per.Corr	Items	Per.Corr	Items	Per.Corr	Items	Per.Corr
1	0.617 **	7	0.603 **	1	0.487 *	1	0.502 *	1	0.627 **	1	0.609 **
2	0.636 **	8	0.513 *	2	0.611* *	2	0.676 **	2	0.577 **	2	0.583 **
3	0.711* *	9	0.566 **	3	0.492 *	3	0.604 **	3	0.605 **	3	0.502 *
4	0.802 **	10	0.807 **	4	0.526 **	4	0.623 **	4	0.502 *	4	0.676 **
5	0.587 **	11	0.618 **	5	0.544 **	5	0.499 *	5	0.676 **	5	0.486 *
6	0.623 **	12	0.488 *	6	0.486 *	6	0.576 **			6	0.533 **
				7	0.507 *						

(*) Significant as 5% Level, (**) Significant as 1% Level

From Table 2, it is evident that the correlation coefficients for the questionnaire items are all statistically significant. This indicates a correlation between these items and the dimensions to which they belong, reflecting the consistency and validity of the questionnaire for application.

Sample profile

The questionnaire, prepared for the faculty, was sent via email and social media to a total of 103 faculty members and distributed among theoretical and scientific disciplines. They assessed their responses to each item in the questionnaire to determine their agreement level regarding the university's role in enhancing employability. The prepared questionnaire for students was also sent via social media and Blackboard to a total of 233 students, covering both theoretical and scientific disciplines. Students were requested to assess their responses by indicating their level of agreement with the university's role in enhancing employment opportunities according to the five dimensions of the questionnaire. The obtained responses were recorded, with 92 responses from faculty members and 202 responses from students. Following data collection, the analysis utilized descriptive statistical methods (means, standard deviations, ranks) to determine the degree of agreement within the study samples on the university's role in enhancing

employability. In addition, inferential statistics (T-test) were employed to identify differences between the means, revealing the impact of gender (male, female) and specialization (theoretical, scientific) on the degree of agreement regarding the university's roles in enhancing employability.

SPSS V25.0 software was used to analyze the data collected from the sample responses. Descriptive statistical methods, including percentages and means, were employed to describe the demographic characteristics of the sample and categorize them based on these characteristics, as illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of the study sample

Characters	Variable	Faculty Members		Students	
		No	Percent	No	Percent
Gender	Male	53	57.6%	66	32.7%
	Female	39	42.4%	136	67.3%
Specialization	Theoretical specializations	64	69.6%	83	41%
	Scientific specializations	28	30.4%	119	59%
Total		92	100%	202	100%

Data analysis

The data were processed using SPSS V25.0 software. Descriptive statistical measures such as means, standard deviations, frequencies, percentages, and ranks were employed. The responses of the research sample (faculty and students) were assessed based on the scale presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Response estimation

Mean Rang	Response estimation
1.00 : 1.80	Very week
1.81: 2.60	Week
2.61: 3.40	Moderate
3.41: 4.20	Strong
Above 4.21	Very Strong

Results and discussion

Research question 1: What is the actual role of Najran University in promoting employability according to the perspectives of the faculty and students?

Then, the means, standard deviations, and ranks were calculated for the level of agreement of the research sample on the role of the university in enhancing employability, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Means, standard deviations, and ranks for the level of agreement of the research sample on the role of the university in enhancing employability

Sample	Domain	mean	Std.dev	Rank	Response estimation
Faculty	First dimension	3.46	0.11	2	Strong

Members	Second dimension	2.98	0.21	4	Moderate
	Third dimension	3.87	0.27	1	Strong
	Fourth dimension	3.31	0.17	3	Moderate
	Scale	3.41	0.18	Strong	
Students	First dimension	3.06	0.22	3	Moderate
	Second dimension	2.54	0.33	5	Weak
	Third dimension	2.86	0.23	4	Moderate
	Fourth dimension	3.13	0.15	1	Moderate
	Fifth dimension	3.08	0.15	2	Moderate
	Scale	2.94	0.20	Moderate	

