

**HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT: EXPLORING EXPERIENCES OF
GRADUATES IN LUSAKA DISTRICT**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, MULULU Linda, do hereby declare that this is my own work, and that all the works of other persons used in this report have been duly acknowledged, and that this work has not been previously presented in this university or any other for similar purposes.

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Date

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APPROVAL

This dissertation of Mululu Linda is approved as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Education and Development, of the University of Zambia.

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Signature

Date

DEDICATION

To my caring and endearing husband, Mr Likezo Victor: Thank you for your immeasurable support and unceasing encouragement. To my children Thabo Likezo and Tumelo Likezo, I know that during the period of my study, I did not give you the attention that you deserved but you still gave me space to work. Thank you for your understanding. Thanks to the entire family for the prayers and support.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CBU – Copperbelt University

CEEC - Citizens Economic Empowerment Commission

CSO - Central Statistical Office

ILO – International labour Organisation

LCMs - Living Conditions Monitoring survey

LCMSs - Living Conditions Monitoring survey

UNILUS – University of Lusaka

UNZA – University of Zambia

WB – World Bank

WHO – World Health Organisation

ZAMSTAT - Zambia Statistical Agency

ZPR - Zambia Population review

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to establish and document the experiences of youth graduates regarding employment and employability in Lusaka district. The study was guided by the Human Capital Theory. The study employed a convergent parallel design of 260 respondents sampled using simple random and snowball sampling. The target population of this study encompassed graduates, human resource managers and selected employers in Lusaka district. A questionnaire and an interview guide were the main protocols used to collect qualitative and quantitative data sets from the respondents. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive and thematic analysis. The study found out that jobs are hard to find, and that job seeking is very stressful and frustrating. The study further found that graduates have had to learn additional new skills useful in seeking employment. These include networking, participating in job fairs, visiting company websites and taking up voluntary work positions. The study also ascertained that higher education still contributes to improving efficiency of the workforce by providing individuals with necessary market –skills- relevant to the economy. Moreover, higher education produces well-informed graduates who become responsive to job opportunities and are exposed to more work opportunities. The study found that there is less job-fitting with qualifications or skills - job market fit. The job market needs workers who are better qualified and market-fit. Nevertheless, the current education system is not fully meeting this demand. The study has revealed several primary barriers to securing employment that include lack of relevant experience, few jobs, and also an acute skills gap for those who are already employed. The study recommends that educational institutions should promote more practical oriented courses; the corporate sector must keep up efforts of supporting young people by empowering them through provision of opportunities for skills development through internship and job shadowing that might help to establish more realistic employment expectations and access to employment.

Key words: *Higher Education, Employment, Low Job Opportunity Situations, experiences, Graduates*

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

The study sought to establish and document the experiences of youth graduates regarding employment and employability in Lusaka district. This chapter presents the background to the study. It also outlines the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives and research questions that will be used to address the objectives of the study. This chapter also presents the significance of the study, delimitations and limitations of the study as well as operational definition of terms. This chapter ends with a summary.

1.1 Background

Unemployment levels in Africa and many parts of Europe are predominantly high and have been set on the top agenda for many governments that have realised the need to tap into the productive age for economic value (Bell and Blanchflower, 2009). In Zambia, the youth unemployment rate stands at 60% of the total employable population (Ministry of Labour, 2017). The Zambian youth graduate unemployment rate is seen to be among leading rates in Sub-Saharan Africa especially that the youth population is in the bracket of 15-34 and makes up a huge majority of the Zambian population at 65% (ILO, 2017).

Higher education is under increasing pressure to directly support employability and the growth and regeneration of the country's economy. Higher education must make a substantial contribution to addressing the demands of the economy, not the least of which is ensuring future competitiveness, according to assessments of the role and purpose of education conducted on a national and worldwide level (World Bank, 2018). The purpose of higher education is to ensure

graduates gain comprehensive education that increase the likelihood of gaining and sustaining employment, with benefits to all stakeholders including the economy (Omar et al., 2012). Therefore, the expectations for higher education are to engage proactively with the skills needs by the economy, the business and industry coupled with addressing imperative public constraints referring to governmental expectations.

Education is a very important aspect of human life. Thinking of education as a tool for realizing human capital is a motivator for societies to invest in education to raise productivity and to increase individual, social and other related benefits. According to Harvey (2000), higher education has become a conduit that is at the service of the labour market or corporate world and its primary function is to train people for the labour market. Therefore, the relationship between higher education and employment has been given attention for policy making issues as well as for research purposes (Pages & Stampini, 2007). In most organisations, employers have been, for some time proclaiming the need for highly educated and skilled people if their businesses are to be successful in a rapidly evolving, global economy.

Using financial investments in education and the returns on those investments, numerous economists have calculated the correlations between employment and education. Consequently, if the life income exceeds the educational costs—that is, the income lost because of a longer life span devoted to school and potential interest rates—a higher degree of education is beneficial, provided that the investments are placed as capital in a bank (World Bank, 2011).

Africa has the largest youth bulge in the world, and the number of the youth is expected to grow by 42.5 million between 2012 and 2026 (World Bank, 2011). The youth stratum constitutes a larger proportion of the labour force. If positively mobilized, the youth can be an important instrument

of economic growth and development in any economy because of their total number drive, passion and innovative ability (Msigwa & Kipasha, 2011). Despite being Africa's most educated generation to emerge from schools and universities, a youth in Africa is twice as likely to be unemployed when he/she graduates (ILO, 2016). According to data from the International labour organisation (ILO) in sub-Saharan Africa, the youth unemployment rate hovers around 12 percent. It is also said that the African region has the world's highest rate of people working who are employed but earning less than US\$2 a day and languish in poverty.

Zambia is mostly a young population with about 45.3% of its population being under the age of 15 years old (ZAMSTAT, 2022). The current population of Zambia is about 18,435,759, based on projections of the latest United Nations data. According to current projections Zambia will continue to experience rapid population growth throughout the century. Zambia's current population of 18.38 million is expected to more than quadruple to 80.78 million people in 2099 (Zambia Population review, 2020). Amidst this rise in population Zambia still records high levels of poverty and this can be attributed to high levels of unemployment. The Living Conditions Monitoring survey (LCMSs) results show that poverty levels have remained high at 62.8 percent in 2006 and 60.5 in 2010. In 2015, poverty was recorded at 54.4 percent. According to ILO (2019) estimates, the estimated youth unemployment rate in Zambia in 2019 was 21.41 percent.

Trends in the labour force since 1986-2014 indicate that Zambia's labour force has been increasing. In 2005, the population of the labour force was estimated at 4,918,788 giving rise to a labour force participation rate of 80.0 percent. The labour force grew to 5,003,871 in 2008 and 5,966,199 in 2012 giving participation rates of 74.5 percent and 75.9 percent, respectively. In 2014, the population in the labour force was 6,329,076 which gave rise to the participation rate of 77.7

percent. The employed population was slowly moving from agriculture industries to non-agriculture industries between 2005 and 2014.

The formal sector accounted for 16.4 percent of the employed population while the informal sector accounted for 88.6 percent. Paid employees accounted for 26.1 percent of the employed population while own account workers (self-employed and employers) accounted for 46.3 percent. However, the 2017 labour force survey (LFS) was analysed on the basis of new definitions of employment and unemployment, following the adoption of the resolution of the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians, and thus provides a different labour force profile for the economy (ICLS, 2013). While the population in the labour force has presumably remained stable, the employment rate has reduced according to the 2018 labour force survey (LFS, 2018).

According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Security report, the unemployment rate in Zambia faces the insufferable irony of being a microeconomic metric of the highest priority but the least effort in measurement for policy, analysis or implementation. According to the Zambia Labour Force reports commissioned by the Zambian Ministry of Labour and social security and implemented by the Central Statistical Office, a person is employed if in the period concerned they performed work for pay either in cash or kind, barter or family gain (CSO, 2013). In addition, the Zambian state defines unemployment as the condition of complete joblessness where the affected persons are also available for work or are actively looking for work (CSO, 2014). Related to the issue of measurement of unemployment is the term unemployment rate. This is defined as the ratio of the unemployed population to the labour force in a given period of time (CSO, 2013).

Higher education systems in most countries have expanded rapidly and Zambia has not been an exception. This has had important and profound impacts on labour markets and the way in which

employers recruit and use highly educated labour. Today, employment is the rising up agenda as thousands of students with qualifications still remain jobless with one reason or the other. Higher education is reshaping its objectives to support learners for careers, opportunities, progressive employment, training for working world and better with their capacities (Pages & Stamping, 2007).

According to Nasir and Nazil (2000), higher education helps students to build employability skills, this means enabling students to get and keep jobs, allow them to bring changes to the working world and similar proficiency for development. Therefore, education has always been evaluated in terms of its practical value (Gbadamosi and de Jage, 2009) but when the acquisition of a particular qualification fails to starve off unemployment then it becomes a social issue. Completion of a certificate, diploma or degree represents the end point of formal education and training and the assumption is that graduates will proceed immediately upon qualifying to the workplace (Kruss, 2004). This however, is not always the case, especially in the current global environment of economic instability.

It has largely been observed in the current situation that many graduates from Zambian universities and colleges have been experiencing high levels of unemployment. Many people who have acquired post-secondary education are roaming the streets in towns with their curriculum vitae (CV's), looking for jobs and some get discouraged. The number of unemployed graduates has continued to rise yearly because universities and colleges produce thousands of graduates who are unable to find or access jobs. This has led to an increase of unemployed graduates which the Zambian economy may not be able to absorb (Sunday Times, 2008). Graduates that have managed to secure jobs have not had it easy. A study by the policy think tank New Century Forum found that fresh graduates now earn about 9.6 per cent less in their first job than graduates 25 years ago,

and more are settling for low-paid, unskilled jobs. This study also found that the growth in the number of graduates outpaced the rise in the number of skilled jobs.

The scenario suggests a potential imbalance in the job market, where the number of graduates exceeds the growth in available skilled job opportunities. This situation can lead to several implications. Graduates may find themselves in jobs that do not fully utilize their skills and education, leading to underemployment. This could mean working in positions that don't require a college degree or where they're overqualified. With more graduates vying for a limited number of skilled positions, competition among job seekers intensifies. This could result in increased pressure to stand out in the job market through additional qualifications, experience, or networking. Even though there are skilled jobs available, there might be a disconnect between the skills graduates possess and the skills demanded by employers. This could indicate a need for education and training programs to adapt to changing market needs (Msanta, 2017).

If a significant portion of graduates are unable to find suitable employment, it can have broader economic consequences. This includes reduced consumer spending, delayed entry into homeownership, and potential long-term effects on productivity and economic growth. Policymakers may need to address this issue through measures such as promoting vocational training, incentivizing industries with high job growth, or encouraging entrepreneurship to absorb the surplus of graduates. Addressing the imbalance between the number of graduates and skilled job opportunities typically requires collaboration among educational institutions, employers, and policymakers to ensure that graduates are equipped with the skills demanded by the job market and that job opportunities align with the qualifications of graduates (Rose et.al, 2019).

Indubitably, based on the above information, unemployment is one of the most persistent and contentious economic challenge in Zambia and anywhere around the world. This situation is more critical among young people, and threatens both social security and the country's long term and economic growth and development vision. Young people tend to constitute a large percentage of the unemployed. Therefore, on the basis of the foregoing contextual background, this study attempted to establish the experiences of university graduates in Lusaka, Zambia regarding employment and employability. In so doing, this study gathered information to validate or negate the relationship that exists between education and employment based on the current Zambian context.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Low employment levels remain a key challenge in Zambia and it is a growing problem that is negatively affecting graduates' present and future social-economic well-being (Masanta, 2017). For many graduates, their hope of earning an income leans heavily on being able to secure employment. However, in situations of low employment chances like the case is with Zambia, several challenges, unsavory and unethical practices arise which meet with the job-seekers such as employment methods, employment scarcity and other experiences like how those that are employed got the jobs. Unemployment Rate in Zambia increased to 13.20 percent in 2019 from 11.40 percent in 2018 (Trading Economics, 2020). When investigating unemployment in Zambia, most studies have focused on the factors that have been perpetuating and propagating unemployment (Mujenja, 2014). Nonetheless, it appears that few studies (Mwelwa, 2020) have been done to document the experiences of youth graduates regarding employment and employability in Lusaka as well as the relationship between higher education and employment in a situation of low-job chances situation as occurs in Zambia. The absence of research on this salient

matter might lead to unbundled comprehension of this searing issue. Thus, this study attempted to establish the experiences of university graduates in Lusaka, Zambia regarding employment and employability in a low-job opportunity situation.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to establish and document the experiences of graduates regarding employment and employability in Lusaka district.

1.4 Specific Objective

The following were the objectives of the study;

1. To explore the experiences of graduate's seeking employment opportunities in Lusaka district.
2. To ascertain the employment seeking strategies among the graduates in Lusaka district.
3. To establish the challenges encountered by graduates in low job opportunity situations in Lusaka district.

1.5 Research questions

The study sought answers to the following research questions;

1. What are graduates' experiences regarding seeking employment opportunities in Lusaka district?
2. What employment seeking strategies among the graduates in Lusaka district?
3. What challenges are encountered by graduates in low job opportunity situations in Lusaka district?

1.6 Significance of study

It is hoped that the findings of this study would benefit scholars and policy makers. The findings of this study might also help graduates, higher education institutions and employing agencies to have informed understanding of the employment situation in Lusaka district. It is also hoped that the findings of this study would contribute to the body of scholarly knowledge on higher education and employment. The information generated by this study could be used by other researchers, governments and other stakeholders to come up with strategies that help to assuage the scourge of unemployment among graduates.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

The study was restricted to Lusaka District, and it was randomly conducted to the unemployed graduates that completed their studies in selected public institutions although living in Lusaka district. This study was undertaken in Lusaka, the capital city, because of the likelihood of higher employment chances relative to other places as well as the convenience with regards to the location of most universities in the country as well as the high youth population.

1.8 Limitation of the Study

One of the limitations of this study with reference to Mugenda (1999) was the challenge to locate the graduates especially those that completed within the space of ten years and above. This challenge was addressed through the use of snowball sampling. The other limitation was the unwillingness of some graduates to take part in the study. Regardless of the limitations, sample saturation was attained and the findings were thus reliable.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

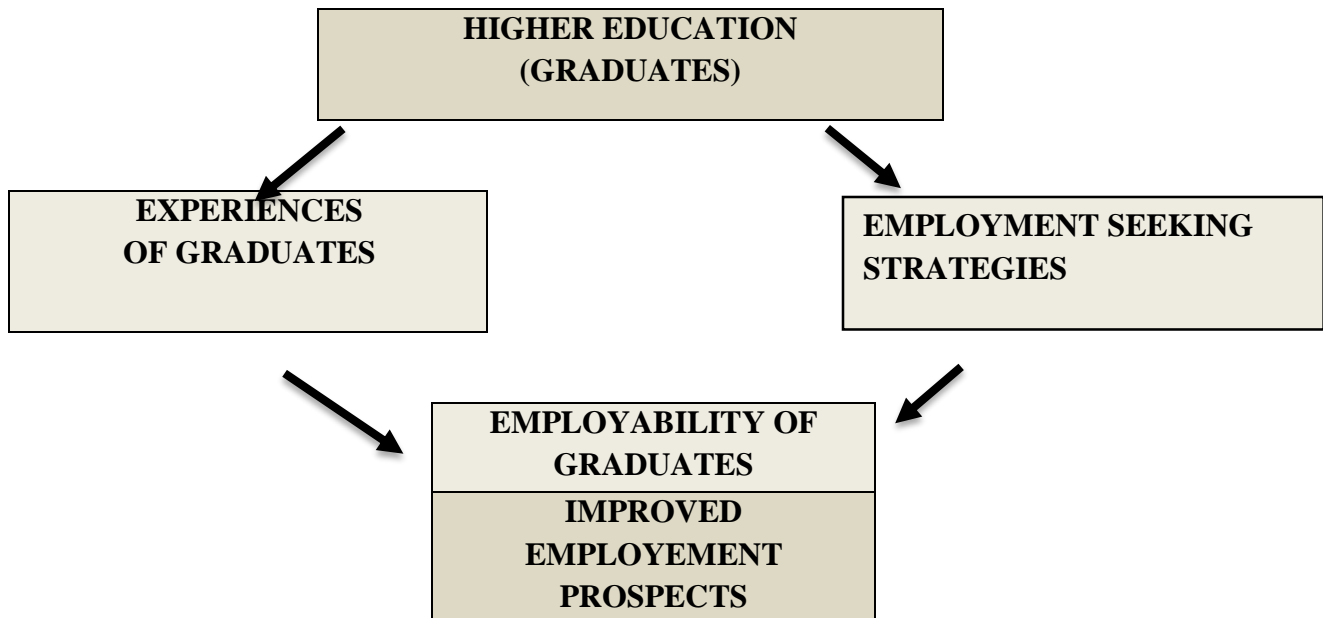
This study was guided by the human capital theory. Becker (1962) introduced the human capital theory, arguing that investments in human capital (such as education, on job training, medical care,

and migration) can pay off in the long run in terms of financial, personal, social and societal returns. Becker later explained that investments in human capital are those “activities that influence future money and psychic income by increasing the resources in people” and predicted a positive relationship between education and earnings (Becker, 1993). Higher education scholars have since employed the human capital investment theory framework and found that the incentive to acquire further education is higher during periods of higher unemployment or recession because the amount of foregone income tends to be lower and therefore, the opportunity costs also tend to be lower (Dellas & Koubi, 2003; Perna 2005).

