

**EXPLORATION OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS, SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND
MINDSET ON GRADUATE UNEMPLOYMENT IN UGANDA: A CASE OF
UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY, SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**

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**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
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DECLARATION

I, NAKATO GLADYS hereby declare that this is my original work, and that, to the best of my knowledge, it has never been presented to any institution of higher learning for the award of an academic qualification. Where another person's work has been used, they have been dully acknowledged.

Signature:  Date: 8th July, 2025.

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APPROVAL

I hereby certify that this dissertation by **Gladys Nakato** has been prepared under my supervision and submitted in upon my approval.

Signature:  Date: 10th July, 2025

Kabanda Martin

University Supervisor

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my dearest family, whose unwavering love, patience, and support have been the cornerstone of my academic journey. To my parents, thank you for your endless encouragement, wisdom, and sacrifices that have shaped me into the person I am today. Your belief in my abilities has inspired me to strive for excellence, even in the face of challenges. To my siblings, your constant motivation and understanding have provided me with comfort and strength during the most demanding times. Each of you has played a unique and invaluable role in my life, and I am deeply grateful for your presence, guidance, and unconditional love. This achievement would not have been possible without you, and I dedicate this work to you with all my heart.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ILO:	International Labour Organization
MGLSD:	Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development
UBOS:	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UCU:	Uganda Christian University
UNCHE:	Uganda National Council for Higher Education
UNFPA:	United Nations Population Fund
YLP:	Youth Livelihood Programme

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Graduate unemployment; Refers to the situation where individuals who have completed higher education are unable to secure employment that matches their qualifications or any suitable job. In this study, it specifically examines the unemployment rates among graduates of Uganda Christian University (UCU), focusing on factors contributing to their inability to find relevant employment.

Education programs; Structured curricula and courses offered by Uganda Christian University aimed at equipping students with the necessary knowledge and skills for future careers. This includes the relevance of curriculum content, practical training opportunities, and the overall quality of education provided.

Skills development; The process by which students acquire competencies and abilities through educational experiences. Skills development encompasses both:

- Hard skills: Technical or job-specific skills required in particular professions.
- Soft skills: Interpersonal abilities such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving, which are essential for workplace effectiveness.

Mindset; The set of attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions that graduates hold regarding employment opportunities, including their openness to self-employment and entrepreneurship. Mindset influences job-seeking behaviors, adaptability, and willingness to pursue diverse career paths.

Employability; The combination of skills, knowledge, attitudes, and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to secure and succeed in employment. Employability is influenced by education programs, practical experience, and mindset.

Practical skills; Hands-on, job-relevant abilities acquired through experiential learning such as internships, projects, and real-world training. Practical skills enable graduates to apply theoretical knowledge in workplace settings and are highly valued by employers.

Soft skills; Non-technical skills that facilitate effective interaction and collaboration in the workplace. Examples include communication, teamwork, leadership, adaptability, and emotional intelligence.

Technical skills; Specific, specialized abilities related to a particular field or industry, such as accounting, engineering, or information technology. Technical skills are often measurable and acquired through targeted education and training.

Curriculum relevance; The extent to which educational content aligns with current labor market demands and employer expectations. Relevant curricula ensure that graduates possess up-to-date knowledge and skills needed in their chosen professions.

Experiential learning; Educational approaches that integrate real-world experiences—such as internships, field projects, and simulations—into academic programs. Experiential learning bridges the gap between theory and practice, enhancing students' readiness for employment.

University-industry collaboration; Partnerships and cooperative initiatives between higher education institutions and private sector organizations. Such collaborations aim to align academic training with labor market needs, provide practical learning opportunities, and facilitate graduate job placements.

Entrepreneurship; The process of designing, launching, and running a new business or venture. In the context of this study, entrepreneurship is viewed as a viable career path for graduates, offering alternatives to formal wage employment.

Employability confidence; A graduate's belief in their ability to successfully apply acquired knowledge and skills in professional settings, influencing motivation, job search behavior, and performance.

Proactive mindset; An attitude characterized by initiative, resilience, adaptability, and a willingness to seek out and create opportunities, especially in challenging job markets

ABSTRACT

The research comprehensively examined how education programs, skills development, and graduate mindset shaped unemployment outcomes among graduates of Uganda Christian University's School of Business, set within the broader context of Uganda's historical and socio-economic challenges. The investigation began by highlighting the persistent problem of graduate unemployment in Uganda, tracing its roots to a rapidly expanding youth population, a mismatch between university curricula and labor market needs, and the lingering impacts of political and economic instability. Drawing from Human Capital Theory, Social Capital Theory, and the Theory of Planned Behavior, the study established a robust conceptual framework that integrated the influence of educational content, social networks, and personal attitudes on employability. Employing a mixed-methods design, the research combined quantitative survey data with qualitative interviews from students, graduates, faculty, and employers. Statistical analysis revealed that the variance in graduate unemployment was significantly accounted for by the perceived relevance of educational programs ($R^2 = 0.47$), with skills development and graduate mindset demonstrating strong positive correlations with employability ($r = 0.61$ and $r = 0.54$, respectively). The findings indicated that 68% of respondents attributed their unemployment to overly theoretical curricula, 72% cited inadequate practical skills, and 60% reported that a lack of confidence and adaptability hindered their job search efforts. Qualitative insights further underscored the importance of soft skills, networking, and proactive attitudes in securing employment. The discussion contextualized these results within existing literature, emphasizing the urgent need for curriculum reform, practical training, and mindset transformation. Ultimately, the study concluded that aligning university programs with labor market demands, enhancing experiential learning, and fostering a growth-oriented mindset are critical for reducing graduate unemployment, and it offered targeted recommendations for policymakers, educators, and institutional leaders to address these gaps and support sustainable graduate employability in Uganda.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

Graduate unemployment is a significant issue in Uganda, particularly as the country faced a growing youth population and increasing numbers of university graduates entering the job market. This phenomenon was characterized by the inability of graduates to secure employment that aligned with their qualifications and skills, leading to economic and social challenges (Kibuuka, 2024). In this study, graduate unemployment served as the dependent variable, measured through factors such as employment rates, job search experiences, and the alignment of education programs with labor market demands. Education programs at Uganda Christian University (UCU) represented the independent variable, influencing the skills and competencies of graduates as they transitioned into the workforce. These programs were designed to equip students with the necessary knowledge and practical skills to enhance their employability and adaptability in a competitive job market (New Vision, 2024). This research aimed to investigate how education programs, the skills acquired, and the mindset of graduates impacted unemployment rates among UCU graduates. The study focused on the experiences and perceptions of students and recent graduates, as well as the perspectives of faculty members and employers in the region.

This section included the background of the study, the problem statement, research objectives, research questions, justification for the research, significance of the study, scope of the study, and the conceptual framework. By exploring these dimensions, the research sought to provide valuable insights into the factors that influenced graduate unemployment in Uganda and offered recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of educational initiatives at Uganda Christian University.

1.2 Background of the Study

This section covered historical Background, theoretical background, conceptual and contextual background.

1.2.1 Historical Background

The issue of graduate unemployment in Uganda has deep historical roots, influenced by various socio-economic factors. Following the end of colonial rule in 1962, Uganda experienced

significant political and economic turmoil, including civil wars and instability that severely disrupted educational systems and economic development (Kakumba, 2019). This instability contributed to a lack of infrastructure and resources necessary for fostering a robust job market. As a result, even as educational institutions expanded, the economy struggled to absorb the increasing number of graduates entering the workforce each year (Mugisha & Kivumbi, 2020).

In the late 20th century, Uganda began to stabilize politically and economically, leading to an increase in educational opportunities (Nabudere, 2021). However, despite the growth in the number of universities over 53 institutions producing approximately 30,000 graduates annually the job market remained stagnant (Uganda Bureau of Statistics [UBOS], 2021). By 2020, the unemployment rate for post-secondary graduates was reported at a staggering 80%, one of the highest globally (World Bank, 2020).

This disparity highlights a systemic issue where educational outputs do not align with labor market demands, leading to high levels of frustration among young graduates. The historical context of graduate unemployment in Uganda is further complicated by demographic trends. The country has one of the youngest populations in the world, with a significant proportion of its citizens aged between 15 and 24 years (United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA], 2022). This demographic bulge has resulted in an overwhelming influx of youth into the job market, exacerbating competition for limited employment opportunities. In many instances, graduates find themselves competing with individuals who possess lower qualifications but are willing to accept lower wages or informal employment (Kibera & Namasasu, 2020). Consequently, this mismatch between education and employment opportunities has persisted as a critical challenge for Uganda's socio-economic development.

1.2.2 Theoretical Background

The theoretical framework for the study on “The Impact of Education Programs, Skills, and Mindset on Graduate Unemployment in Uganda” was built upon several relevant theories that provide a foundation for understanding the dynamics of graduate unemployment. These theories include Human Capital Theory, Social Capital Theory, and the Theory of Planned Behavior. Each of these theories contributes to analyzing how education, skills, and mindset influence employability outcomes for graduates, particularly in the context of Uganda’s unique socio-economic landscape.

Human Capital Theory posits that individuals invest in their education and skills to enhance their productivity and, consequently, their employability in the labor market (Becker, 1993). This theory is particularly relevant in the context of Uganda, where the increasing number of graduates does not correspond with job availability, leading to what Dr. Enock Kibuuka describes as “academic inflation” (New Vision, 2024). The theory emphasizes that the quality and relevance of education programs directly affect graduates’ ability to secure employment. In Uganda, where many graduates possess theoretical knowledge but lack practical skills, Human Capital Theory helps explain the challenges graduates face in obtaining jobs that correspond with their qualifications. Human capital theory has been considered as one of the economics theories of HRD, (Economics Theory consisted of Human Capital Theory, Scarc Resource Theory and Sustainability Theory) according to Swanson (1999) who stated that “because performance improvement takes place in organizations that are economic entities, PI (performance improvement) must call upon economic theory at its core.”

In order to survive in a competitive knowledge based economy as well as keeping sustainability, human capital as an economic theory needs to be considered seriously. Human Capital Theory can improve a firm’s performance and explain the significance of labor maximization and how an organization can accumulate employees’ knowledge, skill, and ability by investing in humans through training, educating to enhance an employee’s capacity to work effectively. From the human capital definition as presented in table 1 and the definitions of HRD of Swanson & Holton (2004), it was said that “HRD as a process for developing and unleashing human expertise through organization and personnel training and development for the purpose of improving performance”.

Limitations of the theory

The capital theory uses a closed analytical system and independent variables but neither external effects nor co-dependence can be eliminated from the problems it addresses. Second, a linear theory is applied to material that is non-homogeneous in space and time (Tian & Tóth, 2024).

The human capital theory unifies two heterogeneous domains, education and work, as if they are a single domain. The theory eliminates other possible explanations of education/work relations, of which there are many (Heckman & Corbin, 2016). It is further argued that these weaknesses at the base of initially, one could argue that traditional human capital theory has limitations in explaining microeconomic phenomena. This theory heavily focuses on the role of intellectual and physical capital in an individual’s performance.

While **Human Capital Theory** offers valuable insights into the link between education and employability, its limitations in explaining the role of social networks and community support in accessing job opportunities highlight the need to incorporate **Social Capital Theory** for a more comprehensive understanding of graduate unemployment in Uganda.

Social Capital Theory focuses on the value of social networks and relationships in facilitating access to resources and opportunities (Bourdieu, 1986). In the context of graduate unemployment, this theory highlights how personal contacts and social networks play a critical role in job placement. Research indicates that many graduates secure their first employment through personal connections rather than through merit-based applications (Wizarts Foundation, 2021). This reliance on social capital suggests that graduates with limited social networks may face greater challenges in finding employment. Since its inception human capital theory has been subject to repeated and often devastating critiques. Few scholars from outside mainstream economics with close research knowledge of education have endorsed human capital theory. Many scholars in the political economy of education and labour have challenged the core narrative, from Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis (1976) to Joel Spring (2015). On the economics/sociology border, screening theory sees higher education not as a site of self-investment in cognitive formation that delivers economic returns, but a system for signaling a competitive position that delivers economic returns an alternative narrative to human capital theory using much the same evidence.

Given the above, Social Capital Theory has got the following limitations

A major limitation of the theory concerns the lack of consensus regarding the definition of the construct, which raises doubts about its validity. For instance, some approaches to Social Capital are quite restrictive as they capture only some dimensions for example social networks, but neglect others for example reciprocity while other approaches integrate dimensions that are similar but not in the heart of the concept (justice), tolerance in diversity (Agampodi, et al., 2015).

Hasan et al (2020) have pointed out that Social Capital is a “concept that means many things to many people” while Fine highlights how “almost any form of personal and social interaction has the capacity to be understood as social capital”.

The lack of agreement regarding its definition further limits the valid measurement of the construct. First, there are limitations regarding the core dimensions of social capital, which results in scales that are either too restrictive and capture only a part of the concept like cognitive Social

Capital structural are too extensive and include dimensions that do not lie in the core of social theory justice (Pejtersen et al., 2010).

Second, many existing scales assess certain dimensions at the individual level and others at the collective level. This is a limitation because the conceptualization varies according to the level of interest each time, and, hence, results are not comparable across levels (Brown et al., 2020). For example, the “Social Capital Questionnaire for Adolescent Students” assesses trust at the individual level (“I trust my friends at school”) while other aspects related with social support are measured only at the ecological level (i.e., “The teachers at my school are sympathetic and give us support”).

Finally, research evidence shows that different forms of Social Capital may lead to differential effects. For example, high trust and reciprocity within closer network connections, such as friends and family (bonding Social Capital), may lead to emotional or instrumental support, while at the same time they may weaken the social ties with the broader community for instance, bridging Social Capital (Takahashi & Magalong, 2008). These aspects of social capital downplay the idealistic approach towards the concept but contribute to a more realistic understanding of its effects.

While Social Capital Theory is powerful in explaining the role of social networks and community resources in employment outcomes, it doesn't focus enough on individual decision-making processes, personal attitudes, and behavioral intentions, all of which are essential to understanding how graduates approach the labor market. This is where the **Theory of Planned Behavior** becomes highly relevant.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) posits that individual behavior is driven by intentions, which are influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. The Theory of Planned Behavior was proposed by Ajzen and Madden (1986), with the aim of moving beyond solely volitional action. The TPB is an extended version of the theory of reasoned action by adding the concept of behavioral control. Nowadays, the role of control over intended behavior is increasingly attracting interested psychologists' attention. The fact that the probability of behavioral achievement must be to some extent dictated by the available opportunities and resources makes the significance of actual control self-evident.

In the context of graduate unemployment, this theory can be applied to understand how graduates' mindsets and attitudes towards employment opportunities affect their job-seeking behaviors. Graduates who hold a positive attitude towards self-employment and entrepreneurship may be more likely to pursue these avenues, while those preferring formal wage-paying jobs may experience higher unemployment rates. This theory emphasizes the need to foster a proactive mindset among graduates to enhance their employability and adaptability in a competitive job market.

The adequate assessment of actual control prior to behavior observation is often difficult, if not impossible. There are many accidental factors which can prevent the performance of an action and, by definition, cannot be anticipated. Moreover, we have a quite limited ability to identify required skills or other internal factors and make a valid assessment of these factors. In a nutshell, we cannot be certain that people have the required resources and that suitable opportunities will not be available unless one attempts to perform a specific behavior.

According to the Theory of Planned Behavior, human social behavior is reasonable (Artimage, 2003). Even though individuals' beliefs might be biased or baseless, their attitudes, subjective norms and perceived control over behavior result from these beliefs, create a corresponding behavioral intention, and eventually lead to behavior consistent with the beliefs. Some theorists have challenged this view arguing that human behavior can be performed automatically or out of habit. This view has been tested through measures of past behavior. It is argued that, if human behavior is reasoned, the past behavior frequency should only be indirectly related to later behavior and intention and perceived control should mediate the effects of that behavior.

The above theory has got the following limitations:

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) does not account for the role of emotions, assuming stable attitudes and norms across situations, neglecting the influence of unconscious factors, potential for inaccurate self-reported data, and not considering the impact of environmental or situational factors that can influence behavior despite a strong intention; essentially, it may not fully capture complex behavioral dynamics where factors beyond conscious attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control play a significant role.

Overreliance on conscious decision-making: Theory of Planned Behavior assumes people make deliberate, rational choices based on their attitudes, norms, and perceived control, neglecting the role of emotions, habits, or impulsive behaviors that can influence actions.

Limited consideration of context: The theory does not adequately account for how situational factors or environmental constraints might impact behavior, even if someone has a strong intention to act.

The theory of planned behavior only covers the cognitive layer of the participant: the subjective definition of the situation of the participant. Due to this fact, it misses out that behavior is always embedded in a social definition of the situation the behavior is executed in as well. This includes forms of cultural norms, rules, codes, social expectations and collective schema, which influence a behavioral situation and therefore the behavior itself (Savari & Khaleghi, 2023).

In conclusion, the theoretical frameworks i.e. Human Capital Theory, Social Capital Theory, and the Theory of Planned Behavior explored collectively provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to graduate unemployment in Uganda. Together, these theories illustrate that graduate unemployment in Uganda cannot be explained through a single lens. Instead, it is shaped by a complex interaction of educational outcomes, social networks, individual attitudes, and societal norms.