As shown in Table 5, the mean score for the university's role in enhancing employability from the perspective of faculty members was (3.41) with a strong level of agreement. The results indicated that faculty members' agreement on the university's actual role in enhancing employability was strong in the first dimension (institutional initiatives and projects) and the third dimension (scientific research and community partnership). However, the agreement level was moderate in the second and fourth dimensions. In addition, regarding the ranking of dimensions in terms of faculty members' agreement level, the third dimension of university roles (scientific research and community partnership) ranked first with a mean score of (3.87) and a strong level of agreement. The first dimension (institutional initiatives and projects) ranked second with a mean score of (3.46) and a strong level of agreement. The fourth dimension (providing effective channels of communication with production institutions and employers) ranked third with a mean score of (3.31) and a moderate level of agreement. The second dimension (available academic specializations and programs) ranked fourth with a mean score of (2.98) and a moderate level of agreement.

The results indicated that the university's role in enhancing employability from the students' perspective had a mean score of (2.94) with a moderate level of agreement. The responses showed homogeneity, with a standard deviation value of (0.20). The agreement level on the university's actual role was moderate in all dimensions except for the second dimension related to available academic specializations and programs, which was weak. Regarding the ranking of dimensions based on students' agreement levels, the fourth dimension (providing effective channels of communication with production institutions and employers) ranked first with an average score of (3.13) and a moderate level of agreement. The fifth dimension (academic leadership and faculty) ranked second with an average score of (3.08) and a moderate level of agreement. The first dimension (institutional initiatives and projects) ranked third with an average score of (3.06) and a moderate level of agreement. It was followed by the third dimension (scientific research and community partnership) in fourth place with an average score of (2.86) and a moderate level of agreement. The second dimension (available academic specializations and programs) ranked fifth with an average score of (2.54) and a weak level of agreement.

The results pointed out an agreement between the faculty and students in the ranking of university roles' dimensions. The dimension related to providing academic specializations and programs contributing to enhancing employability was placed last from the faculty's perspective (moderate agreement) and also ranked last from the students' perspective (weak agreement). This suggests significant challenges for the university regarding its roles in disciplines and programs that contribute to enhancing employability. The results also indicate variability in the ranking of dimensions between the faculty and students in

their perceptions of the university's actual role in promoting employability. The findings align with previous studies (Maria et al., 2018; Teng et al., 2019; Hahn et al., 2020; Abelha et al., 2020; Ahmed, 2020; Abdel Qader, 2021; Zalieniene & Pereira, 2021) emphasizing the need to explore universities' roles in improving students' competencies for suitable employment opportunities. The current research supports the idea that universities should enhance their educational, research, societal, and institutional roles to prepare students for future professions. The results also align with studies emphasizing the role of universities in achieving the goals of Vision 2030, particularly regarding investing in human capital. These findings reinforce the importance of universities in meeting the objectives and requirements of Vision 2030.

To interpret the results related to the responses on the first dimension (Institutional Initiatives and Projects), the mean, standard deviation, and ranks were calculated, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Responses on the first dimension (Institutional Initiatives and Projects)

items	Faculty Members				Students			
	Mean	Std. dev	Rank	Response estimation	Mean	Std. dev	Rank	Response estimation
First dimension: Institutional initiatives and projects								
The university is committed to establishing partnerships and agreements with recruiters and employers	3.42	0.22	6	Strong	2.92	0.47	8	Moderate
The university offers career guidance and guidance programs to raise awareness about future professions and jobs	3.29	0.10	8	Moderate	3.30	0.12	4	Moderate
The university provides rehabilitation and training initiatives and projects for students regarding the skills required for future professions and jobs	3.10	0.08	12	Moderate	2.42	0.49	11	Weak
The university provides extracurricular activities that enhance the skills needed for future careers and jobs	3.57	0.08	5	Strong	2.99	0.54	7	Moderate
The university provides clubs, competitions and motivational factors to enhance the future skills of students	3.58	0.16	4	Strong	3.53	0.19	3	Strong
The university includes in its strategic plan development initiatives and projects that enhance the future skills of students and graduates	3.73	0.19	2	Strong	3.76	0.22	2	Strong