Human capital theory assumes that education determines the marginal productivity of labour and it determines earnings. Since 1960, it has dominated the economics and policy and public understanding, of relations between education and work. It has become widely assumed that intellectual formation constitutes a mode of economic capital, higher education in preparation for work and determines graduate’s outcomes. All in all, according to the human capital investment theory, individuals are more likely to invest in capital development during periods of economic contraction or higher unemployment rates because the opportunity costs (foregone earnings) are lower during these periods (Dellas & Koubi 2003; Dellas & Sakellaris, 2003; Perna, 2005; Arkes, 2010). Investment in education were found to act as a shelter against future unemployment (Arkes, 2010). In the context of this study, this theory highlighted the correlation that exists between employment and employability especially after the findings were collected, refined and analysed.

1.10 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework as crafted by the researcher is presented below;



Based on the objectives of the study, this conceptual framework was seen in the light of ascertaining the relationship between higher education and employment in a low-job opportunity situation in Lusaka district. Then, it explored the experiences of graduate's seeking jobs in Lusaka district. Lastly, it identified the employment seeking strategies among the graduates in Lusaka district. Once, this is done, there is a likelihood that employability will be enhanced.

Given that young people make up a larger share of the population in Zambia, there is little doubt that youth unemployment poses a severe danger to the country's peace, security, political, and economic stability. The opportunity cost to young individuals and society as a whole of doing nothing about youth unemployment is very substantial. Although there are many and well-known reasons why young people are unemployed, it is vital to focus on the most significant ones so that the right remedies may be developed after an accurate diagnosis of the causes (Nkonde, 2019).

According to Nkonde (2019), it is crucial that the government understands that the private sector creates jobs and that the majority of talent and ideas for job creation are found outside of government. As a result, they should think about searching for solutions to the problem of youth unemployment outside of the government bureaucracy. It is crucial that the commercial sector, collaborative partners, labour unions, and civil society are involved. There are Zambians out there who have creative and useful ideas for long, medium, and short-term job development. The solutions are there begging to be seized.

Zambia is one of several developing nations fighting to provide its citizens with appropriate work possibilities, particularly in the formal economy. Youth unemployment is significant, particularly in metropolitan areas where it has risen to 40.4% for women and 35.6% for men (CSO 2011, 95). According to Sender et al. (2005), the socioeconomic crisis of the previous two decades and Zambia's young and expanding population, which is producing an ever-bigger youth labour force, are to blame for the country's high rates of youth unemployment. The majority of people affected by youth unemployment lack skills according to Mayaka and Moyo (1999). Zambia may experience increased poverty levels in the future if the problem of youth unemployment is not addressed. The new administration has pledged to increase youth job prospects, but without accurate data and knowledge of the dynamics of labour demand, the administration's good intentions are likely to confront serious obstacles.

As more individuals have access to higher education, there is more competition for good positions (Kitroeff 2018). The second difficulty is not having the necessary credentials for some employment; new positions frequently have standards that differ from those of school programmes (Jackson, 2015). Technological innovation, for instance, has an impact on people's employment. Graduates need to have 21st-century skills—personal qualities that make them employable—in

order to succeed. Pupils encounter two obstacles: fierce rivalry and a deficiency of specialised skills required for employment. To equip students for lifelong learning, technological knowledge and 21st-century abilities including problem-solving and IT application skills are essential. Additionally, in order to foster beneficial business relationships and access to specialised information, two personal attributes—cooperation and initiative—are essential.

Currently, the 21st-century skills system is considered to be fundamental to all career prospects. Problem-solving is one of them – it includes one’s abilities to analyze work situations, diagnose problems, reason, and make decisions (Van Laar et al., 2017). Challenges are a part of any job; they can appear when customers are dissatisfied, when employees underperform, or when machinery breaks. The other 21st-century skill is the application of IT (information technology). Most business areas now use computers in the workplace; therefore, employees cannot operate without understanding how to work with technology (Kivunja 2015). For this reason, a person has to be familiar with word processing, file management, spreadsheets, the internet, and other specific programs (Van Laar et al., 2017).

Students need to acquire the discussed 21st-century skills and maintain their level to increase employability. However, they also must have personal attributes that will make them more qualified. The first useful behavior is cooperation, and ability, and a desire to work with other people. By being collaborative, a person creates new relationships and gains more information from others. Cooperation helps to overcome the challenge of lacking skills as it leads to mentorship (Jackson, 2015). Workers with a cooperative attitude invite feedback and positive thinking, maintaining a pleasant atmosphere at work and inspiring colleagues (Jackson, 2015).

The next personal attribute is initiative – a behavior needed in creative fields as well as marketing, development, and entrepreneurship. By developing an initiative approach, a person actively participates in discussions, offers new and bold ideas, takes on responsibility, and thinks creatively (Collet, Hine & Du Plessis 2015). Also, ambition may be useful in customer communication because clients may appreciate encouragement and support. This attribute is connected to self-direction that allows workers to set and achieve personal goals (Van Laar et al., 2017).

The idea of employability explains to graduate students the skills and characteristics that they have to possess to increase their chance of getting the job they want. Graduate prospects have to acquire 21st-century skills to distinguish themselves from the competition and match the specific job requirements. Problem solving and application of IT are two of these skills. The first one is necessary for every field because it allows one to overcome possible issues. The second skill is also helpful in most professions because computers are used universally. Cooperation and initiative raise can raise my employability because they create connections, invite feedback, and support continuous learning.

1.11 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

The following are some of the operational definitions that were used in this study.

Higher Education: Higher education is tertiary education leading to the award of an academic degree.

Employment: Employment is an agreement between an individual and another entity that stipulates the responsibilities, payment terms and arrangement, rules of the workplace, and is recognised by the government.

Employability: refers to an individual's ability to gain initial employment, maintain employment, and obtain new employment if required. In simple terms, employability is about being capable of getting and keeping a fulfilling job.

Graduate: A person who has successfully completed a course of study or training, especially a person who has been awarded an undergraduate or first academic degree.

Youth: A period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood independence or persons between the ages of 15 to 35 years of age.

University: A university is an institution of higher (or higher) education and research, which awards academic degrees in various academic disciplines.

Labour force: The number of people of working age (18 to 64) who are employed or who are unemployed and were and were available to work (World Bank, 2013).

1.11 Summary

This chapter has covered the background of the study, the identified issue that led to its implementation, and the focus of the intended investigation. Also, this chapter has described the broad and detailed goals that will guide the investigation as well as the underlying theory. The importance of doing the study has also been emphasized. The scope of the investigation, operational definitions used within the study, and last but not least, the delimitation of the study, has all been further explained in this chapter. The literature surrounding the key ideas of this study, as well as the gaps found therein, was discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Overview

The previous chapter presented the background to the study, highlighting the problem that impelled its undertaking, its purpose, outlined the general and specific objectives and questions that will guide the study, the theory adopted, the significance attached to undertaking the study. The foregoing chapter further outlined the scope of the study, operational definitions within the study, and the delimitation of the study. The focus of this chapter is literature pertaining to the main concepts of the study.

2.1 Graduate Unemployment

In order to understand the issues surrounding the unemployment among graduates in Zambia, it is important to contextualize some terms that are synonymous with the phenomenon of unemployment among graduates. According to Brier et al (2010), a graduate is an individual who has obtained an undergraduate or postgraduate degree or has completed secondary school and has also obtained a certificate or diploma of at least six months' full time duration.

Unemployment is one of the biggest predominant and common problems in today's world. It prevails widely among numerous countries, a matter that brings many problems in the country's internal economy and hence it jeopardizes communities' stability and cohesion. The world got into another period of unemployment after world war two, and the consequential wars and destruction were a reason behind the rise in unemployment, in addition to the other factors that led to the increasing unemployment in communities. Unemployment is defined as the state of unemployed in which the individual has the ability to work and they seek and they seek for an opportunity but

to no avail. Unemployment also includes individuals who worked before but they have not found the opportunity once more (Kufa, 2020).

Unemployed persons are those who have had no employment during the reference week, were available for work, except for temporary illness and made specific efforts to find employment sometime during the four-week period ending with the reference week (Husmanns, 2007). In order to be considered unemployed, an individual must be without work, currently available to work and taking steps to find work (CSO report, 2015).

2.2 Unemployment in Zambia

The argument on the unemployment statistics in Zambia has always been that there has not been much formal employment creation by government. The Ministry of labour states that unemployment levels stand at 41.2% (Ministry of Labour, 2017). The youth in Zambia comprise of 64.2% of the working population in Zambia and about 55% of the labour force (Bhorat, et al., 2015). The youth unemployment bracket of 15-34 years represents 60% of the unemployed and this poses a very huge challenge to the national productivity (Habazoka, et al., 2016).

The problem of youth unemployment is not only in Zambia but also common in Kenya whose youth unemployment rate stands at a staggering 65% representing the highest among selected Sub-Saharan countries (Habazoka, et al., 2016). According to a research by Habazoka et al, (2016) Zambia's youth unemployment rate stands at 27.5%. The comparison of Kenya's unemployment rate to Zambia indicates that Zambia is better placed with its implementation of its national development policies but on the other hand an argument can be brought out that Kenya has a larger population of about 48.6 million in comparison to Zambia with 16.6 million (World Bank, 2017). The difference in population indicates that the problems faced by Zambia in graduate unemployment could have a larger effect on its economy than those faced by Kenya.

2.3 Causes for youth graduate unemployment

The field of study of a graduate is said to be a factor in influencing the employability of youth graduates. In the studies by Moleke (2005) and Baldry (2013) in South Africa, they found that graduates in the field of humanities and arts had the lowest figures for finding jobs. From this finding, they both suggested that humanities and arts disciplines are not preparing graduates adequately for the job market. Reasons for the low figures for finding jobs with these qualifications are that, “they are considered to be too general in skills focus and employers may be less certain about the capability of graduates with these kinds of qualifications” (Moleke, 2005:7).

In a study by Nel and Neale-Shutte (2013) they agreed that the field of study maybe a reason for unemployment. On career choice, Alesina, Danninger and Rostagno (1999) also argued that educational and attitudinal choices are tilted toward the public sector in countries where public jobs are much more attractive and available than private sector jobs. This suggests that attractiveness and availability of job opportunities for a specific career also influences choice of a career.

One of the most pressing issues in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has been identified as youth unemployment (Hilson and Ose, 2014). According to Rama (1998) found that there are in essence three causes of unemployment. The first is age: the probability of being unemployed of being unemployed is highest amongst the youth, and it deteriorates with age. The second being education: various studies indicate that the rate of unemployment reduces as education levels get higher. Finally, are the benefits received from family support: the likelihood of being unemployed is higher among persons who live with their parents.

In Zambia unemployment/underemployment have been identified as low levels of entrepreneurship coupled with limited access to appropriate finance, technology and markets, low

absorptive capacity of the labour market for new entrants and the concentration of growth in highly capital-intensive and urban based sectors like mining. On the other hand, the informal economy has been growing rapidly and accounts for 90% of total employment (labour force survey, 2008). It is estimated that about 280 000 or more new entrants join the labour market annually and create a reserve army of the unemployed due to the lack of ability of the job market to create sufficient formal jobs to absorb these new entrants (Nkonde, 2019).

Writing about entrepreneurship employment opportunities, Gyoshev et. al (2008) argued that the shape and pace of entrepreneurship in the emerging economies is determined by the dominant influence of the institutional environment. They argue further that ‘for newly forming organisations, the international environment defines, creates, and limits entrepreneurial opportunities and this affects the speed and scope of entrepreneurial entry rates. They suggest that there appears to be a need to initiate programmes to upgrade the knowledge and skills of the people to actualise their entrepreneurial aspirations.

Transparency International Zambia describes corruption in Zambia as endemic, and this is greatly supported by the Auditor General’s Report that indicated that corruption in Zambia is widely spread (Ndulo, 2014). Corruption in Zambia is linked to poor economic performance and can be among the factors that are hindering youth employment in Zambia. This means that sustainable jobs now become only accessible to the few privileged youth. Corruption can also be discussed in line with nepotism and gender abuse.

Social networks or what Putnam (2000) calls ‘social capital’ is identified as an important factor in job search resources and strategies. Hence, lack of social capital or social networks has the potential to influence youth graduate’s inability to access the available jobs on the labour market.

Schoer, Rankin and Roberts (2012) found that the majority of employees in their study had been recruited through social networks and that these same employees reported a higher number of employed household members, highlighting the importance of household connections to the labour market. Other literature, Bernstein (2010); Rankin, Simkins, Rule, Trope and Bernstein (2007); and Wittenberg (2002), also identify networking as the most effective job searching strategy.

Lindsay et al., (2005) study in Scotland explored the use of social networks for job-search purposes in different geographical areas. In the study the authors compared the impact of social networks in three different rural areas and established some of the effects that location can have on unemployed individuals and also the choice of job search method. The results suggested that weak ties', usually established through work rather than family based contacts, tended to be the focus for informal job search activity. Thus, young people, those who had been unemployed for a longer period of time or intermittently and those with low skills were less able to benefit from social networks.

With the global phenomenon of increasing investments in higher education in both the public and private sector, as reflected in the increasing number of colleges and universities, an increased number of new graduates in need of employment opportunities are being added yearly to the labour force (NYP, 2006; Nel & Neale-Shutte, 2013). This situation strains the labour market which can only take a limited number due to its slow growth. In Zambia, lack of job opportunities is further worsened by the kind of education curriculum that promotes and produces graduates who rarely see themselves as potential employers, but only as potential employees in the formal sector. Furthermore, the structure of the economy and sources of growth are such that formal wage jobs are being created slowly, limiting the number of employment opportunities amidst increasing employment demand (World Bank, 2013).

In a study done by Nel and Neale-Shutte (2013:443-445), 37.3% of the graduates who participated in this study a year after graduation indicated that they were unemployed, while 62.6 per cent indicated that they were in paid employment. Of those unemployed, reasons related to: a lack of available jobs (24.9%); a lack of opportunities in the respondent's particular field of study (9%), and a lack of work experience in a particular field of study.