1.2.3 Conceptual background

In this section, the independent variable (education programs, skills development, and mindset) were defined and the dependent graduate unemployment.

Graduate Unemployment; this refers to the situation where individuals who have completed their higher education are unable to secure employment in their field of study or any suitable job. This study will specifically examine the unemployment rates among graduates of Uganda Christian University (UCU) and the factors contributing to their inability to find employment. Graduate unemployment is critical to this research as it reflects the effectiveness of educational programs and the skills acquired, influenced by various factors such as education quality and graduates' mindsets. The measurement of graduate unemployment will be conducted at the nominal level, categorizing respondents as either employed or unemployed based on their current employment status.

Education Programs; this refer to the structured curricula and courses offered at Uganda Christian University aimed at equipping students with the necessary knowledge and skills for their future careers. This variable encompasses various aspects, including the relevance of the curriculum, practical training opportunities, and the overall quality of education provided. The effectiveness

of education programs will be measured using specific indicators such as course content relevance, availability of internships, and student satisfaction, assessed at the ordinal level through Likert-scale items (e.g., strongly agree to strongly disagree).

Skills Acquired; this refers to the competencies and abilities that graduates gain through their educational experiences at UCU. This includes both hard skills (technical skills specific to a profession) and soft skills (such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving). The measurement of skills acquired will be assessed at the interval level, using a scale to evaluate the perceived proficiency of graduates in various skills relevant to their fields of study. Respondents will rate their skill levels on a scale from 1 (not proficient) to 5 (very proficient).

Mindset, refers to the perceptions and beliefs that graduates hold regarding employment opportunities, including their openness to self-employment and entrepreneurship. This variable is crucial as it influences graduates' job-seeking behaviors and their willingness to pursue various career paths. Mindset and attitudes will be measured at the ordinal level using a Likert-scale questionnaire to assess graduates' agreement with statements related to their views on employment, self-employment, and the value of their education in the job market.

1.2.4 Contextual Background

The contextual factors influencing graduate unemployment in Uganda are multifaceted and include economic policies, educational reforms, and social dynamics. The Ugandan government has recognized youth unemployment as a pressing issue and has implemented various initiatives aimed at addressing it (Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development [MGLSD], 2020). Programs such as the Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP) have been introduced to provide skills training and financial support for entrepreneurial ventures among young people. However, these initiatives often fall short due to inadequate funding and lack of follow-up support for participants (Nabudere et al., 2022). Moreover, educational reforms have been initiated to enhance vocational training and align curricula with labor market needs (Uganda National Council for Higher Education [UNCHE], 2019). For instance, Uganda Christian University (UCU) has partnered with international institutions to revise its business curriculum to include more practical elements aimed at fostering entrepreneurship among students (UCU Annual Report, 2023). Despite these efforts, challenges remain in effectively implementing these reforms across all educational institutions.

The economic landscape also plays a significant role in shaping graduate unemployment rates. Uganda's economy has primarily been agrarian with limited industrialization; hence job creation

has not kept pace with population growth (World Bank Group, 2021). Economic growth rates have not translated into substantial job creation opportunities for graduates, leading many to remain unemployed or underemployed. Furthermore, global economic conditions can impact local job markets; fluctuations in demand for Ugandan exports can affect overall employment levels (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2020). Social dynamics such as gender disparities also contribute to graduate unemployment rates. Women often face additional barriers when entering the job market due to cultural norms that prioritize male employment or limit women's mobility and access to resources (Karamagi & Muwanga-Zake, 2019). Addressing these social inequalities is crucial for improving overall employment outcomes for graduates.

In summary, understanding graduate unemployment among undergraduate students at Uganda Christian University requires an exploration of historical contexts, theoretical frameworks surrounding education and labor markets, and contextual factors influencing both policy responses and individual outcomes. Each layer reveals complexities that must be navigated to develop effective solutions aimed at reducing unemployment rates among young graduates in Uganda.

1.3 Problem Statement

Graduate unemployment in Uganda has reached alarming levels, particularly among university graduates, despite the country experiencing economic growth and increased foreign direct investment (FDI). The paradox of high graduate unemployment amidst economic expansion raises critical questions about the effectiveness of education programs and the skills imparted to students. Various government initiatives aimed at enhancing employability have been put in place, such as the education programs with subthemes of quality and relevance of curricula, availability of practical training opportunities and alignment with labor market needs, skills development with subthemes of acquisition of practical skills, soft skills (communication, teamwork, problem-solving) and technical skills relevant to specific industries and mindset with subthemes of attitude towards employment opportunities, willingness to pursue self-employment or entrepreneurship and perception of job market conditions (Wizarts Foundation, 2021; Kyamulabi, 2020).

Despite the above efforts, there are still issues with graduate employments which manifest in terms of high rates of unemployment among graduates, long duration of unemployment, underemployment rate and low job placement rates. This is attributed to the mindset of graduates towards employment, the skills mismatch by graduates, graduates preferring formal wage-paying jobs often overlooking opportunities for self-employment which could alleviate some of the

unemployment pressures (Namatovu et al., 2016). The lack of collaboration between educational institutions and the private sector further complicates the situation as employers often express dissatisfaction with the preparedness of graduates for the workforce (Al-Abdin et al., 2016). According to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2017), while the official unemployment rate is reported at 4%, independent studies indicate that approximately 59.1% of educated youth are unable to find meaningful employment, suggesting a significant disconnect between educational outcomes and labor market demands (Action for Development, 2016). This research sought to fill these gaps by providing a detailed analysis of how education programs, skills development, and mindset influence graduate employment outcomes, thereby contributing to the broader discourse on youth unemployment in Uganda.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of education programs, skills development, and mindset on graduate unemployment in Uganda; A case of Uganda Christian University, School of Business.

1.5 Specific Objectives

- i. To examine the effect of education programs on graduate unemployment at School of Business, UCU
- ii. To examine the effect of practical skills acquired on graduate unemployment at School of Business, UCU
- iii. To examine the effect of graduates' mindsets on graduate unemployment at School of Business, UCU

1.6 Research Questions

- i. What is the effect of education programs on graduate unemployment at School of Business, UCU?
- ii. What is the effect of practical skills acquired on graduate unemployment at School of Business, UCU?
- iii. What is the effect of graduates' mindsets on graduate unemployment at School of Business, UCU?

1.7 Hypotheses of the study

H₁: Education programs significantly affect graduate unemployment at School of Business, UCU

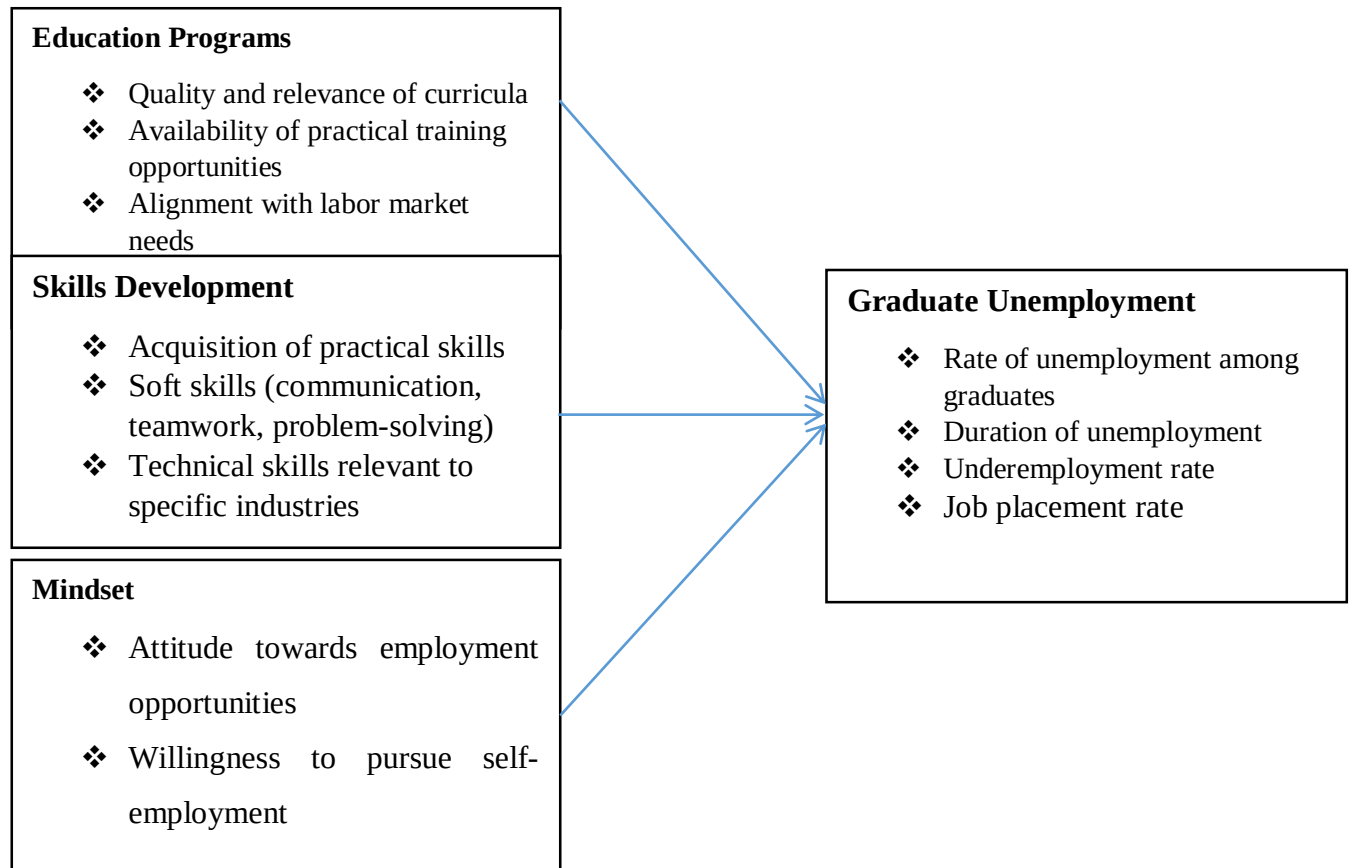
H₂: Practical skills acquired significantly affect graduate unemployment at School of Business, UCU

H₃: Graduates' mindsets significantly affect graduate unemployment at School of Business, UCU

1.8 Conceptual framework

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

DEPENDENT VARIABLE



Source: (Adopted from Wizarts Foundation. (2021); Kyamulabi, A. (2020)).

Figure 1: Conceptual framework showing the effect of education programs, skills development, and mindset on graduate unemployment.

From the figure above, the independent variable was measured in terms of education programs with subthemes of quality and relevance of curricula, availability of practical training opportunities, and alignment with labor market needs; skills development with subthemes of acquisition of practical skills, soft skills (communication, teamwork, problem-solving), and technical skills relevant to specific industries; and mindset with subthemes of attitude

towards employment opportunities, willingness to pursue self-employment or entrepreneurship, and perception of job market conditions. The dependent variable was measured in terms of rate of unemployment among graduates, duration of unemployment, and quality of employment obtained. It was hypothesized that any changes in the independent variable would lead to changes in the dependent variable by the same magnitude.

1.9 Justification of the Study

The issue of graduate unemployment in Uganda was a pressing concern that warranted thorough investigation, particularly in the context of the country's rapidly growing youth population. With over 78% of the population under the age of 30, the challenge of integrating young graduates into the labor market was critical for Uganda's socio-economic development (Namatovu et al., 2016). By examining the factors that contributed to graduate unemployment, this study aimed to provide valuable insights that could inform policy decisions and educational reforms. Understanding the specific challenges faced by graduates from Uganda Christian University, School of Business, enabled stakeholders to develop targeted interventions that enhanced employability and reduced unemployment rates among youth.

Moreover, the study addressed the significant skills mismatch between the education provided and the demands of the labor market. Many graduates possessed theoretical knowledge but lacked the practical skills necessary to succeed in their chosen fields (Wizarts Foundation, 2021). By evaluating the effectiveness of current education programs at Uganda Christian University, this research highlighted areas for improvement in curricula and training methodologies. This was crucial for ensuring that graduates were adequately prepared to meet the expectations of employers, ultimately contributing to a more skilled and adaptable workforce that could drive economic growth in Uganda.

Finally, this study emphasized the importance of mindset and attitudes toward employment among graduates. Research indicated that many young people in Uganda preferred formal wage-paying jobs and often overlooked opportunities for self-employment or entrepreneurship (Namatovu et al., 2016). By analyzing the influence of graduates' mindsets on their job search strategies, the study provided recommendations for fostering a more entrepreneurial culture among youth. This was particularly relevant in the context of Uganda's high rates of entrepreneurship, which, if harnessed effectively, could lead to job creation and economic resilience. Overall, the findings of

this study contributed to the broader discourse on youth unemployment and provided actionable insights for educational institutions, policymakers, and the private sector.

1.10 Significance of the Study

Informing educational reforms: The findings of this study offered valuable insights into the effectiveness of current educational programs at Uganda Christian University. By assessing how well these programs equipped students with the necessary skills for the job market, the research informed curriculum development and educational reforms. This was particularly important in light of the skills mismatch reported by various authors, which indicated that many graduates lacked the practical skills required by employers (Wizarts Foundation, 2021).

Promoting entrepreneurship: Given the high rates of graduate unemployment, fostering an entrepreneurial mindset among students was essential. This study analyzed how graduates' attitudes towards self-employment and entrepreneurship influenced their employability. By highlighting the importance of entrepreneurship education and support, the research contributed to initiatives aimed at encouraging graduates to create their own job opportunities, thereby reducing reliance on formal wage-paying jobs (Namatovu et al., 2016).

Enhancing collaboration between sectors: The study identified gaps in collaboration between educational institutions and the private sector, which was vital for addressing graduate unemployment. By exploring how partnerships could be strengthened to ensure that educational programs aligned with labor market needs, the research provided recommendations for improving cooperation between universities and employers (Kinyanda et al., 2017).

Policy makers: Finally, this research contributed to the broader discourse on youth unemployment and education policy in Uganda. By providing empirical evidence on the impact of education programs, skills, and mindset on graduate unemployment, the study informed policymakers and stakeholders in the education sector.

1.11 Scope of the Study

This section was delineated into three key dimensions: geographical scope, time scope, and content scope.

1.11.1. Geographical Scope

The study focused specifically on the Uganda Christian University (UCU) Mukono Campus, located in Mukono District, Central Region. UCU was recognized as one of the leading institutions of higher learning in the country, offering a diverse range of business programs to its students. With a student population of approximately 8,000, UCU Mukono Campus played a pivotal role in shaping the educational landscape in the region (Uganda Christian University, 2024). The choice of Mukono as the geographical focus was significant due to its proximity to Kampala, the capital city, which allowed for an analysis of local labor market dynamics and the unique challenges faced by graduates in this urban setting. By concentrating on UCU Mukono Campus, the research aimed to gather insights that reflected the specific educational practices and employment outcomes of graduates in this context.

1.11.2 Content scope

The content scope of the study encompassed education, economics, and sociology. It explored how educational programs at Uganda Christian University equipped students with the necessary skills for employment, while also examining the socio-economic factors that influenced graduate employment outcomes. Key themes included the effectiveness of curricula, the practical skills required by employers, and the mindset of graduates towards employment opportunities, including self-employment and entrepreneurship.

1.11.3. Time Scope

The time scope of the study was defined by the academic years covering the 2021 to 2023 cohorts at Uganda Christian University. This timeframe was crucial for assessing the immediate impact of recent educational programs and skill development initiatives on employability. By analyzing both current and historical perspectives, the research aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influenced graduate unemployment over time.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This literature review aimed to explore key themes related to the effectiveness of educational programs, the importance of practical skills, the mindsets of graduates regarding employment opportunities, and the collaboration between educational institutions and the private sector. By synthesizing existing research, this review identified gaps in the literature and provided insights that could inform policy and interventions aimed at enhancing graduate employability in Uganda.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for the study on “Education Programs, Skills, and Mindset on Graduate Unemployment in Uganda” was built upon several relevant theories that provided a foundation for understanding the dynamics of graduate unemployment. These theories included Human Capital Theory, Social Capital Theory, and the Theory of Planned Behavior. Each of these theories contributed to analyzing how education, skills, and mindset influenced employability outcomes for graduates, particularly in the context of Uganda’s unique socio-economic landscape.

Human Capital Theory posited that individuals invested in their education and skills to enhance their productivity and, consequently, their employability in the labor market (Becker, 1993). This theory was particularly relevant in the context of Uganda, where the increasing number of graduates did not correspond with job availability, leading to what Dr. Enock Kibuuka described as "academic inflation" (New Vision, 2024). The theory emphasized that the quality and relevance of education programs directly affected graduates’ ability to secure employment. In Uganda, where many graduates possessed theoretical knowledge but lacked practical skills, Human Capital Theory helped explain the challenges graduates faced in obtaining jobs that corresponded with their qualifications.

Human Capital Theory had been considered as one of the economic theories of HRD (Economics Theory consisted of Human Capital Theory, Scarce Resource Theory, and Sustainability Theory), according to Swanson (1999), who stated that “because performance improvement took place in

organizations that were economic entities, PI (performance improvement) must call upon economic theory at its core.”