The university provides databases of specializations, jobs, and skills required for the future	3.22	0.10	11	Moderate	2.31	0.04	12	Week
The university provides synergies and exchange visits with corresponding international programs regionally and globally	3.65	0.19	3	Strong	2.54	0.26	10	Week
The university provides departments concerned with graduates, community partnership, achieving Vision 2030, and skills development units, and develops integrated plans and strategies for them that meet the needs of professions and jobs in the future.	4.09	0.12	1	Strong	4.04	0.13	1	Strong
The university provides scientific centers and business incubators, supporting innovation and entrepreneurship, with future directions that enhance its role in achieving the requirements of the future	3.28	0.15	9	Moderate	3.00	0.24	6	Moderate
The university provides distance training platforms for its students to develop their skills necessary for future professions and jobs	3.27	0.12	10	Moderate	3.25	0.15	5	Moderate
The university provides its students with exchange of scientific visits locally and internationally to contribute to qualifying them for the needs of the current and future labor market.	3.34	0.05	7	Moderate	2.68	0.42	9	Moderate

From the results presented in Table 6, it is evident that faculty members agree on the first dimension (Institutional Initiatives and Projects) with an average of (3.46) and strong agreement. The results also indicate a consensus among faculty opinions, with a standard deviation value of (0.13). There is variability in faculty agreement on the specific roles falling under this dimension, with average agreement ranging from (4.09 to 3.10), falling between moderate and strong agreement. The results show that faculty strongly agree on (6) items and moderately agree on (6) items. The highest agreement score is for item (9), indicating the university's role in providing departments dedicated to graduates, community partnership, achieving Vision 2030, and units for skills development, with integrated plans and strategies meeting the needs of future professions and jobs. The lowest agreement is for item (3), which highlights the university's role in providing

initiatives and projects for the qualification and training of students in the skills required for future professions and jobs.

As evident from Table 6, students agree on the first dimension (Institutional Initiatives and Projects) with an average of (3.06) and strong agreement. The results also indicate a consensus among student opinions, with a standard deviation value of (0.27). There is variability in student agreement on the specific roles falling under this dimension, with average agreement ranging from (4.04 to 2.31), falling between weak and strong agreement categories. The results show that students strongly agree on (3) items, moderately agree on (6) items, and weakly agree on (3) items. The highest agreement score is for item (9), indicating the university's role in providing departments dedicated to graduates, community partnership, achieving Vision 2030, and units for skills development, with integrated plans and strategies meeting the needs of future professions and jobs. The lowest agreement is for item (7), which highlights the university's role in providing databases on specializations, jobs, and skills required for the future.

To interpret the results related to the responses of the research sample on the second dimension (Currently Available Academic Specializations and Programs), the means, standard deviations, and ranks were calculated, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Responses of the research sample on the second dimension (Currently Available Academic Specializations and Programs)

Items	Faculty Members				Students			
	Mean	Std. dev	Rank	Response estimation	Mean	Std. dev	Rank	Response estimation
second dimension: currently available academic specializations and programs								
The university provides majors and academic programs that suit the needs of future professions and jobs	3.06	0.17	3	Moderate	2.63	0.61	2	Moderate
The university provides departments with the freedom to create specializations and academic programs that meet the current and future needs of professions and jobs	2.99	0.21	4	Moderate	2.89	0.35	1	Moderate
The university is keen to review and develop its specializations and academic programs to meet the needs of current and future professions and jobs	3.50	0.05	2	Strong	2.50	0.24	5	Moderate
The content of the academic programs prepares me for future careers and jobs	2.80	0.23	6	Moderate	2.58	0.39	4	Moderate
The university is keen to partner with professional associations and employers when developing or creating academic specializations or programs	3.59	0.34	1	Strong	2.59	0.34	3	Moderate
The university provides	2.79	0.3	5	Moderate	2.49	0.2	6	Moderate

interdisciplinary programs and specializations that keep pace with current and future labor market requirements		7		e		9		te
departments provide academic specializations and programs through their websites and introductory brochures for current and future professions and jobs related to them	2.15	0.12	7	Week	2.15	0.12	7	Week

