

Big Data Analysis | Unemployment

University Degree, Longer Job Queue? Graduate Unemployment Peaks at 33% Among Young Graduates in Pakistan

Among graduates aged 20–24, unemployment stands at 32.8% almost one in three. The rate gradually declines with age, falling to 24.8% among those aged 25–29, 15.3% among 30–34-year-olds, and 5.3% among those aged 40–44.



32.8%

1 in 3 Graduates aged 20-24 are reported unemployed.

Source: Gallup & Gilani Pakistan
(www.gallup-international.com;
www.gallup.com.pk www.gilanifoundation.com)



(Also emailed*/faxed separately)



PRESS RELEASE

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University Degree, Longer Job Queue? Graduate Unemployment Peaks at 33% Among Young Graduates in Pakistan

(Islamabad), 11th August 2026

A university degree is expected to open doors to employment. But in Pakistan, it often means joining a longer queue before finding work.

Analysis by Gallup Pakistan Digital Analytics of the Pakistan Labour Force Survey 2024–25 shows that unemployment among graduates is 18.3%, higher than the national unemployment rate of 14.7% across all education levels.

The challenge is particularly acute for young graduates.

Among graduates aged 20–24, unemployment stands at 32.8%—almost one in three. The rate gradually declines with age, falling to 24.8% among those aged 25–29, 15.3% among 30–34-year-olds, and 5.3% among those aged 40–44.

This suggests that graduate unemployment is often a waiting period rather than permanent exclusion from the labour market. Many graduates eventually find work, but only after spending several years searching, waiting, or accepting jobs below their qualifications.

The experience is even more difficult for women.

Among graduates aged 20–24, 42.3% of women in the labour force are unemployed, compared with 26.1% of men. The gap widens further among those aged 25–29, where 45.2% of female graduates are unemployed versus 14.9% of males. Even at ages 30–34, female graduate unemployment remains 36.1%, compared with 7.9% for men.

The findings suggest that Pakistan's challenge is not simply producing more graduates. It is creating enough high-quality jobs to absorb them—and addressing the structural barriers that keep educated women waiting far longer than men for employment.

A university degree should be a bridge into productive work. For many young Pakistanis, it has instead become the start of an extended job search.

Pakistan's graduates face the toughest job market right after they graduate

Unemployment rate among graduates (bachelor's degree or higher) by age group, and the much steeper gap facing young women. Pakistan Labour Force Survey 2024-25, ILO definition.

32.8%

Unemployment rate, graduates aged 20-24

45.2%

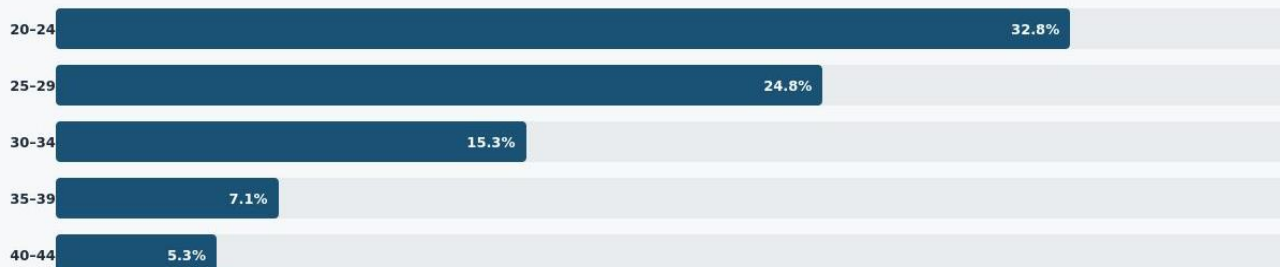
Peak female graduate unemployment (age 25-29)

18.3%

Overall graduate unemployment rate, vs. 14.7% nationally across all education levels

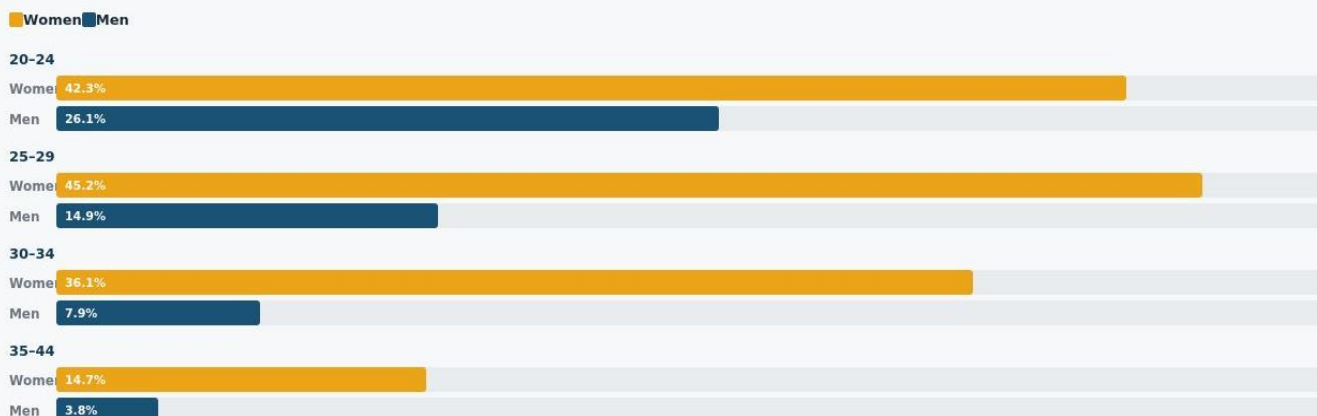
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE AMONG GRADUATES BY AGE GROUP

Unemployment is highest right after graduation, then falls steadily



SAME STORY, SPLIT BY SEX

Female graduates face far higher and longer-lasting unemployment



IT'S A QUEUE, NOT A WALL

Graduate unemployment falls from 33% to 5% between ages 20-24 and 40-44 — most graduates do eventually find work. The real cost is the wait: years of underused education while searching, often the most economically productive years of a career.

WOMEN WAIT ROUGHLY TWICE AS LONG

At every age band, female graduate unemployment is 1.6-3x higher than male. Even in their early 30s, over a third of female graduates in the labour force are still unemployed — a rate men fall below a decade earlier, in their mid-20s.

Source: Pakistan Labour Force Survey 2024-25 (PBS). Graduates defined as holding a bachelor's degree (2-year or 4-year) or higher. Unemployment follows the ILO definition: not working, actively looked for work in the last 4 weeks, and available to start within 2 weeks. Rates are share of the labour force (employed + unemployed) in each group.

Source: Gallup & Gilani Pakistan
(www.gallup-international.com; www.gallup.com.pk, www.gilanifoundation.com)

This analysis was conducted by Gallup Pakistan Digital Analytics using microdata from the Pakistan Labour Force Survey 2024-25, conducted by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). The analysis examines unemployment among university graduates by age and gender to understand labour market outcomes for educated Pakistanis.



Opinion Poll from Gallup Pakistan
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Gilani Research Foundation is headed by Dr. Ijaz Shafi Gilani who pioneered the field of opinion polling in Pakistan and established Gallup Pakistan in 1980. Currently, Dr. Gilani, who holds a Ph.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and has taught at leading universities in Pakistan and abroad, is Chairman of Gallup Pakistan.

If you have any further questions regarding this poll, please feel free to contact us.

*Best Regards,
Gallup Pakistan*

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