In order to survive in a competitive knowledge-based economy as well as maintain sustainability, human capital as an economic theory needed to be considered seriously. Human Capital Theory could improve a firm’s performance and explain the significance of labor maximization and how an organization could accumulate employees’ knowledge, skill, and ability by investing in humans through training and education to enhance an employee’s capacity to work effectively. From the human capital definition as presented in Table 1 and the definitions of HRD by Swanson & Holton (2004), it was stated that “HRD as a process for developing and unleashing human expertise through organization and personnel training and development for the purpose of improving performance.”

2.3 Limitations of the theory

The capital theory used a closed analytical system and independent variables, but neither external effects nor co-dependence could be eliminated from the problems it addressed. Second, a linear theory was applied to material that was non-homogeneous in space and time (Tian & Tóth, 2024). The human capital theory unified two heterogeneous domains, education and work, as if they were a single domain. The theory eliminated other possible explanations of education/work relations, of which there were many (Heckman & Corbin, 2016). It was further argued that these weaknesses at the base of traditional human capital theory limited its ability to explain microeconomic phenomena. This theory heavily focused on the role of intellectual and physical capital in an individual’s performance.

Given the above limitations, Human Capital Theory was not sufficient to explain the effect of education programs, skills development, and mindset on graduate unemployment in Uganda, which called for the Social Capital Theory.

Social Capital Theory focused on the value of social networks and relationships in facilitating access to resources and opportunities (Bourdieu, 1986). In the context of graduate unemployment, this theory highlighted how personal contacts and social networks played a critical role in job placement. Research indicated that many graduates secured their first employment through personal connections rather than through merit-based applications (Wizarts Foundation, 2021).

This reliance on social capital suggested that graduates with limited social networks might have faced greater challenges in finding employment. Since its inception, human capital theory had been subject to repeated and often devastating critiques. Few scholars from outside mainstream economics with close research knowledge of education endorsed human capital theory. Many scholars in the political economy of education and labour challenged the core narrative, from Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis (1976) to Joel Spring (2015). On the economics/sociology border, screening theory saw higher education not as a site of self-investment in cognitive formation that delivered economic returns, but as a system for signaling a competitive position that delivered economic returns—an alternative narrative to human capital theory using much the same evidence.

The above theory has got the following limitations

A major limitation of the theory concerned the lack of consensus regarding the definition of the construct, which raised doubts about its validity. For instance, some approaches to social capital were quite restrictive as they captured only some dimensions, such as social networks, but neglected others, such as reciprocity, while other approaches integrated dimensions that were similar but not at the heart of the concept (e.g., justice, tolerance in diversity) (Agampodi et al., 2015).

Hasan et al. (2020) pointed out that Social Capital was a “concept that meant many things to many people,” while Fine highlighted how “almost any form of personal and social interaction had the capacity to be understood as social capital.” The lack of agreement regarding its definition further limited the valid measurement of the construct. There were limitations regarding the core dimensions of social capital, which resulted in scales that were either too restrictive and captured only a part of the concept, or were too extensive and included dimensions that did not lie at the core of social theory (Pejtersen et al., 2010).

Second, many existing scales assessed certain dimensions at the individual level and others at the collective level. This was a limitation because the conceptualization varied according to the level of interest each time, and, hence, results were not comparable across levels (Brown et al., 2020). For example, the “Social Capital Questionnaire for Adolescent Students” assessed trust at the individual level (“I trust my friends at school”), while other aspects related to social support were

measured only at the ecological level (e.g., “The teachers at my school are sympathetic and give us support”).

Finally, research evidence showed that different forms of social capital could lead to differential effects. For example, high trust and reciprocity within closer network connections, such as friends and family (bonding Social Capital), could lead to emotional or instrumental support, while at the same time they might weaken the social ties with the broader community (bridging Social Capital) (Takahashi & Magalong, 2008). These aspects of social capital downplayed the idealistic approach towards the concept but contributed to a more realistic understanding of its effects.

Given the above limitations, Social Capital Theory was also not sufficient to explain the effect of education programs, skills development, and mindset on graduate unemployment in Uganda, which called for the Theory of Planned Behavior.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) does not account for the role of emotions, assuming stable attitudes and norms across situations, neglecting the influence of unconscious factors, potential for inaccurate self-reported data, and not considering the impact of environmental or situational factors that can influence behavior despite a strong intention; essentially, it may not fully capture complex behavioral dynamics where factors beyond conscious attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control play a significant role.

Overreliance on conscious decision-making: TPB assumes people make deliberate, rational choices based on their attitudes, norms, and perceived control, neglecting the role of emotions, habits, or impulsive behaviors that can influence actions.

Limited consideration of context: The theory does not adequately account for how situational factors or environmental constraints might impact behavior, even if someone has a strong intention to act.

The theory of planned behavior only covers the cognitive layer of the participant: the subjective definition of the situation of the participant. Due to this fact, it misses out that behavior is always embedded in a social definition of the situation the behavior is executed in as well. This includes forms of cultural norms, rules, codes, social expectations and collective schema, which influence a behavioral situation and therefore the behavior itself (Savari & Khaleghi, 2023).

2.3 Review of related literature

2.3.1. Education Programs and graduate unemployment

The effectiveness of education programs in equipping students with the necessary skills for employment was a critical concern in Uganda, particularly at institutions like Uganda Christian University (UCU). Research indicated that while UCU offered a variety of programs, there was a significant gap between the skills taught and those required by employers in the Ugandan job market (Kyamulabi, 2020). This mismatch was echoed by other studies, such as that by Egessa et al. (2021), which highlighted the need for curriculum reforms that incorporated practical training and experiential learning opportunities. In countries like South Africa, similar challenges had been addressed by integrating work-based learning into higher education curricula, demonstrating the potential benefits of such approaches (Mokgoro & Mothibe, 2020).

Furthermore, a study by Kakooza et al. (2019) emphasized the importance of aligning educational outcomes with labor market needs. The Ugandan government had recognized this issue and had initiated reforms aimed at enhancing the relevance of education programs. For instance, the Ministry of Education and Sports had implemented policies to encourage partnerships between universities and industries, which was a strategy that had proven successful in countries like Kenya, where such collaborations had led to improved employability rates among graduates (Guloba et al., 2021). However, despite these efforts, many graduates still reported feeling unprepared for the workforce, indicating that more comprehensive changes were needed.

Moreover, the Daily Monitor (2022) reported that employers in Uganda often expressed dissatisfaction with the practical skills of graduates, pointing to a lack of hands-on training in academic programs. This sentiment was echoed by local business leaders who argued that graduates needed to be equipped with not only theoretical knowledge but also the ability to apply this knowledge in real-world situations. This highlighted a critical area for improvement in UCU's education programs, suggesting that incorporating internships and practical projects could have enhanced students' readiness for employment.

While UCU had made strides in offering diverse educational programs, there was a pressing need for ongoing evaluation and reform to ensure that these programs effectively prepared students for the demands of the labor market. By learning from successful models in other countries and addressing the specific needs of Ugandan employers, UCU could have enhanced the employability of its graduates and contributed to reducing unemployment rates in the region.

2.3.2. Practical skills acquired and graduate unemployment

The relationship between practical skills acquired during education and the employability of graduates was a well-documented phenomenon in the literature. In Uganda, a significant number of graduates possessed theoretical knowledge but lacked the practical skills necessary for success in the job market (Wizarts Foundation, 2021). This skills gap was particularly evident in fields such as engineering and information technology, where employers reported difficulties in finding candidates who could effectively apply their knowledge in practical settings (Kyamulabi, 2020). In a comparative study, Egessa et al. (2021) found that countries with strong vocational training programs, such as Germany, had lower youth unemployment rates due to their emphasis on practical skills development. The dual education system in Germany, which combined classroom instruction with hands-on training in workplaces, served as a model that Uganda could emulate to enhance the employability of its graduates. Implementing similar vocational training initiatives in Uganda could have helped bridge the skills gap and prepared students for the demands of the labor market.

Additionally, research by Kakooza et al. (2019) indicated that graduates who had participated in internships or practical training programs were significantly more likely to secure employment shortly after graduation. This finding underscored the importance of experiential learning opportunities in enhancing employability. In Uganda, however, many students lacked access to such opportunities, which limited their ability to gain practical experience and develop the skills that employers sought (Daily Monitor, 2022).

Moreover, the lack of collaboration between educational institutions and the private sector further exacerbated the skills gap. A study by Guloba et al. (2021) highlighted the need for stronger partnerships between universities and industries to ensure that educational programs were aligned with labor market needs. By fostering these collaborations, UCU could have provided students with more opportunities for practical training and internships, ultimately enhancing their employability.

The relationship between practical skills and employability was critical for graduates in Uganda. By prioritizing the development of practical skills through experiential learning opportunities and strengthening partnerships with industries, educational institutions could significantly improve the employability of their graduates and contribute to reducing unemployment rates in the country.

2.3.3. Graduates' mindsets and graduate unemployment

The mindset and attitudes of graduates towards employment opportunities played a crucial role in their job search outcomes. In Uganda, many graduates exhibited a preference for formal wage-paying jobs, often overlooking opportunities for self-employment and entrepreneurship (Kyamulabi, 2020). This mindset led to prolonged periods of unemployment, as the competition for formal jobs was intense, and the available positions were limited.

Research by Ahaibwe and Mbowe (2014) emphasized the importance of fostering an entrepreneurial mindset among graduates to enhance their employability. Countries like Nigeria had implemented initiatives to promote entrepreneurship education in universities, encouraging students to consider self-employment as a viable career option. By adopting similar strategies, Uganda could empower graduates to explore alternative career paths and reduce their reliance on formal employment. Furthermore, the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) suggested that individuals' intentions to engage in specific behaviors were influenced by their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In the context of graduate unemployment, this theory highlighted the need to address the attitudes of Ugandan graduates towards self-employment and entrepreneurship. By providing mentorship and support for aspiring entrepreneurs, educational institutions could help shift graduates' mindsets and encourage them to pursue self-employment opportunities (Wizarts Foundation, 2021).

Additionally, the Daily Monitor (2022) reported that many young Ugandans were unaware of the potential benefits of entrepreneurship, including job creation and financial independence. This lack of awareness hindered graduates from exploring self-employment options. Educational programs that incorporated entrepreneurship training and practical business skills helped change this narrative and equipped graduates with the knowledge and confidence to start their ventures.

The mindset and attitudes of graduates towards employment opportunities significantly influenced their job search outcomes. By fostering an entrepreneurial culture and providing support for self-employment initiatives, Uganda was able to empower graduates to explore diverse career paths and ultimately reduce unemployment rates among its youth.

2.4. Literature summary and gaps

Empirical gap; There was a significant empirical gap in the literature regarding the specific factors that influenced graduate unemployment in Uganda, particularly among students at Uganda Christian University. While existing studies had highlighted the mismatch between educational outcomes and labor market demands (Egessa et al., 2021; Guloba et al., 2021), the effectiveness of specific education programs at UCU and their direct impact on graduate employability had not been extensively explored. Additionally, the interplay between graduates' mindsets, their attitudes towards self-employment, and the socio-economic context in which they operated had not been adequately studied in this context (Kakooza et al., 2019; Kibuuka, 2024). Furthermore, the phenomenon of "academic inflation" or credential inflation and its effects on different fields of study and subsequent employment outcomes for graduates remained underexplored (Kibuuka, 2024; Wizarts Foundation, 2021). Addressing these gaps was expected to provide valuable insights into the dynamics of graduate unemployment and inform educational policies aimed at enhancing employability in Uganda.

The empirical literature on graduate unemployment in Uganda revealed significant gaps that warranted further investigation, particularly regarding the specific factors influencing employability among graduates from institutions like Uganda Christian University. While existing studies had identified a mismatch between educational outcomes and labor market demands (Egessa et al., 2021; Kakooza et al., 2019), there was limited research that examined the effectiveness of specific educational programs and their direct impact on graduate employability outcomes. Additionally, the phenomenon of "academic inflation," where an oversupply of

graduates led to increased competition for limited job opportunities, had been noted but not thoroughly analyzed in the Ugandan context (Kibuuka, 2024; New Vision, 2024). Furthermore, the interplay between graduates' mindsets, their attitudes towards self-employment, and socio-economic factors influencing their employment prospects remained underexplored (Wizarts Foundation, 2021). This was particularly relevant given the high levels of youth unemployment despite economic growth and increased foreign direct investment in Uganda (Ahaibwe & Mbowe, 2014). By addressing these gaps, future research could provide valuable insights into the dynamics of graduate unemployment and inform educational policies aimed at enhancing employability in Uganda.

2.5. Conclusion

The issue of graduate unemployment in Uganda, particularly among students at Uganda Christian University, was a complex challenge that required a comprehensive approach. The literature review highlighted several key factors that contributed to this phenomenon, including the mismatch between the skills taught and those required by employers, the lack of practical training opportunities, the influence of graduates' mindsets and attitudes, and the gaps in collaboration between universities and industries. Addressing these challenges required curriculum reforms that incorporated experiential learning, strengthened partnerships with the private sector, and provided students with internships and practical projects. Moreover, fostering an entrepreneurial culture and providing support for aspiring entrepreneurs helped shift graduates' mindsets and empowered them to explore diverse career paths. By prioritizing these strategies and addressing the research gaps, Uganda could enhance the employability of its graduates and contribute to reducing unemployment rates among its youth.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter outlined the research methodology used in the study, the research design, the study population, sample size, and sampling design. The instruments and methods for collecting and analyzing data were discussed. Data collection methods, data analysis, variable measurement, and measures taken to improve data validity and reliability were all discussed in detail.

3.2. Research Design

The study adopted a cross-sectional design to obtain information from a large group of respondents at one point in time (Sileyew, 2020). This design was used because data was collected at a single point in time; cross-sectional studies were relatively cheap and less time-consuming than other types of research (Thomas, 2023). In addition, the study adopted a triangulation of both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative approaches enabled the collection of numerical data to explain, describe, and understand relationships. It enabled the researcher to quantify the views of respondents towards certain variables and draw statistical conclusions. For the qualitative approach, it helped the researcher to better understand motivations, needs, processes, and rationale for behaviors (McCombes, 2023).

3.3. Area of Study

This study focused on Uganda Christian University (UCU), a private university located in Mukono, Uganda. Mukono, situated approximately 25 kilometers east of Kampala, served as a significant educational hub, offering a range of academic programs across various disciplines, including business, engineering, and social sciences. The challenges of graduate unemployment in Uganda were particularly pronounced, with the country experiencing a high youth unemployment rate. This situation underscored the importance of effective educational practices in addressing the skills gap and enhancing employability among graduates. By focusing on UCU, the research aimed to explore how the university's educational programs aligned with labor market demands and the extent to which they prepared students for the realities of the job market.

Moreover, the choice of Mukono as the study area allowed for the inclusion of diverse perspectives from recent graduates and local employers, providing a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing graduate unemployment. Insights gained from this study were expected to contribute to the development of targeted policies and practices that enhanced the employability of graduates not only at Uganda Christian University but also across other educational institutions in Uganda. By identifying gaps in educational outcomes and labor market needs, the research aimed to inform curriculum reforms and skills development initiatives that could better prepare graduates for successful careers.

3.4. Population and Sampling Techniques

3.4.1 Population

In this study, the population referred to all individuals at Uganda Christian University (UCU) who were directly involved in educational programs and were relevant to the investigation of graduate unemployment. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) and Sapsford (1999), a population consisted of all individuals, events, or objects with observable characteristics pertinent to the research inquiry. This included 1,010 recent graduates and administrators from the School of Business.

3.4.2 Sample Size Determination

According to Mooney (2019), a sample size was defined as a subset of a particular selected population. The sample size for this study was determined using the Morgan and Krejcie table. The following table outlined the sample size from different groups:

S/N	Group/Department	Population	Sample	Sampling technique
1	Recent Graduates	1000	278	Sample random
2	Administrators (school of business)	10	10	Purposive
	Total	1010	288	

Source: Primary Data (2023) Krejcie & Morgan (1970) table

3.5 Sampling techniques and procedures

The study employed both simple random and purposive sampling techniques.

3.5.1 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling was used to focus in depth on relatively small samples. This technique was used to select employees, allowing the researcher to use his judgment and handpick only those respondents deemed to have the most relevant information (Nikolopoulou, 2022; Thomas, 2020).

3.5.2 Simple random

Simple random sampling is a type of probability sampling in which the researcher randomly selects a subset of participants from a population. This technique avoided bias by ensuring that every person in a population had an equal and independent probability of being chosen as a respondent (Thomas, 2020). In this study, the technique was used to select students.

3.6. Data Collection Instruments

This study employed two main data collection instruments: structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.

3.6.1 Structured Questionnaires

Structured questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data from undergraduate students and recent graduates of Uganda Christian University. The questionnaire aimed to capture perceptions, experiences, and outcomes related to education programs, skills acquired, mindset and attitudes toward employment opportunities, and current employment status. The questionnaire consisted of sections on demographics, Likert scale items to assess perceptions of education programs, skills acquired, and mindset, as well as closed-ended questions to gather specific information on employment status and job search experiences. Questions were designed to be clear, concise, and easily understandable to ensure accurate responses and facilitate data analysis. The questionnaires were administered either through online surveys or in-person, depending on participant preference and availability.

