

**SOFT SKILLS AND GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY: A CASE  
OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION GRADUATES OF UGANDA  
CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**

**BY**

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**A DISSERTATION**

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## **DECLARATION**

I, OUMO ROBERT hereby declare that this dissertation is my work and it has not been submitted before to any other institution of higher learning for fulfillment of any academic award.

Signed.....

Date.....

## **APPROVAL**

This is to certify that, this dissertation titled “Soft Skills and Graduate Employability: A Case of Business Administration Graduates of Uganda Christian University” has been done under my supervision and now it is ready for submission.

Signature .....

**Dr. Moses Tahate Kamya (PhD)**

(Academic Supervisor)

Date.....

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my late Mother, Mrs. Majeri Abiji Oumo, who was so passionate about the Academic Excellence of her children as a pathway to attainment of personal and societal goals, and always motivated us to work hard no matter the hurdles.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

ASSOCHAM	Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India
GCA	Global Center on Adaptation
GRC	Governance, Risk and Compliance
IBM	International Business Machines Corporation
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
NHCE	National Council for Higher Education
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UCU	Uganda Christian University
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation was to examine the relationship between Soft Skills and Graduate Employability of Business Administration Graduates of Uganda Christian University. The study objectives were to determine the relationship between Leadership Skills, Teamwork Skills, Integrity Skills, Analytical Thinking Skills, Creativity Skills and Graduate Employability. The study used a Cross-Sectional Design supported by both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The sample size was 285 respondents, derived from the study population of 1050. Ten (10) representatives of firms took part in the study for qualitative data.

The results indicated that each of the dimensions of Soft Skills had a positive and significant relationship with Graduate Employability, that is; Leadership Skills ( $r=.604^{**}$ ,  $p<0.01$ ); Teamwork Skills ( $r=.785^{**}$   $p<0.01$ ); Integrity Skills ( $r=.688^{**}$   $p<0.01$ ); Analytical Thinking Skills ( $r=.644^{**}$   $p<0.01$ ) and Creativity Skills ( $r=.801^{**}$   $p<0.01$ ). Furthermore, the results show that the predictors can explain 44.9 percent of the Variance in Graduate Employability (Adjusted R Square = .449). Creativity Skills are the best predictor of Graduate Employability (Beta = .551 Sig,  $p<.01$ ), followed by Leadership Skills (Beta = .534, Sig,  $p<.01$ ) and then Analytical Thinking Skills follow (Beta = .451 Sig,  $p<.01$ ). Teamwork and Integrity Skills were also significant with lower variances in predicting Graduate Employability, that is (Beta = .363 Sig,  $p<.01$ ) and (Beta = .277 Sig,  $p<.01$ ), respectively.

It was recommended that Universities should encourage the formation of many University Clubs, Societies and other acceptable groups in which students are exposed to practical development of Soft Skills. It was further recommended that Staff Members be attached as Patrons to each group. Universities should consider having a Course Unit specifically for teaching Soft Skills to meet employers' needs, apart from teaching them integrated in existing Courses. To give this kind of

training, Lecturers should be developed in teaching Soft Skills, and then, they can develop the students.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This study sought to investigate the relationship between Soft Skills and Graduate Employability. This Chapter provides the background to the study both in the local and international context; the theory guiding the study; efforts by Uganda Christian University (UCU) to enhance Soft Skills development among its students and Government interventions to address the Soft Skills Gap. It also covers the problem statement, purpose, objectives, research questions, scope, significance, justification and Conceptual Framework (CF) for the study.

### **1.1 Background**

Graduate Employability, once an obscure Concept, now commands a central place in directing the development of Soft Skills that are essential for employment. Graduate Employability is basically, the capacity of Graduates to move into and stay in employment while Soft Skills focus on the Graduate's characteristics of readiness for work (Canadian Labour Force Development Board, 2005). In today's era and time, Graduate Employability has become a requirement for Organizations that need to survive in both domestic and global markets and also for Graduates who aim for career success (GCA, 2021; Rwakoma, 2013).

It is in this regard that worldwide Universities are under increasing pressures to produce employable Graduates. In fact, Universities are criticized for producing Graduates who cannot cope with current job market demands (World Bank, 2014). The bottom line is the gap between the demands for employability skills by employers and the acquired low Soft Skills of University Graduates. Many research findings have indicated that there is lack of Soft Skills among university Graduates globally but mostly in developing Countries (European Commission 2021; Prasad, 2017; UNESCO, 2020; Higher Education Academy 2014). For instance, the Report titled

“Employment in Europe 2010” has it that young new labour market entrants have low Soft Skills levels which increases the risk of long-term unemployment for significant numbers of new entrants. As per the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) 2020 Report, there are over 5500 Management Institutes in India each with an average of 50 graduate students but only 10,000 management Graduates turned out to be employable on the basis of having the required Soft Skills. ILO (2021) and UNESCO (2022) reported that though worldwide there was growing improvement in the learning of soft skills, the improvement rate is still very low at 2.01 percent and even lower in Sub-Sahara Africa at 0.63 percent. With this low trend there is still much more that has to be done to impart Soft Skills in graduate students. Noting that human trends are dynamic, the rate at which Soft Skills catch up with demand call for quick and deeper understanding of the trends in Soft Skills demands and therefore more research works are needed.

In Uganda, the Ministry of Education and Sports indicates that the total enrolment in Universities increased from 57,114 in 2002 to 345,000 in 2016. Furthermore, public Universities increased from 3 to 9 between 2002 and 2019 and also the number of private Universities increased to 43 by 2017 (MoES, 2018). In general terms, despite the youth in Uganda being the majority of the population and the bedrock of the labour force, the optimal contribution of young University Graduates to the development of this Country is hampered by unemployment that is much caused by lack of adequate Soft Skills (Action Aid International, 2013). Uganda Employers Association (2019) Report found that 30 percent of the employed University Graduates could not easily switch from one employment to another due to the inadequacy of Soft Skills. Therefore, there is great concern that despite the growing number of Universities in Uganda and an enormous increased intake of students, the Country has not been efficient at producing Graduates who are relevant to the Uganda labour market and to global labour markets. This has, as a result,



contributed to relatively high levels of unemployment currently at 9.2 percent (UBOS, 2020). The human capital theory explains such gaps in Uganda's Graduate Employability.

The human capital theory guiding this study suggests that education leads to the acquisition of productive skills, knowledge and other attributes which are of economic value not only to the Graduates who get high life time earnings, but also to the nations which benefit in terms of growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and to the Organization that competitively survives. Therefore, University education should equip Graduates with productive skills which should increase Graduates' prospects for employment and making a measurable economic contribution to national wealth. Contributing to improving Graduate employability through the provision of Soft Skills is among the priorities at Uganda Christian University.

Uganda Christian University (UCU) is a non-profit private University which was established by the Anglican Church (Church of Uganda) in 1997 and subsequently granted a Charter in 2004. This followed the elevation of the Bishop Tucker Theological College (BTTC) into a University (Kiyaga, 2011). BTTC, which was established in 1913 focused mainly on training the Clergy and Educators. UCU continues to be at the forefront of bridging the skills gap among Ugandan Graduates. Through its theme of providing "A Complete Education for A Complete Person", the University aspires to integrate traditional academic learning with physical, social, emotional and spiritual growth (Uganda Christian University, 2022) and in all enabling their graduate students' employability. In that regard, the University is mainstreaming in its curriculum, the critical Soft Skills of Leadership, Teamwork, Analytical Thinking, Creativity and Integrity, among others (Uganda Christian University, 2022).

Leadership skills enhance an individual's ability to influence other group members towards achieving a common goal and developing a vision for them to pursue (Algahtani, 2014). Teamwork skills is the ability of an individual to belong to a group of employees who work

together to achieve a common goal and hold each other accountable (Constructing Excellence, 2015). Integrity skills refer to the ability of individuals in positions of authority to stick to moral principles and ethical values in conduct of official business (Engelbrecht, Heine, & Mahembe, 2017). It is generally agreed that followers tend to have more trust and confidence in leaders of high moral standing (Schoorman et al., 2007). Integrity has been categorized into two; Individual/Personal and Corporate Integrity.

Analytical Thinking skills refer to the ability of an individual to identify and define problems, establishing the cause and providing solutions to those problems (Roberts, 2019). Analytical Thinking is important for various reasons and follows a logical process (Skills-Up, 2021). Creativity skills on the other hand refer to the interaction between attitude, process and environment, resulting into creation of original ideas, acts, products and services which are of value and solutions to real world problems. Creativity enhances the ability to cope with uncertainty and make appropriate judgments and innovations that are needed for the creative understanding of changing thinkers (Piiro, 2011).

Undoubtedly, the highly competitive corporate world today places greater emphasis on Soft Skills, which are a pre-requisite for new recruits and as such, possession of the relevant Soft Skills has a significant bearing on graduate employability.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Employer surveys indicate that occupation-specific (hard) skills are no longer sufficient for Graduates to meet the needs of Uganda labour markets, without a number of Soft Skills required for students to prepare themselves to meet the needs of various employers after graduation (New Vision, 2021; Rwakoma, 2021, Bagonza, 2021). In addition, a global survey by OECD (2017) indicated that 63.4 percent of employees expressed challenges in getting Graduates with the required Soft Skills, which is a global gap in employability of Graduates.

Currently, universities in Uganda release close to 400,000 Graduates annually into the job market (NCHE, 2010). With only 90,000 Graduates able to find jobs, this leaves 310,000 unemployed (UBOS Statistical Abstract, 2012) and yet most of them continue to be invited to various interviews. The main barrier to Graduate Employability is the gap between the graduate job skills and the Soft Skills needed in the workplace. Most employers have indicated that the training Programmes currently in place have not adequately equipped trainees with Soft Skills and the competencies relevant to the job market (Guloba, et al., 2021). According to UBOS (2019), labour underutilization, which is the mismatch between supply and demand of labour, continues to be high, standing at 37 percent in 2018/19. Before the onset of global Covid-19 pandemic, the National Household Survey 2019/2020 indicated that Uganda's unemployment rate stood at 9.2 percent, while the unemployment rate for youth aged 18-30 was 13 percent.

For intervention purposes, the Government of Uganda, through the Ministry of Education and Sports decided a few years ago to introduce the Graduate Work Placement Policy for University finalists to work in various public and private Organizations. This Policy is expected to enable the students to appreciate the working environments and notice the employability skills demanded in the workplace. While Universities often take the blame for producing unemployable Graduates, Geel (2014) observes that employers also have a role to play in developing the employability skills of their newly recruited Graduates.