From the results in Table 7, it is evident that faculty members agree on the second dimension (Currently Available Academic Specializations and Programs) with an average of (2.98) and a moderate level of agreement. The results also indicate a consensus among faculty members, with a standard deviation value of (0.21). There is variability in the faculty's agreement on the roles within this dimension, with their agreement ranging between (3.59 to 2.15), covering levels of weak to strong agreement. The results indicate that faculty members strongly agree on two items, moderately agree on (4) items, and weakly agree on one item. The highest level of agreement was obtained for item (5), which points to the university's role in partnership with professional associations and employers when developing or introducing specializations or academic programs. The lowest level of agreement was for item (7), which refers to the role of scientific departments in making available informative brochures about current and future professions and jobs associated with them through their website.

In addition, from the results presented in Table 7, it is evident that the students agree on the second dimension (Currently Available Academic Specializations and Programs) with an average of (2.54) and a strong level of agreement. The results also indicate a consensus among students, with a standard deviation value of (0.34). There is variability in students' agreement on the roles within this dimension, with their agreement ranging between (2.89 to 2.15), covering levels of weak to moderate agreement. The results indicate that students moderately agree on (6) items and weakly agree on one item. The highest level of agreement was obtained for item (2), which points to the university's role in providing departments with the freedom to create specializations and academic programs that meet the current and future needs of professions and jobs. The lowest level of agreement was for item (7), which refers to the university's role in providing databases with specializations, jobs, and skills required for the future.

To interpret the results related to the responses of the research sample on the third dimension (Scientific Research and Community Partnership), the means, standard deviations, and ranks were calculated, as shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Responses of the research sample on the third dimension (Scientific Research and Community Partnership)

Items	Faculty Members				Students			
	Mean	Std. dev	Rank	Response estimation	Mean	Std. dev	Rank	Response estimation
third dimension: scientific research and partnership with society								
The university allocates research projects and initiatives directed at serving society, the labor market, and industry requirements	3.74	0.25	4	Strong	2.74	0.19	4	Moderate

The university provides funding for research initiatives that are future-oriented and practical in nature	3.89	0.18	3	Strong	2.89	0.18	3	Moderate
Universities support students' research contributions and direct them towards applied fields that keep pace with the requirements of future professions and jobs	3.48	0.24	6	Strong	2.48	0.24	6	Moderate
The university cooperates with employers, employers, and productive institutions to create and activate research chairs	4.20	0.23	2	Strong	3.20	0.23	2	Moderate
The university markets its centers, chairs, research outputs, and its relationship to solving production and manufacturing problems	3.68	0.56	5	Strong	2.61	0.39	5	Moderate
The university provides scholarship channels for internationally reputable majors and destinations to transfer expertise and experiences later.	4.26	0.17	1	Strong	3.26	0.17	1	Moderate

Based on the results presented in Table 8, it is evident that the faculty members agree on the third dimension (Scientific Research and Community Partnership) with an average of (3.87) and a strong level of agreement. The results also indicate a consensus among the faculty members, with a standard deviation of (0.27). There is variation in the faculty's agreement on the roles within this dimension, with average agreement ranging from (4.26 to 3.48), indicating strong levels of agreement. The faculty members strongly agree on all the roles within this dimension, with the highest agreement obtained for item (6), which indicates the university's role in providing channels for specialization in internationally prestigious destinations to transfer experiences and experiments later on. The lowest agreement is for item (3), which pertains to the university supporting students' research contributions and directing them toward applied fields that meet the requirements of future professions and jobs.

The results also indicate that students agree on the third dimension (Scientific Research and Community Partnership) with an average of (2.86) and a moderate level of agreement. The results show a consensus among the students, with a standard deviation of (0.23). There is variation in students' agreement on the roles within this dimension, with average agreement ranging from (3.26 to 2.48), indicating moderate levels of agreement. Students moderately agree on all the roles within this dimension, with the highest agreement obtained for item (6), which indicates the university's role in providing channels for specialization in internationally prestigious destinations to transfer experiences and experiments later on. The lowest agreement is for item (3), which pertains to the university supporting students' research contributions and directing them toward applied fields that meet the requirements of future professions and jobs.

To interpret the results related to the responses of my research sample on the fourth dimension (Providing Effective Channels for Communication with Production Institutions and Employment Entities), the means, standard deviations, and ranks were calculated as shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Responses of my research sample on the fourth dimension (Providing Effective Channels for Communication with Production Institutions and Employment Entities)

Items	Faculty Members				Students			
	Mean	Std. dev	Rank	Response estimation	Mean	Std. dev	Rank	Response estimation
Fourth dimension: Providing effective channels of communication with productive institutions and employers.								
The university provides a database for graduates and is keen to constantly update it to determine the graduate's employment status and requirements	3.10	0.04	5	Moderate	3.10	0.04	4	Moderate
The university is keen to communicate effectively with graduates, investigate their needs, and develop policies and plans that achieve this	3.45	0.35	1	Strong	3.45	0.35	1	Strong
The university is keen to ensure that graduates are informed of the activities, events, and professional development programs necessary for graduates	3.39	0.12	2	Moderate	3.16	0.06	2	Moderate
The university is keen to coordinate with internationally accredited training bodies and facilitate the enrollment of graduates	3.25	0.12	4	Moderate	2.80	0.17	5	Moderate
The university coordinates with employment agencies to train graduates on the skills required for current and future jobs	3.36	0.23	3	Moderate	3.15	0.14	3	Moderate

As shown in Table 9, it is evident that the faculty members agree on the fourth dimension (Providing Effective Channels for Communication with Production Institutions and Employment Entities) with an average of (3.31) and a moderate level of agreement. The results also indicate a consensus in the opinions of the faculty members, with a standard deviation of (0.17). There is variation in the faculty's agreement on the roles within this dimension, with averages ranging between (3.45 to 3.10), representing strong and moderate levels of agreement. The faculty members strongly agree with paragraph (2) and moderately agree with the remaining paragraphs of this dimension. The highest agreement score is for paragraph (2), which highlights the university's role in effective communication with graduates, understanding their needs, and developing policies and plans to achieve that. The lowest agreement score is for paragraph (1), emphasizing the university's provision of a database for graduates and continuous updates to monitor the employment status of graduates and their requirements.

The results also indicate that the students agree on the fourth dimension (Providing Effective Channels for Communication with Production Institutions and Employment Entities) with an average of (3.13) and a moderate level of agreement. The results show a

consensus in students' opinions, with a standard deviation of (0.15). There is variation in students' agreement on the roles within this dimension, with averages ranging between (3.45 to 2.80), representing moderate to strong levels of agreement. Students strongly agree with paragraph (2) and moderately agree with the remaining paragraphs of this dimension. The highest agreement score is for paragraph (2), emphasizing the university's role in effective communication with graduates, understanding their needs, and developing policies and plans to achieve that. The lowest agreement score is for paragraph (4), highlighting the university's commitment to coordinating with internationally accredited training institutions and facilitating graduates' enrollment in them.

To interpret the results related to the responses of my research sample on the fifth dimension (Academic Leadership and Faculty), the means, standard deviations, and rankings were calculated, as illustrated in Table 10.

Table 10. Responses of my research sample on the fifth dimension (Academic Leadership and Faculty)

Items	Students			
	Mean	Std .dev	Rank	Response estimation
fifth dimension: academic leaders and faculty				
Academic leaders adopt a philosophy of continuous development and modernization to keep pace with the requirements of professions and jobs in the future	3.17	0.06	2	Moderate
The academic leadership of the program is keen to map out the professional skills in the specialization required by the labor market and verify that students have acquired them.	2.88	0.09	5	Moderate
The faculty member is keen to use teaching practices that enhance students' future skills	2.84	0.21	6	Moderate
The faculty member is keen to familiarize students with the relationship between their academic specializations and the nature of related professions and jobs	3.08	0.25	4	Moderate
The faculty member is interested in activities and assignments of a professional nature that serve professional skills related to the specialization	3.17	0.19	3	Moderate
The faculty member is keen to participate in specific programs, conferences and events that ensure his continuous follow-up of professional and skill trends in his field of specialization	3.33	0.15	1	Moderate

Through Table 10, it is evident that students agree on the fifth dimension (Academic Leadership and Faculty) with an average of (3.08) and a moderate level of agreement. The results indicate a consensus in students' opinions, with a standard deviation of (0.16). There is variation in students' agreement on the roles within this dimension, with averages ranging between (3.33 to 2.88), representing moderate levels of agreement. Students moderately agree with all the roles within this dimension. The highest agreement score is for paragraph (6), which emphasizes faculty members' commitment to participating in quality programs, conferences, and events to ensure continuous monitoring of professional and skill trends in their field. The lowest agreement score is for paragraph (2), highlighting the academic leadership's commitment to mapping the professional skills required for the job market and verifying students' acquisition of these skills.

Research question 2: Does the variation in gender and specialization among the study samples impact their level of agreement on the university's role in enhancing employability?

To understand the impact of gender (male, female) and major (theoretical, scientific) differences in the study samples on their agreement levels regarding the actual role of the university in enhancing employability, an independent samples T-test was employed to detect differences between the means, as illustrated in Table 11.

Table 11. T-test for detecting differences between the means (genders, majors)

Variables			T-test			
			mean	Std.deviation	t	Sign
Faculty members	Gender	Males	3.37	0.43	0.587	No Significant
		Females	3.44	0.47		
	Specialist	Theoretical	3.29	0.47	1.84*	Significant
		Scientific	3.51	0.45		
Students	Gender	Males	2.78	0.46	2.95**	Significant
		Females	3.09	0.41		
	Specialization	Theoretical	2.76	0.47	3.52**	Significant
		Scientific	3.11	0.39		

From Table 11, it is evident that there were no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of faculty members' responses based on the gender variable. However, the results indicate statistically significant differences at the 0.05 level between the mean scores of their agreement on the university's role based on the major variable, favoring scientific majors. In addition, there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of students' agreement on the university's role based on the gender variable, favoring female students. Similarly, there are differences between the mean scores of their agreement on the university's role based on the major variable, favoring scientific majors. These results align with studies (Abdel Latif, 2019; Anastasiu et al., 2017; Jackson & Tomliuson, 2020; Lopez-Meneses et al., 2020) that emphasize the need to reconsider the changing requirements of the job market, particularly its orientation towards technical, digital, and industrial sciences.

Conclusion

The study aimed to explore the actual role of Najran University in enhancing employability from the perspectives of faculty members and students. A set of roles were identified and categorized into five dimensions, and the opinions of faculty members and students were surveyed. The results revealed that, according to faculty members, the third dimension (scientific research and community partnership) and the first dimension (institutional initiatives and projects) received strong agreement. Their agreement was moderate on the fourth dimension (providing effective channels of communication with production institutions and employment destinations), followed by the second dimension (available academic specializations and programs). After surveying students' opinions, the fourth dimension came first, followed by the first, fifth, third, and finally, the second dimension. Furthermore, the results indicated no significant gender effect in faculty members' responses. However, there was a significant effect based on their majors, favoring scientific majors. In addition, a gender effect was found in students' responses, favoring female students at the agreement level. Moreover, there was a significant major effect, favoring scientific majors.

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