Further studies have challenged the existing concepts on employability while introducing new definitions which consider the evolution of employability over time and also some critical variables that influence employability at both individual and organisational levels (Clarke, 2008). Employability however, does not guarantee employment but increases the chances of obtaining suitable employment, compared to other job seekers, understanding how to manage employability is more important than just understanding what employability is. How individuals can enhance their employability compared to others in job market, and the role organisations can play in employability development was studied in detail. Clarke (2008) can be considered parallel to previous studies on employability which clearly links individual learners and their environment rather than considering things on isolation. Clarke's study clearly highlights that defining employability as "having skills and abilities to get employed, remain in employment and to find new employment when required. Hillage & Pollard (1998) argues that this is problematic because skills and abilities alone do not guarantee employment while attitude and behaviour, individual characteristics, and labour market conditions all play an integrated role in generating employability.

While job opportunities could be available, youth graduates face the problem of lacking work experience. Nel and Neale-Shutte (2013) found that the majority of unemployed graduate respondents felt that experiential or work-based learning enhanced their employability.

Anyanwu's (2000) study also had similar results, the majority of the graduates in his study who had no prior work experience or may had some delay in entering the workforce.

Writing about entrepreneurship employment opportunities, Manolova, Eunni and Gyoshev (2008:205) argued that 'the shape and pace of entrepreneurship in the emerging economies is significantly determined by the dominant influence of the institutional environment'. They further argue that 'for newly forming organizations, the institutional environment defines, creates, and limits entrepreneurial opportunities', and this affects the speed and scope of entrepreneurial entry rates. They suggest that 'there appears to be a need to initiate programmes to upgrade the knowledge and skills of the people to actualize their entrepreneurial aspirations' Focusing on hindrances to accessing a job, Baldry (2013) argues that the ability to embark on an efficient and consistent job search journey is vital for graduates in need of employment.

However, the ability to be active and effective in the job search venture is dependent on the socio-economic situation of individual graduates. In a study by Baldry (2013) in South Africa, it was found that graduates of low socio-economic status and graduates with difficulty accessing resources showed the highest prevalence of unemployment. The common job searches techniques, like internet access, newspapers for job adverts, calling or visiting labour market networks, and mailing, all require money. For the socially and economically disadvantaged graduate, such an expenditure would not be an option to incur if the basic needs like water, food for survival are not met.

Kingdon and Knight (2005) further explain that poor graduates become discouraged job seekers due to inability to effectively search for jobs. In addition, when talking about the effects of poverty on job searches, issues of location, the area of one's residence at the time of searching for a job,

also become an issue (Baldry, 2013). This is because the infrastructure and distance from one's residence to facilities like the internet café, or post boxes may add to the cost of searching for a job, and in such situations, poor graduates may be involuntarily excluded from employment opportunities (Baldry, 2013).

2.4 Job Seeking among unemployed graduates

Based on literature reviewed above, among other factors that may contribute to youth graduate unemployment, is the job-search behaviour of the unemployed. This behaviour is mostly influenced by the motivation for finding a job. Most motivation theories assume that not searching by the unemployed is a function of one having a low level of motivation to seek employment, the value one places on having a job, self-determination, and the expected results from the job-seeking venture. These factors do relate and interact in shaping the job-seeking behaviour and experiences of unemployed people (Maarten, Willy, Hans De Witte & Feather, 2005; Maarten, Willy, Siegfried De, Hans De & Edward, 2004; Vansteenkiste, Lens, Witte & Feather, 2005). Vansteenkiste et al (2005) found that higher confidence about finding a job might indicate more positive attitudes towards self and towards the current state of the labour market in terms of provision of employment opportunities.

Unemployment becomes social death and the unemployed are seen as depressed and without hope. Within the perspective, unemployment is presented as a huge social problem. Unemployment increases the risk of suicide attempts, alcohol consumption, deaths due to suicide attempts and has generally lowered life expectancy (Halvorsen, 1999).

With these mentioned factors at play, job-seeking may negatively or positively experienced. Unemployment affects life satisfaction and general health of unemployed graduates. However, it is also argued that 'although we believe that many people who fail to persist at job searching are

not motivated, it is possible that some are instead engaging in alternative activities rather than searching for a new job' (Maarten et al, 2004:347). Atkinson and Birch (1970) also argue that when people's motivation for an alternative activity becomes greater than their motivation for a target activity, they may switch to the alternative activity. This consequently directs unemployed people's attention away from a job search towards alternative activities.

Graduate unemployment is of concern because individuals who become unemployed in their early working years may become discouraged and some struggle or even fail to obtain a job after full-time higher education may see a decline in human capital and employment prospects, which could result in social exclusion (Gomez-salvador and Leiner-Killinger, 2008). These studies argue that youth unemployment can be problematic not only to the affected but, but to the economy at large. This is so because youth unemployment means unused labour potential and therefore has a negative effect on prospective economic growth. Secondly, youth unemployment implies that there is lesser labour input from those who in spite of less- or no work experience than older workers are supposed to advance the processes of production with their more recent and innovative expertise (ibid,2008).

In a study done by Maarten, et al (2005), job search intensity positively correlated with motivation and employment value, indicating that unemployed people who are self-driven and motivated to search for a job and unemployed people who place higher value on gaining employment are more active job seekers. The results further showed that the more unemployed participants valued having a job and the more they felt controlled in their job search, the more they reported feeling worthless and socially isolated. These research participants also reported having negative job-seeking experiences, and lower life satisfaction and psychological wellbeing. Meanwhile, those with higher autonomous motivation were somewhat less satisfied with their present lives. Those

unemployed participants with higher job expectancies reported a negative unemployment experience.

2.5 Concerns of graduate unemployment

The Notion of unemployment, specifically youth unemployment, as a factor promoting violence is relatively common in the literature. Paul Collier identified the economic growth rate as “the single most (statistically) influential variable in determining whether a country returns to war within a few years of a peace settlement and saw unemployment as a likely route through which growth could affect violence (Collier, 2000). He argued that unemployment was a source of grievance providing a motive alongside greed- while the opportunity cost for unemployed young men to engage in violence and join armed groups was low (Collier, 2000 cited in Stewart, 2015:4). Unemployment among graduates is a major political and social-economic challenge in Africa, despite the efforts by some governments to try to enhance performance in their economies (Baah-Boateng, 2016). In Zambia, youth unemployment has been associated largely with crime and some political violence. The lack of employment especially among youth and graduates is assumed to be the reason why many young people are involved in criminal activities and also involved in violent political crusades perpetrated by politicians in various political parties. A research conducted by Caruso and Gavrilova analysed the relationship between unemployment and violence in Pakistan. The findings indicated that most of the young population in that country were unemployed (Caruso & Gavrilova, 2012).

The study in Pakistan appears to be compared largely to the Zambian environment where some traces of political violence have been evident in every election in the last 10 years and involving the youth (Oliver, 2016). Hilker in her research indicated that population is going to increase by 2025 and that the global youth population will stand at 72million more (Hilker, 2015). According

to Hilker the youths are mostly involved in violence and affected largely by poverty. This raises huge concern for countries like Zambia with a relatively small GDP, as it means that the productive age group is not actively participating in economic growth activities.

Cincotta et. al (2003), Heinsohn (2003) and Urdal (2004) (cited in Cramer, 2010) echo the view that youth unemployment is a key cause of insurgency or civil war. It is believed that unemployment triggers participation in insurgencies, prompts people to join violent gangs, drives people to extremism, and that it is the primary reason behind domestic violence (Cramer, 2015). Similarly, in relation to crime: Disaffected young people who lack the economic opportunities to raise themselves out of poverty are more vulnerable than adults to participation in armed violence, crime, gangs, drug trafficking and other illicit activities' (Ali, 2014).

Unemployment is a problem that affects not only the individual youth, but also the family, and the whole of society. Idleness, frustrations and depression resulting from youth exclusion from employment may lead youths to engage in social vices such as prostitution, drug-abuse and alcohol consumption as well as criminal activities (NYP, 2006; Kingdon & Knight, 2004). Dealing with these consequences for jobless youths is not only expensive, but also a threat for the society, affecting its future (Annamária, 2013). Annamária (2013:183) further argues that "If an increasing part of the new generation begins its adult life with the feeling of being unnecessary and having no chance to integrate into the mainstream society, the future will be burdened with more and more inexperienced and disappointed people with all the consequences of this." This emphasizes the serious consequences of youth unemployment.

Initial unemployment and idleness of graduates have adverse psychological, social, occupational and financial effects on them. In a study done in Nigeria, Fajana (2000) argued that unemployment

can lead to: loss of status, loss of prestige and economic strength or power as a result of the loss of wages and benefits of job, infliction of psychological injury resulting from the breakdown in social contacts and isolation from the world of work, loss of responsibility, identity and respect which the position at work ensures, and loss of purchasing power. Furthermore, on the effects of youth unemployment, Ward (2009) argues that people excluded from the economy may experience poverty and, in order to have a livelihood, they may commit crime.

Further studies have challenged the existing concepts on employability while introducing new definitions which consider the evolution of employability over time and also some critical variables that influence employability at both individual and organisational levels (Clarke, 2008). Employability however, does not guarantee employment but increases the chances of obtaining suitable employment, compared to other job seekers, understanding how to manage employability is more important than just understanding what employability is. How individuals can enhance their employability compared to others in job market, and the role organisations can play in employability development was studied in detail. Clarke (2008) can be considered parallel to previous studies on employability which clearly links individual learners and their environment rather than considering things on isolation. Clarke's study clearly highlights that defining employability as "having skills and abilities to get employed, remain in employment and to find new employment when required.

Hillage & Pollard (1998), argues that this is problematic because skills and abilities alone do not guarantee employment while attitude and behaviour, individual characteristics, and labour market conditions all play an integrated role in generating employability. The other vice that is affecting the youth graduates is alcohol abuse. According to the World Health Organisation, there is a prevalence of alcohol abuse of people above the productive age of 15 as the indicators are that 7.9

are male and 1.0 are female (World Health Organisation, 2014). The prevalence of alcohol abuse is in the productive age and this is an indicator of the youth that are not engaged in the productive sectors. The problem of youth alcohol abuse is not only in Zambia but also in South Africa, 80% of youth deaths are alcohol related (Parker, 2017). In both Zambia and South Africa, youth unemployment rates are very, hence this could be attributed to curse of unemployment.

Specific studies focusing on graduate employment in Zambia might not be as prevalent as in some other regions. However, various reports and research initiatives may provide insights into the broader context of employment and education in Zambia, including the situation of graduates.

One of the studies done on unemployment in Zambia is the Zambia Labour Market Mapping Study: This study, conducted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) or other similar organizations, might provide valuable insights into the dynamics of the Zambian labor market, including graduate employment trends, challenges, and opportunities.

The other national study that was done is the Zambia Labour Force Surveys (ZLFS). The Zambian government periodically conducts labor force surveys, which often include information on employment rates among different segments of the population, including graduates. These surveys can offer data-driven insights into graduate employment trends over time.

Mwelwa (2020) also conducted a study that explored social science degree programmers' effectiveness on skills development and graduate employability in Zambia. The study found that graduates needed a variety of employability skills in order to be employable and maintain their graduate identity. When they joined their organisations, the majority of social science graduates, according to the study, were not prepared for the workforce. They demonstrated employability abilities, but employers were not as impressed. Furthermore, because of the way in which they

were being carried out, the study discovered that student internships were less successful in developing skills. The results also showed that the labour industry and university departments that offered social science programmes had few and weak ties. The study found that all four of the social science degree programmes were less successful in helping graduating students acquire employable skills and become employable, to varied degrees.

2.6 Graduate employment

The systems and types of social interactions in our environments that we as human beings find ourselves in shape our ways of life, our opportunities and our abilities (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). Bronfenbrenner's (1989) argument is that answers to solving social problems in our societies lie in the systems and structures that shape our daily interactions, our capabilities, and the freedoms that we enjoy. Government policy and management practices of the government of a country could be referred to here as the systems and the social interactions that shape our ways of life, and access to opportunities like employment.

Other stakeholders that shape our ways of life in terms of provision and distribution of goods and services are the non- governmental Organisations and the private sector through different roles that they play in the community (Simmons, 1998). These roles include: advocacy, information gathering and analysis, information dissemination, monitoring and watchdog role, generation of ideas and recommendations, service delivery, facilitation/mediation, financing and grant making. These roles could promote youth graduate employment.

Furthermore, a study done by Nel and Neale-Shutte (2013) in South Africa in which graduates were asked to identify ways in which graduate unemployment could be improved, found that graduate's responses included: to improve particular aspects of the content and delivery of their qualification or programme by encouraging smaller classes; ensuring that the latest teaching

technology is used for lectures; enhancing the approachability of lecturers; ensuring that lecturers are suitably qualified and experienced; incorporating more practical work into programmes/qualifications and providing assistance to students to ease their transition into the world of work.

Nel and Neale-Shutte (2013) also believed that experiential or work-based learning should be a compulsory component of their programme/qualification, and that entrepreneurial skills should be taught, and that career guidance for students should be enhanced, and advice should be provided to first-year students in choosing appropriate modules/majors that are in demand by the labour market.

Amidst the growing size of the youth labour force, and the limited growth rate of the labour especially in the formal sector in Zambia, investments to expand the informal sector and inculcation of entrepreneurship spirit and skills in the youth labour force can be possible alternatives for expansion of labour demand (Baldry, 2013; World Bank, 2013). A study by Nel and Neale-Shutte (2013) indicated that only a small percentage of graduates (1.4%) who were sampled indicated that they were self-employed, and that of all the employability skills that graduates perceived to have developed during their studies, the lowest mean ratings were assigned to entrepreneurship.

Meanwhile, studies by Pultnam (2000); Schoer Rankin and Roberts (2012); Bernstein (2010); Rankin et al. (2007), and Wittenberg (2002) also argue on the need for youth graduates to build social capital or social networks in the labour market to help them access the available jobs. In these studies, findings suggest that having friends or relatives already employed in the labour

market or who have connections with the labour market increases the chances of finding employment early and easily for youth graduates.

The Government of the Republic of Zambia has created institutions such as the Citizens Economic Empowerment Commission (CEEC) program that has been supported with finances to provide working capital for the youths to enable them participate in entrepreneurship. A simple survey carried out around Lusaka reveals that many youths do not have access to capital through institutions such as CEEC because of mainly two reasons; the first reason is related to corrupt activities (Anti-Corruption Commission, 2013) the other reason is that they do not have skills to prepare business plans that CEEC require in order to give them business loans (CEEC, 2015).

In another study by Bessant (2004:387), she acknowledged the fact that youth involvement in solving their own problems through voicing out in demand of their rights would be a way to promote youth graduate employment. She argued that ‘youth participation has become a policy cliché to say ‘increased youth participation’ will ‘empower’ young people, help build community and remedy a range of social problems that young people go through.’ Another way that would promote youth employment is the promotion of merit based job recruitment processes. Issues of nepotism and corruption in employment recruitment create unequal access to employment opportunities, thereby creating some form of exclusions that could lead to long sustained poverty on the part of the victims (Lam, 1993).

2.7 Summary

This chapter has reviewed a wealth of literature pertaining to the topic understudy. The literature interrogated in this research indicates that youth unemployment is increasing in Zambia and also that the key sectors of the economy are reducing their volumes of production and thereby needing less and less youth labour because of using more capital-intensive methods of production. This

means that if there are no deliberate efforts to create jobs and business opportunities for the youth, Zambia could have both economic and social crises. The policies and laws put in place by the Zambian government such as increasing the pensionable age and introducing costly minimum wages could result in reduced chances of youth unemployment. Statistics have clearly shown that Africa still has a higher mortality rate and they indicate that unemployment is a major problem globally but must be put on top of the agenda. Youth graduate unemployment in Zambia has a negative effect on economic growth. The proceeding chapter discussed the methodology that was employed for this study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

The previous chapter provided the literature review. This chapter presents the research methodology which will be used in this study. The methodology comprises of the theoretical analysis of the body of methods and principles associated with a branch of knowledge, theoretical model, phases and quantitative or qualitative techniques. The chapter is divided into dominant themes that include description of the study area, research design, study population, sample size, response rate and sampling techniques. The chapter also presents data collection methods and techniques, research approach and data analysis methods.