As UCU is one of those Universities that has taken employability challenge head on, this study sought to find out from UCU employed Graduates (alumni) their perception of how their Soft Skills relate to their employability.

### **1.3 The Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between Soft Skills and Graduate Employability of Business Administration Graduates of Uganda Christian University.

## **1.4 Study Objectives**

The following were the objectives of the study:

1. To examine the relationship between Leadership skills and Graduate Employability.
2. To evaluate the relationship between Teamwork skills and Graduate Employability.
3. To establish the relationship between Integrity skills and Graduate Employability.
4. To determine the relationship between Analytical Thinking skills and Graduate Employability.
5. To determine the relationship between Creativity skills and Graduate Employability.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

The research was guided by the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between Leadership Skills and Graduate Employability?
2. What is the relationship between Teamwork skills and Graduate Employability?
3. What is the relationship between Integrity skills and Graduate Employability?
4. What is the relationship between Analytical Thinking skills and Graduate Employability?
5. What is the relationship between Creativity skills and Graduate Employability?

## **1.6 Scope of the Study**

**1.6.1 Content Scope.** The Independent Variable for the study was Soft Skills, which were measured by Leadership skills, Teamwork skills, Integrity skills, Analytical Thinking skills and Creativity skills. The Dependent Variable was Graduate Employability—the ability and readiness to work. This research examined the Concept of

employability from the Graduates' perspective of its relationship with Soft Skills and usefulness in their current job.

**1.6.2 Geographical Scope.** The study was limited to UCU Graduates of the School of Business Administration employed in Kampala, Wakiso, Mukono and Jinja. Those from UCU Regional Campuses working in these areas also participated in the study.

**1.6.3 Time Scope.** The study covered UCU Graduates for the period 2018-2022. These were former students who graduated in the last 5 years and mostly employed. Those who are employed are able to justify how important Soft Skills are to their employability.

## **1.7 Significance of the Study**

It was anticipated that the knowledge obtained from the study was to be beneficial to both Uganda Christian University and employers. It was hoped that the University would refocus its training Programmes, placing more emphasis on the Soft Skills that are in high demand on the labour market.

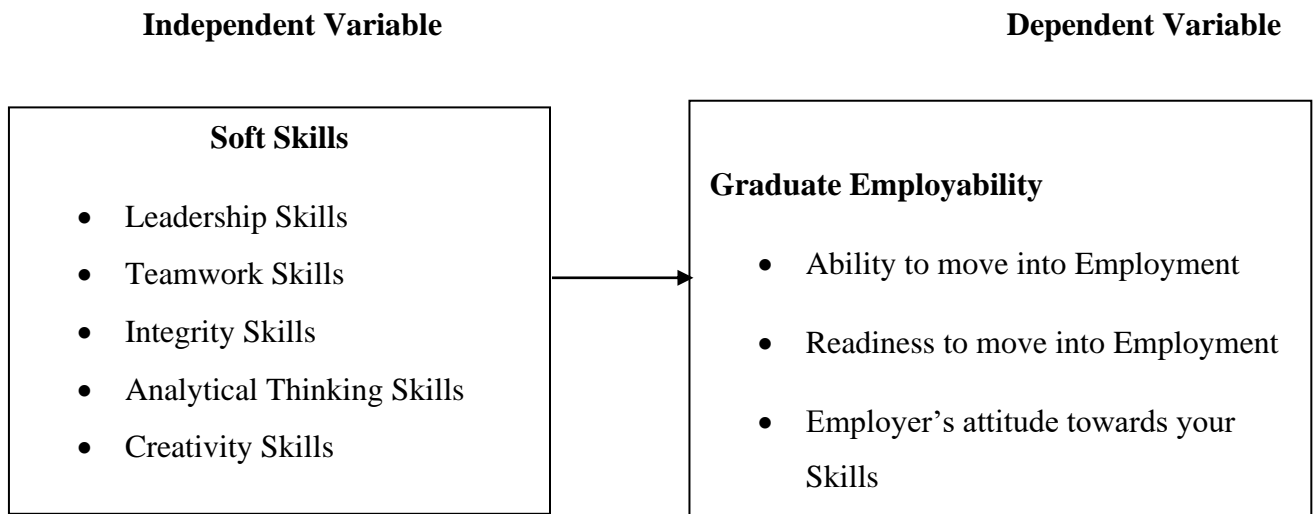
The employers on the other hand would be able to get employees with the relevant Soft Skills that offer a wide range of benefits, including but not limited to productivity, engagement and employee retention (Coates, 2020). The study was also hoped to lay a better framework for future academic research, with view to offer a deeper understanding on traceability of Graduates after University Education.

## **1.8 Justification of the Study**

The study was very necessary in the absence of unified knowledge on Soft Skills and employability. It was important to harmonize knowledge on Soft Skills and Employability. This research was therefore an attempt to address the foregoing concerns.

## 1.9. Conceptual Framework

**Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework Guiding this Study Showing the Relationship between Soft Skills and Graduate Employability**



*Source: Adopted from the Graduate Employment Model and Modified by Researcher (Geel, 2014; Fadhil, Ismail & Alnoor, 2016; Kathal, 2013).*

Figure 1, indicates the study relationships between Soft Skills and Graduate Employability. The Conceptual Framework was adopted based on the scholarly works of Geel (2014); Fadhil, Ismail & Alnoor (2016); and Kathal (2013). As Organizations strive to survive and/or beat competitors, they look for Graduates who have the ability and capability especially Soft Skills, to propel the Organization to higher and higher levels. It is said that Soft Skills are among the few assets that promote competitiveness. In this case, Companies would like to employ Graduates with the appropriate Soft Skills. After all, they are difficult to copy and/or imitate by competitors. Geel (2014) noted that in Sweden, Teamwork and Integrity skills were on high demand and found to be significant in employment demands. Fadhil, Ismail & Alnoor (2016) contended that Creativity skills were paramount in cases where employees had to deal with a variety of customers whose

needs and problems differed greatly. Kathal (2013) observed that Leadership skills were necessary to form a formidable team of management personnel that can propel an Organization to higher levels.

### **1.10 Summary**

This Chapter gave insights on the background of the study, identified gaps and proposed interventions. It implored Uganda Christian University to refocus its training Programmes, placing more emphasis on Soft Skills which are high on demand in the labour market. It also brought out the necessity to have unified knowledge on Soft Skills and Employability.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This Chapter discusses the theoretical framework as well as empirical literature on Soft Skills and Graduate Employability. Empirical review of all the study variables namely; Leadership skills, Teamwork skills, Integrity skills, Analytical Thinking skills and Creativity skills is presented. Furthermore, this Chapter presents the discussions of the study objectives of the relationship of each dimension of Soft Skills with Graduate Employability.

#### **2.2 Human Capital Theory**

This study was guided by the Human Capital Theory, which presupposes that education is an essential element in building the economy and competitiveness in the global economy (Becker, 2009; Bridgstock, 2009). The theory suggests that skills and knowledge reflect the quality of labour and are critical aspects for employability (Jonck, 2014). From that perspective therefore, qualified labour is seen as a key factor for production and success.

Employability in the context of this study, refers to the ability of an individual to gain, maintain and where necessary, obtain new employment (Hillage & Pollard, 1998). Employability is largely tied to the individual's assets (knowledge, skills and attitudes), utilization of the said assets, their presentation to potential employers and workplace environmental context (Onyeike & Onyeagbako, 2014). Suffice to note that employability is at most related to Soft Skills.

#### **2.3 Graduate Employability**

Often times, employability is misconstrued to mean employment, which is only a part of it. It also includes the ability to maintain the job and succeed in the career (Onyeike & Onyeagbako, 2014). Harvey (2001) described employability in terms of factors such as securing a job, the time



within which to get a job, possession of attributes required by recruiters, continuous learning and having employability skills.

Employability is generally viewed from three (03) perspectives; the individual, institution and the employer (Harvey, 2001). Individual employability relates to one's desire to have/keep a job and is often tied to employability skills, attributes, job type, timing and education levels (Harvey, 2001). Institutional employability refers to the role of institutions in facilitating and encouraging students to become employable. The Organization always prefers to recruit staff with employability Soft Skills.

By definition, employability refers to a “set of attributes, skills and knowledge that all labor market participants should possess to ensure they have the capability of being effective in the workplace-to the benefit of themselves, their employer and the wider economy” (Sumanasiri, Yajid, & Khatibi, 2015). Employability has also been referred to by Geel, (2014) as the skills, knowledge and personal attributes that enhance the chances of Graduates obtaining employment and being successful in their careers.

Employability is largely influenced by three (03) factors namely; the ability of an individual and readiness to move into employment; the attitude of the employer towards skills of individuals; and external factors such as available opportunities, work environment and labour market conditions (Geel, 2014).

### **2.3.1 Individual's Ability to Move into Employment**

A number of factors influence an individual's ability to move into employment. These include among others; level of knowledge and transferrable skills; attributes and attitudes possessed, as well as levels of passion for the job, which translates to job satisfaction (Harvey, 2001; Ramisetty & Desai, 2018; Warner, Yarnall, Ball and Jonas, 2020). Indeed, McQuaid & Lindsay (2005) contended that the ability of individuals to gain employment is determined by the extent to which

they possess transferable skills; level of motivation to look for work; extent of “mobility” in pursuing the job; degree of access to information and support networks; as well as the degree and type of personal hindrances to work.

### **2.3.2 Individual’s Readiness to Move into Employment**

The readiness of an individual to move into employment relates to the condition in which job seekers have the requisite skills and are prepared to work in a particular field (Harvey, 2001). According to Makki, Salleh, Memon, & Harun (2015), work readiness, career self-efficacy and career exploration are fundamental for job seekers, especially Graduates to move into employment. Mason et al. (2009) referred to work readiness as the possession of skills, knowledge, attitudes and understanding necessary for new Graduates to be productive and positively contribute towards the attainment of the Organization’s goals. When recruiting new employees, a high premium is placed on work readiness by employers (Makki, Salleh, Memon, & Harun, 2015).