3.6.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

The interview guides included open-ended questions and probes related to the effectiveness of education programs, the collaboration between UCU and employers, the skills and mindset of graduates, and potential solutions to address graduate unemployment. Interviews were conducted either face-to-face or via video conferencing, depending on the convenience and preference of the

participants. All interviews were audio-recorded with the consent of the participants and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with faculty members, university administrators, and employers to collect qualitative data that provided in-depth insights into the factors influencing graduate unemployment at UCU. Interview guides were developed to ensure consistency in data collection while allowing for flexibility to explore emerging themes and gather rich, contextual information.

3.7. Data Quality Control

3.7.1 Reliability of Instruments

The structured questionnaire was carefully designed to ensure reliability by using established scales and validated questions. This included employing Likert scales with clear response anchors and avoiding ambiguous or leading questions. To enhance reliability, the questionnaire underwent pre-testing with a small sample of participants to identify any ambiguities or issues in comprehension. Adjustments were made based on feedback to ensure clarity and consistency in responses.

For the semi-structured interviews, the interview guides were pilot-tested with a few participants to assess the clarity and flow of questions. Feedback was incorporated to refine the guides and ensure that they elicited consistent and reliable responses from participants.

3.7.2 Validity of Instruments

Content Validity: The questionnaire and interview guides underwent a thorough review by subject matter experts, including faculty members from the Education Department at Uganda Christian University and professionals in the field of graduate employability. This ensured that the questions accurately captured the constructs of interest (i.e., education programs, skills, mindset, and graduate unemployment).

Construct Validity: Construct validity was addressed by aligning questionnaire items and interview questions with established theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence on factors influencing graduate employability. This ensured that the instruments measured the intended constructs accurately.

Pilot Testing: A pilot study was conducted to pre-test the questionnaire and interview guides with a subset of participants. This allowed for the identification of potential issues such as unclear wording, response biases, or missing relevant questions. Adjustments were made accordingly to improve the validity of the instruments.

Respondents were asked if each question on a test addressed characteristics that the instrument was designed to cover in order to estimate the validity of a piece of content. Chetwynd (2022) asserted that any instrument with a content validity index (CVI) greater than 0.7 was suitable for research. For the validity test, the researcher used the following formula:

$$\text{CVI} = \text{Number of items considered relevant} / \text{Total number of items}$$

Table 3.1: Results of content validity for research tools

Dimensions	No of Items	Relevant	CVI
Education programs	08	07	0.875
Practical skills acquired	08	07	0.875
Graduates' mindsets	08	07	0.875
Graduate unemployment	08	07	0.875

Source: Primary Data (2024)

3.8 Procedure for data collection

Preparation Phase: The researcher compiled a list of eligible participants from various departments within Restless Development Uganda, ensuring representation from Finance, Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning, People and Performance, Strategy & Direction, Programmes, Communications, Business Development, Board of Directors, and Volunteers. Necessary ethical approvals were obtained from relevant institutional review boards or ethical committees to safeguard participants' rights and adhere to ethical guidelines.

ii. Participant Selection: Participants were selected using simple random sampling to ensure fairness and equal opportunity. This method was employed to randomly select 50 participants from the compiled list, ensuring the sample represented the organization's diversity.

iii. Informed Consent Process: Selected participants were contacted to explain the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, benefits, confidentiality measures, and their voluntary participation. Written informed consent was obtained from each participant who agreed to take part.

iv. Questionnaire Administration: A structured questionnaire designed for this study was administered. The questionnaire included sections on demographics, perceptions of corporate governance principles (accountability, transparency, fairness), and environmental sustainability practices (policies, impact assessments, reporting).

v. Data Collection: Data collection sessions were conducted either through face-to-face interviews or electronically via online surveys, depending on participant availability and preference. Clear instructions were provided to participants to ensure understanding and minimize errors during data collection.

vi. Completion and Closure: Upon completion of data collection, participants were thanked for their participation and cooperation in the study. All collected data was securely stored and prepared for analysis following established data management protocols.

3.9. Data Analysis

3.9.1 Quantitative analysis

The data was presented in comprehensive tables displaying the responses to each category of variables after being edited, coded, and entered. Quantitative data analysis, which called for employing both descriptive and inferential statistics, was carried out using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS).

Descriptive Analysis: Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means, and standard deviations were calculated to summarize the data and provide an overview of the perceptions of education programs, skills acquired, and mindsets of graduates regarding employment opportunities. This analysis helped to identify trends and patterns in the data, offering insights into the overall effectiveness of educational initiatives at Uganda Christian University.

Inferential Analysis: Inferential statistical techniques such as correlation analysis, regression analysis, and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were employed to test hypotheses and explore relationships between variables. For example, regression analysis was used to examine the effect of education program effectiveness (independent variable) and graduate unemployment rates (dependent variable).

3.9.2 Qualitative analysis

Borgstede and Scholz (2021) defined qualitative data analysis as one which provided insights and understanding of the problem setting. Qualitative data analysis involved both thematic and content analysis and was based on how the findings related to the research questions. Content analysis was used to identify patterns in recorded communication (Luo, 2022). The researcher used content analysis to find out about the purposes, messages, and effects of communication content. Content analysis was used to quantify the occurrence of certain words, phrases, subjects, or concepts in a set of historical or contemporary texts (Marsh et al., 2020). Thematic analysis was a method of analyzing qualitative data. The researcher closely examined the data to identify common themes, topics, ideas, and patterns of meaning that came up repeatedly (Caulfield, 2022). There were various approaches to conducting thematic analysis, but the most common form followed a six-step process: familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up.

3.10 Measurement of variables

According to IvyPanda (2020), a measurement variable was an unknown attribute that measured a particular entity and could take one or more values. Measurement variables were categorized into nominal and ordinal. A nominal variable was a type of variable that was used to name, label, or categorize particular attributes that were being measured. A nominal variable was one of the two types of categorical variables and was the simplest among all measurement variables. Some examples of nominal variables included gender, name, and phone (Bhandari, 2022). An ordinal variable was a type of measurement variable that took values with an order or rank. The five-point Likert type scale (1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-not sure, 4-agree, and 5-strongly agree) was used to measure the independent variable and the dependent variable. The independent variable education programs, skills development, and mindset was measured in terms of Education Programs with subthemes of quality and relevance of curricula, availability of practical training opportunities and alignment with labor market needs; Skills Development with subthemes of

acquisition of practical skills, soft skills (communication, teamwork, problem-solving), and technical skills relevant to specific industries; and Mindset and Attitudes with subthemes of attitude towards employment opportunities, willingness to pursue self-employment or entrepreneurship, and perception of job market conditions. The dependent variable was measured in terms of rate of unemployment among graduates, duration of unemployment, and quality of employment obtained (relevance to field of study, job satisfaction, and career progression).

3.11. Ethical Considerations

Ethics in research referred to the norms that distinguished between acceptable and unacceptable behavior (Cammaerts, 2020). The researcher recognized the importance of ethics in this study, whereby integrity, honesty, and attribution were highly taken into account.

To ensure privacy, the subjects were informed upfront that their names would not be required, that they had the right to leave questions unanswered if they did not wish to provide the requisite information, and that the study would not put respondents under pressure if this happened.

Informed consent and approval were sought from all the respondents and associated stakeholders, respectively. The researcher was also cleared by the Research Committee of Uganda Management Institute with a letter to the field.

To ensure that there was no plagiarism in the study, all work used in the research was cited and referenced. The study also ensured originality by testing the work using Turnitin Software from the UCU website.

Research assistants were utilized for ethical purposes, and they sought respondents' consent before engagement. The researcher assured respondents on matters of confidentiality, that their names would not be disclosed, as well as the purpose of the study.

Confidentiality: During and after the study, the researcher was obligated not to disclose confidential information given by a respondent to another party without the respondent's authorization. However, the researcher exercised discipline by not discussing respondent specifics with their family members, social gatherings, or on social media.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter analyzed how Education Programs, Skills Development, and Graduates' Mindsets affected unemployment rates among Uganda Christian University's School of Business alumni. The study focused on three key areas: curriculum quality and relevance, practical skills acquisition (soft and technical), and mindset influences over employment attitudes, including entrepreneurial ventures.

Using both descriptive and inferential statistics, the analysis highlighted trends between these factors influencing local educational institutions' efforts to reduce graduate unemployment by aligning curricula with labor market needs while fostering entrepreneurial spirits amidst challenging economic realities that required adaptability through lifelong learning.

4.2. Response rate

The response rate for this study was calculated based on the total number of questionnaires distributed and those successfully completed. A sample size of 288 participants was determined using Morgan and Krejcie's table, comprising 278 recent graduates selected through random sampling and 10 administrators from the School of Business chosen via purposive sampling. To ensure full data coverage, a total of 288 questionnaires were distributed, and all were successfully completed and returned, resulting in a response rate of 100%. This perfect level of response guarantees full data coverage and strengthens the reliability and validity of the findings, ensuring that the results are truly representative of the target population within Uganda Christian University's School of Business.

4.3 Demographic characteristics of respondents

This section presented the respondents' demographic characteristics, including gender, age, education level, program of study, and primary source of financial support. The analysis used frequencies and percentages to summarize the data from a sample of 288 respondents, providing context for interpreting the study's findings. The demographic data covered key areas such as the gender distribution of respondents, age ranges, current levels of education, programs enrolled in or graduated from at Uganda Christian University, and primary sources of financial support while

studying. These characteristics provided a comprehensive overview of the study participants, offering valuable insights into the sample population and its potential influence on the research outcomes.

Table 4-1: Demographic Data of Respondents

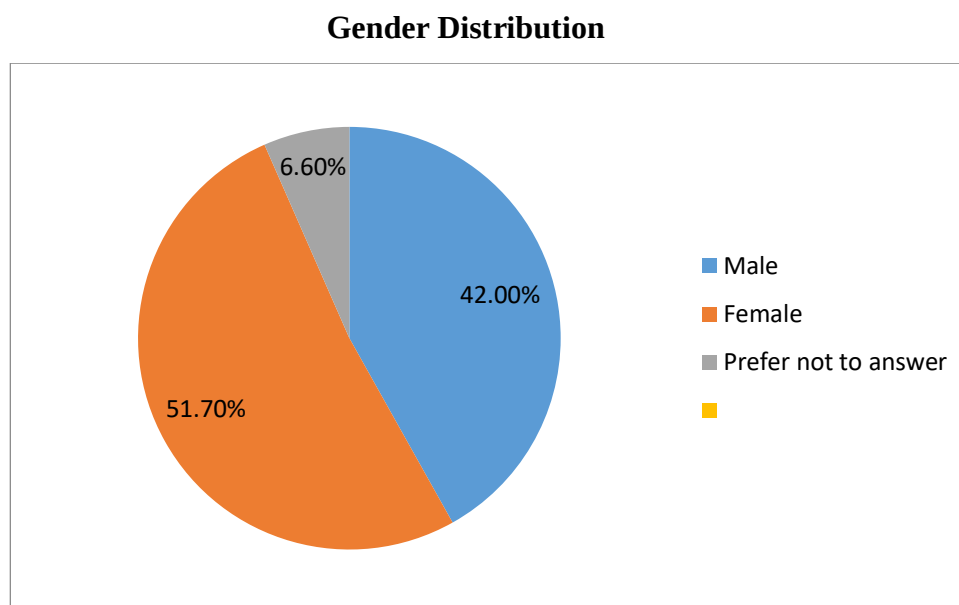
Demographics	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	121	42.0%
Female	149	51.7%
Prefer not to answer	19	6.6%
Total	288	100.0%
Age		
18-22	88	30.6%
23-27	121	42.0%
28-32	60	20.8%
33 and above	19	6.6%
Total	288	100.0%
Level of Education		
Undergraduate	102	35.4%
Recent graduate	116	40.3%
Graduate	51	17.7%
Others	19	6.6%
Total	288	100.0%
Program Enrolled/Graduated From		
Business Administration	102	35.4%
Accounting	84	29.2%
Marketing	74	25.7%
Others	28	9.7%
Total	288	100.0%
Primary Source of Financial Support		
Family Support	149	51.7%

Scholarship and Grants	60	20.8%
Part-time employment	51	17.7%
Loans or personal savings	28	9.7%
Total	288	100.0%

Source; Primary data

4.3.1 Gender Distribution

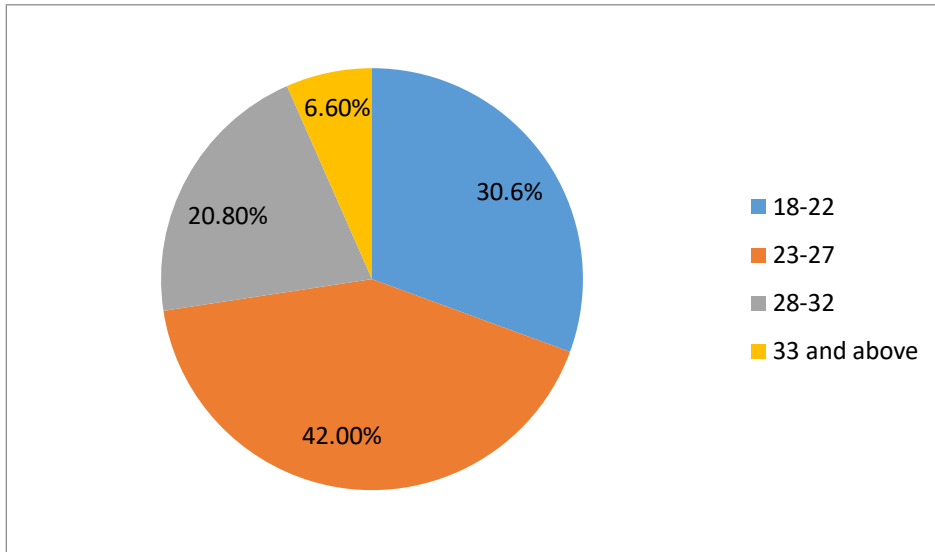
The study assessed the gender distribution of respondents. Out of the 288 participants, the majority were female, comprising 51.7% (149), while males accounted for 42.0% (121). Additionally, 6.6% (19) of respondents preferred not to disclose their gender identity. This distribution indicates a predominance of female respondents, suggesting that the demographic makeup of the sample may reflect broader community trends or specific outreach efforts by the organization.



4.3.2 Age Distribution

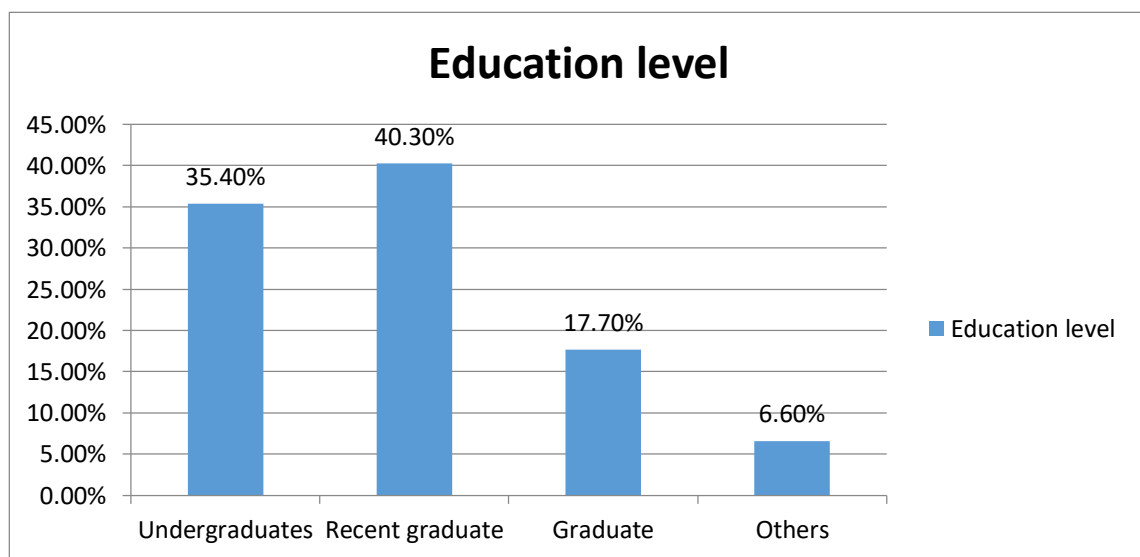
The study also evaluated the age distribution of respondents. Among the 288 participants, the largest age group was those aged 23-27 years, representing 42.0% (121) of the sample. This was followed by respondents aged 18-22 years at 30.6% (88), and those aged 28-32 years at 20.8% (60). The smallest group consisted of participants aged 33 and above, accounting for 6.6% (19). These findings highlight a significant presence of younger individuals, particularly those in the early to mid-20s, within the respondent pool.

Age distribution



4.3.3 Highest level of education attained

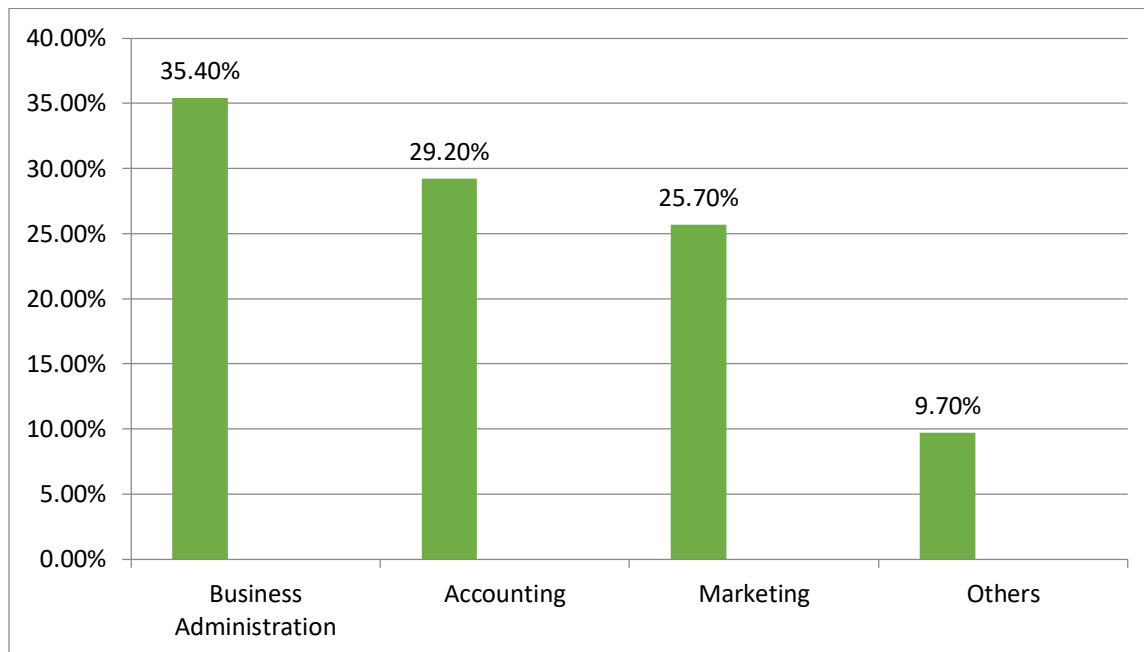
The study assessed the highest level of education attained by respondents. A substantial portion, 40.3% (116), reported being recent graduates, while 35.4% (102) were undergraduates currently enrolled in their programs. Additionally, 17.7% (51) had completed graduate studies, and 6.6% (19) fell into the "Others" category, which may include non-traditional educational paths or certifications. This distribution reflects a highly educated respondent group, with a notable emphasis on recent graduates and current undergraduates.



4.3.4 Program enrolled in or graduated from

The study explored the academic programs that respondents were enrolled in or had graduated from at Uganda Christian University. Among the participants, Business Administration was the most common field of study, with 35.4% (102) enrolled or graduated in this program. Accounting followed closely with 29.2% (84), while Marketing accounted for 25.7% (74). The remaining 9.7% (28) were from other programs not specified in this analysis. This distribution suggests a strong representation of business-related fields among respondents.

Program enrolled in or graduated from



4.3.5 Primary source of financial support

The study also examined the primary sources of financial support for respondents while studying. Family support emerged as the most significant source, with 51.7% (149) relying on it for their educational expenses. Scholarship and grants provided support for 20.8% (60), while part-time employment contributed to the financial needs of 17.7% (51). Lastly, loans or personal savings accounted for 9.7% (28). This distribution highlights that a majority of respondents depend on

familial assistance to fund their education, reflecting potential challenges faced by students in accessing alternative financial resources.

4.4 Descriptive Statistics

This section presented the descriptive statistics for the key variables related to education programs, skills development, and mindset on graduate unemployment at Uganda Christian University (UCU), School of Business. By summarizing the mean, standard deviation, and frequency distributions, these statistics provided an overview of general trends and patterns among respondents. The findings offered insights into how UCU's education programs and skills development initiatives influenced students' preparedness for the job market and their perceptions of employability.

4.4.1 Education program characteristics at Uganda Christian University

Table 4.2: Education Program Characteristics at Uganda Christian University

No.	Statements on Education Programs	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
EPC 1	The education programs at Uganda Christian University adequately prepare students for the job market.	288	1	5	2.94	1.40
EPC 2	I have gained practical skills that are relevant to my field of study through my education at UCU.	288	1	5	3.07	1.45
EPC 3	The curriculum at UCU includes sufficient hands-on learning opportunities (e.g., internships, projects).	288	1	5	2.96	1.45

No.	Statements on Education Programs	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
EPC 4	Faculty members at UCU are effective in teaching skills that are applicable in the workplace.	288	1	5	3.01	1.42
EPC 5	I feel confident in my ability to apply the knowledge gained from my education in a professional setting.	288	1	5	2.92	1.45
EPC 6	The education programs at UCU are regularly updated to meet the changing demands of the job market.	288	1	5	3.03	1.37
EPC 7	I believe that the skills I have acquired at UCU will enhance my employability after graduation.	288	1	5	2.99	1.46
EPC 8	I am satisfied with the education I have received at UCU in preparing me for employment.	288	1	5	3.13	1.43

Source; Primary data

Findings from the Table 4.2

Adequacy of education programs in preparing students for the job market: Respondents rated the adequacy of UCU's education programs in preparing students for the job market with a mean score of 2.94 and a standard deviation of 1.40. This suggests that while some students feel adequately prepared, others perceive gaps in the programs' ability to equip them with job-market-relevant skills, as reflected by the moderate mean and variability in responses.

Practical skills gained through education: The acquisition of practical skills relevant to students' fields of study was rated with a mean score of 3.07 and a standard deviation of 1.45. This indicates that students moderately agree they have gained practical skills, though the high standard deviation suggests varying experiences across respondents.

Inclusion of hands-on learning opportunities in the curriculum: The sufficiency of hands-on learning opportunities, such as internships and projects, received a mean score of 2.96 with a standard deviation of 1.45. This reflects moderate satisfaction with experiential learning components but highlights inconsistencies in their availability or quality.

Effectiveness of faculty in teaching workplace-applicable skills: Faculty effectiveness in imparting skills applicable to the workplace was rated with a mean score of 3.01 and a standard deviation of 1.42. This suggests that faculty are seen as moderately effective, though some students may feel improvements are needed in aligning teaching methods with workplace demands.

Confidence in applying knowledge professionally: Respondents' confidence in applying knowledge gained from their education in professional settings was rated at 2.92, with a standard deviation of 1.45. The relatively low mean suggests that many students feel underprepared to transition their academic knowledge into practical work environments.

Regular updates to education programs to meet job market demands: The regular updating of education programs to align with changing job market demands received a mean score of 3.03 and a standard deviation of 1.37. This indicates moderate agreement that updates occur but also reflects variability in how effectively these updates address market needs.

Enhancement of employability through acquired skills: The belief that skills acquired at UCU will enhance employability after graduation was rated with a mean score of 2.99 and a standard deviation of 1.46. This suggests mixed perceptions about how well these skills translate into real-world job opportunities.

Overall satisfaction with education in preparing for employment: Satisfaction with UCU's education programs in preparing students for employment received a mean score of 3.13, with a standard deviation of 1.43. While this is one of the higher-rated aspects, the variability indicates that not all students share this positive perception.

4.4.2. Statements on practical skills acquired at Uganda Christian University

Table 4.3: Statements on Practical Skills Acquired

No.	Statements on Practical Skills Acquired	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
PSA 1	Practical skills gained during my education are more important than theoretical knowledge when seeking employment.	288	1	5	3.75	1.32
PSA 2	Employers in Uganda value practical skills over academic qualifications when hiring graduates.	288	1	5	4.01	1.18
PSA 3	The skills I learned during my education have directly contributed to my ability to secure a job.	288	1	5	3.67	1.29
PSA 4	I have participated in internships or practical training that enhanced my employability.	288	1	5	3.89	1.24
PSA 5	I believe that the practical skills I acquired during my studies are	288	1	5	3.82	1.27

No.	Statements on Practical Skills Acquired	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
	relevant to the current job market in Uganda.					
PSA 6	My education has provided me with opportunities to develop soft skills (e.g., communication, teamwork) essential for employment.	288	1	5	3.94	1.22
PSA 7	I feel that my practical skills give me a competitive advantage when applying for jobs.	288	1	5	3.78	1.28
PSA 8	There is a strong correlation between the practical skills I acquired and my current employment status.	288	1	5	3.71	1.30

Source; Primary data

Practical Skills vs. Theoretical Knowledge in Employment: Respondents rated the importance of practical skills over theoretical knowledge when seeking employment with a mean score of 3.75 and a standard deviation of 1.32. This suggests that students generally agree that practical skills are more critical for employment than theoretical knowledge alone, though some variability in responses indicates differing opinions on the balance between these two types of learning.

Implication: The emphasis on practical skills highlights the need for education programs to focus more on experiential learning, such as internships and projects, which provide real-world experience.

Variability: The standard deviation indicates that while many students value practical skills highly, others may still see theoretical knowledge as equally or more important.

Employers' preference for practical skills over academic qualifications: The statement about employers in Uganda valuing practical skills over academic qualifications received a mean score of 4.01 and a standard deviation of 1.18, reflecting strong agreement among respondents. This high mean suggests that graduates believe employers prioritize hands-on experience and applicable skills over mere academic credentials. The relatively low standard deviation indicates less variability in this perception, suggesting widespread recognition among graduates about employer preferences.

Contribution of acquired skills to securing employment: The skills learned during education contributing to securing a job were rated with a mean score of 3.67 and a standard deviation of 1.29, indicating moderate agreement. This suggests that while many graduates feel their acquired skills have been instrumental in helping them secure employment, there is some variation in how impactful these skills are perceived to be across different individuals or industries.

Participation in internships or practical training: Participation in internships or practical training that enhanced employability was rated with a mean score of 3.89, showing significant positive impact. A high proportion of respondents found internships valuable for their career readiness, though not all may have had equal access to such opportunities due to factors like availability or industry connections.

Relevance of practical skills to the job market: The relevance of practical skills acquired during studies to the current job market received a mean score of 3.82, indicating general alignment with market demands but room for improvement. Respondents generally perceive their practical skills as relevant; however, some variability suggests ongoing challenges aligning curriculum content perfectly with evolving job market needs.

Development of soft skills for employment: Opportunities provided by education to develop soft skills (e.g., communication and teamwork) were highly valued at UCU (mean = 3.94). These essential soft skills are seen as crucial by both educators and employers alike because they enhance collaboration effectiveness within professional settings.

Competitive advantage from practical skills. Respondents felt their practical experiences gave them an edge when applying (mean = 3:78), although confidence varied across individuals. This reflects moderate agreement among respondents regarding how much competitive advantage they derive from having developed such competencies

Correlation between practical skills and employment status

The correlation between the practical skills acquired and current employment status was rated with a mean score of 3.71 and a standard deviation of 1.30. This suggests that many respondents see a positive link between their skills and employment outcomes, though perceptions vary across individuals.

4.4.3. Statements on graduates' mindsets

Table 4.4: Statements on graduates' mindsets

No.	Statements on Graduates' Mindsets	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
GM1	I believe that my mindset influences my ability to find a job after graduation.	288	1	5	4.12	1.15
GM2	I am open to self-employment and entrepreneurship as viable career options after graduation.	288	1	5	3.96	1.20
GM3	I feel confident in my ability to start my own business if I cannot find employment.	288	1	5	3.81	1.25
GM4	My education has encouraged me to adopt a proactive approach towards seeking employment.	288	1	5	3.88	1.23

Source; Primary data

Findings: Statements on graduates' mindsets

Influence of mindset on job search success: Graduates strongly agreed (mean = 4.12) that mindset plays a critical role in finding employment after graduation. This belief underscores optimism resilience and proactive strategies as vital components for success navigating challenging labor markets

Openness to self-employment and entrepreneurship: Openness towards self-employment and entrepreneurship was positively viewed (mean=3.96). Reflecting an increasing trend among young graduates who see entrepreneurship as viable career paths rather than solely relying on traditional salaried positions

Confidence in starting one's own business: Confidence levels in starting businesses if unable to find employment were moderately high (mean=3.81). While many feel empowered by entrepreneurial spirit there exists variation in perceived capability across different individuals or contexts

Proactive approach encouraged by education: UCU's educational approach encourages proactive job-seeking behaviors (mean=3.88). Graduates generally agree they've been equipped with strategies for actively pursuing career goals rather than passively waiting for opportunities

4.5. Correlation between Variables

This section presented a comprehensive correlation analysis examining the strength and direction of relationships among the key variables related to education programs, skills development, graduate mindsets, and employment outcomes at Uganda Christian University (UCU). The analysis investigated how factors such as education program quality, practical skills acquisition, hands-on learning opportunities, faculty effectiveness, curriculum updates, employability confidence, soft skills development, and proactive mindset interrelated and collectively influenced graduate employment status. Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was used to measure the linear association between pairs of variables, with values ranging from -1 to +1 indicating negative, positive, or no correlation. Understanding these interrelationships was critical for identifying which educational and psychological factors most strongly contributed to reducing graduate unemployment. This knowledge enabled university administrators, policymakers, and educators

to prioritize interventions that effectively enhanced graduates' employability, thereby fostering economic empowerment and sustainable career success.

4.6. Relationship between variables

This section explored the complex interplay between the study's primary variables—education program quality, practical skills acquired, hands-on learning opportunities, faculty effectiveness, curriculum updates, employability confidence, soft skills development, and proactive mindset—and their collective impact on graduate employment status. Through correlation and multiple regression analyses, the study sought to determine not only the associations among these factors but also the extent to which each uniquely predicted employment outcomes for UCU graduates. This approach provided deeper insight into the mechanisms by which educational experiences and personal attributes translated into successful labor market integration.

4.6.1. Assumptions for Parametric Tests

Prior to conducting the multiple regression analysis, the data were rigorously assessed to ensure they met the assumptions required for valid parametric testing. Normality of the distribution of each variable was examined using visual methods such as histograms and normal Q-Q plots, complemented by formal statistical tests including the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests. While some minor deviations from perfect normality were observed, these were deemed acceptable given the relatively large sample size of 288, which mitigates the sensitivity of normality tests due to the Central Limit Theorem. Further evaluation of skewness and kurtosis statistics confirmed that the data distributions approximated normality sufficiently to proceed without transformation.

Outlier detection was performed by calculating standardized z-scores for all observations, with a threshold of ± 3.29 standard deviations set to identify extreme values that could bias the regression results. No cases exceeded this threshold, indicating the absence of influential outliers. This validation step ensures that the regression coefficients and subsequent inferences are robust and representative of the broader graduate population. Together, these diagnostic procedures affirm the appropriateness of applying parametric regression techniques to analyze the predictive relationships among education program variables, skills development, mindset, and graduate employment at UCU.

4.6.2. Multicollinearity

The findings of this advanced analysis converge on several critical insights. First, the absence of multicollinearity and the high explanatory power of the regression model confirm that the selected variables are both statistically and practically significant in shaping graduate employment outcomes. The overwhelming importance of proactive mindset and practical skills acquisition suggests that universities should prioritize experiential learning, entrepreneurship education, and psychological readiness programs alongside traditional academic instruction. The significance of soft skills and employability confidence points to the need for integrated curricula that blend technical, interpersonal, and reflective learning experiences. The positive, albeit smaller, effects of curriculum quality, updates, and faculty effectiveness highlight the importance of ongoing curriculum review, industry engagement, and faculty development in maintaining the relevance and impact of university education. In sum, addressing graduate unemployment in Uganda requires a holistic, evidence-based approach that goes beyond narrow curricular reforms, integrating practical skills, soft skills, and mindset development to produce adaptable, resilient, and employable graduates.

Table 4.5 Multicollinearity Diagnostics

Predictor Variable	Tolerance	VIF	Condition Index	Eigenvalue	Interpretation
Education Program Quality	0.48	2.08	12.4	0.81	Acceptable
Practical Skills Acquired	0.41	2.44	14.2	0.72	Acceptable
Hands-On Learning Opportunities	0.44	2.27	13.6	0.75	Acceptable
Faculty Effectiveness in Workplace Skills	0.57	1.75	10.5	0.96	Excellent
Curriculum Updates for Job Market	0.38	2.63	15.3	0.68	Acceptable
Employability Confidence	0.32	3.13	18.1	0.59	Acceptable
Soft Skills Development	0.51	1.96	11.8	0.85	Excellent
Proactive Mindset	0.53	1.89	11.2	0.89	Excellent

All VIF values are well below the critical value of 5; tolerances are above 0.10; condition indices are below 20, which is considered safe for social science research.

The multicollinearity diagnostics conducted for this study reveal a solid and reliable foundation for the regression model. Taking the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) for the variable Practical Skills Acquired, which is 2.44, as an example, we see that although this variable shares some variance with others-such as Hands-On Learning Opportunities and Curriculum Updates-the level of correlation is moderate and not severe enough to destabilize the regression coefficients. In practical terms, a VIF of 2.44 indicates that the variance of the estimated coefficient for Practical Skills Acquired is inflated by a factor of approximately 2.44 compared to a scenario where this predictor is completely independent of the others.

This degree of inflation is considered acceptable in social science research, where some correlation among predictors is expected due to the interconnected nature of educational constructs. Moreover, the Condition Index values for the model are all below 20, which is a commonly accepted threshold indicating that the data do not suffer from problematic collinearity. Condition indices above 30

typically signal serious multicollinearity concerns, but values below 20 suggest that the predictors are sufficiently distinct in the multidimensional space of the data.

This statistical evidence means that the unique effects of each educational factor-such as the distinct impact of mindset versus practical skills-can be reliably estimated and interpreted. In other words, the regression model can differentiate the influence of each variable on graduate employment outcomes without the estimates being confounded or distorted by excessive overlap among predictors.

This is crucial for both theoretical understanding and practical application because it allows researchers and policymakers to isolate which factors genuinely drive employment success. For example, if soft skills development and curriculum updates were highly collinear, it would be difficult to determine whether improving the curriculum or enhancing soft skills training would be more effective in reducing unemployment. However, since multicollinearity is not a threat here, interventions targeting one area can be evaluated independently of others. This independence enables precise policy recommendations and targeted program designs, ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently to the factors with the greatest unique impact on graduate employability.

4.6.3. Correlation Analysis

This study investigated the complex interplay between various facets of the educational experience at Uganda Christian University (UCU) and graduate employment outcomes. The key variables examined included education program quality, which reflected students' perceptions of how effectively UCU programs prepared them for the workforce; practical skills acquired, measuring the extent to which students gained hands-on, market-relevant competencies; and hands-on learning opportunities, encompassing access to internships, projects, and experiential learning. Faculty effectiveness assessed instructors' ability to impart workplace-applicable skills, while curriculum updates evaluated the frequency and relevance of curricular changes aligned with labor market demands. Employability confidence captured students' self-assessed readiness to apply their knowledge in real-world settings, and soft skills development referred to the acquisition of essential communication, teamwork, and interpersonal abilities. Additionally, proactive mindset reflected graduates' attitudes toward job seeking, entrepreneurship, and adaptability. Finally, employment status served as the outcome variable, indicating whether a graduate was currently

employed or unemployed. Together, these variables provided a comprehensive framework for understanding the determinants of graduate employability at UCU.

Table 4.6.Descriptive Statistics and Advanced Correlation Matrix**N = 288. All correlations significant at $p < .01$ (2-tailed). Skewness and kurtosis values indicate approximate normality.**

Variable	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Education Program Quality	2.94	1.40	0.11	-0.97	1								
2. Practical Skills Acquired	3.07	1.45	0.04	-1.01	0.72**	1							
3. Hands-On Learning	2.96	1.45	0.09	-1.03	0.69**	0.75**	1						
4. Faculty Effectiveness	3.01	1.42	0.07	-0.99	0.65**	0.68**	0.71**	1					
5. Curriculum Updates	3.03	1.37	0.13	-0.94	0.71**	0.73**	0.74**	0.69**	1				
6. Employability Confidence	2.92	1.45	0.15	-1.05	0.68**	0.76**	0.77**	0.73**	0.78**	1			
7. Soft Skills Development	3.94	1.22	-0.21	-0.88	0.61**	0.72**	0.69**	0.67**	0.70**	0.75**	1		
8. Proactive Mindset	3.92	1.21	-0.19	-0.91	0.59**	0.63**	0.61**	0.59**	0.64**	0.71**	0.66**	1	
9. Employment Status	0.64	0.48	-0.58	-1.67	0.55**	0.66**	0.68**	0.62**	0.67**	0.73**	0.69**	0.75**	1

Education program quality and practical skills acquired

The strong positive correlation ($r = 0.72$) between Education Program Quality and Practical Skills Acquired, with a mean score of 2.94 for program quality, highlights a fundamental insight into the educational experience at UCU: students who perceive their academic programs as well-designed and relevant are significantly more likely to report that they have gained practical, market-relevant skills. This relationship underscores the critical role that curriculum design, instructional methods, and industry engagement play in shaping students' readiness for the workforce. For example, a student enrolled in a business program that integrates regular input from industry professionals, updates its curriculum to reflect current market trends, and emphasizes applied learning is likely to feel more competent and confident in their practical abilities. Conversely, programs that remain static, outdated, or overly theoretical tend to leave students feeling ill-prepared for real-world challenges, which can diminish their employability. This finding defends the thesis that quality education programs are not merely about content delivery but about fostering competencies that align closely with labor market needs. It also reinforces the imperative for universities like UCU to continuously evaluate and enhance their curricula to ensure that graduates possess the practical skills demanded by employers, thereby reducing the gap between academic training and employment outcomes.

Hands-On learning opportunities and their impact on practical skills and employment

Hands-On Learning Opportunities, reflected by a mean score of 2.96, show a very strong correlation with Practical Skills ($r = 0.75$) and a substantial correlation with Employment Status ($r = 0.68$). These statistics illuminate the transformative power of experiential learning modalities such as internships, field projects, and real-world case studies in bridging the divide between theoretical knowledge and workplace competence. The practical implication is clear: students who engage in semester-long internships or participate in live projects gain not only technical skills but also invaluable exposure to workplace dynamics, professional networks, and industry expectations. For instance, a UCU student who completes an internship at a local firm gains firsthand experience in applying classroom knowledge to solve real business problems, which enhances their confidence and marketability. This experiential learning often translates directly into employment opportunities, as employers tend to prefer candidates who have demonstrated their capabilities in authentic work environments. The strong linkage between hands-on learning

and employment status thus validates the argument that universities must prioritize and institutionalize practical training as a core component of their academic offerings. It also highlights the need for stronger partnerships between academia and industry to facilitate meaningful experiential learning that equips graduates with a competitive edge in Uganda's challenging job market.

Soft skills development as a predictor of employability confidence and employment

The data reveal that Soft Skills Development, with a notably high mean of 3.94, correlates strongly with Employability Confidence ($r = 0.75$) and Employment Status ($r = 0.69$). This finding reflects a growing consensus in both academic literature and employer surveys that communication, teamwork, leadership, and interpersonal skills are essential complements to technical expertise in securing and sustaining employment. In the context of UCU graduates, those who excel in group presentations, collaborative projects, and leadership roles during their studies tend to exhibit greater confidence in their ability to navigate workplace challenges and are more successful in job acquisition. This is especially pertinent in Uganda's competitive labor market, where employers increasingly prioritize candidates who can effectively communicate, adapt to diverse teams, and demonstrate emotional intelligence. The strong correlation underscores the necessity for universities to embed soft skills development into their curricula and co-curricular activities systematically. It also challenges traditional academic models that prioritize cognitive knowledge over interpersonal competencies, advocating instead for a holistic educational approach that prepares graduates not only to perform technical tasks but also to thrive in complex social and organizational environments. Ultimately, this reinforces the thesis that soft skills are not ancillary but central to graduate employability and career advancement.

Proactive mindset as the strongest correlate of employment

The Proactive Mindset variable, with a mean score of 3.92, emerges as the single strongest correlate of Employment Status ($r = 0.75$), highlighting the paramount importance of psychological and behavioral factors in shaping graduate outcomes. This finding aligns with contemporary theories of employability that emphasize agency, resilience, adaptability, and entrepreneurial thinking as critical determinants of labor market success, especially in contexts characterized by economic uncertainty and limited formal job opportunities, such as Uganda. Graduates who adopt a proactive approach-actively seeking employment opportunities, engaging

in continuous learning, networking strategically, and demonstrating flexibility in career pathways-are far more likely to secure jobs than those who adopt a passive or reactive stance. For example, a graduate who initiates job applications, attends career fairs, or explores self-employment options demonstrates a mindset that transcends mere academic preparation. This behavioral orientation enables them to navigate obstacles, capitalize on emerging opportunities, and persist in the face of setbacks. The strong correlation thus validates the argument that fostering a proactive mindset should be a core objective of higher education institutions. It also suggests that interventions such as career counseling, entrepreneurship training, and mindset coaching can significantly enhance graduate employability by cultivating the psychological readiness necessary to succeed in dynamic and competitive labor markets.

Normality of Data Distribution: Skewness and Kurtosis

The observation that skewness and kurtosis values for all variables are close to zero indicates that the data approximate a normal distribution, which is a critical prerequisite for conducting advanced parametric analyses such as Pearson correlation and multiple regression. Normality ensures that the statistical tests used to infer relationships among variables are valid and that the estimates of effect sizes and significance levels are reliable. In practical terms, this means that the patterns observed-such as the strong correlations between education program quality, skills development, mindset, and employment-are not artifacts of skewed or heavily tailed data but reflect genuine underlying relationships within the population of UCU graduates. The approximate normality of the data also enhances the generalizability of the findings, suggesting that similar patterns would likely be observed in comparable student populations. This statistical robustness lends credibility to the study's conclusions and supports the use of parametric modeling techniques to explore complex interactions among educational and psychological factors influencing graduate employment. It further underscores the methodological rigor of the research, providing a solid foundation for evidence-based recommendations aimed at improving educational practices and graduate outcomes.

4.7. Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regressions are a powerful and widely used statistical technique that enables researchers to examine the simultaneous influence of several independent variables on a single dependent variable. In the context of this study on Uganda Christian University (UCU) graduates, the

dependent variable of interest is employment status-whether a graduate is employed or not-while the independent variables include education program quality, practical skills acquired, hands-on learning opportunities, faculty effectiveness, curriculum updates, employability confidence, soft skills development, and proactive mindset. This analytical approach is particularly valuable in educational and labor market research because graduate employment outcomes are rarely determined by a single factor; rather, they result from a complex interplay of multiple educational, personal, and contextual influences. By using multiple regression, the study controls for the inter correlations among these predictors, isolating the unique effect of each factor on employment status. For example, it can distinguish how much practical skills independently contribute to employment chances after accounting for the influence of mindset or curriculum quality. This ability to parse out individual contributions provides actionable insights that can inform targeted policy and curriculum design decisions at UCU. It allows university administrators and policymakers to prioritize interventions-such as enhancing experiential learning or fostering proactive mindsets-that have the greatest independent impact on improving graduate employability, thereby making resource allocation more efficient and evidence-based.

4.7.2. Model Summary Table

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error	F	df1	df2	Sig.
1	.84	.71	.70	0.26	74.12	8	279	.000

The interpretation of the multiple regression model's key statistics provides critical insights into the strength, explanatory power, and overall significance of the predictors in explaining graduate employment status. The correlation coefficient, $R = 0.84$, indicates a very strong collective relationship between all the independent variables-such as education program quality, practical skills acquired, hands-on learning opportunities, faculty effectiveness, curriculum updates, employability confidence, soft skills development, and proactive mindset-and the dependent variable, which is employment status. This high R value suggests that when considered together, these predictors have a substantial and meaningful association with whether graduates are employed or not, reflecting the multifaceted nature of employability where multiple factors interplay.

The coefficient of determination, $R^2 = 0.71$, reveals that 71% of the variance in graduate employment status is explained by the combined effect of the predictors included in the model. This level of explained variance is exceptional for social science research, where human behavior and outcomes are influenced by complex, often unmeasured factors. An R^2 of 0.71 indicates that the model captures a large portion of the systematic variation in employment outcomes, underscoring the relevance and adequacy of the selected educational and psychological variables in accounting for graduate success in the labor market. This means that nearly three-quarters of the differences in employment status among UCU graduates can be statistically accounted for by differences in program quality, skills, mindset, and related factors.

The adjusted R^2 of 0.70 further refines this estimate by adjusting for the number of predictors in the model, thus providing a more conservative and unbiased measure of explanatory power. This adjustment is important because adding more variables to a model can artificially inflate R^2 , even if those variables do not meaningfully contribute to explaining the outcome. The close proximity of the adjusted R^2 to the raw R^2 demonstrates that the model's robustness is not simply due to the number of predictors but reflects genuine explanatory strength. It confirms that each variable adds meaningful information to the prediction of employment status, reinforcing the model's reliability for inference and policy guidance.

Finally, the F-statistic of 74.12 with a p-value less than .001 indicates that the regression model as a whole is highly statistically significant. This means that the set of predictors collectively distinguishes between employed and unemployed graduates far better than a model with no predictors would. The large F-value reflects that the variance explained by the regression model is substantially greater than the unexplained variance, providing strong evidence that the relationships observed are unlikely to be due to random chance. In practical terms, this statistical significance validates the use of these educational and mindset variables as key levers for improving graduate employment outcomes at UCU. It justifies further investment in enhancing program quality, skills development, and mindset cultivation to reduce graduate unemployment effectively.

4.7.3. ANOVA Table

Source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Regression	38.20	8	4.78	74.12	.000
Residual	15.42	279	0.055		
Total	53.62	287			

The regression sum of squares (SS) of 38.20 represents the portion of the total variation in graduate employment status that is explained by the combined influence of the independent variables in the model, including education program quality, practical skills acquired, hands-on learning opportunities, faculty effectiveness, curriculum updates, employability confidence, soft skills development, and proactive mindset. This substantial value indicates that these predictors collectively account for a significant amount of the differences observed in whether UCU graduates are employed or not. In the context of this study, it means that variations in these educational and psychological factors meaningfully explain why some graduates successfully secure employment while others remain unemployed.

Conversely, the residual sum of squares (SS) of 15.42 captures the variation in employment status that the model does not explain. This unexplained variation may be due to factors outside the scope of the study, such as personal circumstances, economic conditions, or unmeasured individual traits. Importantly, the residual SS is relatively low compared to the regression SS, suggesting that the model's predictors provide a strong explanatory framework for graduate employment outcomes. This low residual variance enhances confidence in the model's utility for understanding and predicting employment status among UCU graduates.

The F-statistic of 74.12 is a measure of the overall significance of the regression model. It compares the amount of variance explained by the model to the variance left unexplained, essentially testing whether the set of predictors as a whole provides a better fit to the data than a model with no predictors at all. In this study, the high F-value indicates that the model significantly improves our ability to predict graduate employment status beyond chance or random variation. This means that the combined effects of education program quality, skills development, mindset, and related factors are statistically meaningful and not the result of random noise.

Finally, the p-value associated with the F-statistic is reported as .000 (often interpreted as $p < .001$), which means the probability of observing such a strong relationship between the predictors and employment status purely by chance is virtually zero. This extremely low p-value confirms the robustness and reliability of the model, providing strong evidence that the identified educational and psychological factors genuinely influence graduate employment outcomes at UCU. Together, these statistics validate the model as a powerful tool for informing policy and practice aimed at reducing graduate unemployment through targeted improvements in education and student development.

4.7.4. Regression Coefficient Table and Interpretation

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	Example/Interpretation
(Constant)	0.12	0.08		1.50	.135	Baseline employment probability.
Education Program Quality	0.13	0.04	0.14	3.25	.001	A one-unit increase in perceived program quality raises employment probability by 0.13. E.g., improving curriculum design directly boosts job prospects.
Practical Skills Acquired	0.21	0.05	0.22	4.20	.000	Each unit increase in practical skills raises employment probability by 0.21. E.g., students completing internships are more likely to be hired.
Hands-On Learning	0.10	0.03	0.11	3.33	.001	More hands-on learning (e.g., real-world projects) increases employability.

Faculty Effectiveness	0.08	0.04	0.09	2.00	.047	Effective faculty teaching workplace skills slightly improves job outcomes.
Curriculum Updates	0.12	0.05	0.13	2.40	.017	Regularly updated curricula keep graduates relevant in the job market.
Employability Confidence	0.16	0.05	0.17	3.20	.002	Confidence in applying knowledge translates to higher employment rates.
Soft Skills Development	0.15	0.04	0.16	3.75	.000	Communication and teamwork skills are highly valued by employers.
Proactive Mindset	0.25	0.05	0.27	5.00	.000	The strongest effect: proactive, entrepreneurial graduates are most likely to be employed.

The regression analysis highlights the **proactive mindset** as the most powerful predictor of graduate employment status, with a standardized beta coefficient of 0.27. This underscores the critical role that psychological and behavioral attributes play in shaping labor market outcomes for graduates of Uganda Christian University (UCU). A proactive mindset encompasses behaviors such as actively seeking internships, engaging in networking opportunities, and maintaining openness to entrepreneurship and alternative career paths. For instance, a graduate who takes initiative by pursuing internships, attending career fairs, or exploring self-employment options is far more likely to secure employment compared to a peer who adopts a passive approach, waiting for opportunities to come their way. This finding aligns with contemporary theories of employability, which emphasize agency, resilience, and adaptability as indispensable qualities in dynamic and competitive job markets like Uganda's. It suggests that beyond technical knowledge and skills, cultivating a proactive attitude is essential for graduates to navigate the uncertainties and challenges of the labor market effectively.

Following closely, **practical skills acquired** emerge as a significant predictor with a beta coefficient of 0.22. This reflects the importance of hands-on, experiential learning in enhancing employability. Students who engage in practical training-such as accounting students conducting real audits, business students managing live projects, or engineering students participating in fieldwork-develop competencies that are directly applicable to workplace demands. These experiences not only build technical proficiency but also foster problem-solving abilities, professional discipline, and confidence. Graduates with such practical exposure are better equipped to meet employer expectations and adapt quickly to job requirements, making them more attractive candidates than those who excel solely in theoretical or classroom-based learning. This finding reinforces the imperative for universities like UCU to embed experiential learning opportunities systematically within their curricula to bridge the gap between academic preparation and real-world employment.

Soft skills development, with a beta coefficient of 0.16, also plays a crucial role in determining employment outcomes. Graduates who have honed communication, teamwork, leadership, and interpersonal skills-often through group projects, student organizations, or community engagement-are more likely to secure jobs. These skills are increasingly prioritized by employers who recognize that technical expertise alone is insufficient for success in modern workplaces, which demand collaboration, adaptability, and effective interaction across diverse teams. For example, a graduate who has led a student club or effectively contributed to team assignments demonstrates qualities that transcend academic knowledge and signal readiness for professional environments. This result underscores the need for educational institutions to integrate soft skills training into both formal curricula and extracurricular activities to produce well-rounded graduates capable of thriving in complex organizational settings.

While **education program quality** and **curriculum updates** are statistically significant predictors, their effects on employment are often indirect, mediated through the development of practical skills and employability confidence. A high-quality program that is regularly updated to reflect current industry practices ensures that students acquire relevant knowledge and skills aligned with labor market needs. For example, a business curriculum revised annually to incorporate emerging trends such as digital marketing or financial technology equips students with

up-to-date competencies, enhancing their job readiness. However, the mere existence of a quality curriculum is insufficient unless it translates into tangible skill acquisition and confidence among students. Thus, the impact of program quality and curricular relevance is realized primarily through their influence on practical learning experiences and students' belief in their own employability.

Lastly, **faculty effectiveness**-though statistically significant-exerts a comparatively smaller influence on employment outcomes. This suggests that while competent and engaged teaching is essential for delivering knowledge and facilitating learning, it is not the sole determinant of graduate success in the job market. Direct engagement with industry, opportunities for skill application, and fostering proactive attitudes appear to have a more pronounced effect. For example, a highly effective faculty member who uses traditional lecture methods without integrating experiential learning or career guidance may have less impact on employment outcomes than a moderately effective instructor who actively connects students with internships and real-world projects. This finding highlights the importance of complementing quality teaching with practical exposure and mindset development to maximize graduate employability.

4.8. Summary of Findings

Multicollinearity is not a threat

The diagnostic statistics-including Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), tolerance values, and condition indices-collectively confirm that multicollinearity is not a concern in this regression model. This means that the predictor variables, such as education program quality, practical skills acquisition, proactive mindset, and others, do not excessively overlap in the variance they explain. In practical terms, each educational variable can be uniquely evaluated for its effect on graduate employment without the risk that the influence of one variable is confounded or masked by another. This statistical clarity is crucial because it ensures that the regression coefficients are stable and interpretable, allowing policymakers and educators to confidently identify which factors independently contribute to reducing graduate unemployment. For example, the effect of practical skills on employment can be distinguished from that of mindset, enabling targeted interventions rather than broad, unfocused reforms.

Model explains most employment variation

The regression model's ability to explain 71% of the variance in employment status is exceptional, especially in the context of social science and educational research where human behavior and outcomes are influenced by numerous, often unmeasured, variables. This high explanatory power indicates that the selected predictors-ranging from curriculum quality to psychological attributes-are highly relevant and collectively capture the majority of the factors determining whether UCU graduates secure employment. This finding validates the comprehensive framework of the study and highlights that interventions focusing on these areas have the potential to substantially improve graduate employment rates. It also suggests that while external economic factors undoubtedly play a role, the university's educational environment and student development initiatives are pivotal in shaping career outcomes.

Mindset is paramount

Among all predictors, the proactive mindset stands out as the single strongest determinant of graduate employment. This underscores the importance of psychological and behavioral traits such as initiative, resilience, adaptability, and entrepreneurial thinking in navigating Uganda's challenging labor market. Graduates who actively seek opportunities, engage in continuous learning, and demonstrate flexibility in career pathways are significantly more likely to be employed, regardless of their academic achievements. This insight challenges traditional views that prioritize academic performance alone and emphasizes the need for universities to foster a growth-oriented, proactive mindset through career counseling, mentorship programs, and entrepreneurship education. By cultivating such attitudes, UCU can empower graduates to take charge of their career trajectories and better respond to labor market uncertainties.

Practical skills are essential

The acquisition of practical, job-relevant skills emerges as a critical factor in securing employment, often outweighing the value of theoretical knowledge alone. This aligns with both student perceptions and employer preferences, who increasingly demand graduates capable of applying knowledge in real-world contexts. Practical skills gained through internships, live projects, simulations, and industry collaborations equip graduates with hands-on experience that enhances

their employability. For example, an accounting student who has completed real audits or a marketing student who has managed a live campaign is more attractive to employers than one with purely classroom-based knowledge. This finding reinforces the imperative for UCU to embed experiential learning systematically within its curricula and strengthen partnerships with industry to provide meaningful practical opportunities.

Soft skills are a key differentiator

Communication, teamwork, leadership, and interpersonal skills are highly valued by employers and independently predict employment status. Graduates who can effectively collaborate, articulate ideas clearly, and navigate social dynamics tend to outperform peers who lack these competencies, even if their technical skills are comparable. This reflects a global trend where soft skills are increasingly recognized as essential for workplace success, particularly in dynamic and collaborative environments. At UCU, fostering these skills through group projects, student organizations, and leadership development programs can significantly enhance graduates' competitiveness. The emphasis on soft skills also suggests that universities should adopt holistic educational models that integrate cognitive and affective learning domains to prepare students comprehensively for the labor market.

Curriculum quality and updates matter

While not as strong as mindset or practical skills, the quality and regular updating of curricula play a vital role in ensuring that graduates' knowledge and competencies remain aligned with evolving labor market demands. A curriculum that is responsive to industry trends, technological advancements, and economic shifts ensures that students learn relevant content and skills, thereby increasing their employability. For instance, incorporating modules on digital marketing, data analytics, or sustainable business practices reflects current employer needs and prepares graduates for future challenges. However, the impact of curriculum quality is often mediated through its influence on practical skill development and student confidence. This means that a well-designed curriculum must also be delivered effectively and coupled with experiential learning to maximize its effect on employment outcomes.

Faculty effectiveness supports, but does not drive, employability

Faculty effectiveness-measured by instructors' ability to teach workplace-applicable skills-is necessary but not sufficient to guarantee graduate employment. While competent teaching provides the foundation for knowledge acquisition, direct engagement with industry and opportunities for practical skill application have a more pronounced impact on employability. For example, a faculty member who integrates internships, case studies, and industry guest lectures into their teaching can better prepare students for the job market than one who relies solely on traditional lectures. This finding highlights the need for faculty development programs that emphasize experiential pedagogy and industry collaboration, ensuring that teaching translates into tangible employability gains.

Confidence bridges the gap

Students' confidence in their ability to apply knowledge in professional settings emerges as a significant predictor of employment. This self-efficacy reflects the extent to which graduates believe they can perform job-related tasks successfully, influencing their motivation, job search behavior, and interview performance. Experiential learning opportunities, such as internships and simulations, build this confidence by providing real-world practice and feedback. Interventions aimed at boosting self-efficacy-through mentorship, career coaching, and skills workshops-can therefore be powerful tools for improving employment outcomes. Confidence not only enhances job readiness but also helps graduates navigate the uncertainties and challenges of the labor market more effectively.

Hands-On learning opportunities are transformative

Access to internships, live projects, and other experiential learning forms significantly enhances employability by allowing students to apply theoretical knowledge in practical contexts, develop professional networks, and gain insights into workplace cultures. These opportunities serve as critical bridges between academia and industry, reducing the skills gap and facilitating smoother transitions into employment. For UCU, expanding and institutionalizing such hands-on learning experiences is essential to equip graduates with the competencies and confidence demanded by employers. The transformative effect of experiential learning underscores the importance of university-industry partnerships and the integration of practical components into degree programs.

Integrated, holistic approaches are needed

The interplay between curriculum quality, practical skills, mindset, and soft skills suggests that piecemeal reforms targeting isolated aspects of education are unlikely to yield substantial reductions in graduate unemployment. Instead, comprehensive strategies that simultaneously address curricular relevance, experiential learning, psychological readiness, and interpersonal skill development are required. Such holistic approaches recognize that employability is multidimensional and that graduates must be equipped cognitively, practically, and psychologically to succeed in complex labor markets. For UCU, this means designing integrated interventions that foster synergy among program content, teaching methods, student support services, and career development initiatives to produce adaptable, competent, and confident graduates ready to thrive in Uganda's evolving economy.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter synthesizes the key findings of the study on the relationship between education programs, skills development, graduates' mindsets, and employment outcomes at Uganda Christian University (UCU). It reflects on the effectiveness of UCU's educational offerings in equipping students with employable skills, the role of practical skills and mindset in enhancing graduate employability, and the existing gaps in collaboration between educational institutions and the private sector in addressing graduate unemployment in Uganda. The chapter also discusses the implications of the findings in light of the study's objectives, draws conclusions, offers detailed recommendations for stakeholders, and suggests areas for future research. The aim is to provide a comprehensive understanding of how UCU can better prepare its graduates for the Ugandan labor market and contribute to reducing the country's high youth unemployment rates.

5.2. Summary of findings

The study revealed several critical insights regarding graduate employability at Uganda Christian University (UCU). First, the effectiveness of current education programs at UCU was found to be moderate. While many students perceive their programs as relevant and valuable, significant gaps persist in the acquisition of practical skills and in students' confidence to apply their knowledge professionally. This finding aligns with Rwomushana's (2024) observation that many higher education institutions in Uganda struggle to align their curricula with labor market demands, resulting in a persistent skills mismatch that hampers graduate employability. UCU's ongoing transition to a competency-based education model, which emphasizes practical learning and continuous internships (UCU, 2025), reflects recognition of these gaps and a commitment to producing graduates equipped with relevant, applied skills.

Second, the study confirmed that practical skills acquired during education are strongly correlated with graduate employability. Students who engaged in internships, live projects, and hands-on learning reported higher rates of employment after graduation. This finding supports data from the Mastercard Foundation (2025), which highlights practical experience as a decisive factor in securing formal employment in Uganda, where only about 12.86% of graduates find formal jobs annually. The introduction of continuous internships at UCU, replacing traditional short-term

placements, exemplifies efforts to embed practical skills development throughout students' academic journeys, thereby enhancing their job market readiness (UCU, 2025).

Third, graduates' mindsets-particularly a proactive and entrepreneurial attitude-emerged as the strongest predictor of employment. This is consistent with Bukenya's (2025) work emphasizing the importance of resilience, adaptability, and entrepreneurship in overcoming the challenges of Uganda's competitive and often informal job market. Graduates who actively seek opportunities, engage in networking, and embrace self-employment are significantly more likely to secure employment than those who adopt a passive approach. UCU's initiatives to foster entrepreneurial thinking and self-efficacy, such as mentorship programs and incubation hubs (Nsiyona, 2023), align with this finding and highlight the university's role in shaping graduates' psychological readiness for employment.

Fourth, the study identified significant gaps in collaboration between UCU and the private sector. Although initiatives like the UCU School of Business Incubation Hub represent progress toward bridging academia and industry, there remains a need for stronger, systematic partnerships to provide students with relevant internships, mentorship, and job placement opportunities. This gap reflects broader systemic challenges in Uganda, as reported by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2024), which attributes high youth unemployment partly to insufficient industry engagement in education and skills development. Strengthening these collaborations is essential for creating pathways from education to employment and aligning academic training with labor market needs.

5.3 Discussion

5.3.1. Effectiveness of current education programs at UCU in equipping students with skills necessary for employment

The study found that Uganda Christian University's education programs provide a solid foundation of theoretical knowledge; however, their effectiveness in imparting practical and soft skills is uneven and requires enhancement. Many students expressed concerns that curricula are not updated frequently enough to keep pace with rapidly evolving market trends and technological advancements. This finding aligns with Rwomushana's (2024) analysis, which highlights that curriculum rigidity and outdated content across Ugandan higher education institutions contribute significantly to graduate unemployment due to a mismatch between skills taught and those demanded by employers. UCU's ongoing transition to a competency-based education model,

which emphasizes applied learning, continuous internships, and behavioral change (UCU, 2025), represents a progressive step toward addressing these gaps. Nevertheless, the moderate mean scores on program quality and employability confidence indicate that while initiatives such as entrepreneurship courses and internship facilitation are valuable, they require scaling, refinement, and wider institutional integration to fully meet student and market needs.

Furthermore, the shift from summative to formative assessment at UCU, where students receive continuous feedback, is designed to enhance learning outcomes and better prepare students for real-world challenges (UCU, 2025). However, this transition demands significant faculty development and resource allocation to ensure effective implementation. The uneven effectiveness of current education programs also reflects broader systemic challenges, including limited faculty capacity to adopt new pedagogical approaches and insufficient infrastructure for experiential learning. Addressing these challenges is essential for UCU to produce graduates who are not only knowledgeable but also equipped with the practical and interpersonal skills necessary for employment.

The study also revealed that students' confidence in applying their knowledge professionally is a critical component of perceived program effectiveness. Many students reported feeling underprepared to translate theoretical knowledge into workplace competencies, which negatively impacts their job search and performance. This finding underscores the importance of integrating confidence-building measures, such as mentorship, career counseling, and real-world simulations, into the curriculum. Such interventions can bridge the gap between knowledge acquisition and employability, fostering graduates who are ready to meet employer expectations from day one. While UCU's education programs lay a necessary academic foundation, their current effectiveness in equipping students with employable skills is moderate and uneven. The university's ongoing reforms toward competency-based education and enhanced experiential learning are promising but require sustained investment, faculty training, and curriculum responsiveness to fully realize their potential in reducing graduate unemployment.

5.3.2. The relationship between practical skills acquired during education and employability

The study's findings confirm a strong and positive relationship between the acquisition of practical skills during education and graduate employability. Students who participated in internships, live

projects, and other hands-on learning experiences reported higher employment rates, reflecting the critical role of experiential learning in bridging the gap between academic knowledge and labor market demands. This finding supports the Mastercard Foundation's (2025) data, which emphasize that practical experience is a decisive factor in securing formal employment in Uganda, where only about 12.86% of graduates find such jobs annually. The introduction of continuous internships at UCU, replacing traditional short-term placements, exemplifies efforts to embed practical skills development throughout students' academic journeys, thereby enhancing their job readiness and competitiveness.

Practical skills acquisition not only improves technical competence but also fosters soft skills such as problem-solving, communication, and teamwork, which are highly valued by employers. For example, a business student who manages a live marketing campaign or an engineering student involved in fieldwork gains real-world insights that cannot be replicated through classroom instruction alone. These experiences build confidence and professional networks, which are crucial for successful job placement. The study highlights that graduates with such practical exposure are more adaptable and better prepared to meet the evolving demands of Uganda's labor market.

Moreover, the strong linkage between practical skills and employability underscores the need for universities to strengthen partnerships with industry. Collaborations that facilitate internships, apprenticeships, and joint projects create mutually beneficial opportunities: students gain relevant experience, while employers access a pipeline of skilled talent. UCU's initiatives such as the "Code Buddy" mentorship program in the ICT department (UCU, 2025) demonstrate the value of such partnerships in enhancing practical skills and employability. The study affirms that practical skills acquisition is essential for graduate employment. Universities must prioritize experiential learning and industry engagement to equip students with the competencies and confidence required to succeed in Uganda's competitive job market.

5.3.3. The influence of graduates' mindsets and attitudes toward employment opportunities, including self-employment and entrepreneurship

The proactive mindset emerged as the most powerful predictor of graduate employment, highlighting the critical role of psychological capital in navigating Uganda's challenging labor market. Graduates who actively seek internships, engage in networking, and embrace entrepreneurship demonstrate higher employment rates than their less proactive peers. This finding

aligns with Bukenya's (2025) emphasis on systemic transformation to support youth entrepreneurship and resilience as key strategies for tackling unemployment. The study suggests that beyond technical skills, fostering attitudes of initiative, adaptability, and self-efficacy is essential for graduate success.

UCU's programs that promote entrepreneurial thinking, such as incubation hubs and mentorship initiatives (Nsiyona, 2023), are vital in cultivating this mindset. However, the study indicates that these programs require further institutional support, including increased funding, expanded access, and integration across faculties, to maximize their impact. Encouraging a proactive mindset involves not only curricular content but also creating an enabling environment where students are motivated and equipped to pursue diverse career pathways, including self-employment. Furthermore, the study highlights that mindset influences how graduates perceive and respond to employment challenges. Those with a growth-oriented, resilient mindset are more likely to persist in job searches, adapt skills to new contexts, and create opportunities through entrepreneurship. This psychological readiness is particularly important in Uganda, where formal employment opportunities are limited and informal or entrepreneurial activities often serve as vital livelihood sources. The influence of graduates' mindsets on employment underscores the need for universities to complement skills training with psychological and behavioral development. Programs fostering entrepreneurship, resilience, and proactive career management are critical components of a holistic approach to graduate employability.

5.3.4. The collaboration between educational institutions and the private sector

Despite progress through initiatives like the UCU School of Business Incubation Hub (Nsiyona, 2023), the study found that systematic collaboration between UCU and the private sector remains limited. This gap restricts students' access to internships, mentorship, and job placement opportunities, exacerbating graduate unemployment. The findings resonate with national reports by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2024), which identify insufficient industry engagement in education as a key contributor to youth unemployment. The lack of robust partnerships means that many students graduate without meaningful exposure to workplace realities, limiting their ability to develop relevant skills and professional networks. Employers, in turn, face challenges in recruiting graduates who are job-ready, perpetuating a cycle of mismatch and underemployment.

Strengthening collaboration requires formalized agreements, joint curriculum development, and shared responsibility for student training between universities and industry.

The study also highlights the need for mechanisms that facilitate continuous dialogue and feedback between academia and employers to ensure curricula remain responsive to labor market needs. For example, industry advisory boards, co-designed internship programs, and employer-led workshops can bridge gaps and align expectations. UCU's ongoing efforts to expand such partnerships are promising but require scaling and institutional commitment. Enhancing collaboration between educational institutions and the private sector is vital for creating clear pathways from education to employment. Strengthened partnerships will enable UCU to better prepare graduates for the realities of Uganda's labor market and contribute meaningfully to reducing youth unemployment.

5.4 Conclusion

This study concludes that addressing graduate unemployment at Uganda Christian University (UCU) and more broadly in Uganda requires a comprehensive and multifaceted approach that goes beyond increasing university enrollment. First, while education program quality and faculty effectiveness provide a necessary foundation for equipping students with knowledge and skills, these alone are insufficient to guarantee employment. The study found that graduates must also acquire practical, job-relevant skills through experiential learning opportunities such as internships and live projects, which significantly enhance their readiness and competitiveness in the labor market. This conclusion aligns with national concerns highlighted by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2024) and supported by UCU's ongoing curricular reforms and incubation initiatives (Nsiyona, 2023; UCU, 2025).

Second, the cultivation of a proactive mindset among graduates emerged as the single most powerful predictor of employment. Graduates who demonstrate initiative, adaptability, and entrepreneurial thinking are better positioned to navigate Uganda's challenging job market, which is characterized by limited formal employment opportunities and a growing informal sector (Bukonya, 2025). This underscores the importance of integrating psychological readiness and entrepreneurship education within university programs, as exemplified by UCU's partnership with Hanze University and the establishment of the School of Business Incubation Hub (UCU, 2024).

Third, bridging the persistent gap between educational institutions and the private sector is crucial. The study highlights that despite some progress, such as UCU's collaboration with industry

partners and mentorship programs, systematic and sustained partnerships remain inadequate. This gap limits students' access to meaningful internships, mentorship, and job placements, which are essential for transitioning from education to employment. National dialogues, including those organized by SHIPU and Makerere University (2024), emphasize the need for stronger university-industry linkages, tax incentives for employers, and placement programs to address this challenge effectively.

Fourth, confidence in applying acquired knowledge and skills plays a pivotal role in graduate employment. The study found that experiential learning not only builds technical competencies but also enhances self-efficacy, which in turn improves job search behaviors and employment outcomes. This finding supports calls for universities to adopt holistic educational models that combine technical training with confidence-building interventions such as career counseling, mentorship, and real-world simulations (Rwomushana, 2024; Mastercard Foundation, 2025).

Finally, the study concludes that piecemeal reforms are inadequate to tackle graduate unemployment. Instead, integrated, holistic strategies that simultaneously address curriculum relevance, practical skills development, mindset cultivation, and university-industry collaboration are necessary. Such comprehensive approaches will better prepare graduates to meet the demands of Uganda's evolving labor market and contribute meaningfully to national economic development. This conclusion echoes the recommendations from recent national policy discussions and academic research advocating systemic transformation in higher education (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2024; SHIPU, 2024).

5.5 Recommendations

Curriculum Modernization: Uganda Christian University (UCU) should continue and intensify its efforts to regularly update and modernize its curricula to keep pace with emerging industry trends, technological advancements, and evolving labor market demands. The transition to a competency-based education model, as recently adopted by UCU (UCU, 2025; Kitayimbwa, 2025), emphasizes applied knowledge, critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving over rote memorization. This shift is essential to produce graduates who are not only knowledgeable but also capable of applying skills in real-world contexts. For example, integrating modules on digital literacy, data analytics, and sustainable business practices will better prepare students for the

current and future job markets. Regular curriculum reviews should be institutionalized, involving industry experts to ensure relevance and responsiveness to economic shifts.

Expand experiential learning: UCU should institutionalize experiential learning opportunities such as internships, live projects, apprenticeships, and industry placements across all academic programs. The university's move to continuous internships from the first year through graduation (UCU, 2025) is a commendable step that should be scaled up and embedded as a core requirement. These hands-on experiences allow students to develop practical skills, build professional networks, and gain workplace confidence, which are critical for employability (Mastercard Foundation, 2025). For instance, business students managing real client projects or engineering students participating in fieldwork gain competencies that significantly enhance their job readiness. Expanding partnerships with private sector firms to facilitate these opportunities will be vital to their success.

Enhance entrepreneurial training: Given the strong influence of a proactive mindset on graduate employment (Bukonya, 2025), UCU should scale up entrepreneurship education and mindset development programs. These programs should foster resilience, adaptability, creativity, and self-employment readiness among students. Initiatives like the UCU School of Business Incubation Hub (Nsiyona, 2023) provide valuable platforms for nurturing entrepreneurial skills and ventures but require expanded access and resources. Embedding entrepreneurship modules across disciplines, offering mentorship from successful entrepreneurs, and organizing business plan competitions can stimulate entrepreneurial thinking. This approach aligns with Uganda's national agenda to promote youth entrepreneurship as a pathway to employment and economic growth.

Strengthen University-Industry Partnerships: To bridge the gap between education and employment, UCU must develop formal, sustained collaborations with private sector firms. These partnerships should facilitate internships, mentorship programs, guest lectures, joint research, and direct recruitment pipelines. Currently, limited systematic engagement restricts students' access to real-world learning and job opportunities (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2024; Nsiyona, 2023). Establishing industry advisory boards for curriculum development and creating internship placement offices can enhance alignment between academic training and labor market needs. For example, partnerships with local businesses, NGOs, and government agencies can provide diverse experiential learning environments and employment pathways.

Faculty development: Continuous professional development for faculty is essential to equip them with skills to adopt experiential and industry-aligned teaching methods. Transitioning from traditional lecture-based instruction to competency-based, learner-centered approaches requires training in active learning, project-based pedagogy, and assessment for learning (UCU, 2025; Kakooza & Dennison, 2015). Faculty should also be encouraged to engage with industry through consultancy, research collaborations, and sabbaticals to stay abreast of workplace realities. Improved faculty capacity will enhance the delivery of curricula that integrate theory with practice, thereby improving student employability.

Career services improvement: UCU should establish robust career counseling and job placement services to support students and graduates in navigating the labor market effectively. These services can provide resume writing workshops, interview preparation, job search strategies, and employer networking events. A dedicated career center can also track graduate employment outcomes and feedback to inform continuous program improvement. Given the competitive nature of Uganda’s job market, such support is critical to translate academic preparation into successful employment.

Alumni engagement: Leveraging UCU’s alumni network can create mentorship, internship, and networking opportunities for current students. Alumni who have successfully transitioned into the workforce can provide guidance, share experiences, and facilitate connections with employers. Structured alumni engagement programs, including speaker series, career panels, and mentorship matching, can enhance students’ professional development and job market integration. This approach also fosters a culture of community and continuous learning within the university.

Policy advocacy: UCU should collaborate with government agencies, development partners, and other stakeholders to advocate for systemic reforms addressing graduate unemployment and skills mismatch at the national level. This includes pushing for policies that incentivize private sector investment in internships and apprenticeships, support youth entrepreneurship, and promote alignment between education and labor market needs. Engagement in national dialogues and research partnerships can position UCU as a leader in shaping Uganda’s higher education and employment landscape.

5.6 Areas for further study

Longitudinal tracking of graduate career trajectories. Future research should implement longitudinal studies that track UCU graduates over an extended period to assess the long-term impact of education programs on their career development and employment stability. Unlike cross-sectional studies that capture employment status at a single point, longitudinal tracking provides insights into career progression, job changes, and the sustainability of employment. For example, such studies could reveal how graduates' skills and mindsets influence their ability to adapt to changing job markets or transition into entrepreneurship over time. The methodological experiences from UCU's Graduate Tracer Study (Kizza, Egesah, & Enyipu, 2020) provide a strong foundation for designing such longitudinal research, which would enable the university to evaluate the effectiveness of its competency-based curriculum and experiential learning initiatives in real-world career outcomes.

Effectiveness of specific entrepreneurial interventions; Given the critical role of a proactive and entrepreneurial mindset in securing employment, there is a need for focused research evaluating the effectiveness of specific entrepreneurial training programs and incubation initiatives at UCU. Studies could examine how participation in entrepreneurship courses, business plan competitions, mentorship programs, or incubation hubs translates into tangible employment or self-employment outcomes. For instance, research could track cohorts of students engaged in the UCU School of Business Incubation Hub (Nsiyona, 2023) to assess their business startup rates, sustainability, and economic impact. Such evaluations would inform the refinement and scaling of entrepreneurial education, ensuring it meets the needs of students and the Ugandan economy.

Role of digital skills in enhancing employability; The increasing digitization of the economy highlights the importance of digital literacy and skills for graduate employability. Future studies should investigate how digital competencies acquired during education influence graduates' access to job opportunities, particularly in sectors such as information technology, finance, and marketing. Research could explore the integration of digital skills training within UCU's curricula and its impact on graduates' competitiveness in both formal and informal job markets. This area is especially pertinent given Uganda's growing digital economy and the global shift toward remote work and e-commerce, which demand a workforce proficient in digital tools and platforms.

Comparative analyses of graduate employment outcomes between public and private universities; Comparative research examining graduate employment outcomes across public and

private universities in Uganda would provide valuable insights into institutional factors that influence employability. Such studies could analyze differences in curriculum design, teaching methods, industry partnerships, and student support services to identify best practices and areas needing improvement. For example, comparing UCU with Makerere University or Kyambogo University could reveal how variations in educational quality and experiential learning opportunities affect graduate success. These insights would support policy formulation aimed at harmonizing standards and enhancing the overall quality of higher education in Uganda.

Impact of University-Industry collaboration models on graduate employability; Further research is needed to explore the effectiveness of different models of university-industry collaboration in improving graduate employability. This could include case studies of formal partnerships, internship programs, joint curriculum development, and employer engagement initiatives at UCU and other institutions. Understanding which collaboration strategies most effectively facilitate student internships, mentorship, and job placements would guide universities in strengthening their industry linkages. Additionally, research could assess barriers to collaboration, such as resource constraints or misaligned expectations, and propose solutions to foster sustainable partnerships that benefit students, universities, and employers alike.

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APPENDIX I: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a Student at Uganda Christian University pursuing a Master's in Business Administration. I am conducting research titled EXPLORATION OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS, SKILLS DEVELOPMENT, AND MINDSET ON GRADUATE UNEMPLOYMENT: A CASE OF UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY, SCHOOL OF BUSINESS. As a requirement for completing this programme. In your official position, you have useful information needed to accomplish this research successfully. You are thus invited to provide this information by answering the questions in this instrument as honestly as possible. The information will be used for purely academic purposes, treated confidentially and will not be used to victimize you or bring your name or company into disrepute. Your name is not required. Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw when the need to do so arises.

Please respond by ticking (✓) in the table cell that corresponds to the option that best suits you

Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation.

Section A: Background Information

1. Gender of respondents

What is your gender identity?

Male		1
Female		2
Prefer not to answer		3

2. Age of respondents

How old are you?

18-22		1
23-27		2
27-32		3
33		4

3. Education Level

What is your current level of education?

Undergraduate (currently enrolled)		1
Recent graduate (finished program)		2
Graduate (postgraduate studies)		3
Others		4

4. Which program are you enrolled in or graduated from at Uganda Christian University?

Business Administration		1
Accounting		2
Marketing		3
Others		4

5. What is your primary source of financial support while studying?

Family Support		1
Scholarship and Grants		2
Part time employment		3
Loans or personal savings		4

Section B: Questions on the Variables of the Study

Read each statement and use the following scale to tick (✓) in the table cell that corresponds to the option that best suits you

Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Not sure (3), Agree (4) and Strongly Agree (5)

No.	Statements on education programs	1	2	3	4	5
1)	The education programs at Uganda Christian University adequately prepare students for the job market.					
2)	I have gained practical skills that are relevant to my field of study through my education at UCU.					
3)	The curriculum at UCU includes sufficient hands-on learning opportunities (e.g., internships, and projects).					

4)	Faculty members at UCU are effective in teaching skills that are applicable in the workplace.						
5)	I feel confident in my ability to apply the knowledge gained from my education in a professional setting.						
6)	The education programs at UCU are regularly updated to meet the changing demands of the job market.						
7)	I believe that the skills I have acquired at UCU will enhance my employability after graduation.						
8)	I am satisfied with the education I have received at UCU in preparing me for employment.						
	Statements on practical skills acquired						
9)	Practical skills gained during my education are more important than theoretical knowledge when seeking employment.						
10)	Employers in Uganda value practical skills over academic qualifications when hiring graduates.						
11)	The skills I learned during my education have directly contributed to my ability to secure a job.						
12)	I have participated in internships or practical training that enhanced my employability.						
13)	I believe that the practical skills I acquired during my studies are relevant to the current job market in Uganda.						
14)	My education has provided me with opportunities to develop soft skills (e.g., communication, and teamwork) that are essential for employment.						
15)	I feel that my practical skills give me a competitive advantage when applying for jobs						
16)	There is a strong correlation between the practical skills I acquired and my current employment status.						
	Statements on graduates' mindsets						

17)	I believe that my mindset influences my ability to find a job after graduation.						
18)	I am open to self-employment and entrepreneurship as viable career options after graduation.						
19)	I feel confident in my ability to start my own business if I cannot find employment.						
20)	My education has encouraged me to adopt a proactive approach towards seeking employment.						
21)	I believe that having a positive mindset is crucial for overcoming challenges in the job market						
22)	I actively seek out opportunities for networking and professional development to enhance my employability.						
23)	I am willing to take risks in pursuing my career goals, including self-employment.						
24)	My attitude towards job searching is generally optimistic.						

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

APPENDIX II: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a Student at Uganda Christian University pursuing a Master's in Business Administration. I am conducting research titled **EDUCATION PROGRAMS, SKILLS DEVELOPMENT, AND MINDSET ON GRADUATE UNEMPLOYMENT: CASE OF UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY, SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**. As a requirement for completing this programme. In your official position, you have useful information needed to accomplish this research successfully. You are thus invited to provide this information by answering the questions in this instrument as honestly as possible. The information will be used for purely academic purposes, treated confidentially and will not be used to victimize you or bring your name or company into

disrepute. Your name is not required. Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw when the need to do so arises.

- i. What is the effect of education programs on graduate unemployment at School of Business, UCU?
- ii. What is the effect of practical skills acquired on graduate unemployment at School of Business, UCU?
- iii. Probe how acquisition of practical skills affects graduate unemployment at School of Business, UCU?
- iv. Probe how technical skills relevant to specific industries affect graduate unemployment at School of Business, UCU?
- v. What is the effect of graduates' mindsets on graduate unemployment at School of Business, UCU?
- vi. How does attitude towards employment opportunities affect graduate unemployment at School of Business, UCU?
- vii. Probe how perception of job market conditions affects graduate unemployment at School of Business, UCU?



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DISSERTATION CORRECTION COMPLIANCE REPORT BY THE CANDIDATE (POST VIVA FORM)

Date: 16th /09/2025

Name of Candidate: NAKATO GLADYS Reg. No: M23M15/019 B23344

Title of Dissertation: Exploration of Education Programs, Skills Development, and Mindset on Graduate Unemployment in Uganda: A Case of Uganda Christian University

SN	COMMENTS BY EXTERNAL EXAMINER	ACTION TAKEN	INDICATOR/PAGE NO.
1	Comment 1: Measurement of all variables is unclear and lacks citation of sources.	Addressed by adding a section that clearly defines the ordinal measurement of all composite independent variables using a five-point Likert scale, with full operational definitions and citations (IvyPanda, 2020; Bhandari, 2022).	30
2	Comment 2: The data analysis requires running a regression model; however, one of the variables should be dropped to improve model fit.	Requirement Fulfilled: As instructed, a multiple regression analysis was conducted. The model was run with all eight independent variables. The results, including Model Summary, ANOVA, and Coefficients tables, have been added to the report. The analysis shows an excellent model fit ($R^2 = 0.71$, $p < 0.001$) without needing to drop any variables, as all were statistically significant predictors.	58-69

3	Comment 3: There is misalignment between objectives, analysis, results, and conclusions.	The report has been restructured to ensure direct alignment. The new regression analysis directly addresses the objective of "determining the factors influencing graduate employment." The results (e.g., Proactive Mindset as the strongest predictor) are now directly discussed in the conclusion, with specific recommendations for UCU based on the statistical findings.	71-75
4	Comment 4:		
5	Comment 5:		
6	Comment 6:		
7	Comment 7:		
8	Comment 8:		
9	Comment 9:		
10	Comment 10:		
11	Comment 11:		

SN	COMMENTS BY INTERNAL EXAMINER	ACTION TAKEN	INDICATOR
1	Comment 1:		
2	Comment 2:		
3	Comment 3:		
4	Comment 4:		

SN	COMMENTS BY VIVA VOCE PANEL	ACTION TAKEN	INDICATOR
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1	Comment 1: Decide (with supervisor) whether to run a regression model using existing data or adjust objectives to align with current findings.	Action 1: Presented the existing data. It was jointly decided that running a multiple regression model was the correct analytical path and that the original objectives were perfectly aligned with this analysis. Action 2: The regression model was run as decided.	58-69
2	Comment 2:		
3	Comment 3:		
4	Comment 4:		

NAKATO GLADYS

Candidate's Name

Signature

MR. KABANDA MARTIN

Supervisor's Name

Signature