3.1 Research Design

Research design refers to a plan or framework within which research must be carried out so that the desired information can be obtained with greater precision. It is the glue that holds the research project together (Kasonde-Ng'andu, 2013). According to Polit and Beck (2013) a research endeavour is systematic investigation into a phenomenon and sources in order to establish facts and reach new conclusions. This study used a Convergent Parallel Design. Convergent Parallel Design is a research methodology that combines qualitative and quantitative approaches to investigate a specific topic or phenomenon. It involves collecting both qualitative and quantitative data separately and then merging and comparing the results in a final analysis. This design was used because it allowed the researcher to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research topic by examining it from multiple perspectives. This design also offered flexibility and versatility in

addressing complex research questions and provided valuable insights for decision-making and policy development.

3.2 Target Population

Population refers to the larger group from which a sample is taken for measurement (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). The target population of this study encompassed university graduates in Lusaka district. The researcher only targeted a certain number of respondents because it was not feasible to include the entire population into the study due to constraints of time, man power and financial resources.

3.3 Sample Size

A sample is defined by Leedy (2001) as the smaller group of examples chosen from the population on that you actually measure. Further, Kasonde (2013) asserts that sample size is the number of participants selected from the universe to constitute a desired sample. Best and Khan (2006) defined an ideal sample as a number that is large enough to serve as an adequate representation of the population which the researcher wishes to generalise and small enough to be selected economically in terms of subject availability and expense in both time and money. The total sample size of this study comprised of 280 respondents from within Lusaka district. To calculate the sample through spreadsheet software and calculators, the formula presented below was used:

$$\bar{x} = (\Sigma xi) / n$$

Here, \bar{x} represents the sample mean, Σ tells us to add, xi refers to all the X-values and n stands for the number of items in the data set.

3.4 Sampling Techniques

The techniques used in research have a direct effect on sample size. The sample for students was drawn randomly using simple random sampling. Simple random sampling is a type of probability sampling in which the researcher randomly selects a subset of participants from a population. Each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected. Data was then collected from as large a percentage as possible of this random subset. This technique was chosen because it helped the researcher to pick respondents with information relating to the study. Additionally, the researcher used snowball sampling as a supplementary sampling technique to sample the key informants. Snowball sampling or chain-referral sampling is defined as a non-probability sampling technique in which the samples have traits that are rare to find (White, 2013). More specifically, the researcher used Exponential Non-Discriminative Snowball Sampling. In this type, the first subject is recruited and then he/she provides multiple referrals. Each new referral then provides with more data for referral and so on, until there is enough number of subjects for the sample. This is a sampling technique, in which existing subjects provide referrals to recruit samples required for a research study.

The following criterion was used to determine study eligibility: (1) Youth: a youth in this study is referring to a person between the ages of 18 to 29. The focus on this group is as a result of being the subset of youth who have the highest percentage of unemployment according to CDE (2013), (2) Graduate: a graduate in the study is any person who has obtained an undergraduate degree or has completed secondary school and in addition obtained a certificate or diploma of at least six months' full time duration and (3) Gender: both males and females from any race are eligible to participate.

The graduates were sampled using the student record systems for respective universities. First, the researcher identified some graduates with the help of Deans of students. Afterward, the researcher choose appropriate sampling methods based on the population's characteristics and research objectives. Using these methods, the researcher drew a sample from the list, ensuring it's a smaller subset of the entities in the sampling frame.

3.5 Research Instruments

The researcher used questionnaires and interview guides to collect information pertaining to the objectives of this study. Questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data. Questionnaires are often used by researchers in quantitative research as they are understood to be very useful to collect large amounts of data from a large sample of people. A questionnaire is easy to conduct and surely, large amounts of information can be obtained from a large number of respondents. Questionnaires are also cost-effective when the researchers aim to target a large population. Conversely, interviews were used to collect qualitative data. Kvale (2004) states that interviews help obtain descriptions of the lived world of the participants with respect to interpretations of the meaning of the phenomena under investigation. An interview is a powerful way to gain insight into educational and other important social issues when used to understand the experiences of individuals whose lives reflect issues raised in a study. In addition, they help create an atmosphere that allows participants to talk freely.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher sought permission from the University of Zambia Ethics Committee and Ministry of Education before embarking on the process of data collection. The researcher equally obtained an introductory letter from the Universities for identification purposes. Based on the set objectives

of this study, the researcher developed a questionnaire and interview guides which were pilot-tested on a small proportion of the target population before the full blown exercise of data collection. After the pilot test, some open and close ended questions were revised.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis is ‘the process of bringing order, structure, and interpretation to the mass of collected data,’ (McDonough and McDonough, 1997). Thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data. Thematic analysis is the study of patterns of meaning. In other words, it’s about analysing the themes within your data set to identify meaning. Most importantly, this process is driven by your research questions, so it’s not necessary to identify every possible theme in the data, but rather to focus on the key aspects that relate to your research questions.

The researcher opted to use thematic analysis because it is highly beneficial as it allows one to divide and categorise large amounts of data in a way that makes it far easier to digest. Thematic analysis is particularly useful when looking for subjective information such as a participant’s experiences, views, and opinions, which is why it is usually conducted on data derived from, for example, surveys, social media posts, interviews, and conversations. Conversely, quantitative data was analysed using descriptive analysis. A descriptive analysis is an important first step for conducting statistical analyses. It gives you an idea of the distribution of data, helps to detect outliers and typos, and also enable identify associations among variables, thus making the researcher ready to conduct further statistical analyses.

After data collection the data was firstly edited which involved a careful scrutiny of the completed questionnaires and/or schedules. The edited quantitative data was further entered into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and descriptive statistics were generated in form of frequency tables. In addition, one inferential statistic (spearman’s correlation) was done to establish the

relationship between higher education and employment. Qualitative data from semi-structured interviews were transcribed from audio recordings into text. Thematic analysis was further used where themes were drawn from the interviews in line with the research objectives and research questions. Firstly, the researcher transcribed audio files and observed meanings and patterns across the data set. The researcher then read through the transcript, and jotted down notes about potential codes. The codes were subsequently grouped into themes.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

To determine the reliability and validity of the interview guide schedule and questionnaires, respectively, the researcher carried out a pilot study. The researcher assessed the validity and reliability of the interview schedule's questions by looking at each participant's unique response and determining how relevant it was to the study's goals. A range of data gathering procedures were employed to help verify the information gathered from respondents in order to ensure its legitimacy. To prevent this kind of issue, the research also compared the responses with those of other Participants

3.9 Credibility and Trustworthiness

Credibility refers to the truth of the data or the participant views and the interpretation and representation of them by the researcher (Polit & Beck, 2012). Credibility is enhanced by the researcher describing his or her experiences as a researcher and verifying the research findings with the participants. A qualitative study is considered credible if the descriptions of human experience are immediately recognized by individuals that share the same experience. To support credibility when reporting a qualitative study, the researcher should demonstrate engagement, methods of observation, and audit trails.

Transferability on the other hand refers to findings that can be applied to other settings or groups (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013; Polit & Beck, 2012). A qualitative study has met this criterion if the results have meaning to individuals not involved in the study and readers can associate the results with their own experiences. Researchers should provide sufficient information on the informants and the research context to enable the reader to assess the findings' capability of being "fit" or transferable. However, the criterion of transferability is dependent on the aim of the qualitative study and may only be relevant if the intent of the research is to make generalizations about the subject or phenomenon.

Tactics to ensure credibility are that, the researcher held lengthy interviews with participants, having more than one interview so as to get more details, expanding the findings and clarifying any doubts and also keeping a record of all the activities in this regard. Interviews were tape-recorded for referral adequacy. Persistent observation of participants was also important. Continuous consultation with my supervisor helped to ensure credibility and trustworthiness.

3.10 Ethical Consideration

The researcher took into account all possible ethical issues. The researcher applied for ethical clearance. Ethical clearance was granted by the ethics committee. During the data collection process, the purpose of the study was explained to the participants so that they can voluntarily participate in the study. The measures were undertaken to ensure compliance with ethical issues included keeping the identity of the respondents confidential. In addition, during research, respondents' responses were neither interfered nor contested by the researcher. In addition, informed consent was obtained from both the respondents and the people in charge of the

University where the research was carried out. An informed consent form was issued to the respondents before collecting data from them. Above all, the respondents were equally treated.

3.11 Summary

This chapter presented the methodology that was used in the study. A Convergent Parallel Design was used. The target population comprised of some graduates from the stated universities. A total number of 280 respondents constituted the sample. The sample was selected through simple random sampling procedure. Research instruments that were used include questionnaires and interview guides. The data was analysed qualitatively using thematic analysis. Above all, ethical issues were taken into consideration.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Overview

The previous chapter looked at the Methodology. This chapter presented the findings that were obtained from the field using the research questions of the study. The study used a convergent parallel research design in view of the purpose to establish and document the experiences of youth graduates regarding employment and employability in Lusaka district. The study further gathered information in order to validate the relationship that may exist between education and employment in times when employment opportunities are low.

4.1 Demographic characteristics of respondents

4.1.1 Gender of respondents

As regards the gender, the table below shows that the 50% (140) of respondents in this study were females and 50% (140) were males. This information is tabulated in the figure above.

Table 1: Gender of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	140	50.0
Male	140	50.0
Total	280	100.0

Source: Field Data (2022)

4.1.2 Age of respondents

With reference to the table above, the age range of the respondents in this study was 18-41 years of age. The majority of the respondents were between 18 and 25 years old (84). This was heralded by respondents between the ages of 26 – 33 years (84), 34 – 41 years (56) and above 41 years.

Table 2: Age of respondents

Age (years)	Frequency	Percent
18 to 25	84	30.0
26 to 33	84	30.0
34 to 41	56	20.0
Above 41	56	20.0
Total	280	100.0

Source: Field Data (2022)

4.1.3 Marital Status

With reference to the figure below, 80.0% (224) of the respondents indicated that they are married. Conversely, 20% (56) indicated that they are single.

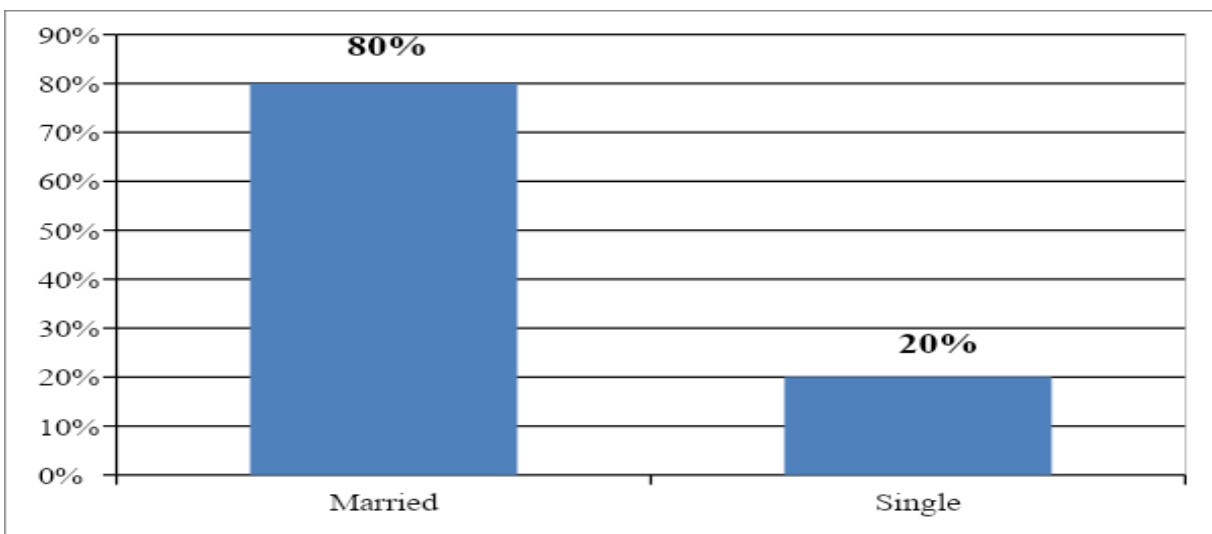


Figure 1: Marital Status; Source: Field Data

4.1.4 Qualifications of respondents

The table below illustrates the qualifications of respondents. Most of the respondents (60%) indicated that they have a bachelor's degree. On the other hand, 40% of the respondents indicated that they have a Master's degree.

Qualification	Frequency	Percent
Certificate	84	30.0
Bachelor's	168	60.0
Master's	122	40.0
Total	280	100.0

Source: Field Data (2022)

4.1.5 University

According to the information presented in the table below, majority of the respondents (80%) pursued their studies at X. The rest of the respondents (20%) correspondingly indicated that they did their studies at University Y and University Z.

Table 3: University

	Frequency	Percent
University X	224	80.0
University Y	28	10.0
University Z	28	10.0
Total	280	100.0

Source: Field Data (2022)

4.1.6 Employment status

The table below presents the employment status of respective respondents. 90% of the respondents indicated that they employed. A smaller fragment of the respondents (10%) indicated that they are not employed.

Table 4: Employment status

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	252	90.0
No	28	10.0
Total	280	100.0

Source: Field Data (2022)

The figure below shows that most of the respondents (70%) were in full time employment. A smaller fragment of the respondents (30%) indicated that they work on part time basis.

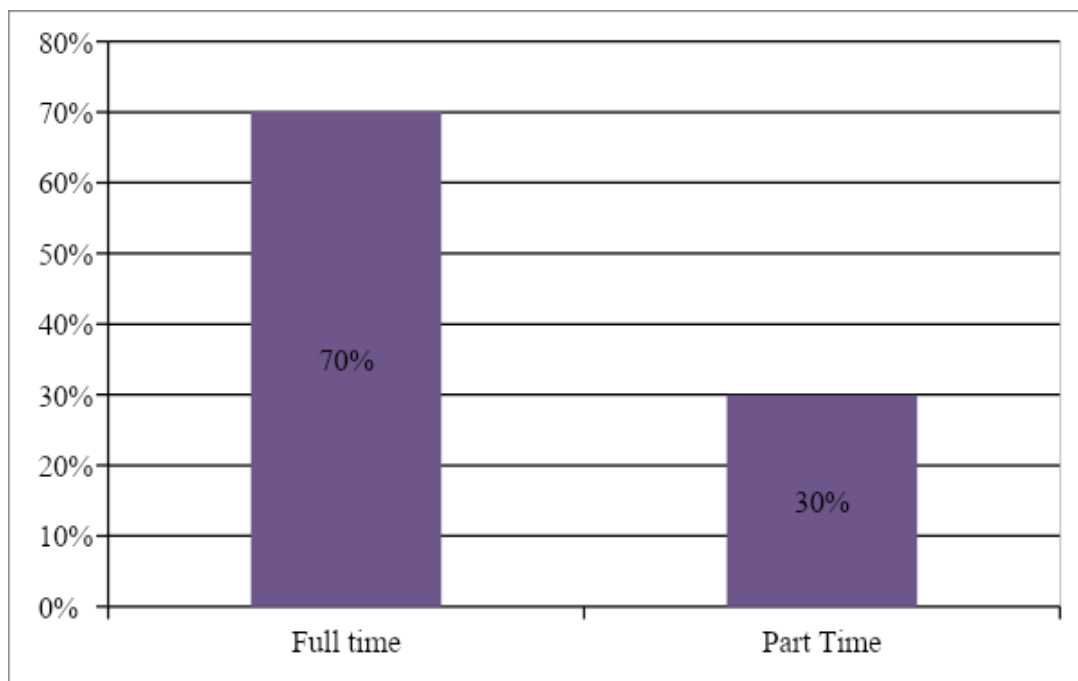


Figure 2: Employment status; Source: Field Data (2022)

4.1.7 Employment Sector

The table below illustrates the employment sector in which the selected respondents belong to. The figures presented in the table below are indicative of the fact that most of the respondents (80%) work in the public sector. Conversely, 20% of the respondents indicated that they belong to the private sector.