A comprehensive work readiness skills set comprises of traits and employability skills including attributes, generic skills and technical skills. The traits range from meeting the expectations of the workplace, group work, good work ethics, and acknowledgement of skills to adoption of a new culture, new skills and change (Makki, Salleh, Memon, & Harun, 2015). Career self-efficacy, which relates to one’s confidence and belief in their capabilities and competencies to obtain employment is another ingredient for an individual’s readiness to move into employment (Makki, Salleh, Memon, & Harun, 2015; Coetzee and Oosthuizen, 2012; Bandura, 1993). Bandura (1993) further posited that individuals with a high career self-efficacy tend to be more ambitious, have a positive attitude and visualize success in their career life. McArdle et al. (2007) indicated that job search and re-employment are positively correlated with career self-efficacy.

Career exploration like work readiness and career self-efficacy is essential in preparing individuals to move into employment. It is a behaviour which is both purposive and cognitive, which involves deliberate search for information regarding careers, jobs and Organizations (Makki, Salleh, Memon, & Harun, 2015; Berlyne, 1966). This process is deemed to be essential in career development and exposes Graduates (job seekers) to career opportunities and choices (Super, 1980; Johnston, 2006).

### **2.3.3 Employer's Attitude towards Skills of Individuals**

The attitude of the employer towards skills of individuals, which has a direct impact on the employability rates, can be shaped by perceptions or surveys about the levels of knowledge, skills (transferrable), attitude and work experience of the individuals desired; age of those individuals; type of Institution where they studied from and the academic disciplines (courses) offered by those Institutions (Kantane, Sloka, Dzelme, & Tora, 2015; Asiri, Bocij & Greasley, nd). According to Hosain, Mustafi & Parvin (2021), key factors considered by employees while recruiting include general knowledge; technical, communication, leadership, teamwork; Information and Communication Technology (ICT); problem solving, analytical and critical thinking skills; logical ability, experience, education background, commitment and personality, among others.

Based on the above, employers will likely ask potential hires questions such as:

- a. What is your qualification?
- b. Where did you study from?
- c. What skills do you have?
- d. What is your work experience?
- e. What is your age?
- f. Are you willing to learn on the job?

- g. Can the individual be trained and developed?
- h. What are your personal attributes and attitudes?

Employability can be measured using a number of tools, methods and approaches including; the Employability Performance Indicators, Job Satisfaction Surveys, Employability Audits, Graduate Employment Rates and the Graduate Skills Assessment (GSA), among others (Harvey, 2001; Ramisetty & Desai, 2018). Employment Performance Indicators evaluate the ability of Graduates to secure jobs, their attributes and job satisfaction.

Graduate Employment Rates comprise of surveys and statistics on Graduates who get gainfully employed. Employability Audits on the other hand measure the extent to which students of a particular Institution have obtained the attributes desired by employers. Meanwhile, the Australian developed GSA is an assessment tool for evaluating the quality of generic skills obtained by Graduates while studying at University (Caballero & Walker, 2011). Other Instruments for measuring employability skills include the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (Husain, Mustapha, Malik, & Bunian, 2012); Alumni Surveys and Employability Skills Inventory (Rodgers, 2012).

#### **2.3.4 Work Ethics**

Ethics are behaviours or actions that are considered proper and right (Government of South Africa, nd). Simply put, ethics are all about “doing the right thing” and conducting oneself in a decent manner. Work ethics on the other hand refer to employee behaviours or conduct deemed acceptable and expected by employers to be upheld in order to safeguard the reputation and image of the Organization (Government of South Africa, nd). Work ethics mean a set of moral principles that guide human conduct, doing what is morally correct, honourable and acceptable to many in society or organization (Omisore & Oyende , 2015). Khan (2019) defined work ethics as a set of principles based on diligence and hard work. He further alluded that work ethics is the

application of ethics at the workplace. Khan (2019) further posited that people with a good work ethic are very productive at work and never quit easily.

To ensure productivity and profitability, most Organizations set rules, policies and procedures that must be observed by all employees. Employers sourcing for new employees focus on individuals with excellent work ethics, as they do not want to put their investments at risk by employing people who will not contribute to the Company's success. Most importantly, work ethics play an important role in determining an employee's job retention (Government of South Africa, nd).

To enhance prospects of getting employed, job seekers should consider having the values and behaviours of being responsible, honest, paying attention to appearance, ability to organize, initiative, good attitude and people skills, among others (Government of South Africa, nd). Essentials of work ethics for employees include among others dedication, reliability and dependability, competence, openness, honesty, integrity, humility, impartiality/fairness, legality, respect for others, initiative, professionalism and accountability (Khan, 2019).

Work ethics exhibited by individuals are anchored on their values, which in turn are shaped by their environment, experiences and life-long influences, such as peers, teachers, parents and friends (Omisore & Oyende , 2015). According to Ness, Melinsky, Buff, & Seifert (2010), Work ethics has seven (07) dimensions, namely; Work Centrality, Belief in Hard Work, Delay of Gratification, Self-Reliance, Morality/Ethics, Wasted Time and Leisure. These dimensions of work ethic have an influence on the career status of an employee.

## **2.4 Soft Skills**

Soft skills refer to a combination of skills, competencies, personal qualities, attitudes and behaviours, which significantly contribute to one's ability to perform effectively, interact well with others, manage challenges in the workplace environment and above all realize their goals

(Lippman, Ryberg, Carney and Moore, 2015). This study focused on five (05) Soft Skills to enhance Graduate Employability, namely; Leadership skills, Teamwork skills, Integrity skills, Analytical Thinking skills and Creativity skills.

Soft Skills refer to those personal attributes that determine one's ability to work well or interact with others (Chavan, 2018). They include among others; teamwork, time management, empathy, delegation, time management, effective communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, creativity, adaptability, leadership, responsibility, organisation, negotiation, customer service, networking, social skills, presentation, conflict resolution and ability to work under pressure (Chavan, 2018).

Soft Skills are important for a number of reasons that include but are not limited to; career progression and promotion; the modern workplace becoming increasingly interpersonal; customers and clients increasingly demanding for Soft Skills; the future workplace relying on Soft Skills; difficulty in automating Soft Skills; and high demand for Soft Skills by recruiters (Chavan, 2018).

#### **2.4.1 Leadership Skills**

The Concept of leadership dates back to mythology and is one that is often understood and interpreted differently (Arevalo, 2018). House (1976) defined leadership as the “process by which an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal”.

The term leader is derived from the old English word “leden”, which means guiding and the Latin word “ducere”, loosely translated to mean driving (Arevalo, 2018). Therefore, by implication, a leader is someone with followers. It is imperative to note that, there exists a distinction between Leaders and Managers. While Managers perform organizational tasks assigned to them using the functions of planning, budgeting, staffing, controlling and solving problems, among others;

Leaders in contrast set a Vision and align their followers towards realizing that Vision (Bohoris, 2008; Kotter, 2001).

Several Leadership Models and Theories do exist, including but not limited to the Leadership Trait Theory, Leadership Behaviour Theory, Contingency/Situational Leadership Theory, House's Model (1971), Vroom-Jago Decisional Model, Hersey and Blanchard Model (1966).

**The leadership Trait Theory** presupposes that, leaders possess unique traits or characteristics or qualities which distinguish them from their followers. These include; intelligence, creativity, self-confidence, drive, job specific knowledge, credibility, motivation and flexibility, among others (Kolzow, 2014). The theory suggests that individuals are born with certain unique traits which qualify them to be leaders or not (Arevalo, 2018). **The Leadership Behaviour Theory** postulates that the effectiveness of leaders is contingent on the behavioural style they adopt and not necessarily their traits (Arevalo, 2018). On the other hand, Kolzow (2014) observes that good leadership can be learnt by individuals. According to the Blake and Mouton Managerial Grid, there are five (05) types of leadership behavior, namely:

**The Country Club Style**, which is a situation where the leader is involved with and exhibits a high concern for others. However, they are not very concerned about the task to be accomplished.

**The Impoverished Style**, is where the leader neither has concern for people nor the task. These leaders are self-centered and fear making mistakes. This is considered the least effective leadership approach.

**The Middle-of-the-Road Style**, where leaders show some concern for the task and the people, but not quite with conviction.

**Produce or Perish Style**, where the preoccupation of the leader is on the accomplishment of the task and not necessarily people executing it. Such leaders are considered dictators, who believe that staff ought to be grateful for being employed and receiving a salary.

**Team Style**, where leaders show concern in equal measure, for both the people and the organizational tasks, through teamwork. The leader develops shared motivation to achieve organizational goals. It is considered the most ideal behavioural approach to leadership.

**The Contingency/Situational Leadership Theory**, which holds that whatever works for a Leader in a particular situation may not necessarily apply to another Kolzow (2014). The theory further contends that where a Leader succeeds in one situation, he or she may fail in a changed situation or other operational setting. Arevalo (2018) posited that effective leadership is dependent on the behaviour adopted and traits exhibited by a leader in a particular situation.

**The House's Model (1971)** holds that for Leaders to be effective, they must eliminate all obstacles and create conducive conditions for followers to achieve their goals (Arevalo, 2018). It further alludes that a leader must adapt to the situation and set a path for their followers to take. In the same token, leaders ought to help their followers achieve both personal and organizational goals.

**The Vroom-Jago Decisional Model**, which emphasizes the ability of leaders to make sound decisions, if they are to be effective (Arevalo, 2018). The Model suggests that involvement of followers in the decision-making process fosters participation of all stakeholders in organizational activities. This collective approach will however depend on the time available to make a decision and take action.

**The Hersey and Blanchard Model (1966)**, which presupposes that the effectiveness of leadership depends on the efficiency of the Leader (Arevalo, 2018). The maturity of employees, and the behavior of the Manager/Leader while performing tasks and relating to employees respectively are considered key factors to achieve effectiveness. Mature employees are those deemed able to assume responsibilities and take initiative on their own. The behaviour of the



Manager relates to his/her ability to clearly define tasks and manage employees. Meanwhile, the behaviour of the Leader is concerned with how he/she relates with employees.

A number of Leadership Styles have been put forward by different Scholars; including the Authoritarian Versus Democratic Leadership, Charismatic Leadership, Transactional Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Servant Leadership and Situational Leadership.

**Authoritarian Leaders** are primarily concerned with the accomplishment of specific tasks (Kolzow, 2014). They make individual decisions without involvement of followers, a practice that undermines innovation and creativity. Authoritarian leadership is more effective in situations where tasks are straightforward, quick decisions are desirable and there is a high level of trust in the Organization.

**Democratic leaders** on the other hand focus more on developing inter-personal relationships (Kolzow, 2014). This leadership style assumes that power is derived from followers that people are self-driven and can be creative if motivated to do so. In this leadership style, decision-making process is shared and there is greater participation of followers. Democratic leadership is more appropriate for situations where there is sufficient time to take decisions; members of the group are skilled and readily willing to share knowledge.

**Charismatic leaders** create a compelling Vision that is compatible with the needs and aspirations of followers (Kolzow, 2014). Charismatic leaders are effective communicators, with a deep sense of empathy and emotional appeal to their followers. They quickly understand and respond to events in their environment. Charismatic leaders create a sense of dependability from their followers and are adept at creating and stimulating change.

**Transactional Leadership** assumes that followers should be motivated through rewards and punishments if better performance is to be realized (Kolzow, 2014). It employs the “Carrot and

Stick” approach. Therefore, the preoccupation of the Leader is setting organizational goals and ensuring that followers perform their tasks as expected to achieve those goals.

**In Transformational Leadership**, the Leader creates a compelling Vision, inspires and motivates followers to achieve that Vision (Kolzow, 2014). He/she builds relationships with followers, to be able to influence them. The primary focus of the Transformational Leader is to change for the better, both the followers and the Organization. He/she has the power of stimulating and inspiring his/her followers towards realizing extraordinary results (Robbins and Coulter, 2007).

Transformational leadership is anchored on continuous learning and building relationships. Considerable effort and time are spent on building trust and exhibiting a high level of personal integrity. This leadership style focuses on building loyalty and dedication among followers, purposed to make each group member successful. According to Warrilow (2012), there are four (04) components of transformational leadership, including; charisma or idealized influence; inspirational motivation; intellectual stimulation and individual attention.

**Servant Leadership** espouses the idea that leaders should focus on serving others first before self and subordinating their interests to those of others (Kolzow, 2014). The goal of Servant Leadership is to foster personal growth, participation and teamwork of followers. In essence, Servant Leaders should be “givers” as opposed to “takers”.

**Situational Leadership** Theory holds that every leadership style can only be applied effectively depending on a particular work environment (Kolzow, 2014). In effect, different Organizations have different leadership styles, depending on the complexity of the Organization, calibre of the employees and type of task at hand.

### 2.4.2 Teamwork Skills

A team is defined as a formal group of people closely working together and having a shared commitment to accomplish a particular goal or objective (Pcepurnia, 2020). According to Pcepurnia (202), teams have become very popular in Organizations for the following reasons:

- Collective effort of teams produces better results compared to individuals.
- Employee talents are better utilized with teams than individuals.
- Teams have more flexibility and responsiveness to environmental changes.
- There is greater participation with teams.
- Increased employee motivation and decentralized decision making.
- Helps to flatten the Organization, which has its own benefits.

Teamwork has a number of benefits for the Organization, including but not limited to; improved employee relations, technical and interpersonal skills; improved job satisfaction and performance; fosters co-operation and flexibility; better quality of work life; extends social support to members and generally bringing new dynamics to the workplace by making work to be more interesting and challenging (Khawam, DiDona, & Hernández, 2017; Levi, 2014).

Several types of teams do exist, including the following (Pcepurnia, 2020):

**Problem-Solving teams**, whose sole purpose is to deal with problems in the Organization.

**Cross-functional teams**, whose members are drawn from different functional areas for a particular purpose. The members have diverse skills, competencies and experiences which increases performance.

**Virtual teams**, which work remotely over an internet connection and do not need to be physically present at the firm's premises.

**Research and Development (R&D) teams**, whose main task is to develop new products through innovation.

**Self-Managed teams**, which are small groups of individuals entrusted with certain tasks of the Organization and making autonomous decisions.

**Diverse teams**, which are designed to perform different tasks including problem solving, creativity and innovation.

Effective teamwork requires certain ingredients to be in place. Constructing Excellence (2015) identified six (06) key elements for effective teamwork, namely; team identity; shared vision and objectives; communication; collaboration and participation; issue negotiation and resolution; as well as reflection and self-assessment. Successful teams have team spirit derived from mutual respect, trust, being helpful and friendly.

Members of an effective team play different roles, which cumulatively enhance the performance of a team. A role is defined as “a set of expectations that are tied to a particular job or position in the team” (Pcepurnia, 2020). According to Khawam, DiDona, & Hernández (2017) and Belbin (1993), team members play the following roles:

**Plant**, who is creative, imaginative, solves difficult problems and behaves in an unpredictable manner.

**Coordinator**, who is mature, confident and good leader, clarifies goals and is good at delegating and promoting decision making.

**Monitor (Evaluator)**, who is sober, strategic, judicious, explores all options and makes sound judgments.

**Implementer**, who is disciplined, reliable, efficient and rigid but makes ideas become realities.

**Completer (finisher)**, who is scrupulous, meticulous, apprehensive, looks for mistakes and ensures timely delivery of assigned tasks.

**Resource Investigator**, who is sociable, passionate, communicator, scouts for opportunities and is good at networking.

**Shaper**, who is dynamic, challenges the status quo, can work under pressure and has the zeal to overcome obstacles.

**Team worker**, who is cooperative, a thinker, gentle, listener and peacemaker.

**Specialist**, who is independent minded, self-motivated, committed, shares knowledge and skills with other members.

### **2.4.3 Integrity Skills**

The intriguing Concept of integrity continues to gain currency and with diverse viewpoints. Integrity refers to strict observance of a set of moral or artistic values (Merriam-Webster dictionary). It can be conceptualized from the perspective of wholeness, constancy and unity of principles and values; personal and professional responsibility; observance of laws, rules, moral values and norms (Huberts, 2018).

Integrity has been categorized as individual/personal and corporate integrity. Individual integrity espouses the attributes of compassion, transparency, ethical conduct, honesty and being considerate. It is the idea that Individuals can be trusted, believed in and be reliable. Corporate integrity on the other hand is fidelity to organizational culture, policies and philosophies of Leaders. Integrity is among others, underpinned by the principles of predictability, consistency, honesty and fairness; coupled with actions and behaviours of individuals (Caldwell, 2018). It comprises the elements of wholeness, consistency, morality, ethics and truthfulness to oneself (Christie & Fellow, 2019).

#### **2.4.4 Analytical Thinking Skills**

Analytical thinking refers to a way of thinking that facilitates effective collection of information that can be utilized to find solutions to different problems (Skills-Up, 2021). It can be applied in different situations and is key to problem solving and decision making. Analytical thinking is important in the workplace considering that it enables employees to be independent and quick problem solvers (Skills-Up, 2021). According to Skills-Up (2021), analytical thinking takes the following steps:

- a. Gathering information as much as possible.
- b. Examining information critically through active listening, critical reading and evaluation of information sources.
- c. Logical reasoning to understand the problem and its cause, so as not to jump into conclusions.
- d. Carrying out additional research, reaching a conclusion and deciding how to solve the problem.
- e. Forecasting the consequences of decisions made and take appropriate action.

Analytical thinking skills can be improved by reading books, playing brain games, being curious and practicing problem solving (Skills-Up, 2021). Analytical thinking can be facilitated through abilities and behaviours such as questioning, defining terms, identifying assumptions, interpretation, reasoning, predicting and looking at arguments from both sides (ART-IN, 2017). Analytical thinking skills have been grouped into three (03) types, namely; Analysis of Elements, Analysis of Relationships and Analysis of Organizational Principles (ART-IN, 2017).

#### **2.4.5 Creativity Skills**

The age-old Concept of Creativity is one shrouded in mystery, multifaceted and complex, with different definitions and perspectives (Al-Ababneh, 2020; DCU, nd). Amabile (1997) defined Creativity as the creation of original and valuable ideas, ranging from arts and science disciplines

to everyday life. Dewett (2007) on the other hand defined Creativity as the production of original and valuable ideas, processes or products by an individual or group of individuals. Meanwhile, (Tomsen & Saintrond, 2014) defined Creativity as the process of producing things which are both novel and have value.

Therefore, it is evident that there is consensus to a larger extent, among Scholars and Researchers, that Creativity involves creation of novel and valuable ideas, processes and products to solve real world problems. In the world of business, Creativity means firms developing new ideas and transforming those ideas into new products and services that can be delivered to the market place (Kilroy, 1999). Creativity often takes three (03) forms, namely; creating totally new products/services, amalgamating existing products/services; and improving existing products/services (Mikdashi, 1999). The Componential Theory of Creativity (Amabile, 1997) postulates that individual creativity comprises of the elements of domain knowledge/expertise/skills; skills for creative thinking and inherent motivation for the task.

## **2.5 Leadership Skills and Graduate Employability**

The configuration of today's workplace has significantly changed on many aspects, with major implications on leadership and employability (Cherry, 2019). Unlike the past Organizations with a menacingly rigid bureaucracy, today's Organizations have been flattened, with leadership largely distributed across the Organization to effectively respond to changes in the internal and external environments (Cherry, 2019). Firms are constantly reporting that they have a problem in recruiting Managers as most of the Graduates fail to exhibit leadership skills. Leadership skills include the ability to motivate others to achieve organizational goals (Schermerhorn, 2008). Typical characteristics of effective leadership expected in Graduates include among others, responsibility, self-esteem and ethical qualities of integrity and honesty. These skills and others are said to be the predictors of future Graduate Leaders of Organizations. Therefore, Leadership skills are critical requirements for Graduate Employability.

In seeking future Leaders to move their enterprises forward, many Organizations proactively look out for people with great potential and Leadership skills. These skills are also very useful for higher team performance and supervision at lower managerial levels (Wigan & Leigh College, 2022).

## **2.6 Teamwork Skills and Graduate Employability**

Teamwork is a key requirement in most occupations and an essential part of Graduate Employability requirements. Employers are seeking to recruit individuals who pay due attention to relations with subordinates, peers and superiors in order to work together as a team. Teamwork involves building relationships and working with other people using a number of important skills and habits, such as working cooperatively; contributing to groups with ideas, suggestions, and effort; sense of responsibility; respect for different opinions; and ability to participate in group decision making.

Teamwork skills that enhance Graduate Employability add value to the workplace especially in today's changing environment. Teamwork skills consist of a number of facets; productive as team member, positive and encouraging attitude; punctual and meets deadline; maintains accountability to the team; work with multiple approaches; aware and sensitive to diversity, and share ideas to multiple audiences.

Therefore, today most Organizations are constantly looking out for individuals with teamwork skills; capable of being creative, flexible, adaptive, take initiative and work in a collaborative environment (Kadavakollu, 2013). The prospective employees should be able to quickly adapt to the existing system without causing much trouble. Hashim (2015) alluded that Teamwork is one of the Soft Skills most sought from new recruits by employees. Individuals who are team players should possess communication, interpersonal relationship, self-adaptability, planning and decision making skills, among others.



As jobs become more complex, Organizations are resorting to employing teams to remain competitive and achieve organizational success (Khawam, DiDona, & Hernández, 2017). Teams are deemed more effective in improving quality of products/services, productivity, performance and competitive advantage for the Organization. In particular, collaboration by teams is essential for achieving difficult tasks and goals of the Organization (Khawam, DiDona, & Hernández, 2017).

## **2.7 Integrity Skills and Graduate Employability**

Integrity skills have become important in respect of all Sectors of society, including Graduate Employability. Therefore, what Integrity skills do employers expect when employing graduates? According to Karssing (2007), Integrity means that a Graduate exercises his/her tasks adequately, carefully and responsibly, taking into account all relevant interests. For employment purposes, Montefiore & Vines (1999) reflects on the Graduate as wholeness and responsibility. Other perspectives focus on one or more other specific values that include; incorruptibility, honesty, impartiality and accountability. This is related to virtues, with graduate integrity acting in line with virtues such as wisdom, justice, courage and temperance (Becker & Talsma, 2016).

Graduates seeking employment are expected to have Integrity skills to understand what is right or wrong, good or bad. These are concerned with values and norms that employers feel strongly about, because serious interests are involved that affect the Organization and Community of which they are a part. Values and norms are the basis for judgement and decision making. The roles they play, however, are different. A value is “a belief” or quality that contributes to judgments about what is good; right; beautiful; or admirable. Values thus weigh in the choice of action for employees and firms alike. A norm is more specific. Norms tell us whether something is good or bad, right or wrong, beautiful or ugly. For types of behaviour, they answer the question “what is the correct thing to do?” (De Graaf, 2003; Van der Wal, (2008). For example, some types of integrity violations include, among others; corruption, conflict of interest, fraud and theft

of resources; waste and abuse of resources; breaking rules/misusing power; misuse and manipulation of information; indecent treatment (such as intimidation and discrimination) and private time misconduct.

Organizations put a premium on culture of integrity, which fosters trust relationships, shared values, good corporate governance, a highly valued work environment and solid financial performance in the long-term (Rahim, Omar, & Kamaruddin, 2020). The authors further observe that firms seek to hire individuals with high integrity to keep organizational secrets and avoid incurring financial losses from corrupt employees.

Individuals with integrity possess some unique character traits, including; loyalty, honesty, humility, respect, ethical conduct, truthfulness, trustworthiness, reliability (dependability), predictability, consistency, transparency, compassion, accountability, taking responsibility for own actions, being considerate and keeping promises, among others (Duggar, nd; Robinson, 2005; Indeed, 2021). Therefore, people of Integrity can be counted to consistently do what is right and be expected to stand for what is fair and just.

## **2.8 Analytical Thinking Skills and Graduate Employability**

Graduate Employability in relation to Analytical Thinking is about a Graduate who has the capacity to reason and potentially override the intuitions, gut feelings and instincts. This is often considered a defining characteristic of the Graduate for employment (Stanovich, 2004).

Every Organization, Project, Workplace or Job will always have problems and challenges that have to be solved or addressed. Today, Organizations need people with Analytical and Critical Thinking skills at all levels, in order to reduce complexity in chains of command in resolving problems, thus saving time and money (Wigan & Leigh College, 2022). Analytical and Critical Thinking skills are essential in investigations of issues, determination of solutions and taking of appropriate decisions (Indeed, 2021).

Organizations are struggling with huge amounts of information and data on a daily basis regarding their internal and external environments, which requires to be acted upon and decisions to be made. Quickly making sense out of this information or data, identifying and evaluating which one is relevant to the Organization or a particular role, will require strong Analytical skills of employees handling that information or data (Wigan & Leigh College, 2022).

Analytical skills are not just a single skill, but rather a set of diverse abilities that have to be possessed by analysts to be able to effectively perform their duties. These skills include; data mining, data and metrics interpretation; theorizing, research, troubleshooting, diagnostics, brainstorming, creativity, organization, communication, reporting and problem-solving, among others (Duszyński, 2022).

## **2.9 Creativity Skills and Graduate Employability**

The contemporary highly competitive, globalized and technologically advanced business environment renders Creativity to be among the most valued and sought after skill by Organizations. Creativity drives innovation for new products and services, and enhances organizational efficiency and productivity (Timane & Wandhe, 2021). It is also a critical life skill essential for navigating through the constantly evolving and complex work environment. For University Graduates to fit into employment demands, they have to learn to think creatively in solving real-world problems, through authentic learning experiences. Seeing the gaps is the beginning of problem-solving and the beginning of a creative thinking path to finding solutions and to convincing others. To be fit for employment, the Graduate is expected to be able to generate ideas that are new, seeing existing situations in a new way, identifying alternative explanations, seeing links and finding new ways to apply ideas to generate a positive outcome.

Creativity allows individuals to be adaptive to different life situations by generating solutions to problems and challenges. Creativity is key to purposeful thinking and is largely linked with the

skills of evaluation and analysis. Individuals with creative skills adapt to various life situations by leading to solutions, methods and processes to tackle old problems and today's challenges.

Creativity helps unlock the potential of individuals and has several ingredients, including; imagination, curiosity, risk-taking, problem-solving, exploration and embrace of new ideas, acknowledgement of other people's strengths and contributions; possession of different perspectives on issues and implementation of new ideas in order to arrive at useful solutions, among others (Timane & Wandhe, 2021; Tideway, 2020).

## **2.10 Summary**

This Chapter expounded on the Human Capital Theory on which this study is hinged, noting that skills and knowledge inform the quality of the labour force, and by implication organizational performance. It brought to the fore the idea that Graduate Employability is largely determined by the Individual's ability and readiness to move into the labour market, as well as perception of employers about the soft skills of the said Individual.

Each of the identified Soft Skills was discussed extensively, pointing out their positive contribution to the performance of the Organization and therefore their influence on how Individuals stand chances of being hired based on the possession of such skills.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This Chapter presents the Research Methods that were used to carry out the study. It contains the research design, study population, sample size, sampling techniques, data sources, data collection instruments, measurement of research variables, reliability and validity of instruments, data processing and analysis and limitations of the study.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

A research design is the conceptual structure within which the research is conducted and constitutes the blue print for measurement of the variables, collection and analysis of data (Creswell, 2014).

This study used a Cross-Sectional Survey Design, which is a design used to gather data from a representative sample at one point in time and is used to make inferences about the target population. With a time scope of five (05) years, the Cross-Sectional Design enabled the research to be done in a very short time. The choice for this design was based on the fact that it allows a careful gathering of information or data on the study objectives, (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The design is a less time-consuming activity, it is easy to deploy and cheap to administer. The design was supported by both quantitative (numeric data) and qualitative (non-numeric data) approaches, with the purpose of providing a better understanding of the research objectives and questions (Neuman 2011).

#### **3.3 Study Population**

The study population comprised of Bachelors and Masters Graduates of Business Administration of Uganda Christian University over a five-year period (2018-2022) and are employed in Kampala, Wakiso, Mukono and Jinja. Graduates from UCU Campuses outside Kampala and

Mukono but employed in the areas mentioned were allowed to be part of the population. It also covered representatives of select firms where Graduates of Business Administration of Uganda Christian University in the target population are currently or have been employed.

On average, 200 students graduate with Bachelors of Business Administration (BBA) annually, while about ten (10) students graduate with Master of Business Administration (MBA) over the same period. Therefore, estimated 1000 BBA and 50 MBA students graduated over the period under consideration (2018-2022) making a population of 1,050 respondents.

### 3.4 Sample Size

The sample size for the study was determined using the Krejcie & Morgan (1970) table (Appendix I). Therefore, the sample size for this study was 285 respondents, derived from the study population of 1050. Ten (10) representatives of firms (Appendix II) took part in the study for qualitative data.

**Table 3.1: Proportional Break-down of Population and Sample Size for the study**

Category	Population	Sample Size
MBA Graduates	50	13
BBA Graduates	1000	268
<b>Total</b>	<b>1050</b>	<b>285</b>

**Source: Secondary data**

### 3.5 Sampling Techniques

The samples for the study were obtained using the non-probability sampling techniques of Snowball sampling and Convenience sampling. Convenience sampling involves selection of readily and easily available participants, while Snowball sampling entails identifying a few participants who provide information about other participants to be approached and included in the study (Taherdoost, 2016).

### **3.6 Data Sources**

Data sources used in this study were primary data and secondary data.

Primary data is the new data collected from the respondents through structured scheduled questionnaires and interviews (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007). Primary data according to Church and Collyer (2002) is information collected through personal interviews and questionnaires, with a specific intention and on a specific objective. Data from primary sources is more reliable since it is obtained from original sources and is collected specifically for the purpose of the study (Axinn & Pearce, 2006).

Secondary data is data that has already been collected for some other purpose, processed and subsequently stored (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007). Secondary data was collected from text books, dissertations, annual reports, journals, newspaper articles, bulletins, documentary and archival information. Secondary data was used because it provided comparative and contextual data. It is also unremarkable and requires fewer resources to work on (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007). The disadvantage is that any secondary data that is used would have been collected for a particular purpose and that this purpose may not be the same as that of the person using it.

### **3.7 Data Collection Instruments**

A Self-administered Questionnaire for primary data, (Appendix III) consisting of close-ended questions was used to gather numeric data from the respondents (Anderson et al., 2008). It consisted of three (03) parts namely; Bio-data Section that provided questions about respondents' background (for instance age, gender, department, etc). The second Section consisted of questions about Soft Skills while part three of the questionnaire had questions on Graduate Employability. The questions in part two and three were based on a five (05) Item

Likert Scale (Strongly Agree or SA (5), Agree or A (4), Not Sure or N (3), Disagree or D (2) and Strongly Disagree or SD (1).

Interview Guide for qualitative data (Appendix IV) was designed using open-ended questions and the researcher engaged more in a face-to-face interaction with the interviewees (Sue & Riller, 2012). The Exercise entailed verbally reading the questions to the interviewee and answers provided were recorded for later analysis.

### **3.8 Measurement of Research Variables**

The Instrument (Questionnaire) for measuring the Independent Variable (Soft Skills) and the Dependent Variable (Graduate Employability), was adapted from previous published research works of Geel (2014); Fadhil, Ismail & Alnoor (2016); Sunday (2013); and Harvey (2001). Leadership skills were measured using the parameters of responsibility, self-esteem, integrity, and honesty. Team works skills were measured using parameters of interpersonal skills, attributes of teamwork, helping others to learn and resolving differences. Analytical thinking was measured using the parameters of decision making, problem solving and foresightedness. Integrity skills were measured by intrinsic motivation and behaviour change. Creative skills were measured using the parameters of imaginary skills, knowledge skills and learning skills. Employability was measured using the parameters of shared vision, goal clarity and organizational governance.

### **3.9 Reliability and Validity Tests**

Reliability is used to measure the extent to which an instrument yields consistent/similar results after repeated applications (Rossman and Rallis, 2012). The Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was used to measure the scale of reliability for the internal consistency of the items. After the design of the tool, it was administered to a small group of respondents not part of the study to test for reliability. The results in Table 3.2 below indicated that all items were above Alpha 0.7 as required.



Validity refers to the degree to which a Concept is accurately measured in a quantitative study (Heale & Twycross, 2015). For this study, it was planned to pretest the instrument for validity. The instrument was given to experts including the supervisor for rating and fine tuning. Thereafter, the CVI was computed using the formula:

$$\text{Content Validity Index (CVI)} = \frac{\text{Number of items declared valid}}{\text{Total number of items in the instrument}}$$

**Table 3.2: Reliability and Validity Results**

Study Variable	Cronbach Alpha Coefficient	Content Validity Index
Leadership Skills	0.812	0.871
Teamwork Skills	0.885	0.912
Integrity Skills	0.901	0.901
Analytical Thinking Skills	0.863	0.822
Creativity Skills	0.824	0.997
Graduate Employability	0.944	0.888

*Source: Primary Data*

### **3.10 Data Processing and Analysis**

#### **3.10.1 Quantitative Data**

Quantitative data analysis is a systematic process that involves the gathering and evaluation of measurable and verifiable numerical data (Ali, 2021). The Questionnaires were cleaned, sorted and computed for descriptive and inferential statistics. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 25) was used to run descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. Inferential statistics in the form of Pearson correlation and regression were obtained.

#### **3.10.2 Qualitative Data**

Qualitative data analysis is the process of identifying, examining and interpreting contextual and subjective non-numerical data, and determining how the findings can answer research questions. All interviews were open-ended questions, tape-recorded with the permission of the respondents

and transcribed for analysis using NVivo package. The help of a statistician trained in the application of NVivo package was sought in the entire analysis. NVivo package helped to analyze and group results based on the emotions expressed in the texts. Ethically, it was agreed with the respondents that their identities were to remain confidential. In addition, secondary data from the documents was reviewed and used to reinforce quantitative data.

### **3.11 Ethical Considerations**

Before the study was carried out, the researcher took into account a number of ethical considerations. After approval of the Research Proposal, an introductory letter was obtained from the School of Research and Post Graduate Studies (SRPS) of Uganda Christian University, granting permission to proceed with the data collection Exercise. The letter clearly indicated that the research was conducted purely for academic purposes only. Consent of every respondent was sought. The Questionnaires further indicated that the study was solely for academic purposes and that the responses were to be treated with utmost confidentiality (Lwanga, 2018).

### **3.12 Summary**

In this Study, a Cross-Sectional Survey Design was used to gather data from a representative sample of 295 respondents. The design was supported by both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The non-probability sampling techniques of snowballing and convenience sampling were used, because of convenience, time and cost factors, as well as the need to conform to the study objectives. Both primary and secondary data sources were used for the study, utilizing the data collection instruments of Questionnaires and Interview Guides. The Instrument (Questionnaire) for measuring the Soft Skills and Graduate employability, was adapted from the research works of Geel (2014); Fadhil, Ismail & Alnoor (2016); Sunday (2013); and Harvey (2001).

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

In this Chapter, the empirical results of this study are presented, analyzed and discussed. The presented results include demographic results, correlations and regression analysis.

The study objectives were:

1. To examine the relationship between Leadership skills and Graduate Employability.
2. To evaluate the relationship between Teamwork skills and Graduate Employability.
3. To establish the relationship between Integrity skills and Graduate employability.
4. To determine the relationship between Analytical Thinking skills and Graduate Employability.
5. To determine the relationship between Creativity skills and Graduate Employability.

#### **4.1. Response Rate**

The sample size was 285 respondents and all these respondents were identified and each of them received a Questionnaire. 207 Questionnaires were received back duly filled in, making a response rate of 72.6 percent.

#### **4.2. Background Information**

This Section presents, analyzes, and discusses the background information of the respondents in order to provide a clear understanding of their profiles.

**Table 3.1: Gender of Respondents**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	153	73.9
Female	54	26.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: Primary Data*

Table 4.1 indicates that the total respondents were 207 and of these, 73.9 percent were male and 26.1 percent were female. This shows that both males and females participated in the study and therefore, there was no gender bias in the study.

**Table 4.2: Positions Currently Held by Respondents**

<b>Position Currently Held</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Top Management	17	8.2
Middle Management	108	52.2
Junior Staff	82	39.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: Primary Data*

Table 4.2 shows that the respondents were holding various positions of responsibility. The majority of the respondents (52.2 percent) were in Middle Management and 8.2 percent were Top Managers. In addition, 39.6 percent were Junior Staff and also University Graduates. This implies that all respondents were well educated, had the capacity to self-administer the Questionnaires and were expected to be well knowledgeable to provide credible answers. Furthermore, all the respondents were taught under the same University Curriculum that exposed them to similar Soft Skills. Therefore, the respondents could ably assess how the Soft Skills acquired at the University relate to their employability.

**Table 5.3: Age of Respondents**

<b>Age (Years)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
21 – 30 years	123	59.4
31 – 40 years	79	38.2
41 – 50 years	5	2.4
Above 50 years	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: Primary data*

The results in Table 4.3 indicate that the majority of the respondents were in the youth age bracket (59.4 percent) and much more concerned with employability issues. Cognizant of the fact that the youth are the majority in Uganda and most affected by unemployment, the information they presented provided a blueprint for solutions to the challenge of youth unemployment in the Country.

**Table 6.4: Years of Formal Employment Since Graduating from UCU**

<b>Years of Formal Employment</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Less than 1 year	41	19.8
1 – 3 years	91	44.0
4 - 6 years	75	36.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: Primary data*

Table 4.4 results show that the majority of respondents have been working for at least three (03) years and are therefore expected to gauge how the Soft Skills acquired at University have and continue to relate and enhance their employability.

### 4.3 Inferential Analysis

Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was used in this Research to measure the strength of the correlation between the Soft Skills and Graduate Employability.

**Table 7.5: Pearson Correlations Between Study Variables including Their Descriptive Statistics**

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Leadership Skills	4.64	.557	1					
2. Teamwork Skills	4.70	.668	.759**	1				
3. Integrity Skills	3.47	.549	.644**	.824**	1			
4. Analytical Thinking Skills	3.81	.801	.621**	.577**	.448**	1		
5. Creativity Skills	4.78	.623	.558**	.771**	.602**	.811**	1	
6. Graduate Employability	4.55	.779	.604**	.785**	.688**	.644**	.801**	1

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

The descriptive statistics (mean score,) for all the Soft Skills shows that Creativity has the highest Mean of 4.78, which indicates the most important Soft Skill for employment by respondents while Integrity skills scored the lowest Mean of 3.47, which indicates it as the least important Soft Skill for employment by respondents. However, according to Norshima, Binti and Belinda (2022), a Mean score of 3.47 is considered as High in the Mean Score Table (Appendix V). In that regard therefore, the respondents agree that Integrity skills are equally important for employment but are the least important among the five (05) examined Soft Skills. Furthermore, the results indicate that all the five (05) Soft Skills have higher positive  $r$  value, implying that all the Soft Skills are correlated to each other and therefore, putting focus on any one of these skills will enhance the other Soft Skills on the list.

### 4.4 Results for Each Study Objective

The results are presented for each study objective in this Section.

#### **4.4.1 Objective 1: To Examine the Relationship Between Leadership Skills and Graduate Employability**

The results of the Pearson's correlation in Table 4.5 indicate a positive significant relationship between Leadership skills and Graduate Employability ( $r = .604^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This suggests that acquiring Leadership skills while at the University positively influences Graduate Employability. This relationship is in line with the scholarly works of Norshima et al (2022) who found out that Leadership skills have a high influence for Employability, especially among Graduates in Malaysia. The study of Behle (2020) of the Banking Industry in Turkey recognized the contribution of Leadership skills to the Bank Industry results.

*In support of the positive and significant relationship, interview participants submitted that Leadership skills when developed at the University enhance the chances for employability.*

**Respondent C:** *I have been the CEO of this Organization for the last three (03) years and I have noticed that graduate recruits who join us with Leadership skills have continued with us. Those without Leadership skills have failed to keep up here and they leave the Company.*

**Respondent F:** *This Organization has employed some Graduates from UCU for some years now. My observation is that most of UCU students acquire some Soft Skills which have helped them to get employed in this Company. The need for Leadership skills is very essential in this Company and during interviews we probe much into Leadership skills. The Graduate has to prove to us that he has been exposed to Leadership skills. For this, we expect the Graduate to show proof that he acquired the feel of Leadership skills from his involvement in University Groups by showing us the Leadership Certificates acquired at the University in leadership positions such as a member of the University Students' Guild and other Clubs, Associations, etc. This Organization strongly believes in Soft Skills while recruiting Graduates.*

#### **4.4.2 Objective 2: To Evaluate the Relationship Between Teamwork Skills and Graduate Employability**

Table 4.5 indicates that Teamwork skills significantly and positively correlate with Graduate Employability ( $r = .785^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This means that Teamwork skills are among the critical skills that can enhance Graduate Employability. The need for this skill is essential as most Industry

workers operate in groups/teams. When employees collaborate to achieve a common goal, they use a combination of talents, attributes, methods, and processes. Therefore, Teamwork skills are necessary for employability. Developing Teamwork skills while at the University would be helpful for Graduate Employability. This finding was supported by Teak (2020) who found out that in the Medical Profession, Teamwork is of utmost necessity and is an important requirement for employability. Schal (2012) found out that for tasks where the output is a result of many participants, the need for Teamwork becomes inevitable. At the University, Teamwork should be well practiced and exhibited in various group activities, both official and unofficial.

*The importance of teamwork skills in enhancing graduate employability was supported by most of the managers interviewed:*

**Respondent A:** *When students join this Company for internship work placement, we put them in different Departments and Groups under the supervision of our Staff. The nature of our Company and its products requires a lot of Teamwork. Therefore, teams are essential and for that reason, we try to identify students on placement who have Teamwork skills for employment after graduation.*

#### **4.4.3 Objective 3: To Establish the Relationship Between Integrity Skills and Graduate Employability**

Table 4.5 Results indicate that there is a positive and significant relationship between Integrity skills and Graduate Employability ( $r = .688^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.1$ ). In this case, Integrity is regarded as a function of Graduate Employability and Organizations will try to identify it among Graduates for employability purposes.

As graduate employees are expected to work at some higher levels in Organizations, the need for individual Integrity skills is essential. As Morris (2021) noted, Organizations worldwide are interested in employing those recruits with ready developed Integrity skills and therefore, this supports the findings of this study. Lucas (2000) in his study of Sales people found out that firms were more interested in Integrity skills than even educational qualifications, which supports this study.



As Sales people carry a Company's brand image in society, their integrity becomes a reflection of the Company's image. Therefore, for image protection, employers target to employ Staff with outstanding integrity.

*The respondents interviewed strongly indicated that the survival of a Company is at stake when Integrity skills are neglected in the process of recruiting Graduates for employment. They all agreed that it is Integrity that supports the firm to be competitive and survive.*

**Respondent F:** *What I have noticed about UCU Graduates we offer employment here is that they display high levels of Integrity. We normally put them in positions that require honesty, truth and morals that the Company cherishes. You cannot work in this Company if your Integrity is questionable. We terminate your employment with us as soon as we get convinced that your Integrity is questionable. This is why we try to recruit Graduates who show that they have a history full of Integrity. This skill is very important for all Organizations and in these times of pervasive corruption, the skill is very crucial for employability.*

#### **4.4.4 Objective 4: To Determine the Relationship Between Analytical Thinking Skills and Graduate Employability**

Table 4.5 indicates that the relationship between Analytical Thinking and Graduate Employability is positive and significant ( $r = .644^{**}$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Organizations are looking for workers who can move around independently and make their own timely and sound decisions. Employers make it essential for their employees to have higher Analytical Thinking skills so that they can critically analyze a problem and proceed further in evaluating the problem and coming up with workable solutions. Cadogt (2003) found out that in Austria, the majority of employers tested Analytical Thinking Skills when recruiting Graduates. Nickson et al (2012) studied global competitiveness and found that most prosperous global firms emphasized Analytical Thinking in their recruitment Policies and during In-house Training Programmes, which is in line with the findings of this study.

*The respondents interviewed supported the positive and significant relationship between Analytical Thinking and Graduate Employability.*

**Respondent H:** *For Graduate employment, one cannot overlook Analytical Thinking as the recruits are expected to start at higher levels of responsibility in the Organization.*

*They have to come in with sound Analytical skills to start off with solving problems, make decisions and get involved in deep analysis of issues/challenges. I am sure at University, students are exposed to Case Studies material, which introduces them to Analytical Thinking. When we conduct interviews for Graduates, we subject them to a Case that reveals their Analytical skills.*

**Respondent D:** *In this firm, you cannot perform your duties without well-developed Analytical Thinking. You will keep asking for help from workmates. You know this Company requires the majority of Staff to work in the field and in most cases on individual basis. When in the field, you have to solve customers' problems which calls for your Analytical Thinking. So, the bottom-line is that Graduate Employability requires Analytical Thinking.*

#### **4.4.5. Objective 5: To Determine the Relationship Between Creativity Skills and Graduate Employability**

The findings in Table 4.5 indicate that Creativity and Graduate Employability have a positive and significant relationship ( $r = .801^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.1$ ). In this continuously changing world, the need for creative employees becomes essential in order to stay competitive in global and domestic marketplaces. Therefore, Organizations would be more interested in employing Graduates who do not hold to the status quo forever without new ideas and solutions. This finding is supported by the International Business Machines Corporation (IBM) Survey of 1500 CEOs, which indicates that Creativity is the number one leadership competency (Dyer, et al, 2012). Marshall (2019) found out that most of the long-time established brands survived through changing times because they were very keen on Creativity skills and avoided over-reliance on routine dependency.

*Creativity skills were supported to be important in Graduate Employability*

**Respondent I:** *I have been around for some years and have seen UCU Graduates coming in the Organization. It is hard to believe but most of them come in when they already have the basic Creativity skills which has greatly enhanced their performance. I have a friend Manager in another Company who told me that if he wants a Graduate with Creativity skills, he prefers one from UCU. For any Organization to compete favourably in the Market, it requires Graduates with Creativity skills and as I say, you cannot separate Creativity skills from Graduate Employability.*

**Respondent D:** *I cannot imagine recruiting a Graduate who has no Creativity skills. Graduates are expected to develop Creativity skills while at University as most employers look for them during Interviews. Graduate Employability is linked to Creativity skills as a strategy for some Companies to remain competitive.*

#### 4.6 Multi Regression Analysis

The hierarchical regression explores the predictive power of Independent Variables on the Dependent Variable. Therefore, the contribution of each Soft Skill to the Dependent Variable is ascertained.

**Table 8.6: Multi Regression Results**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.557	1.168		8.921	.000
	Leadership skills	.441	.042	.534	9.112	.001
	Teamwork skills	.359	.057	.363	7.342	.000
	Integrity skills	.274	.033	.277	8.113	.000
	Analytical thinking skills	.531	.064	.451	6.553	.003
	Creativity skills	.493	.046	.551	5.771	.000

**R=.673, R Square =.453, Adjusted R Square=.449, Std Error of the Estimate =.34196, sig=.000**

Dependent Variable: Graduate Employability

Results in Table 4.6 show that the predictors can explain 44.9 percent of the Variance in Graduate Employability (Adjusted R Square = .449). The results further indicate that Creativity skills are better predictors of Graduate Employability (Beta = .551 Sig,  $p < .01$ ), followed by Leadership skills (Beta = .534, Sig,  $p < .01$ ) and then Analytical Thinking skills (Beta = .451 Sig,  $p < .01$ ). Teamwork and Integrity were also significant with lower Variances in predicting Graduate Employability, that is (Beta = .363 Sig,  $p < .01$ ) and (Beta = .277 Sig,  $p < .01$ ), respectively. This therefore, implies that Organizations should focus and demand all the five (05) Soft skills during Recruitment Exercises, with more emphasis on Creativity and Leadership

skills. These results were supported by previous Scholars such as Geel, (2014); Fadhil *et al*, (2016) and Rothwell & Arnold (2017), whose findings indicated that the same Soft Skills were positive and significant in explaining Graduate Employability, though at different levels of Beta. The differences in the Beta results may be explained by the different geographical and economic situations in which each study was done.

The level of predictability of each dimension is likely to differ from Organization to Organization depending on the Soft Skills the Organization focuses on. For instance, Richman (1999) noted that Service Industries were more interested in Creativity skills. This was so because of the need to deal with customers directly and yet every customer would have different issues to solve.

#### **4.6 Summary**

In the study, both males and females participated in the study, implying there was no gender bias. Majority of the respondents were youth in the age bracket of 21-30 years and in Middle Management.

In the inferential analysis, the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient indicated that Creativity was the most valued skill by respondents, followed by Teamwork and Leadership skills. The least valued skill was Integrity, though all the skills had a positive and significant relationship with Graduate Employability. On the other hand, regression analysis indicated that Creativity skills were better predictors of Graduate Employability, followed by Leadership skills and Analytical Thinking skills.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This Chapter provides the discussion of the findings and the recommendations based on the findings and consistent with the statement of the problem, purpose of the study and study questions. The problem under investigation was how Graduate Employability is related and enhanced by Soft Skills. Therefore, the purpose of the study was to establish the relationship between Soft Skills and Graduate Employability.

The findings from the study indicated that there was a relationship between Soft Skills and Graduate Employability. Each of the five (05) Soft skills namely; Leadership skills, Teamwork skills, Integrity skills, Analytical Thinking skills and Creativity skills had positive and significant relationships with Graduate Employability.

#### **5.2 Discussion of the Results**

The study set out to answer the following Research Questions:

1. What is the relationship between Leadership skills and Graduate Employability?
2. What is the relationship between Teamwork skills and Graduate Employability?
3. What is the relationship between Integrity skills and Graduate Employability?
4. What is the relationship between Analytical Thinking skills and Graduate Employability?
5. What is the relationship between Creativity skills and Graduate Employability?

From the results, Leadership skills and Graduate Employability were found to have positive and significant relationship ( $r = .604^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$  and  $b = .534$ ). University students who develop Leadership skills, like being the University Guild President or a Member of the Guild Council

would enhance their employability. Gideon (2015) found out that University students in Ghana who got involved in University Leadership Programmes and so developed their leadership skills early were preferred for employment by outstanding Industries like Oil Companies in Ghana.

As most Organizations work in groups (Basiem 2011), there is need for Staff to comfortably work together on various Projects. The results indicated that Teamwork skills and Graduate Employability have positive and significant relationship ( $r = .785^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$  and  $b = .363$ ). While at the University, students establish many different groups for different objectives and each one is expected to belong to some of these groups. Membership to such groups enhances a student's capacity to build the basic Teamwork skills. Penncook *et al*, (2021) followed the career of many students who participated in University Games and among the findings was that those who were Club Members would be employed much earlier as they had the basics for Teamwork skills.

From the results, there is a positive and significant relationship between Integrity skills and Graduate Employability ( $r = .688^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.1$ ; and  $b = .277$ ). This means that a Professional is expected to execute his tasks adequately, carefully and responsibly, taking into account all relevant interests such as incorruptibility, honesty, impartiality and accountability. University Students are expected to develop such morals and behaviours in order to be Professionals in their areas of discipline. No employer would like to recruit a Graduate who lacks Integrity. Nabital (2020) in his study on recruitment of Graduates in South Africa found out that employers have devised numerous ways to probe for Integrity as an important requirement for employability.

The relationship between Analytical Thinking skills and Graduate Employability was positive and significant ( $r = .644^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.1$  and  $b = .451$ ). In this case, Graduates with Analytical skills are said to be able to identify a problem, define the problem, establish the cause and provide appropriate solutions. It is in order to say that there is no Organization without challenges that need solutions and therefore, firms would prefer to employ Graduates who have developed the

capacity to solve challenges. It is expected that University students who are in leadership positions engage in solving problems. Easton (2001) found out that one of the criteria for consideration of employment in engineering firms is Analytical Thinking skills. Analytical Thinking was also found to be important in marketing firms where their marketing personnel work in the field, away from the Head Office and therefore the need to make decisions on their own while out there is paramount (Robertson, 2021).

The relationship between Creativity skills and Graduate Employability was found to be positive and significant ( $r = .801^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.1$ ; and  $b = .551$ ). Creativity skills enhance the capacity to handle situations of uncertainty, with appropriate judgments leading to innovations. It develops the capacity to understand the environment and its changing behaviours in order to develop solutions. Peters (2000) found out that in Canada, most Companies have stood the test of time because of their ability to be creative in difficult times. To build capacity of handling any challenge, it becomes a necessity for firms to demand Graduates with Creative skills.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The results have indicated that Graduate Employment is strongly influenced and/or dependent on Soft Skills and in the case of this study they include; Leadership skills, Teamwork skills, Integrity skills, Analytical Thinking skills and Creativity skills. While all the Soft Skills under study were important, those with higher Variances in predicting employability were Creativity skills and Leadership skills. The two (02) skills had the highest predictive powers on Graduate Employability and therefore confirm that they are essential skills to be developed. The correlation results confirm the need to develop Soft Skills at Universities. The skills are useful at every workplace and are indicators that the employee has the capacity to contribute positively to the development of the Organization. While Leadership skills can be imitated to a certain extent, this is not the case with Creativity skills and therefore Leaders with Creativity skills create competitive advantage for the Organization.

## **5.4 Recommendations**

Based on the study outcomes, the following are recommended:

1. Universities should encourage the formation of many University Clubs, Societies and other acceptable Groups in which students are exposed to practical development of Soft Skills. It should be a requirement for every student to show membership to at least two (02) Clubs/Society/Group in the University.
2. Students' Clubs or any other Groups should have a Staff Member as the Patron. This will enable the Staff to impart Soft Skills to the Members.
3. Universities place a greater emphasis on developing Soft Skills by making sure that the meaning of Soft Skills is understood by Lecturers and how these skills can be taught through teaching and learning processes at the University.
4. Universities should consider having a Course Unit specifically for teaching Soft Skills, in order to meet employers' needs, apart from teaching them integrated in existing Courses.
5. To give this kind of training, Lecturers should be developed in teaching Soft Skills and then, they can develop the students. Organizing Guest Speakers from Industries should be encouraged.
6. Develop career specific Course Modules by embedding the most important Soft Skills in their respective Course Units. For example, if the most important Soft Skills for Marketing are Analytical Thinking, Integrity and Creativity skills, then these skills should be embedded in Marketing Course Units and the Lecturers are supposed to discuss them with students. This will mean identifying those Soft Skills that are very relevant to the Profession such as Accounting, Management, Human Resource, Operations and others, so that those relevant Soft Skills are taught in their respective Disciplines.



## **5.5 Further Studies**

It is suggested that further studies on the matter under investigation could entail:

1. Other Scholars researching on the Soft Skills which this study did not include.
2. Another study to look at any other University apart from UCU.
3. Another study to look at more than one (01) University and use probability sampling techniques for the study.
4. Another study to look at the different levels of Soft Skills attained by UCU students and being employed at the workplace.
5. Another study to examine the lecturers' level of Soft Skills development/practices

## **5.6 Limitations**

Not all respondents returned the Questionnaires but encouraged the majority to respond. Individual and Organizations' identities were paramount for the study. However, items on identity were removed from the Questionnaire in order to take into account the confidentiality, privacy, trust and ethical imperatives.

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**APPENDIX I**  
**KREJCIE AND MORGAN MATHEMATICAL TABLE 1970**

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	246
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	351
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	181	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	180	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	190	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	200	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	210	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	373
65	56	220	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	230	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	240	144	550	225	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	250	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	260	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	270	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	256	2600	335	100000	384

N= Population

S= Sample

**APPENDIX II**  
**QUALITATIVE DATA RESPONDENTS: THE ORGANIZATIONS**

Organization	Number of respondents
1. Centenary Bank	2
2. Total Energies	1
3. Stabex International	1
4. Absa Bank	2
5. Uganda Coffee Dev't Authority	1
6. Speke Hotel	2
7. Uganda Bata Shoe Company	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>

**APPENDIX III**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EVALUATION OF SOFT SKILLS AND EMPLOYABILITY OF  
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION GRADUATES OF UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY FOR  
THE PERIOD 2018-2022**

## **GRADUATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

I am OUMO ROBERT, Reg No: J21M15/008 Access No: A91875, a final year student of the Master of Business Administration (MBA) from Uganda Christian University. This survey is part of the Thesis titled “Soft Skills and Employability of Business Administration Graduates of Uganda Christian University”, which is a requirement for the award of Master of Business Administration from Uganda Christian University. It is for this reason that I request for your support and positive feedback in answering the questionnaire. I guarantee that the information you provide will be used only for academic purposes and your identity will never be revealed.

### **SECTION A: General Information/Bio Data**

#### 1. Gender Status

<b>Gender Status</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Tick	1	2

#### 2. Position currently held by respondent

<b>Current Position</b>	<b>Top Management</b>	<b>Middle Management</b>	<b>Junior Staff</b>
Tick	1	2	3

#### 3. Age of the Respondent

<b>Age (years)</b>	<b>21-30</b>	<b>31-40</b>	<b>41-50</b>	<b>Above 50</b>
Tick	1	2	3	4

#### 4. Years of formal employment since graduating from UCU

<b>Years working</b>	<b>Less than 1 year</b>	<b>1-3 years</b>	<b>4-6 years</b>
Tick	1	2	3



## SECTION B: Soft Skills

Please rate on a scale of 1-5, the level of skills you acquired from Uganda Christian University and found useful in your current job, as indicated below:

**5 = Strongly agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree**

Code	Item	5	4	3	2	1
	<b>Leadership Skills</b>					
L1	Motivating a team to meet set deadlines.					
L2	Making decisions and seeing them through.					
L3	Conflict resolution in team.					
L4	Taking the initiative.					
L5	Being flexible - prepared to adapt goals in the light of changing situations.					
L6	Accepting responsibility for mistakes.					
	<b>Team work Skills</b>					
T1	Working cooperatively towards a common goal.					
T2	Taking a share of responsibility.					
T3	Listening to opinions of others.					
T4	Communicating with team members.					
T5	Sharing your ideas with team members.					
T6	Avoiding conflict in the team.					
T7	Accepting and learning from constructive criticism.					
	<b>Integrity Skills</b>					
IN1	Being transparent.					
IN2	Being trustworthy.					
IN3	Being consistent.					
IN4	Being reliable.					

IN5	Being compassionate.					
IN6	Being ethical.					
IN7	Fidelity to organizational culture, policies and philosophies of leaders.					
	<b>Analytical Thinking Skills</b>					
AN1	Organizing data systematically.					
AN2	Analyzing the factors involved in a problem.					
AN3	Being able to identify the key factors involved in a problem.					
AN4	Clarifying the nature of a problem before deciding action.					
AN5	Recognizing inconsistencies in reasoning.					
AN6	Using initiative in generating alternative solutions to a problem.					
	<b>Creativity Skills</b>					
C1	Making choices based on your own judgment.					
C2	Taking the opportunity to learn new skills.					
C3	Having enthusiasm to achieve your goals.					
C4	Paying attention to quality in all your work.					

### Section C: Graduate Employability

Please rate on a scale of 1-5, your employability prospects, as indicated below:

**5 = Strongly agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree**

Code	Item	5	4	3	2	1
	<b>Ability to Move into Employment</b>					

AE 1	Did you have the ability to move into employment?					
AE 2	Did the soft skills enhance your employability?					
AE 3	Do you have any prior work experience?					
	<b>Readiness to Move into Employment</b>					
RE 1	After graduating from UCU, did you feel prepared enough to move into the Workplace?					
RE 2	Did your soft skills create readiness to obtain employment?					
RE 3	Did your education prepare you for the Workplace?					
RE 4	Was practical training a requirement for completion of your degree?					
	<b>Employer's Attitude Towards Your Skills</b>					
EA1	Did the Soft skills help improve your attitude towards work?					
EA2	Did the Soft skills change your attitude?					
EA3	Did you develop this attitude at University?					
EA4	Does your employer motivate you to work?					

**Thank you for sparing time to participate in this survey and your invaluable contribution is highly appreciated.**

The information obtained from your responses shall be treated with utmost confidentiality and only used for the intended purposes. I look forward to your continued co-operation in the future.

#### **APPENDIX IV**

**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS TO EVALUATE THE SOFT SKILLS AND  
EMPLOYABILITY OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION GRADUATES OF UGANDA  
CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY FOR THE PERIOD 2018-2021**

**About the Respondent**

- a. Name (Optional): .....
- b. Title/Position/Designation: .....
- c. Organization: .....
- d. Sex: .....
- e. Date: .....
- f. Time: .....

**Questions**

- 1. Has your Organization recruited Graduates of Business Administration from Uganda Christian University?
- 2. How are the graduates of Business Administration from Uganda Christian University employed by your Organization performing?
- 3. What is your assessment of their Soft Skills listed below?
  - a. Leadership
  - b. Integrity

- c. Teamwork
  - d. Creativity
  - e. Analytical Thinking
4. Do the Graduates have the ability to use the soft Skills?
  5. Do you think the Graduates you employ are well equipped for the Workplace?
  6. If no, what in your opinion are the Graduates lacking with respect to preparedness for the Workplace?
  7. Did you find them ready with Soft Skills to work?
  8. In your opinion, what other Soft Skills should be incorporated in the University Curricula?
  9. What do you expect from a newly recruited Graduate?
  10. Did you have to train them on job?

## APPENDIX V

### MEAN SCORES AND LEVEL

<u>Mean Score</u>	<u>LEVEL (Frequency/Agreement)</u>
1.00 – 1.80	Very low (Never/Strongly Disagree)
1.81 – 2.60	Low (Rarely/Disagree)
2.61 – 3.20	Medium (Sometimes/Neutral)
3.21 – 4.20	High (Often/Agree)
4.21 – 5.00	Very High (Always/ Strongly Agree)

Source: Norshima B, Nur Binti and Belinda M (2022)