

Article

# The analysis of educational level affecting on employment in Vientiane capital, Lao People's Democratic Republic

Kitxana LUANGAPHAY<sup>1</sup> (Laos)  
Viktoria VIDA<sup>1</sup> (Hungary)

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**Abstract:** Labour market in this world has many diversities depending on the country in which every country has a different policy to provide or assist their population. Based on the world development plans, the world government aims to increase the labour force in order to improve the economic performance, which means government sector, business sector, and international firms require a huge amount of work forces to operate their own organization. So the requirements of the workplace mostly need employees that are satisfied to work, have labour skills and reliable on development and profitability to their firm. Currently, Laos is about to getting forward from undeveloped country to developing country, which it is also effect directly to Ministry of Education, and Sport of Laos such create policy for support the development on education field. According to this, most of the firms also expect that their future employees should at least graduate with a bachelor degree. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to show how the issue of employment is currently developing in Laos based on the results of the questionnaire.

**Keywords:** Laos; education; job; employees;

**JEL Classification:** N35; J21;

<sup>1</sup> University of Debrecen, Faculty of Economics and Business  
The country of origin of each author is specified in parentheses

## INTRODUCTION

Human capital has become one of the main drivers for the emergence and development of an innovative, digital-based economy and a knowledge-based economy, so the training to meet labour market needs is crucial (Kovács et al. 2022). In order to supply the labour market with a highly skilled workforce, educational institutions need to work closely with the business sector (Nábrádi et al., 2011). Tumiwa et al. (2022) presented in a case study that improving the quality of human resources plays a prominent role in developing regions, especially in rural areas, educational and training institutions should be developed, and it is mandatory to enhance vocational education as well.

Laos is a landlocked country located in Southeast Asia, the geographic of this country is high mountains in the north and plain areas in the middle to the south. Most of the labor forces are from outside the capital where they mostly have different religious and accent on how they speak. In Lao society, there are 50 ethnic groups with more than 200 ethnic's subgroups (World Bank, 2021). Lao contributes with 4 main ethno-linguistic families as Lao-tai accounted for 62.4%, Mon-Khmer for 23.7 %, Hmong-Lu Mien as 9.7 % and Chine-Tibetan about 2.9 % of total population (Asian Development Bank, 2019). However, even though Laos categorized as one of the most diverse countries with various ethnic groups.

It is true that the Lao government provides policies to comfort Lao people in the labor market. Laos has the advantages of labor; it could quickly boost economic growth and quickly move the country forward. Moreover, to guarantee the quality of the nation's employees, the Lao government encourages their Lao population to reach and graduate at least the general education such as secondary school or high school in order to participate in the labor market. However, according to the reality of Lao society, most firms consider that only carrying the graduated certification of general education is not enough to be a part and employ in their business as well as the employees must complete at least a bachelor degree or even higher.

Lao people have common opinions about living and finding a career in urban areas especially in Vientiane Capital. The reason is if they lived in the city, they could find a better job and could have a higher payment, which they could gain better wealth or have more opportunity to change to a more suitable job.

Sacco (2016) analyzes the public service sector in Malta by examining the relationship between job satisfaction by using the OLS model as well as

focusing on the non-monetary benefit as well as inserting the relevant independent variable, which includes educational attainment in 2016. The researcher found there were a majority of the factors that related to employment significantly influencing the job satisfaction factor.

Luckanícova et al. (2012) examines the statistical modeling as Logit model with the explanation of the study variables on the employment in Slovakia in 2005 and 2009. The examination pointed out that education, age, region and work experiences have a significant impact on the employment in their country in the both models of 2005 and 2009. They also stated that there was a positive relation between the employment and the highest education attained as those who have higher education level would have 4.6 times and 6.8 times more opportunity of getting a career in 2005 and 2009.

Shavit & Yaar (2001) research on the determinant of self-employment in Israel by using data from 13,000 men and female labor force who aged 27-37. For the results, they found that there were no ethnic differences in the odds of self-employment, those who have very low and very high education levels were less likely to be self-employed, having a father whose self-employment enhances one's odds of being self-employed and self-employment is enhanced by the economics activities and circumstance of the family's origin.

Lianos et al. (2004) did research on the performance of graduate students in the Greek labor market after they return from their overseas studies. Their study suggested those who graduates in EU institutes have a better job in Greek labor market as they would get higher salary compared to those graduates in Balkan countries and elsewhere. Previous work experiences and holding the higher in education level also leading to return higher returns and profit to the workers. Those workers who have parents having a university qualification do not consider themselves as over qualification but the over education graduates absolutely gains a higher salaries.

Glick & Sahn (1997) studied on the gender and education impacts on employment and earnings in West Africa especially in Guinea. This study represents the analysis of the determinants of labor force participation, sector of employment and earnings in Sub-Saharan African countries by using the multinomial Logit model. They discover that the earnings of self-employed men and women in Guinea have a positive relation with the education level, experiences. However, gender could be another variable that significantly negatively affects the decision on participation and earnings in the labor market, especially women in Guinea were less

likely to be hired, could not get a better salary or could not have a better position compared to men.

Bauer et al. (1992) examined gender inequality in China where is likely occurring the issue of gender discrimination that existed in both urban and rural areas. Between the education for men and women in China seems to have a big gap, in other words, the Chinese women's roles in society's aspect were strongly linked to the other roles such as taking care of their family and this could indicate the existence and pervasiveness of gender inequality within the labor force in urban China.

Verhofstadt et al. (2007) had a purpose of study in the analysis of the relation between educational level and job satisfaction whether caused by indicators of job quality as apply the OLS and Logit model in the estimation. I can conclude, the study confirmed that the higher educated workers are more satisfied than their lower educated counterparts due to those higher education levels who could obtain a better quality of job.

Faridi et al. (2009) explored the impact of education on female labour forces participants in Pakistan by using the primary data. The study concluded a positive relationship between the female labor force participation and the education level where females are more likely to work in economics and business if their education increases. Moreover, I can summarize, if the spouses have higher education levels then it also provides a positive significance to their wife's employment means their study suggested that educating both males and females could boost economic growth.

Varol (2017) using the Logit model to analyze the female labor participation in Turkey. The study found out that the women labor force in Turkey participated in the labor market with a very low rate and declined from 1980 to 2008.

Paphathanarach (2012) studied the impact of labor participants and labor mobility in Thailand by using the data of households from Thai socio-economic surveys as conducted by the NSO (National Statistical Office) in a period of 4 years (2005-2007 and 2010) of the 6,000 household pooled cross sectional samples. The estimation of Logit Model showed that there was more male's labor who have the ability to participate in the market than the female counterparts. The factors that significantly influence the estimation are age, marital status, high education level and marriage.

Nguyen (2014) did an examination on the labor market returns to education in Vietnam by conducting a survey from the national labor force in 2012. Their study showed that the returns to education are still slow, especially in the tertiary level, meaning there is a mismatch between the

higher education level and the job availability. They also found that there was a discrimination of wage by gender especially women are likely have a less salary than men.

Oancea et al (2016) stated that education is one the main determinants of the unemployment level in all EU countries.

Phachanseng (2013) studied the factors influencing the participation of the labor market in the hotel sector in Vientiane capital. The results of the study showed that the factors influencing the participation of the labor market in the hotel sector in Vientiane capital with a significant level were the pre-employment wage rate, the level of completed education and household income. For gender, status, age and job dependence rate did not provide any effect on the decision to join the labor market of the hotel sector.

Mekmeuangxay (2017) aims to study the effect of ethnicity on labor market participation in Vientiane capital. For the result of the statistical estimation, they found that the factors that have significantly affected the labor market participation of ethnic groups were gender, age and status.

## **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

The present study based on the research mentioned above. The main goal of this study to show how education relates to the current career in Vientiane Capital of Laos. Another aim of this study is to contribute a deep research to support the future education policies for Lao citizens. Firstly, it would start with creating a needs assessment of employees in Vientiane capital by random collecting from the city in 2022. After the data are all collected, it would step to a further study by using the Logit model in econometric analysis for finding the relationship results among the sampling.

In the descriptive part would use the numerical and statistical data, which was collected through many sources such as government and non-government organizations as well as from the sampling questionnaires. The purpose of the descriptive section is aimed to support the qualitative study. Another aim is to design to focus on describing the characteristics of the sampling group for answering the thesis questions by using the overview and attitude toward the employment from Lao labor market in Vientiane Capital in 2022.

Secondary data is information of demographic variables of citizens currently living in Vientiane Capital, employment statistics and related documents collected from many government-non

government departments and various websites for making this study more accurate.

Primary data obtained from a sample survey in the Vientiane Capital area using a questionnaire combined with an interview with actual opinions and attitudes. The data collected in August of 2022 with 400 questionnaires. The data collection selected randomly at various locations in Vientiane Capital such as the National University, shopping malls, markets, government offices or private companies. The total respondents of 413 people consisting of 402 employed respondents (97.34%) and 11 unemployed respondents (2.66%).

To study the analysis of education affecting employment in Vientiane Capital of Lao PDR, the methods that using to collect data was sample questionnaires, which would be divided into four parts as follows:

- Questions about general information of respondents (gender, age, marital status, education levels, academic major field, birthplace, ethnic group, current resident, current occupation, current working task, main income, household income, household expenses, part time and working hours of part time).
- Sample group opinion toward the Lao labor market in Vientiane Capital using Likert Scale formula (Likert, 1961).
- Questions about the various factors relate to their education and current career using Likert Scale formula for creating the need assessment of the Vientiane Capital labor force.
- Opinion concerning the Lao labor force relate to the impact of the Covid-19 by using Likert Scale formula to identify the fears of the labor market.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The 402 respondents who are currently employed consisted of female employees counted 202 people as 50.25% and male employees counted 200 people as 49.75%. Besides, the 11 unemployed respondents are contained with 6 unemployed females accounting as 54.55% and 5 unemployed males accounting as 45.45%. In the Vientiane Capital of Laos, there is a little difference of ratio between the Lao female-male population and this is a reason why the gender from our respondent is nearly equal to another one.

The 402 employed sampling mostly responded by the group of age 21 to 25 years old counted as 109 people (27.11%) then followed by the group of age 26 to 30 years old counted as 101 people (25.12%); the group of age lower than 20 years old counted as 67 people (16.67%); the group of age 31 to 35 years

old counted as 43 people (10.70%); the group of age 36 to 40 years old counted as 25 people (6.22%); the group of age 46 to 50 years old counted as 23 people (5.72%); the group of age 41 to 45 years old counted as 13 people (3.23%); the group of age 51 to 55 years old counted as 12 people (2.99%); the group of age 56 to 60 years old counted as 6 people (1.49%) and the group of age over 60 years old counted as 3 people (0.75%). The 11 unemployed sampling mostly responded by the group of age lower than 20 years old counted as 6 people (54.55%), followed by the group of age 41 to 45 years old counted as 2 people (18.18%). The group of age 21 to 25 years, the group of age 46 to 50 years old and the group of age 51 to 55 years old counted as 1 person (9.09%) for each. The people who aged lower than 20 years are too young to enter the labor market. The other age group of unemployed people chose not to be employed because they are struggling with their personal life problems.

The total results of marital status from 413 samples in Vientiane Capital start with a group of single counted as 314 people (76.03%); a group of married counted as 95 people (23%); a group of divorced and a group of widowed counted as 2 people (0.48%) for each.

From the 413 respondents the majority group was a group of Lao Loum counted 377 people (91.28%); followed by a group of Hmong counted 15 people (3.63%); a group of Khmu counted 7 people (1.69%); a group of Lao Thueng and Lue counted 3 people (0.73%) for each; a group of Tai Daeng counted 2 people (0.48%); a group of Akha, Lao Soung, Lou, Phu Noi, Phu Tai, Phuan counted 1 person (0.24%) for each.

The result of the education level were the follows in the sampling. The largest group was Bachelor counted 214 people (51.82%); followed by a group of Upper Secondary counted 75 people (18.16%); a group of High vocational counted 52 people (12.59%); a group of Master counted 49 people (11.86%); a group of Vocational count as 15 people (3.63%); a group of Uneducated, Primary, Lower Secondary and PhD counted 2 people (0.48%) for each. This scenario could support that holding a higher degree of education could guarantee the successful rate of getting a job.

In the sampling we could distinguish the type of occupation in Vientiane Capital's labor market for 5 types such as government officer, private officer, own business non-profit organization officer (NGOs officer) and unemployed. For 413 respondents of sampling, a private officer covers the major of respondents counted 274 people (66.34%) followed by government officer counted 76 people (18.40%); Own business counted 39 people (9.44%), NGOs

officer counted 13 people (3.15%) and the last one is unemployed counted 11 people (2.66%).

Table 1 demonstrates the results of basic statistical analysis on the attitude level of 402 Laotian employed sampling towards the labor market in Vientiane Capital in 2022.

The highest average value of attitude of Laotian employees towards the labor market in Vientiane Capital is "Easy to access the jobs providers average" 3.95 (SD=0.80). Followed by "There is more job recruitment than in small city" 3.87 (SD=0.87); "Living life is much better compared to provinces" 3.81 (SD=0.86); "Want to settle down and have family in Vientiane Capital" 3.78 (SD=0.89). After that comes "There are more employment assistance organizations in Vientiane Capital" 3.77 (SD=0.92); "Good transportation facilities" 3.73 (SD=0.89) and "High chance of career advancement in capital more than provinces" 3.72 (SD=0.90). At the bottom of the table "There are variety of career choices" 3.66 (SD=0.90); "Easily to find and change to new jobs" 3.63 (SD=0.89); "Easy to promote social status" 3.63 (0.92); "Get a better salary" 3.61 (SD=0.96); "Get better social welfare" 3.55 (SD=0.90). This means all studied variables of the Laotian employees' attitude towards the labor market in Vientiane Capital reached an agreed level of their opinion.

Next, the 402 Lao employees were asked about the impact of Covid-19 disease from the past years. The results see in Table 2.

The two highest average value of the concerning of the impact of Covid-19 disease from the past years are "Fear of the impact negative of the economy" 3.85 (SD=0.91) and "Decreasing of salary/income" 3.53 (SD=1.08). Next comes the "Fear not able to splitting work time and personal time" 3.49 (SD=0.99); "No progression in career" 3.48 (SD=1.18); "Lack of resting from work" 3.45 (SD=1.01). It can be concluded that respondents were worried not only about their health but also about their jobs and income, and only then did they worry about other things (no progression, personal time etc.). However, the variables that lists as Neutral are Cannot solve problem on time 3.40 (SD=1.01); Working from home is having an impact on personal time 3.40 (SD=1.03); Fear of suspend from work 3.37 (SD=1.06); Fear of getting fired from work 3.36 (SD=1.11); No promote in career 3.34 (SD=1.05); Dissatisfaction with work environment 3.33 (SD=1.00); Job is not challenging 3.23 (SD=0.98).

The Covid-19 epidemic was accompanied by numerous new restrictions, strict regulations, and their consequences had to be dealt with in the world,

which also affected the life of everyone (Vida & Popovics, 2021).

From Table 3, the marginal effects demonstrate us the probability of the studied variables toward employment in Vientiane Capital's labor market. The estimation shows variables that passed the significant level test and truly provide impact of employment in Vientiane Capital which are Education Level (edu\_level) and Average Monthly Household Income (ln\_fam\_inc) with significance at 99% follows by Age (age) at 95% and Marital Status (single) at 90% of confidence level. Moreover, the other variables such as Gender (gen), Ethnic Group (ethnic) and Part Time (parttime) have no significant level within the model estimation due to their probability value being greater than the confidence level (0.05).

The estimation shows Age has a positive effect related to the employment in Vientiane Capital which is (0.0035) significant with the p-value of (0.015). Meaning that on average, a one-point increase in age variable is associated with 0.35% point increase in the probability of being employed in the labor market significantly. Getting old refers to a human with experiences where those people could generate more benefits to the firm and that is a reason why firms need people with experiences and skills. In Laos, especially the capital, firms tend to hire people who are willing to work with them with less absence and with less social problems. Unlike other marital status, Lao single people seem to have less worry about their family issues as they work with all their diligence and can freely stay provided accommodation by employers if needed. The mentioned reason could attract many Lao employers to hire unmarried people where demonstrating one-point rise of being single is associated with a 4.26% (0.0426) point of more chance to get into the job in Vientiane Capital of Laos with significant (0.096).

The education level variable in this estimation of this thesis is the most important variable due to it shows a positive impact of Vientiane Capital's recruitment. The education level variable has significance by the level of confidence interval lower than 0.05 (0.000) which matches with the hypothesis. It means one-point increase of having a higher education level is associated with a 1.53% (0.0153) point of more opportunity to be chosen in Vientiane Capital's labor market. Based on the knowledge we gain during higher study and research, we tend to have a deeper understanding in both theoretical and practical ways as we are able to complete the assigned jobs from employers easily. Hence, it could be the reason why in every screening process of job

recruitment, the employer always looks through the education level before the other.

Average monthly family income has a negative effect on employment. If one point increase in average monthly family income variable is associated with a 2.6% (-0.026) point decrease in the probability of participating in the labor market significantly (0.001). Mostly, Lao people prefer to live with whole family and prove that if they do not have their own income, family still be the place where could be the financial supporter of them.

### CONCLUSIONS

This empirical study aims investigated Vientiane Capital's labor market by gathered sampling from 413 respondents through questionnaire in Vientiane Capital, Laos in 2022 and explains by using the descriptive and econometric methods of analysis.

For the econometric analysis, this study used the variables of gender, age, single status, ethnic, education level, household income, part time in the model estimation to find the probability of employment in the Vientiane Capital in 2022. The results provide that the probability of the studied variables toward employment in Vientiane Capital's labor market got impacted by the positive relation with the variable of education level, age, marital status as single and negative relation with average monthly household income as statistically significant. Age has a positive effect related to the employment in Vientiane Capital means the older of age consider the more experiences as it could increase the probability of being employed in the Vientiane Capital's labor market with 0.35%. Many Lao employers in Vientiane Capital of Laos mostly attracted by unmarried people due to they could pay most of their determination to their assigned duty where it could increase the probability of being employed in the Vientiane Capital's labor market with 4.26%. Education level is well known for job selection guarantee, which increase more opportunity to be chosen in Vientiane Capital's labor market about 1.53%. However, the more of the family's wealth led the population among Vientiane Capital choosing not to have a job, which shows as it could decrease the probability of choosing to be employed with 2.6%.

This empirical study did show the essentiality of employment in Vientiane Capital in 2022. For those who would like to do further study in the near future or take this study as the citation, it would be better if the future study could input more sampling and more impact factors of the analysis for future better research and results. In addition, everybody aim to

push the Lao economy and if Laos want to make a better labor market, Lao job providers as well as the government sector should support and encourage graduated students to participate in the labor market with the real match of their abilities, experiences and knowledge. Moreover, job providers should more categorize jobs that are related to employee education background in order to help Lao labor market growth with the efficient employees.

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## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.  
**Attitude of Laotian employees towards labor market in Vientiane Capital**

Attitude towards labor market in Vientiane Capital	Average	SD	Likelihood Estimate
1. There are a variety of career choices	3.66	0.90	Agree
2. There is more job recruitment than in small cities.	3.87	0.87	Agree
3. Get a better salary.	3.61	0.96	Agree
4. Get better social welfare.	3.55	0.90	Agree
5. There are more employment assistance organizations in the Vientiane Capital.	3.77	0.92	Agree
6. Good transportation facilities.	3.73	0.89	Agree
7. High chance of career advancement in capital more than provinces.	3.72	0.90	Agree
8. Easy to access the jobs providers.	3.95	0.80	Agree
9. Easily to find and change to new jobs.	3.63	0.89	Agree
10. Easy to promote social status.	3.63	0.92	Agree
11. Want to settle down and have a family in Vientiane Capital.	3.78	0.89	Agree
12. Living life is much better compared to provinces.	3.81	0.86	Agree

Source: Own construction based on questionnaire, 2022

Table 2.  
**Concerning the impact of Covid-19 disease from the past years**

Concerning the impact of Covid-19 disease from the past years	Average	SD	Likelihood Estimate
1. Decreasing salary/income.	3.53	1.08	Agree
2. Fear of being suspend from work.	3.37	1.06	Neutral
3. Fear of getting fired from work.	3.36	1.11	Neutral
4. No progression in career.	3.48	1.18	Agree
5. Cannot solve problems on time.	3.40	1.01	Neutral
6. No promotion in career.	3.34	1.05	Neutral
7. Dissatisfaction with the work environment.	3.33	1.00	Neutral
8. Job is not challenging.	3.23	0.98	Neutral
9. Fear of the negative impact of the economy.	3.85	0.94	Agree
10. Fear of not being able split work time and personal time.	3.49	0.99	Agree
11. Lack of resting from work.	3.45	1.01	Agree
12. Working from home is having an impact on personal time.	3.40	1.03	Neutral

Source: Own construction based on questionnaire, 2022



Table 3.  
**Marginal Effects**

Meaning of Variable	Variable	Marginal Effects		
		dy/dx	Std. Err.	P> z
Gender	gen	0.0325ns	0.0211	0.124
Age	age	0.0035**	0.0014	0.015
Marital Status	single	0.0426*	0.0255	0.096
Ethnic Group	ethnic	0.0181ns	0.0161	0.260
Education Level	edu_level	0.0153***	0.0034	0.000
Average Monthly Household Income	ln_fam_inc	-0.0260***	0.0076	0.001
Part Time	parttime	0.0024ns	0.0015	0.119

Source: Own construction based on questionnaire, 2022

\* Average Marginal Effects