Table 5: Employment sector

Sector	Frequency	Percent
Public	224	80.0
Private	56	20.0
Total	280	100.0

Source: Field Data (2022)

4.1.8 Duration of employment

The respondents were further asked to indicate how long they have been employed. According to the table presented below, 50% of the respondents indicated that they have been working for one (1) year 40% of the respondents indicated that they have been working for more than four years. 10% of the respondents indicated that they have been in formal employment for less than a year.

Table 6: Duration of employment

Number of years	Frequency	Percent
Less than one year	28	10.0
One to 4 years	140	50.0
More than 4 years	112	40.0
Total	280	100.0

Source: Field Data (2022)

4.2 Experiences regarding the seeking of jobs

Information regarding the experiences of graduates concerning the seeking of jobs is presented in the figure below. Majority of the respondents (80%) indicated that jobs are hard to find. 10% of the respondents indicated that job seeking is very stressful. Similarly, 10% of the respondents indicated that job seeking is very frustrating.

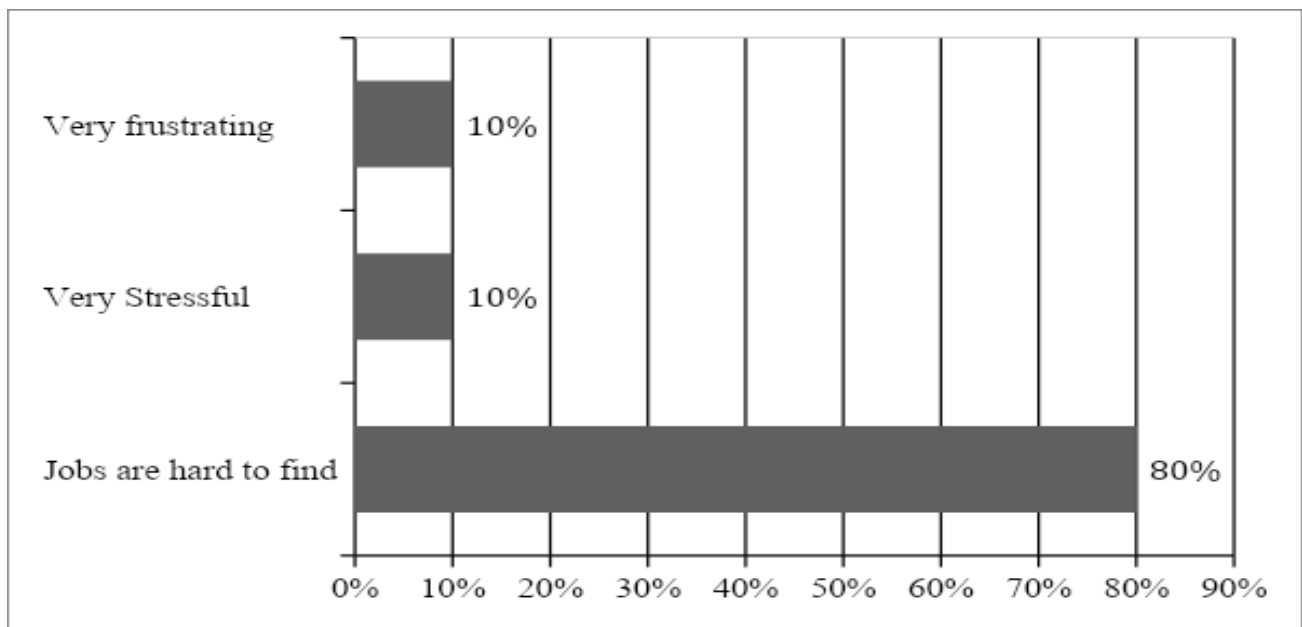


Figure 3: Experiences regarding the seeking of jobs; Source: Field Data (2022)

4.3 Challenges encountered in seeking jobs

The researcher was also interested in knowing if the respondents you encounter challenges when seeking jobs. 80% of the respondents indicated that they encounter challenges when seeking jobs. On the other hand, 20% of the respondents indicated that they do not encounter challenges when seeking jobs.

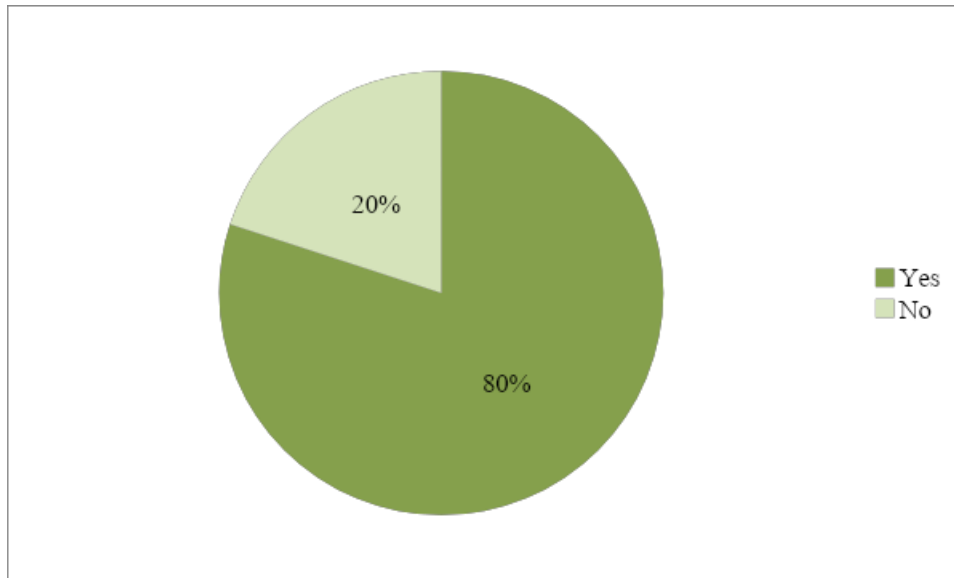


Figure 4: Challenges encountered in seeking jobs; Source: Field Data (2022)

4.4 Challenges encountered when seeking jobs

The challenges encountered when seeking jobs are tabulated in the table below. 50% of the respondents indicated the biggest challenge is lack of experience. 20% of the respondents indicated that unrealistic expectations is another challenge that they have been grappling with when seeking jobs. Competition: Too few jobs and too many graduates was cited by 20% the respondents as a challenge that they encounter when seeking jobs. 10% of the respondents indicated that downturn in the economy is another limiting factor in their quest to seek employment.

Table 7: Challenges encountered in seeking jobs

Challenges	Frequency	Percent
Lack of experience	140	50.0
Unrealistic expectation	56	20.0
Competition: Too few jobs and too many graduates	56	20.0
Downturn in the economy	28	10.0
Total	280	100.0

Source: Field Data (2022)

Qualitatively, four out of the five key informants that were interviewed revealed that lack of experience is the biggest challenge that graduates grapple with. In light of this, one of the key informants indicated that;

Some graduates lack the necessary experience no wonder they encounter challenges when seeking for jobs. Graduates find it depressing to see job listings for junior positions that call for at least a year of work experience. Although internships may give you the experience you need, employers are no longer easily impressed because so many applicants have the same internship credentials. Internship programmes are still valuable, you just need to pick them correctly. The correct internship will allow you to make worthwhile connections and earn useful experience. Start looking for internship opportunities if you haven't already had any. Try your hand at part-time or freelance work if this isn't your cup of tea. They will also provide you with the necessary professional experience to land that position (Key Informant 3).

In addition, another key informant stated that competition has been hampering the employment opportunities of graduates;

The number of job applicants fighting for the same post has increased along with the number of graduates and degree holders over the previous few years. This means there will be fierce rivalry on the job market, particularly for entry-level positions (Key informant 1).

Another key informant indicated that employers have unrealistic expectations;

Employers also have unrealistic expectations of graduates, with there being a mismatch of qualifications and the skills actually required to perform in-demand jobs (Key informant 5).

4.5 Employment seeking strategies

Information regarding employment seeking strategies employed by graduates in Lusaka district is presented using the figure below. 50% of the respondents indicated they learning a new skill is an employment seeking strategy employed by graduates in Lusaka district. 20% of the respondents indicated that networking regularly is one of the strategies employed when seeking jobs. The rest of the respondents stated that participating in job fairs, visting company websites and volunteering are employment seeking strategy employed by graduates in Lusaka district.

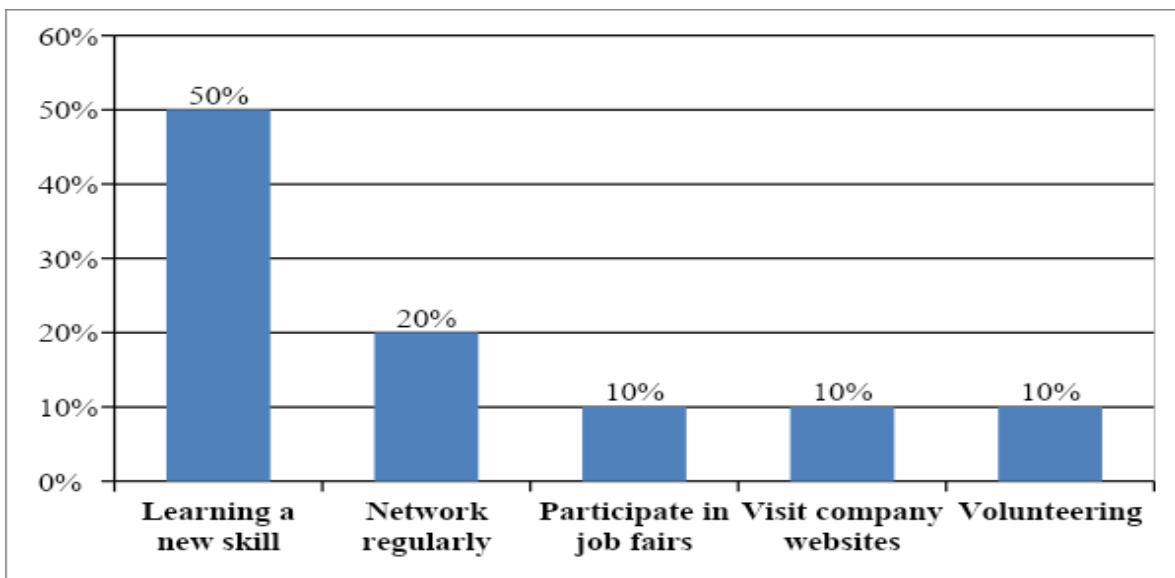


Figure 5: Employment seeking strategies; Source: Field Data (2022)

Collaboratively, the findings from the interviews revealed that graduates employ various employment seeking strategies in their quest to get employed. In view of this, one of the key informants indicated that;

The graduates usually learn new skills that make them to financially sustain themselves. Graduates learn skills in entrepreneurship, project management, research, report writing, CV writing, Job search, job interview and resource mobilization (Key Informant 1).

Similarly, another key informant pointed out that;

A good number of graduates take keen interest in learning new skills. Even if you recently graduated from university, you ought to have gained valuable skills that will enable you to contribute to the organisation you are applying to. For instance, you might be quite knowledgeable about contemporary technology and how you can apply these advancements to complete various duties. It's possible that you've had experience working as an effective coordinator for different student programmes. You can emphasise these key soft talents in your job application. Most recent graduates also lack the skills necessary to write a strong résumé. Graduates must review their resume-writing techniques to help them stand out from the competition. If it's the first time getting a job interview, a graduate must prepare so they don't show up before the interviewer unprepared (Key informant, 4).

Additionally, another informant espoused that;

Some graduates resort to using corporate websites as the main job search strategy. Other graduates use social networking and online media platforms. Some graduates use direct applications but a good number of graduates in Zambia are now using LinkedIN to directly apply for jobs (Key informant, 2).

The qualitative findings further revealed that volunteering and internships are very effective strategies that graduates use to get employed. To validate this, one of the key informants avowed that;

Some graduates are forced to volunteer in order to find work and develop experience due to the current lack of employment prospects in Zambia. By volunteering, graduates engage in unpaid work where they donate their time to assist public, private, or non-profit organisations (Key informant 5).

Since there is and always will be competition for any opening in the present Zambian labour market, graduates use both individual tactics and occasionally combinations of two or three of the aforementioned job search strategies.

4.6 Perceptions on the impact of higher education on employment

The study also sought to establish the relationship between higher education and employment in low job opportunity situations. According to the table below, 60% of the respondents indicated that higher education contributes to overall economic growth by improving the efficiency of the workforce. 30% of the respondents indicated that higher education provides individuals with the necessary market skills to be relevant in the economy. 10% of the respondents indicated that higher education makes the graduates well informed and responsive to job opportunities.

Table 8: Relationship between higher education and employment

Perception variable	Frequency	Percent
Higher education contributes to overall economic growth by improving the efficiency of the workforce	168	60.0
Higher Education provides individuals with the necessary market skills to be relevant in the economy	84	30.0
Higher education makes the graduates well informed and responsive to job opportunities	28	10.0
Total	280	100.0

Source: Field Data (2022)

4.6.1 Relationship between higher education and employment in low opportunity situations

A spearman's correlation was done to establish if there is a relationship between higher education and employment in low job opportunity situations. This was guided by both the null and alternative hypotheses which were stated as follows:

H₀ – There is a significant correlation between higher education and employment in low job opportunity situations.

Table 9: Relationship between higher education and employment in low opportunity situations

<i>H₁ – There is no significant correlation between higher education and employment in low job opportunity situations.</i>			Is there any relationship between higher education and employment in low job opportunity situations	relationship between higher education and employment in low job opportunity situations
Spearman's rho	Is there any relationship between higher education and employment in low job opportunity situations	Correlation Coefficient	0.01	0.01**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	280	280
	relationship between higher education and employment in low job opportunity situations	Correlation Coefficient	0.01**	0.01
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	280	280

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field Data (2022)

Interpretation of spearman’s test: Since the calculated r value of 0.01 is less than the critical value of 0.05 at the chosen level of significance, the null hypothesis was accepted while the alternative hypothesis was rejected.

Decision: This is a positive correlation which means that there is a significant correlation between higher education and employment in low job opportunity situations. It can be seen in the table above that there is positive and strong relationship between higher education and employment. It can therefore be inferred that the effect of higher education on employment is statistically significant. The analysis showed that the coefficient between the higher education and employment was $R = .028$. It was observed that higher education has positive and strong effect on employment.

4.7 Ways higher education institutions and government can enhance employment opportunities for graduates

The table below shows suggestions of what can be done by higher education institutions and government to create employment opportunities for graduates. 50% of the respondents indicated that there is need to encourage internships and proper structural reforms in employment directions. 30% of the respondents indicated that the education system should be made more practical. Lastly, 20% of the respondents indicated that higher learning institutions must offer career guidance and organise alumni networks.

Ways of enhancing graduate employability	Frequency	Percent
Encourage internships and proper structural reforms in employment directions	140	50.0
The education system should be made more practical	84	30.0
Offering career guidance and organizing alumni networks	56	20.0
Total	280	100.0

The findings from the interviews conducted with the key informants revealed that there is need to encourage internships and proper structural reforms in employment directions, make the education system more practical. The key informants further revealed that there is need to integrate

entrepreneurship education and digital innovation into a variety of courses. In view of this, one of the key informants indicated that;

Making the education system more practical can increase the employment prospects of graduates. The present education system is not sufficient. It is mainly based on theoretical knowledge rather than practical knowledge. The students play no active role in the attainment of knowledge. Things are loaded their minds which they cannot digest easily Our educational system is just filling students' heads with a lot of disjointed facts poured into the heads as into a basket; to be emptied out again in the examination hall and empty basket carried out again into the world. Universities and colleges should also integrate entrepreneurship education and digital innovation into a variety of courses to help students develop their knowledge and abilities for working for themselves (Key informant 2).

Another respondent indicated that there is need to offer career guidance and organise alumni networks for the students. In view of this, one of the key informants stressed that;

Career guidance remains the only vehicle that can connect students with right opportunities based on personal assets thereby exploring and putting potentials into judicious use in today's competitive environment. The 21st century demands for competency and productivity which are obtainable when informed career decision is made. Students need career guidance to explore and plan for future career endeavors based on their individual interests, skills and values. There is also need to organise alumni networks because they provide the long-term value to an

educational institution by giving alumni the chance to stay in contact and continue to learn from each other long after they have left school (Key Informant 4).

4.8 Summary

The presentation of the study's findings was the focus of this chapter. The next chapter discussed the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.0 Overview

In the previous chapter, the questionnaire, interview, document and observation data were presented and analyzed. This chapter discusses the findings presented in chapter four. The chapter is divided into different parts. Based on the findings presented in the previous chapter, specific points have been identified and discussed in the following paragraphs.

5.1 Graduates' experiences regarding job-seeking / employment opportunities

The first objective sought to explore graduates' views/ experiences regarding seeking employment opportunities in Lusaka district. The responses of graduates (70%) who are now unemployed show that the main obstacles to getting a job are a lack of experience, a lack of career guidance, high population growth and low economic growth, the need for post graduate qualification and skill gaps for those who are already employed.

This shows a mismatch between the number of jobs available and the number of graduates. This also shows that some present education programmes may lack curriculum focused on skills desired in the job market. This can subsequently make job seeking very difficult. However, having the right attitude and determination to succeed is definitely a bonus for graduates. Knowing how to apply for jobs and understanding the importance of tailoring your curriculum vitae can immensely increase the chances of getting employed. This finding is in tandem with Clare (2009) who adds that graduates must make their CVs relevant in order to position themselves for the jobs they want, rather than just summarising their career history.

The respondents' choices do not reveal how these gaps are to be closed by the respondents or their employers because that is outside the purview of this study. According to the researcher, common result scenarios include aspects like adaptation, on-the-job training, or task sharing with coworkers and peer staff. The researcher also looked for talents that graduates believed employers were looking for in the interviews she conducted. Program management and statistical proficiency were among them, as well as collaboration, teamwork, and communication skills, cultural sensitivity, and foreign language proficiency. Major employers have recognised that job candidates with domestic experience lacked these latter qualities, notably "flexibility, adaptability, and inventiveness; cultural sensitivity; and cross-cultural communication skills." It is important to notice how consistently these desirable skills were identified across both cohorts because this information may be useful for future curricula that combine academic and workplace contexts.

Understanding graduates' experiences regarding job-seeking and employment opportunities in Zambia involves considering various factors such as the state of the economy, educational system, skills demand, and the effectiveness of career services. While specific studies focusing solely on this aspect might be limited, anecdotal evidence, surveys, and broader research on employment dynamics can provide insights. For instance, a study done by Mwelwa (2020) provides grate insight on the effectiveness of social science degree programmes' effectiveness on skills development and graduate employability in Zambia.

5.2 Employment seeking strategies employed by graduates

While the participants in this study employed conventional job-search techniques, they also specifically used social networks and company websites to find information about open positions. For instance, some individuals mentioned how their main job-search tactic was networking. Many participants relied on personal relationships they had already made to tell them of job openings

rather than creating new connections as part of their networking activities. Participants paid particular attention to how they made initial contact with networking acquaintances via social networking sites before meeting up in person or speaking on the phone. Interpersonal networking has been acknowledged as a helpful job search tactic since it gives job seekers the chance to communicate with decision makers directly, a point that survey participants echoed.

The results of this study support Granovetter's (1995) observation that people look for jobs using three methods: direct application, formal means, and personal contacts. This shows that recent college graduates look for jobs using methods that have been shown to be successful for job seekers of all ages and in all industries. Yet, a strategy that specifically characterised how participants in this study looked for jobs was the usage of social networks and company websites.

The results of this study demonstrate how the traditional job search landscape, particularly for recent graduates, has been impacted by technology and the usage of online job search tools. While some study participants utilised direct application as their main tactic, it was not by far the majority. In fact, some respondents revealed that they were gathering information on open positions by using online and direct application methods. This result suggests that, contrary to what Bretz and colleagues (1994) claimed, online job seeking may more closely resemble a preparation job search technique.

A longitudinal research of job seekers, not just young or first-time job seekers, supports the assumption that online job searching is a good approach to learn about jobs and possibilities because it shows that only 40% of online job searches yield relevant job posts (Jansen et al., 2005). This is an illustration of how, prior to formal recruitment attempts like interviews, the anticipatory socialising phase between a job applicant and a company might start.

The results of this study go against earlier research that claimed direct application was the most popular job search strategy for recent graduates (Mau & Kopischke, 2001), but they are still important for understanding how recent graduates look for jobs and apply selectively, especially in the early stages of their job search. Participants mostly talked about using corporate websites as the main job search tactic. One illustration of how social networking and online media have altered job searchers' communication tactics is LinkedIn.

One argument for why more recent grads did not report using direct application or formal means strategies is the use of LinkedIn as a key strategy. Job searchers can browse job advertisements and apply for positions directly on LinkedIn while also connecting with personal contacts like friends, former classmates, and professors. Also, job searchers can advertise their professional credentials and other details that would often be included on resumes, giving them the chance to get hired for a position. For instance, a lot of businesses hire people directly from LinkedIn, and more corporations are using social networking sites than online job boards to find applicants (Joyce, 2014).

Although the study participants did not mention using recruiting agencies, their use of LinkedIn functions in a manner that is comparable to interacting with a recruiter. LinkedIn offers the option for recruiting while allowing the job seeker to be selective in their applications. The results of this study add to the body of evidence supporting the usefulness of social networking sites in the job search process and show that younger job searchers are depending more on internet-based channels than on more conventional job-searching resources. The results of this study showed that most participants employed multiple job search tactics during a three-month period, which is in line with earlier studies on this topic (Jensen & Westgard-Nielsen, 1987; Mau & Kopischke, 2001).

Results from this study indicate that new graduates use both structured and hidden information markets when looking for a job, and that they view their secondary strategy as a "backup" plan in case their primary strategy is unsuccessful. Structured information marketplaces supply job information through online job postings, and employment agencies such as university career services. Employers receive job-related information from hidden information markets via direct applications and personal connections (Allen & Keaveny, 1980).

Participants in this study who indicated they considered networking as their primary strategy added online job searching (direct application) as their secondary strategy over the course of the three-month study period due to a lack of feedback and interest from employers. This clearly demonstrates the use of both structured and hidden information markets. The evolution of job-search expectations and communication techniques is demonstrated by the shifting nature of job-search methods and the addition of new ones over time.

Participants talked about how they gradually added more job hunting techniques as a result of having their expectations broken in a bad way. For instance, some participants added direct application tactics to their job search after using networking as their main approach but failing to land interviews or obtain employment right away. Similar to how other participants indicated that they started asking for feedback from reliable interpersonal sources and contacting acquaintances who might know about open positions after receiving no interest from possible employers.

The results imply that job-hunting strategies adapt over time in light of feedback gleaned from the process. This is a crucial topic because it illustrates how and why expectations can alter and develop through time in order to better meet the demands of the labour market. Other participants talked about how getting comments on their experience made them realise that they needed to find

a "starting" job before getting their "dream job," which modified their job-searching techniques and expectations moving forward. Due to the competitive nature of the job search and hiring process in the present Zambian labour market, graduates are free to use individual strategies and occasionally a mix of the two, three, or all four discussed job search strategies.

Graduates can apply for jobs based on their education and experience, but they often need skills to succeed in most positions. According to the research findings of this study, study participants emphasised the importance of having the necessary skills to perform a job or task. Graduates are able to do their jobs well thanks to these job skills, which can be acquired throughout undergraduate or graduate courses as well as through work experience. According to numerous academics, including Crossman and Clarke (2010), Andrews and Higson (2008), Abdullah-Al-Mamun (2012), and Christou and Eaton (2000), skills play a significant role in the job search and employment process.

It was found that graduates required to pick up some skills based on the verbal accounts of respondents. These skills can be divided into "hard skills" and "soft skills," with the former referring to specialised technical knowledge and training and the latter to personality attributes like leadership, communication, and time management. In defining soft skills, Lafer (2004) contends that they are personal qualities like self-discipline, loyalty, and timeliness that are chosen to be given or withheld depending on the conditions of the job being offered. These qualities are not abilities that one either possesses or lacks. Soft skills are crucial for any employment, regardless of the industry, and they frequently affect graduates' employability (Barski, 2012). For most careers, having both kinds of skills is essential to success and advancement. Employers, however, are typically willing to teach someone the job-specific skills necessary, such as how to find funding, institutional specific reporting systems, monitoring and evaluation systems, operate

specific pieces of machinery, or use specific computer programmes that are highly specific to that role or company. Before hiring you, they normally want to see that you already possess the other "soft talents," though, as it is far more difficult to teach them.

5.3 Relationship between higher education and employment

The study found that the majority of respondents held a firm opinion that a higher education ensures employment and job security. The majority of respondents made an effort to pursue further education while weighing the potential lifelong income sources against the educational investment made by their parents. In general, this finding is in tandem with Tynjala, et. Al (2003) who affirms that higher education tends to be a source of well-paying jobs and to have a favorable correlation with the employment component.

The study also showed that higher education is a predictor of employment. Also, it was discovered through collaboration that a greater level of education has an impact on employment. According to circumstances where more education was perceived as a stronger predictor of employment, the study's findings were consistent Harvey (2000). The quantity of career options, however, has not been sufficient to fully utilise a higher education degree, which is the fact. These are positive indications that higher education is focused towards preparing students for the working world in connection to employment, not for individual gain but for the successful economic situation of the nation.

For those in society who are knowledge-based, higher education fosters a perspective of lifelong learning, and the accomplishment of goals enhances the overall demand for investments in human capital. Investing in human resources is crucial to boosting employability since someone with more knowledge and skills will be more productive than someone with less human capital because they can produce more output value in a given amount of time. Skilled workers will benefit from their

improved productivity in competitive labour markets by earning better earnings and compensation. Hence, higher education is a crucial component of human life, and nations are encouraged to invest in education through the concept of human capital in order to boost production and boost individual rewards. This is in line with human capital theory which served as the theoretical foundation of this study. This result is also consistent with Benos's (2018) assertion that higher education contributes to the creation of human capital, which encourages societies to invest in education in order to increase individual benefits like improved decision-making skills, which then help people stay out of trouble and live better, healthier, and longer lives.

From the standpoint of the researcher, the researcher observed that societies deliver education in schools, which heavily relies on state control, and that programme contexts are frequently decided by entities with ties to the state. Yet, since increasing employment prospects, productivity and personal returns are two things that individuals are passionate about, the business community also has an impact on education by requiring particular educational abilities or credentials. In certain circumstances, the degree to which graduates enroll in higher education and find employment with high-paying positions or rates can be used to measure an educational institution's success. This result supports the human capital theory, which also maintains that real wages are crucial in determining the equilibrium of factors associated to education, such as the degree of education and the number of graduates, which have a big impact on hiring levels.

Higher education offers a variety of returns at numerous levels, according to a sizable body of evidence that has been gathered over many years. They include the gain for people, businesses, and society overall. Higher salaries are a result of investing in education for individuals. The fact that more educated people are less likely to be unemployed and are more likely to be in the labour force is not any less significant. The study revealed that higher education is frequently viewed as

an individual-level investment, wherein the commitment of time and tuition funds results in rewards in the form of enhanced skills, higher earnings, and more employment prospects.

5.4 Relationship between higher education and employment

A Spearman's correlation was done to validate the relationship between higher education and employment. The results of the Spearman's correlation revealed that there is a positive relationship between the aforementioned variables. It was established that there is positive and strong relationship between higher education and employment. The analysis showed that the coefficient between the higher education and employment was $R = .028$. It was observed that higher education has positive and strong effect on employment.

Access to higher education is crucial for a person's ability to learn new skills and find jobs. Most of the time, it gives someone a chance to compete better than those without degrees. Because they equate graduates with success, most employers prefer them to less educated people. Higher education graduates exhibit positive personalities in the various organisations where they work. The majority of graduates learn good morals via engaging with society. This finding is supported by Shaheen (2011) whose study established that access to higher education is very important for both finding work and developing some of the skills required for the workplace. By interacting with other members of the community, it encourages people to broaden their communication skills.

Having more education, knowledge, and skills increases the chance of finding employment, of improving skills while on the job and of realising higher earnings over a lifetime. Employment prospects depend largely on whether individuals' skills meet the requirements of the labour market. Employment and unemployment rates may provide some indications of whether education systems are producing the supply of skills the labour market needs. Employment and unemployment rates are closely related, but one cannot be inferred directly from the other due to

differences in the way they are calculated. The employment rate is the proportion of employed persons in relation to the working-age population, which includes employed, unemployed as well as inactive individuals, that is those who are neither employed nor looking for a job. The unemployment rate refers to the percentage of unemployed people in the labour force, which includes those employed and those unemployed adults looking for a job.

The relationship between higher education and employment is multifaceted and crucial for both individuals and societies. Higher education provides individuals with the knowledge, skills, and credentials necessary to enter the workforce and pursue career opportunities in various fields. Employers often value the specialized knowledge and critical thinking skills that come with higher education degrees (Becker, 1993). Becker further adds that higher levels of education in the workforce are associated with higher levels of productivity and innovation, which contribute to economic growth. As more individuals attain higher education qualifications, economies tend to become more competitive and resilient. On average, individuals with higher levels of education tend to earn higher salaries and enjoy better employment benefits compared to those with lower levels of education. Higher education can significantly impact an individual's earning potential over their lifetime.

In light of the aforementioned Msanta (2017) adds that higher education can reduce the likelihood of unemployment, as individuals with higher qualifications are often in greater demand in the job market. However, this relationship can vary depending on factors such as the economy's health, the relevance of educational qualifications, and regional disparities. Higher education can facilitate upward occupational mobility by providing individuals with the qualifications needed to advance in their careers or transition to higher-paying or more fulfilling roles. In today's rapidly changing job market, higher education plays a crucial role in promoting lifelong learning. Individuals often

return to higher education institutions to acquire new skills, update existing ones, or pursue advanced degrees to stay competitive in their careers.

Rose et.al (2019) posits that higher education can serve as a pathway to social mobility by providing individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds with opportunities to improve their socioeconomic status. Access to higher education can reduce inequalities and promote social inclusion. Higher education institutions not only impart academic knowledge but also foster critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and teamwork skills, which are highly valued by employers across various industries. To maximize the benefits of higher education on employment outcomes, it is essential for educational institutions to align their curricula with the evolving needs of the labor market. This ensures that graduates are equipped with the skills and knowledge demanded by employers. Overall, the relationship between higher education and employment is symbiotic, with higher education contributing to individuals' employability, economic growth, and social mobility while also meeting the needs of the labor market and driving innovation and productivity.

5.4 Challenges encountered when seeking jobs

The study found that graduates face difficulties and that finding a job as a college or university graduate is difficult. Instead of wasting your time, start developing your resume, try to learn interview techniques, adhere to professional conduct during interviews, and learn how to become a more skilled worker. One of the difficulties mentioned by the respondents was a lack of experience. The majority of employers prefer individuals with prior experience, therefore even though you have a degree and a general understanding of your business, it is insufficient. Thus, graduates must take on this task by engaging in internships, volunteer work, or freelancing because

doing so will help you get some experience. Nevertheless, graduates bear in mind that this is just the beginning; it will take a lot of hard work and patience to get there.

The study found that in addition to strong credentials, companies are increasingly looking for candidates with relevant experience. This suggests that graduates should seize every chance to begin compiling a portfolio of professional experience. This can be achieved, for instance, by taking on volunteer work that entails spending as little as one or two days a week with an employer, performing straightforward tasks, or even just work shadowing (observing an experienced employee at work). All of these options can be extremely helpful for graduates looking to enter the workforce.

The study also established that another difficulty is having unrealistic expectations. Fresh graduates are upbeat, optimistic people who think they will immediately obtain their dream career. Due to a lack of experience, industry knowledge, and contacts, it does not happen for the majority of people, yet for some it does. And at this point, you must start learning new things while moderating your expectations in order to gather experience that will help you land your dream job. All graduates who have graduated from college/university and are pursuing and seeking a professional career of your choosing must be aware of the hurdles outlined above. By deciding on the suggested solution, get ready for these difficulties.

For Zambia to profit from the demographic dividend, it must address the issue of young people who are not in school or on the job market. Around 42% of people in the country are under the age of 15, and 79% are under the age of 35. So, Zambia may benefit greatly from a demographic dividend by productively involving its youth. Yet, 43 percent of Zambia's youth are not in school, a job, or training, which is a high percentage. In contrast, the global youth unemployment rate in 2019 was 22.2 percent, while in Africa it was 20.7 percent. Young individuals who are classified

as unemployed frequently suffer difficulties, such as discouragement about job chances and restricted access to education. By prohibiting people from gaining knowledge and experience, being in this condition for a long time can significantly harm their chances of finding job in the future.

A variety of demand-side barriers exist in Zambia's labour market that prevent young people from finding gainful employment. Some of these include distorted labour laws, employers receiving inaccurate information about the pool of potential workers, and a lack of voice. There may be other barriers to business development and job creation. For instance, when entrepreneurial aspirations do exist, they run up against financial constraints and a lack of formal training. Similar to the previous example, although at the aggregate level, the system of perks and other non-wage expenditures did not significantly affect employers' demand for youth labour, it proved significant for the manufacturing sector where proportionally more establishments indicated that it did (Koyi et al. 2012).

Based on the findings of this study, it is evidently clear that graduates in Zambia often face challenges such as limited job openings, fierce competition, and mismatches between their qualifications and available positions. Anecdotal evidence from graduates' testimonies, interviews, or online forums might shed light on their struggles and frustrations. Graduates may find it challenging to secure employment due to a disconnect between the skills they possess and those demanded by employers. This finding is supported by Mwelwa (2020). Reports from employers' associations or skills gap analyses conducted by educational institutions could provide insights into this issue.

5.5 Enhancing employment opportunities for graduates

The study established that in order to create employment opportunities for graduates, the education system should be made more practical. In order to update their curricula to match the demands of the labour market, universities, colleges, and employers should work together. Employers and professional organisations need to establish the skills graduates need to have in order to be productive at their jobs as a starting point. Both general and technical skills should be represented in these. The indicated skills can be included into college and university courses, and chances can be given for students to hone them. Universities and colleges should integrate entrepreneurship education and digital innovation into a variety of courses to help students develop their knowledge and abilities for working for themselves. At the undergraduate and graduate levels, entrepreneurship can be made a required curriculum, taught by successful businesspeople. Governments and funders should provide more money to students who create viable business plans and designate mentors to help them.

Researchers' opinions on how universities and colleges might help combat youth unemployment vary. According to Addae-Mensah (2016), for instance, as society is dynamic and information and skills can become out-of-date, one of the main responsibilities of universities is to teach students how to think critically and adapt to various situations. He contends that colleges and universities are not designed to produce graduates who are "ready-made" for companies.

Although his point of view is reasonable, universities and colleges are under pressure from all parties involved in education, including parents, students, governments, and employers, to make sure that students have the information and skills they need to be prepared for the workforce (Pheko & Molefhe, 2017). Researchers have identified four areas where educational institutions can make a difference, including incorporating employability skills into university curricula, promoting

tighter industry engagement, offering excellent career guidance counselling, and interacting with alumni networks (Ogbuanya & Chukuedo, 2017; Okolie et al., 2020).

Employers' major worry is that recent graduates lack the necessary skills to be productive at work (Dodoo & Kuupole, 2017). According to Okolie et al. (2019), employability is the possibility that graduates would display qualities that employers deem vital for carrying out their jobs in organisations. There isn't a single set of employable abilities that everyone agrees upon. Nonetheless, numerous academics have established a list of fundamental employability abilities for graduates and have advocated talents that reflect employability (Pheko & Molefhe, 2017). Students' reservations about their abilities are consistent with earlier findings, demonstrating the necessity for institutions and companies to enlighten students about how they might increase their chances of landing jobs (Pheko & Molefhe, 2017).

Colleges and universities are in charge of setting up areas where students can practise these skills. For instance, academics advocate for changing courses to incorporate group projects, problem-based learning, and presentations in class. According to Suzuki and Sakamaki (2020), TVET and technical university students in Ethiopia and South Africa who participated in group research activities or what they called "Kaizen" reported having higher levels of communication, teamwork, and problem-solving abilities. The problem with these strategies is that effective class sizes for them to work are not present in African universities and colleges.

Similarly, at the University of Botswana, Moalosi et al. (2012) showed that practical learning developed students' employability skills. For instance, students rated themselves as 'excellent' or 'very good' on the following attributes: self-directed, lifelong learning skills (81% of students),

organisational and teamwork skills (81%), creative thinking skills (76%), communication skills (76%), entrepreneurship skills (76%), and critical thinking skills (71%).

Universities and colleges must do more to prepare students for entrepreneurship because there are fewer employment openings each year compared to the high number of graduates (Ndedi, 2009). University and college curricula are gradually beginning to integrate entrepreneurship instruction. For instance, Oluase et al. (2018) highlight that entrepreneurship is a required course at both the undergraduate and graduate levels throughout all universities in Nigeria, regardless of the discipline. It is crucial for other nations to adopt this approach.

Yet, for it to be effective, academics advise that entrepreneurship education should be offered in the setting where students may work in order to guarantee that it is pertinent, useful, and emphasises the prospects accessible (Oluase et al., 2020). Moreover, encouraging conditions should be developed to encourage the creation of ideas, and funding and suitable mentorship programmes should be made available to students who make viable proposals.

Academics contend that increased collaboration between universities and industry is a key strategy for increasing the number of graduates who find employment (Ishengoma, 2016). Okunuga and Ajeyalemi (2018) claim that graduates frequently lack the necessary skills for employment and that this is partly because there is little collaboration between these two industries. The graduates' ability to launch new firms and create jobs could be improved by more efficient and close collaboration amongst these institutions. In order to increase work prospects, this collaboration, according to Okolie et al. (2020), promotes vocational education in university and college programmes.

The study has established that offering career guidance can play a crucial role in increasing the employment prospects of students and graduates. Career counselling and advice are crucial for students because picking a vocation is a crucial and difficult step. Because everyone is unique and has various requirements, interests, and personalities, career counselling assists in matching students' characteristics and needs with the available professions (Amani, 2017). Students should understand that while having an interest in a certain vocation is crucial, little can be accomplished without the necessary abilities. Hence, any mismatch in this regard could result in joblessness, a lack of dedication, or job unhappiness (Okolie et al., 2020). On the contrary, when a student's needs and abilities are closely matched to the intended vocation, they boost their chances of finding employment and being happy in their jobs (Amani, 2017).

Pitan and Atiku (2017) investigated how career advising and counselling services affected students' employability in a few Nigerian colleges and discovered that opportunity awareness, decision-making skills, and transition learning skills had the biggest impacts. There is evidence that many students find it difficult to choose a career when they have limited access to career guidance and counselling services, despite the fact that scholars generally agree on the significance of career choice (Mbilinyi, 2012). This restricts how much knowledge students have of themselves and the workplace.

According to Biswalo (1996), a lack of competent career guidance and counselling services in Tanzania prevents many young people from making wise career decisions, which causes unemployment. Similar to South Africa, where there aren't many institutions with career assistance centres, career counsellors there acknowledged working from their own independent offices (Chireshe, 2012). This restricts how much knowledge students and graduates have of themselves and the workplace. According to Biswalo (1996), a lack of competent career guidance and

counselling services in Tanzania prevents many young people from making wise career decisions, which causes unemployment. Similar to South Africa, where there aren't many institutions with career assistance centres, career counsellors there acknowledged working from their own independent offices (Chireshe, 2012).

The study also established that alumni networks play a crucial role in increasing the employment prospects of youth graduates. Alumni networks are valuable resources for any institution or university. Since the state's financial support for educational institutions has decreased, alumni groups have been a focus of fundraising efforts. The exploration of prospects in other crucial areas has been constrained by the focus on money in universities'/colleges' interactions with their alumni. Using alumni networks to assist students with professional development and the transfer to the workforce is one of these areas (Chi et al., 2012). Current students are typically excluded from alumni networks, which reduces the wealth of possible advantages.

These findings are supported by Chi et al. (2012) who promoted the use of alumni networks to recruit current students as a result. Such a framework would give students access to the knowledgeable counsel of alumni on a variety of topics, such as selecting the best courses and careers, overcoming learning obstacles, finding internship and apprenticeship opportunities while they are still in school, and finding employment after graduation. Alumni who are now employed in particular disciplines or industries can provide pertinent advice on topics including how to improve job prospects in various professions, technical and professional standards at work, and potential career alternatives (Campbell et al., 2020).

Universities and colleges can also help their alumni by setting up initiatives to improve their networks and employment. For instance, the African Leadership Academy (ALA) hosts annual

gatherings (Indabas) both in the USA and in North, East, West, and Southern Africa. These get-togethers assist graduates in reestablishing connections with one another, exchanging thoughts and experiences, and refocusing on the African continent. Alumni of the ALA engage in leadership development exercises and work together on initiatives and projects that have an impact on the continent during these events.

In Zambia, as in many developing countries, a significant portion of employment opportunities lies in the informal sector. Understanding graduates' experiences in navigating informal job markets, entrepreneurial endeavors, or self-employment ventures could provide valuable insights. Assessing the effectiveness of career guidance services provided by universities, vocational training institutions, or government agencies can offer insights into graduates' experiences in accessing job search resources, resume writing assistance, interview preparation, and networking opportunities. Surveys or interviews with employers can provide insights into their hiring practices, preferences, and perceptions of graduates' preparedness for the workforce. Understanding employers' needs and expectations can help tailor education and training programs to better align with industry requirements. Conducting longitudinal studies or graduate tracking surveys to monitor graduates' career trajectories and outcomes over time can provide valuable data on employment rates, job satisfaction, salary levels, and career progression.

Assessing government policies, initiatives, and partnerships aimed at addressing youth unemployment and enhancing graduates' employability can provide insights into the broader ecosystem supporting job seekers in Zambia. Comparative studies with other countries in the region or similar economic contexts can offer insights into the effectiveness of different approaches to addressing graduate employment challenges and inform policy recommendations. By considering these factors and exploring diverse sources of information, policymakers,

educators, and stakeholders can gain a comprehensive understanding of graduates' experiences regarding job-seeking and employment opportunities in Zambia and identify areas for improvement and intervention.

5.7 Theoretical Implications

The Human Capital Theory adds depth to this study of student employment from the viewpoint of higher education and employability. The link between human capital and student employment has been researched extensively. From employment rate to employment quality, from a single dimension to specific indicators, research viewpoints and issues are demonstrating a tendency toward diversification, and research is gradually deepening (Wang, 2020). One of the internal factors that affects students' capacity to get job is their employability.

The first step to solving the employment issue is to increase students' employability. Employability is a crucial link between academic institutions and the labor market, and it has a direct impact on both the viability of student employment and the standard of employment. As a result, it presents a significant obstacle to developing graduates' employability (Hu, 2019).

Employers typically assess a job applicant's education level, work aptitude, work experience, and other human capital to evaluate whether the applicant is a qualified employee, whereas a job applicant's social capital determines their capacity to access resources through their network of contacts in order to pursue employment goals. The ability to actively respond to changes in the external working environment and activities that are recognized by the labor market is thus made possible by "personal ability" and "social capital" in college students. Higher education thus has a beneficial effect on employment (Hu, 2012).

The effect of human capital on enhancing employability will be lessened when students experience a higher awareness of reduced employment options, greater employment pressure, a gloomy attitude toward employment, and a negative coping technique. Future career clarity, one of a student's traits, will have an impact on the relationship between employability and human capital during the job-hunting process.

In the present context, a clear and simple to see future task can better give behavioral motivation and targeted direction for future-oriented activities. Students who are looking for work who have a clear career development path will be more motivated and have more time to learn the desired occupation than students who don't (Ye et al., 2017). This will improve the effect of their human capital on their employability. This study demonstrates that higher education and employability are related. Overall, human capital theory as used in this study provides a framework for understanding the role of education, training, and skills in shaping employment outcomes and guiding policy interventions to improve labor market efficiency and individual well-being.

5.8 Summary

This chapter discussed, analyzed, and interpreted the data that was collected to establish and document the experiences of youth graduates regarding employment and employability in Lusaka district. The primary data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire and interview guides which was complimented by secondary data from the literature review, document analysis, as well as literature control. The study found that there is less job-fitting qualifications or skills. Job market needs workers who are better qualified and market-fit not met by the current education system. The study has shown that the primary barriers to finding employment include lack of relevant experience, low job opportunities, and also an acute skills gap for those who are already employed. The final chapter of this study offers a summary and conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Overview

The purpose of this study was to establish and document the experiences of youth graduates regarding employment and employability in Lusaka district. The study further gathered information that validated the relationship that may exist between education and employment in times when employment opportunities are low. Data related to this study was collected using qualitative methods such as interviews and quantitatively using questionnaire. The aim of this chapter was to summarize the main findings of the study.

6.1 Conclusion

The study was guided by three objectives. The first objective explored the experiences of graduate's seeking employment opportunities in Lusaka district. The study established that the graduates face primary barriers to finding employment such as a lack of experience, a lack of opportunities, and skill gaps for those who are already employed.

The second objective endeavored to identify the employment seeking strategies among the graduates in Lusaka district. The study established that learning a new skill, networking regularly, participating in job fairs, visiting company websites and volunteering are employment seeking strategy employed by graduates in Lusaka district.

The last objective aimed at ascertaining the relationship between higher education and employment in low job opportunity situations in Lusaka district. The study established that there is positive correlation between higher education and employment. This correlation was validated by a spearman's correlation which produced a positive correlation. This entails that attainment of higher education increases the employment prospects of an individual. Further, findings indicated

that higher education contributes to overall economic growth by improving the efficiency of the workforce. Some respondents indicated that higher education provides individuals with the necessary market skills to be relevant in the economy. The other set of respondents indicated that higher education makes the graduates well informed and responsive to job opportunities.

The results of this study allow the researcher to draw the conclusion that individuals with greater education typically have more work opportunities. The majority of this study's findings supported the notion that the working world needed workers who were more effective and better qualified. Employment is predicted by higher education. However, the advantages of higher education are not as great as the need for graduates in the workforce.

The Ministry of Education and other pertinent agencies must exert all of their resources to promote appropriate structural reforms in the areas of higher education and employment. Students were upbeat about the future of their higher education, regardless of whether they are presently enrolled in institutions or have finished their educational careers. The contribution of these hard-working graduates may raise Zambia's level of development.

It is undeniable that higher education and employment have a close relationship. Businesses look for graduates, people want to progress their careers via education, university research can create new industries or destroy those that already exist, and governments that fund higher education on behalf of the public frequently want to see some overall economic gain. The labour market and higher education do have strong connections, but these connections are not straightforward, and there has been debate and discussion about the rights and obligations of higher education institutions, organisations that represent the interests of the labour market, and governments. The study's conclusions ought to serve as a wake-up call for most developing countries to improve their

higher education systems in order to reduce youth unemployment and the usage of illegal labour practises.

The key outcome from this study emphasizes the ways that graduates use to look for jobs by describing one of those methods. Graduates reported using online resources to look for job openings and investigate possible employers overwhelmingly, either as a major or secondary technique. While some research indicates that businesses are shifting away from posting jobs on job boards and job search websites like Monster and CareerBuilder in favour of posting more on social networking sites like LinkedIn (Joyce, 2014), the results of this study encourage businesses to use a variety of online channels for job postings.

The study has shown that graduates use several ways to job hunt. These include websites to help obtain information about available possibilities and job responsibilities, while also going to social networking sites like LinkedIn and sometimes Facebook to gather the same information. However, only a small percentage of participants indicated using career services, such as exclusive career services job boards, to look for employment, suggesting that firms should focus more on leveraging internet channels to hire fresh college grads. Finally, in order to have a better knowledge of the corporate culture, participants talked about how they use web resources to investigate companies before applying and before conducting interviews with them.

As a method to start the anticipatory socialisation process before official recruitment attempts and align expectations, organisations would benefit from making as much information about the corporate culture available online as possible. Giving job candidates feedback is the final piece of advice for businesses. Participants are not anticipating extensive feedback, despite the fact that giving feedback might be time-consuming for companies. They would much prefer to be able to

receive confirmation that their application was received, which can be done via an automated email service.

When candidates are not chosen for an interview or a job, organisations should think about letting them know. It is not necessary to provide the candidate with individualized or in-depth feedback when doing this via automated email. The candidate should be informed that if they have not heard from the organisation by the deadline, they are no longer being considered for the position. Organizations should, whenever possible, offer a schedule for examining applications and requesting interviews. It would be unnecessary to email participants to let them know they were not chosen if this information was made explicit on the application. It would also stop unpleasant questions from applicants asking where they stood in the selection process.

Last but not least, businesses can think about implementing an automated portal system for job applicants that refreshes after an application has been evaluated and a choice has been made. This would relieve companies of the responsibility of notifying applicants who have not been chosen by email of the status of their applications. The results of this study offer chances for colleges to better educate recent college graduates for the job search in addition to recommendations for organisations. Career services should assess their presence on campus in the first place.

Despite the fact that career services have an own job posting board and offer resume and interview preparation, participants in this study had little knowledge of their existence or presence. Second, career services have a special role in assisting young job searchers in developing reasonable expectations. College graduates might begin to create expectations based on these experiences by offering networking opportunities, information about business cultures, and performing mock interviews. This could assist to lessen the stress of the job hunt and the transition from university

to profession. Finally, research suggests that encouraging students to participate in internships and job shadowing opportunities might help to establish more realistic employment expectations. In order to recruit and equip graduates for full-time, post-graduate employment, organisations and universities can take use of a number of the study's practical recommendations.

6.1 Recommendations

The following recommendations have been developed on the basis of this research:

1. Educational institutions should promote more marketable and practical courses that would help students establish successful careers.
2. Higher learning institutions should provide career counseling and services to students.
3. Higher learning institutions should encourage students to participate in internships and job shadowing opportunities might help to establish more realistic employment expectations.
4. The corporate sector must keep up its efforts to support young employment by empowering them, giving opportunities for skill development through internships, and strengthening partnerships with the government.

6.2 Recommendation for further research

More research is needed on how employability can be enhanced. This may include career guidance and a close look at the courses offered at schools if at all they are related to the careers needed in the labour market. Further research can be carried out on the coping strategies that unemployed youth may use or be offered to cope with the conditions of unemployment. This study suggests that the programmes or courses that are offered at higher learning institutions be evaluated to assess whether they correlate with what is needed in the labour market.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Dear participant,

My name is Linda Mululu, a Zambian female student at the University of Zambia pursuing a master's degree in Education and Development under the school of education. This research I am conducting is part of my academic requirement. The purpose of this study is to establish and document the experiences of youth graduates regarding employment and employability in Lusaka district. The study will further gather information that will validate the relationship that may exist between education and employment in times when employment opportunities are low.

There is no direct benefit to you anticipated from participating in this study. However, it is hoped that the findings of this study would benefit scholars, policy makers, and higher education administrators. It is also hoped that the findings of this study will add to the body of scholarly knowledge on higher education and employment. The results of this study will equally have important policy implications. The information generated by this study could be used by other researchers, governments and other stakeholders to come up with effective strategies that help to assuage the scourge of unemployment among graduates.

Kindly be assured that your identity in this study will be kept confidential. No name or any of your personal details will be disclosed, therefore to explain on the findings, the term "participant" will be used. Further, your decision to participate should be done out of your willingness to contribute to this study. In an event where you are uncomfortable to participate in this research, you have the right to decline or withdraw from participating at any time without penalty. By signing this form,

you are agreeing to be part of the study. Your truthfulness in your responses will be of great importance to this study as it will enhance accuracy in the findings.

SECTION A: BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

Sex of respondent:.....

Position:.....

Time of interview:

Section B: Experiences of graduate’s seeking jobs in Lusaka district

1. What are your experiences regarding the seeking of jobs?
2. Do you encounter any challenges when seeking jobs?
3. What challenges do you encounter when seeking jobs?

Section C: Employment seeking strategies among the graduates in Lusaka district

4. Are there any employment seeking strategies that are employed by graduates when seeking jobs in Lusaka district?
5. What employment seeking strategies are employed by graduates in Lusaka district?
6. Are the employment seeking strategies effective?
7. Suggest some effective seeking strategies that can be employed by graduates in Lusaka district?

Section D: Relationship between higher education and employment in low job opportunity situations in Lusaka district.

8. Is there any relationship between higher education and employment in low job opportunity situations in Lusaka district?

9. What is the relationship between higher education and employment in low job opportunity situations in Lusaka district?

10. Does higher education enhance employment?

11. What can be done by higher education institutions to create employment opportunities for graduates?

Thank you for your time and for taking part in this study. Every piece of information you have shared would go a long way to shape this study. Are there any questions or comments?

APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear participant,

My name is Linda Mululu, a Zambian female student at the University of Zambia pursuing a master's degree in Education and Development under the school of education. This research I am conducting is part of my academic requirement. The purpose of this study is to establish and document the experiences of youth graduates regarding employment and employability in Lusaka district. The study will further gather information that will validate the relationship that may exist between education and employment in times when employment opportunities are low. There is no direct benefit to you anticipated from participating in this study. However, it is hoped that the findings of this study would benefit scholars, policy makers, and higher education administrators. It is also hoped that the findings of this study will add to the body of scholarly knowledge on higher education and employment. The results of this study will equally have important policy implications. The information generated by this study could be used by other researchers, governments and other stakeholders to come up with effective strategies that help to assuage the scourge of unemployment among graduates. Kindly be assured that your identity in this study will be kept confidential. No name or any of your personal details will be disclosed, therefore to explain on the findings, the term "participant" will be used. Further, your decision to participate should be done out of your willingness to contribute to this study. In an event where you are uncomfortable to participate in this research, you have the right to decline or withdraw from participating at any time without penalty. By signing this form, you are agreeing to be part of the study. Your

truthfulness in your responses will be of great importance to this study as it will enhance accuracy in the findings.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERITICS

Instructions

- 1. Do not indicate your name on the questionnaire**
- 2. Please tick or mark with 'X' the correct option and where requested, write your answer in the space provided.**

Section A

- 1. Gender:** (1). Female (2). Male
- 2. Age group:** (1) Below 18 years (2) 18 to 25 years (3) 26 to 33 years (4) 34 to 41 years (5) Above 41 years
- 3. Marital status:** (1). single (2). Married (3). Divorced (4). widowed
- 4. Qualification:** (1) Certificate (2) Diploma (3) Bachelor's Degree (4) Master's Degree (5) PhD
- 5. Which University or College did you graduate from?.....**
- 6. Are you employed?** (1) Yes (2) No
- 7. Status of employment:** (1) Full Time (2) Part Time
- 8. Employment Sector:** (1) Public Sector (2) Private Sector

9. For how long have you been employed? (1) **Less than a year** [] (2) **1 Year** [] (3) **2 years** (4) **3 Years** [] (5) **More than 4 Years** [] **Skip this question if you are not employed**

Section B: Experiences of graduate’s seeking jobs in Lusaka district

10. What are your experiences regarding the seeking of jobs?.....

.....

11. Do you encounter any challenges when seeking jobs? (1) **Yes** [] (2) **No** []

12. What challenges do you encounter when seeking jobs? **Tick as many as apply**

(1) **Lack of Experience** []

(2) **No Clue about how to negotiate salary** []

(3) **Unrealistic/ High Expectations** []

(4) **Competition: Too few jobs and too many graduates** []

(5) **Downturn in the economy** []

(6) **No Interview Skills** []

(7) **Debate between further higher education and job seeking** []

Section C: Employment seeking strategies among the graduates in Lusaka district

13. Are there any employment seeking strategies that are employed by graduates when seeking jobs in Lusaka district? (1) **Yes** [] (2) **No** []

14. What employment seeking strategies are employed by graduates in Lusaka district? **Tick as many as apply**

(1) **Learning a new skill** []

(2) **Network regularly** []

(3) **Participate in job fairs** []

(4) **Visit company websites** []

(5) **Join a professional organization** []

(6) **Use personal contacts to find out about possible job** []

(7) **Visit or set-up informational interviews with as many employers as you can** []

(8) **Volunteering** []

15. Are the employment seeking strategies effective? (1) **Yes** [] (2) **No** []

16. Suggest some effective seeking strategies that can be employed by graduates in Lusaka district?.....

Section D: Relationship between higher education and employment in low job opportunity situations in Lusaka district.

17. Is there any relationship between higher education and employment in low job opportunity situations in Lusaka district? (1) **Yes** [] (2) **No** []

18. What is the relationship between higher education and employment in low job opportunity situations in Lusaka district? **Tick as many as apply**

(1). Higher education contributes to overall economic growth by improving the efficiency of the workforce and leading to higher rates of individual productivity which in turn lead to a higher demand for qualified workers. []

(2). Higher Education provides individuals with the necessary market skills to be relevant in the economy []

(3) Higher education is necessary for success in the world of work []

(4) Higher education makes the graduates well informed and responsive to job opportunities []

(5) Education provides essential skills and knowledge required to carry out a certain occupation or profession []

(6) Employment oriented education provides the base for national development through economic activities []

(7) Education develops creative ability in an individual that is essential employment and employment generation []

19. Does higher education enhance employment? **(1) Yes [] (2) No []**

20. What can be done by higher education institutions and government to create employment opportunities for graduates?

(1) Higher education institutions and government must expand and encourage proper structural reforms in employment directions []

(2) The education system should be made more practical []

(3) Encourage students to embark on industrial attachments and internships []

(4) Government and Education institutions must organize more job fairs []

(5) More employment opportunities should be provided to the students who are still in search of better job with higher education []

(6) Career guidance and services to search employment inside institutions must be provided to the students for the sake of saving students time long period of searching job []

Thank you for your time and for taking part in this study. Every piece of information you have shared would go a long way to shape this study. Are there any questions or comments?

ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER



THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES

Great East Road Campus | P.O. Box 32379 | Lusaka10101 | Tel: +260-211-290 258/291

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APPROVAL OF STUDY

IORG No. 0005376

HSSREC IRB No. 00006464

16th February, 2023,

REF NO. HSSREC:-2023- FEB -011

Ms. Linda Mululu.

School of Education,

P.O.BOX, 32379,
LUSAKA.

Dear, Ms. Mululu,

**RE: “HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT IN LOW JOB OPPORTUNITY
SITUATIONS: EXPERIENCES OF YOUTH GRADUATES IN LUSAKA, ZAMBIA”**

Reference is made to your submission of the protocol captioned above. The HSSREC resolved to approve this study and your participation as Principal Investigator for a period of one year.

REVIEW TYPE	ORDINARY REVIEW	APPROVAL NO. HSSREC:-2023- FEB- 011
Approval and Expiry Date	Approval Date: 22 nd February 2023	Expiry Date: 21 st February, 2024
Protocol Version and Date	Version - Nil.	21 st February, 2024
Information Sheet, Consent Forms and Dates	English.	To be provided
Consent form ID and Date	Version - Nil	To be provided
Recruitment Materials	Nil	Nil

Other Study Documents	Questionnaire.	
Number of Participants Approved for Study		

Specific conditions will apply to this approval. As Principal Investigator it is your responsibility to ensure that the contents of this letter are adhered to. If these are not adhered to, the approval may be suspended. Should the study be suspended, study sponsors and other regulatory authorities will be informed.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

- No participant may be involved in any study procedure prior to the study approval or after the expiration date.
- All unanticipated or Serious Adverse Events (SAEs) must be reported to HSSREC within 5 days.
- All protocol modifications must be approved by HSSREC prior to implementation unless they are intended to reduce risk (but must still be reported for approval). Modifications will include any change of investigator/s or site address.
- All protocol deviations must be reported to HSSREC within 5 working days.

- All recruitment materials must be approved by HSSREC prior to being used.
- Principal investigators are responsible for initiating Continuing Review proceedings. HSSREC will only approve a study for a period of 12 months.
- It is the responsibility of the PI to renew his/her ethics approval through a renewal application to HSSREC.
- Where the PI desires to extend the study after expiry of the study period, documents for study extension must be received by HSSREC at least 30 days before the expiry date. This is for the purpose of facilitating the review process. Documents received within 30 days after expiry will be labelled “late submissions” and will incur a penalty fee of K500.00. No study shall be renewed whose documents are submitted for renewal 30 days after expiry of the certificate.
- Every 6 (six) months a progress report form supplied by The University of Zambia Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee as an IRB must be filled in and submitted to us. There is a penalty of K500.00 for failure to submit the report.
- When closing a project, the PI is responsible for notifying, in writing or using the Research Ethics and Management Online (REMO), both HSSREC and the National Health Research Authority (NHRA) when ethics certification is no longer required for a project.

- In order to close an approved study, a Closing Report must be submitted in writing or through the REMO system. A Closing Report should be filed when data collection has ended and the study team will no longer be using human participants or animals or secondary data or have any direct or indirect contact with the research participants or animals for the study.
- Filing a closing report (rather than just letting your approval lapse) is important as it assists HSSREC in efficiently tracking and reporting on projects. Note that some funding agencies and sponsors require a notice of closure from the IRB which had approved the study and can only be generated after the Closing Report has been filed.
- A reprint of this letter shall be done at a fee.
- All protocol modifications must be approved by HSSREC by way of an application for an amendment prior to implementation unless they are intended to reduce risk (but must still be reported for approval). Modifications will include any change of investigator/s or site address or methodology and methods. Many modifications entail minimal risk adjustments to a protocol and/or consent form and can be made on an Expedited basis (via the IRB Chair). Some examples are: format changes, correcting spelling errors, adding key personnel, minor changes to questionnaires, recruiting and changes, and so forth. Other, more substantive changes, especially those that may alter the risk-benefit ratio, may require Full Board review. In all cases, except where

noted above regarding subject safety, any changes to any protocol document or procedure must first be approved by HSSREC before they can be implemented.

Should you have any questions regarding anything indicated in this letter, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us at the above indicated address.

On behalf of HSSREC, we would like to wish you all the success as you carry out your study.

Yours faithfully,



Dr. J.I. Ziwa

DR. J. I. Ziwa

ACTING CHAIRPERSON

**THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA HUMANITIES AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE - IRB**

cc: Director, Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies

Assistant Director (Research), Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies

Assistant Registrar (Research), Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies