TECHNICAL EDUCATION VOCATIONAL AND ENTREPRENUERSHIP TRAINING AUTHORITY

GRADUATE TRACER STUDY REPORT

Tracing Graduate Outcomes in Zambia's TEVET Sector: A Pilot Study on Employability and Curriculum Relevance

DECEMBER 31, 2024

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Executive Summary

Background

The Technical Education, Vocational, and Entrepreneurship Training (TEVET) sector in Zambia plays a pivotal role in equipping the workforce with technical skills to drive socio-economic development. As a regulatory body, the Technical Education, Vocational, and Entrepreneurship Training (TEVETA) ensures that training programmes align with labour market demands. This pilot Graduate Tracer Study (GTS) focused on graduates from the General Agriculture programme for the years 2021–2023 to evaluate employability outcomes and the relevance of training in achieving Zambia's Vision 2030 and Eighth National Development Plan (8NDP).

Problem Statement

Despite over two decades of TEVET implementation, there is limited data on the employment outcomes and career trajectories of TEVET graduates. This gap hinders evidence-based policy and curriculum improvements necessary to enhance the sector's effectiveness. The study addressed this gap by examining employment rates, relevance of training, and factors influencing the employability of General Agriculture graduates. It also laid a foundation for future studies.

Methods

The study was mainly quantitative with some qualitative components. It combined quantitative data collected from 283 graduates through a structured questionnaire with qualitative insights from thematic analysis of open-ended responses in the same questionnaire. Stratified random sampling was used to ensure representative data from three TEVET institutions. Quantitative data focused on employment rates, income levels, and relevance of training, while qualitative analysis explored graduate perceptions and systemic barriers to employability.

Findings

The Graduate Tracer Study revealed significant insights into the employment outcomes and training relevance for General Agriculture graduates from Zambia's TEVET sector. Employment rates among graduates were below 50 percent, with 35.2 percent of those employed being engaged in self-employment. Male graduates fared better in securing employment compared to their female counterparts, highlighting persistent gender disparities in the job market. Additionally, graduates with higher qualifications demonstrated better employability outcomes and shorter job search periods than those with lower qualifications.

Most of the employed graduates (88 percent) found their training relevant to their current roles, though about 20 percent emphasized the need for curricula updates to reflect modern agricultural technologies and labour market demands. Despite positive perceptions of technical training, qualitative responses indicated gaps in practical exposure and soft skills, which are crucial for navigating dynamic work environments.

Income levels among graduates were generally low, with nearly half of them earning below the national average salary. Gender disparities were evident, as male graduates were more likely to occupy higher-paying roles than their female peers. Structural barriers, including limited access to capital and societal expectations, disproportionately impacted female graduates and hindered broader employment opportunities.

Graduates expressed high levels of satisfaction with their training, with many of them feeling prepared for the job market. However, some pointed to the need for improved industry engagement and greater emphasis on entrepreneurial development to bridge the gap between training and employment opportunities.

Recommendations

To address the challenges identified in the pilot Graduate Tracer Study and enhance the impact of the TEVET sector on graduate employability and national development, several key recommendations were proposed.

First, there was a need to ensure that General Agriculture curricula remained relevant to evolving industry demands. An update to the curriculum could incorporate advancements in modern farming technologies, sustainable agricultural practices, and business management skills. Such alignment would better equip graduates with the competencies needed to thrive in a dynamic labour market.

Second, targeted support for self-employment was crucial. Many graduates faced barriers such as limited access to capital and resources. Establishing mechanisms like low-interest loans, grants, and mentorship programs would enable graduates to pursue entrepreneurship. Workshops on business planning, marketing, and financial management could also be integrated into training programs to enhance entrepreneurial capacity.

Gender disparities in employability needed to be addressed through deliberate policies and programmes. Flexible work arrangements, childcare support, and leadership development initiatives could help women overcome societal and structural barriers. Additionally, outreach programmes and mentorship opportunities to promote gender equity, empowering female graduates to compete effectively in the job market were necessary.

Strengthened partnerships between TEVET institutions and industry stakeholders were vital. Such collaborations could provide opportunities for internships, job placements, and exposure to real-world work environments. Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with businesses could ensure that training programs were tailored to meet the specific needs of employers.

Finally, institutionalizing graduate tracer studies will allow for continuous monitoring of employment outcomes and training relevance. Regular studies will provide essential data to inform policy and curriculum development, ensuring that the TEVET sector remains responsive to labour market demands and the aspirations of graduates.

Foreword

The Technical Education, Vocational, and Entrepreneurship Training (TEVET) sector is at the heart of Zambia's efforts to foster a skilled and adaptable workforce capable of driving the nation's socio-economic transformation. With its vital role in equipping learners with technical, vocational, and entrepreneurial skills, the TEVET sector aligns closely with Zambia's Vision 2030, which seeks to position the country as a prosperous middle-income economy. EVET contributes directly to the goals outlined in the Eighth National Development Plan (8NDP), which prioritizes skills development in sectors such as agriculture, mining, manufacturing, and tourism.

As the regulator of the TEVET system, the Technical Education, Vocational, and Entrepreneurship Training Authority (TEVETA) is committed to ensuring that training programs not only meet the demands of the labour market but also empower graduates with the tools necessary for self-employment and entrepreneurship. The Graduate Tracer Study (GTS) presented in this report represents a critical step in achieving this goal by providing a comprehensive assessment of the employability and relevance of training for graduates in the General Agriculture program.

This study offers valuable insights into the outcomes of TEVET training, highlighting successes while identifying areas for improvement. It underscores the importance of aligning training programs with current and emerging industry demands, enhancing access to resources for self-employment, and addressing barriers to employment, particularly for women and graduates in rural areas. By integrating both quantitative and qualitative data, the study presents a holistic view of the challenges and opportunities within the TEVET sector.

The findings and recommendations in this report will inform the strategies needed to strengthen the sector's contribution to Zambia's socio-economic development. They will guide policymakers, educators, and stakeholders in designing interventions that ensure TEVET graduates are not only employable but also equipped to thrive in an ever-changing world.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the graduates who participated in this study, the institutions that facilitated data collection, and the stakeholders who provided valuable insights. I also commend the research team for their dedication and professionalism in conducting this important study.

As we look to the future, let us remain steadfast in our shared vision of a robust TEVET sector that empowers individuals, drives economic growth, and builds a resilient nation. Together, we can create opportunities for all and realize Zambia's aspirations for a prosperous and inclusive society.

Cleophas Takaiza
Director General
Technical Education, Vocational, and Entrepreneurship Training Authority

Acknowledgements

This report is the culmination of collaborative efforts by a dedicated team of researchers, stakeholders, and institutions committed to advancing the TEVET sector in Zambia. We express our sincere gratitude to the graduates of the General Agriculture program who generously shared their experiences and insights, forming the foundation of this study.

Special thanks go to the management and staff of the participating TEVET institutions for their invaluable support during data collection. We also acknowledge the Zambia Revenue Authority for providing access to key data sets essential to this research.

I am deeply grateful to the leadership of the Technical Education, Vocational, and Entrepreneurship Training Authority (TEVETA) for their invaluable guidance and visionary support. I also extend my heartfelt appreciation to the research team for their unwavering commitment to quality and excellence: Mr. Justine Kimena, Manager of Research and Project Lead; Mr. Evans Bindabinda, Lead Researcher; Mrs. Chansa Nachilima Ochola, Lead Researcher; and Mr. Ackim Kalikeka, Lead Researcher.

Your contributions have been instrumental in furthering the mission of developing a skilled and employable workforce in Zambia.

Phylis Kasonkomona
Director – Development and Research
Technical Education, Vocational, and Entrepreneurship Training Authority

Chapter One: Introduction

Background

Technical and vocational training in Zambia has a long history, dating back to the pre-independence era. Over time, this training landscape has evolved to incorporate entrepreneurial skills alongside traditional technical and vocational disciplines. A significant milestone was the establishment of TEVETA in 1998 to regulate and coordinate the TEVET sector.

Aligned with Zambia's Vision 2030, which aspires to transform the country into a middle-income economy by 2030, the Eighth National Development Plan (8NDP) identifies manufacturing, mining, agriculture, and tourism as priority sectors for skills development (MoF, 2023). As the regulator, TEVETA plays a crucial role in ensuring that the TEVET curriculum aligns with labour market demands while fostering self-employment and wealth creation. After over 25 years of implementation, it is essential to evaluate the impact of TEVET programs on national development and individual livelihoods through structured and evidence-based approaches.

Graduate Tracer Studies (GTS) are a proven method for assessing the impact of educational programmes on graduate outcomes. These studies evaluate aspects such as employability, relevance of training to the labour market, and career trajectories. While GTS have been conducted successfully in Zambia—for example, the University of Zambia's study on postgraduate education by distance learning (Manchishi, etal., 2022)—there remains a significant gap in literature concerning the outcomes of TEVET graduates. This study sook to address this gap by assessing the employability of TEVET graduates and the relevance of their training to Zambia’s labour market.

Theoretical Framework

This study was grounded in two interrelated theories: Human Capital Theory and the Capability Approach. Together, these frameworks provided a comprehensive lens for examining the relationship between education, skills development, and employability in the context of Zambia’s TEVET sector.

Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory (HCT) posits that education and training are investments that enhance an individual's productivity, employability, and earnings potential (Becker, 1964). The skills and knowledge acquired through education function as capital, akin to physical assets, by increasing the efficiency and output of labour.

In the context of TEVET, this theory suggests that technical and vocational training equips graduates with the competencies required by the labour market, giving them a competitive edge in securing employment or pursuing entrepreneurial ventures. This perspective underpins the study’s focus on assessing the alignment between TEVET programs and job market demands.

However, Human Capital Theory has been critiqued for its narrow emphasis on economic returns, often neglecting broader dimensions such as job satisfaction, career progression, and the social value of education (Brown, Green, & Lauder, 2001).

Capability Approach

To address the limitations of Human Capital Theory, this study integrated Amartya Sen's Capability Approach (CA). This framework shifts the focus from economic outcomes to the opportunities (capabilities) that individuals must pursue lives they value (Sen, 1999). The Capability Approach emphasizes the qualitative aspects of education, such as its role in expanding individuals' choices, fostering meaningful work, and enabling societal contributions.

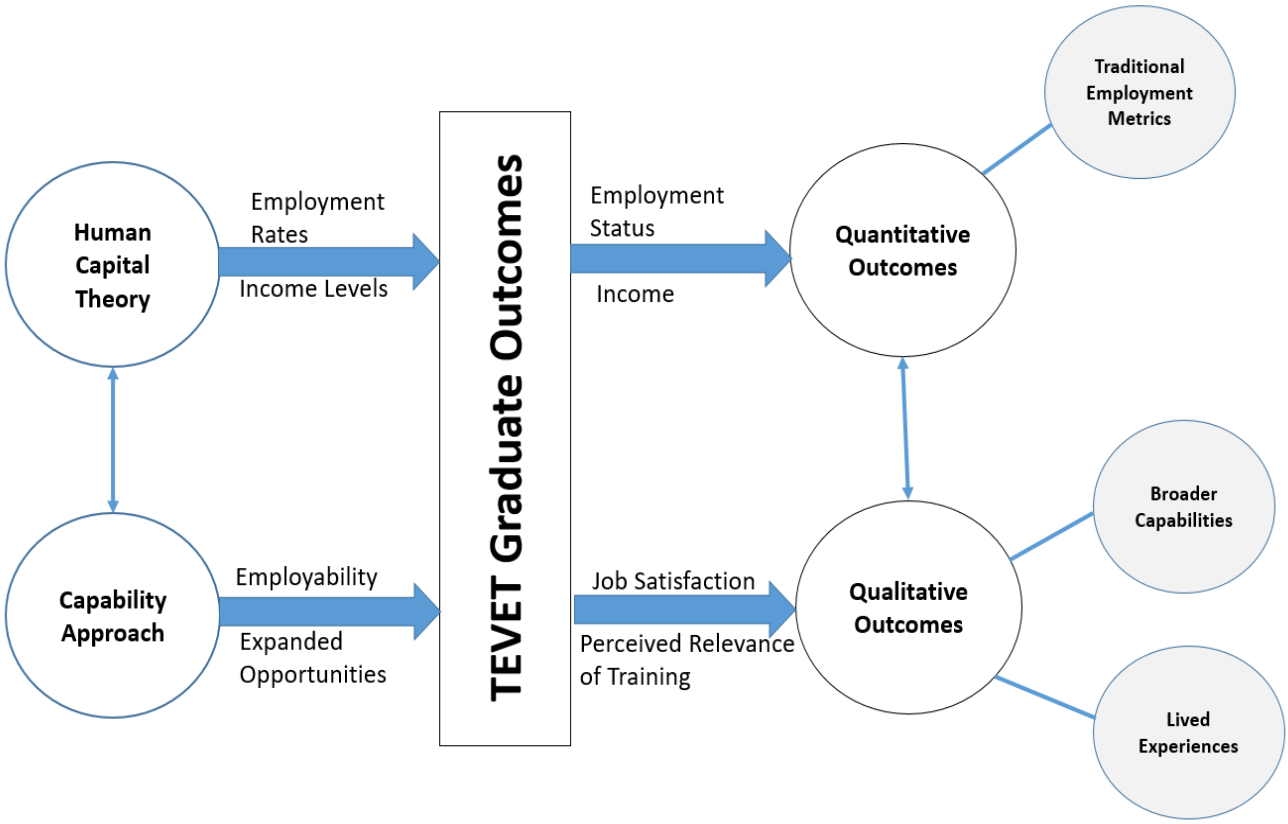
In Zambia, where structural unemployment and underemployment remain challenges, this approach is particularly relevant. It recognizes that the value of TEVET extends beyond immediate job placement to include entrepreneurship, further education, and broader life opportunities. By incorporating the CA, this study explored how TEVET programmes contribute to graduates' adaptability, perceptions of their training, and overall satisfaction with their career trajectories.

Integration of Theoretical Frameworks

The integration of Human Capital Theory and the Capability Approach offers a holistic understanding of TEVET outcomes. Human Capital Theory informs the study's quantitative focus on employment rates, income levels, and alignment with labour market demands. Meanwhile, the Capability Approach provides the basis for qualitative analysis, exploring graduates' perceptions of their training, their ability to navigate the labour market, and the broader opportunities created by their education.

This dual-theoretical approach allowed the study to capture both quantitative outcomes—such as employment status and income—and qualitative experiences, including job satisfaction and perceived relevance of training. Figure 1 illustrates the combined theoretical and conceptual framework that guides the study.

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework of the Study



Problem Statement

Over two decades after the establishment of TEVETA, the effectiveness of TEVET programmes in Zambia remains largely undocumented, particularly regarding the employability of graduates. This lack of data hinders the ability to make informed decisions on policy, curriculum development, and the continuous improvement of training systems.

Research Objectives

The following objectives guided the research: (a) To assess the employability of TEVET graduates who studied General Agriculture in Zambia from 2021 to 2023. (b) To evaluate the relevance of TEVET training programs to the labour market. (c) To provide feedback on curriculum development, assessment, and quality of training in TEVET institutions. (d) To establish a framework for future, large-scale graduate tracer studies in Zambia.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the inquiry process of the study: (a) What is the rate of employability of TEVET graduates who studied General Agriculture programme from 2021 to 2023? (b) How relevant are the skills acquired through TEVET General Agriculture programmes to the current job market in Zambia? (c) Which level of qualification has the highest and lowest employability rates? (d) What are the key factors influencing the employability of TEVET graduates?

Scope and Study Limitations

The study focussed on the graduates in General Agriculture programme for the period 2021 to 2023 from three pilot institutions. The results are generalizable within the context of General Agriculture in the TEVET sector. Trainers, policy makers and employers who were potentially a useful source of information for the GTS were not included in the pilot study.

Chapter Two: Methodology

This chapter provides the study methodology that was implored detailing the research design, sampling, data collection and data analysis methods.

Research Design

This study primarily employed a quantitative research design, complemented by qualitative components to deepen the understanding of graduate outcomes and the factors influencing employability. The quantitative approach enabled the collection and analysis of statistically measurable data for comparison across variables, while the qualitative aspects provided rich contextual insights to enhance the findings. An exploratory descriptive approach was adopted for the study. Kimena (2022) highlights the relevance of this approach, particularly for investigating underexplored phenomena. He explains that exploratory descriptive studies, though primarily qualitative with some quantitative elements, are instrumental in providing foundational insights and straightforward descriptions that guide future, more conclusive research.

Given the limited research on TEVET graduate outcomes in Zambia, this approach was particularly well-suited to the context, enabling an exploratory analysis that can inform future large-scale studies. The mixed-methods design is increasingly recognized as an effective approach in educational research, especially in developing countries where data limitations often necessitate the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

Population and Sampling

Population

The target population was all graduates of General Agriculture in the years 2021, 2022, and 2023 at three TEVET institutions. The institutions were spread across three provinces in Chisamba District of Central Province, Kasama District of Northern Province and Mansa District of Luapula Province. Focusing on a specific program for a pilot study allowed for comparisons of student outcomes. Table 1 provides a summary of the graduate data at the three pilot institutions.

Table 1: Population of Graduates in the Pilot Training Institutions

Name of Institution	*Skills Award / Trade Test*			*Level 4*			*Total*
	2023	2022	2021	2023	2022	2021	
Institution 1	33	97	53	0	18	5	206
Institution 2	123	31	26	22	21	16	239
Institution 3	28	9	4	51	21	24	137
Total	**184**	**137**	**83**	**73**	**60**	**45**	**582**

Source: TEVETA Learner data management system

Sample

Stratified random sampling was employed in this study to ensure that the sample accurately reflected the composition of the population. This method involved dividing the population into distinct subgroups or strata based on specific characteristics and drawing samples from each subgroup in proportion to its size within the overall population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this study, the subgroups or strata were based on the year of study for a particular qualification at a given institution as shown in table 1. There were two qualifications that the graduates obtained; a lower qualification of skills award or trade certificate with open entry and a training duration of 3 to 12 months and a higher qualification of level 4 certificate (or craft certificate) that require ordinary level qualification and a training duration of 2 years.

Maintaining the randomness of the overall sample while ensuring proportional representation enhanced the accuracy and generalizability of the findings. This was particularly valuable since the research aimed to compare different subgroups, as it guaranteed that each subgroup was adequately represented (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

For a pilot graduate tracer study, the recommended sample size is a minimum of 10 percent of the target population, with a minimum of 30 participants for smaller studies (Conroy, 2018; Johanson & Brooks, 2010; Hertzog, 2008). In this study, a sample size of 300 participants was determined resulting in approximately 52 percent of the population which was way above the expected minimum. Table 2 gives a summary of the proportional stratified random sample.

Table 2: Proportional sample

Name of Institution	*Skills Award / Trade Test*			*Level 4*			*Total*
	2023	2022	2021	2023	2022	2021	
Institution 1	7	20	11	-	4	1	43
Institution 2	77	19	16	14	13	10	149
Institution 3	22	7	3	40	17	19	108
Total	51	103	94	4	25	24	**300**

Source: Field data

Data Collection Methods

Initial data was collected through the Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA) database of taxpayer. This process identified graduates who were registered taxpayers, indicating their potential involvement in income-generating activities.

Subsequently, a structured questionnaire containing objective questions and two open ended questions was administered to the sampled graduates. The questionnaire had three sections: (1) general information, (2) education and skills acquired, and (3) employment outcomes.

Data Analysis

The study data collection tools generated both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics. Thematic analysis was used for qualitative data by identifying common themes and trends in the data, thereby providing insights into graduates' experiences and perceptions of their training.

Ethical Considerations

To ensure that the study upheld research ethics, informed consent was obtained, and confidentiality was strictly observed including anonymising graduates' identity. To obtain informed consent, all participants were informed of the study's purpose and their rights, including the right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality was ensured by keeping participant data confidential, with all identifying information removed from published findings. Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the university of Zambia Biomedical Research Ethics committee on reference number 6165-2024.

Chapter Three: Findings

In this chapter findings are presented. The demographic information of the institutions from which the graduates where sampled and the demographic structure of the graduates in view of gender, year of graduation and qualification obtained, thereby justifying the generalisability of the findings to the target population is presented first. This is followed by presentation of quantitative findings on employability and finally qualitative analysis of the data.

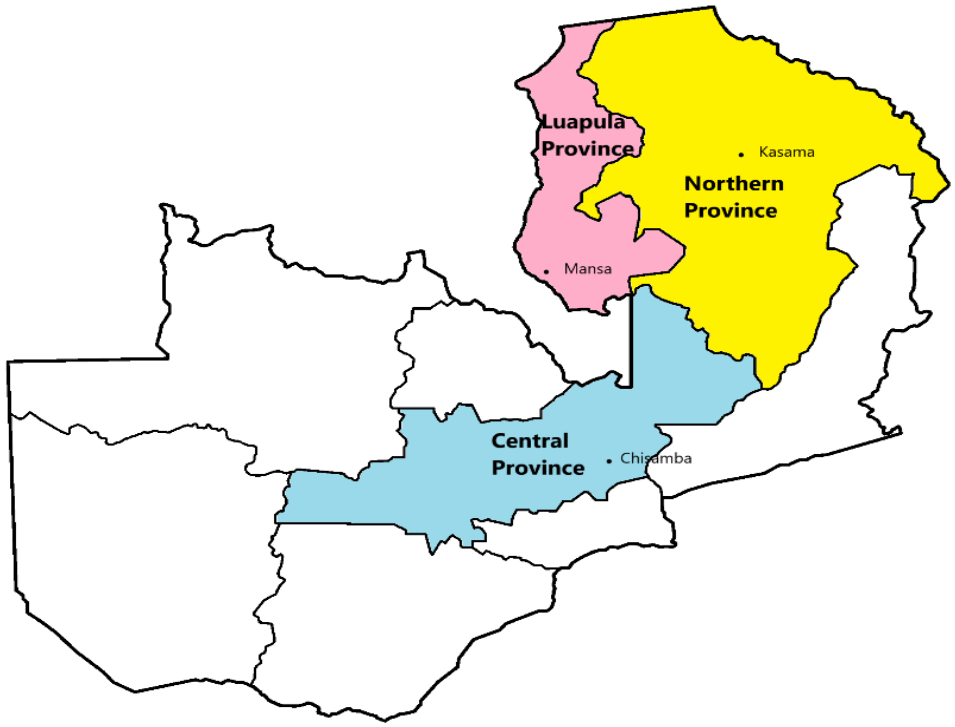
Demographics

Zambia is a landlocked country in Southern Africa, bordered by eight neighbours: Malawi, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique. The country is divided into ten provinces, with Lusaka and Copperbelt being predominantly urban. Lusaka serves as the capital city, while Copperbelt is the hub of the country's mining activities. The remaining provinces are largely agricultural, with Central Province hosting the majority of Zambia's commercial farming.

Pilot Institutions Demographic Information

The pilot institutions for the graduate tracer study were selected from three training institutions located in Central, Luapula, and Northern Provinces—areas primarily characterized by agricultural activities. The selection of the institutions was also influenced by student enrolment data in the General Agriculture programme over the years under consideration. The institution in Central Province was situated approximately 80 kilometres off the Lusaka-Kabwe (Great North) Road in Chisamba district while the institutions in Luapula and Northern Provinces were located within their respective provincial headquarters of Mansa and Kasama respectively. The map in figure 2 provides an overview of the location of the pilot institutions.

Figure 2: Map of Zambia Showing the Three Provinces and Districts Where the GTS was Conducted



Respondents Demographic Information

Out of the sampled 300 graduates, 283 responded to the questionnaire, representing a response rate of 94.3 percent. The graduates who responded comprised of 171 females representing 60 percent and 112 males representing 40 percent as illustrated in figure 3. This data shows that there were more female graduates than their male counterparts. Additionally, and as shown in figure 4, the number of graduates was steadily increasing from 2021 to 2023 and

Figure 3: Distribution of Graduates by Gender

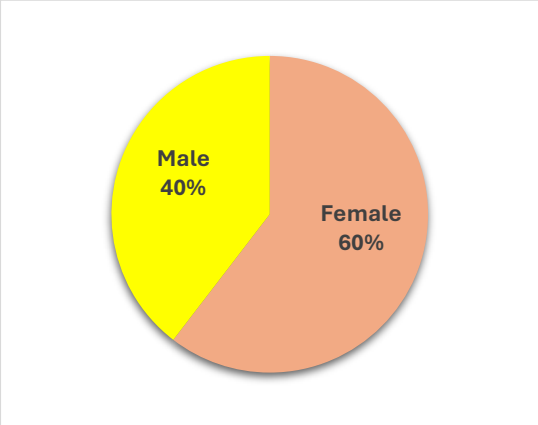
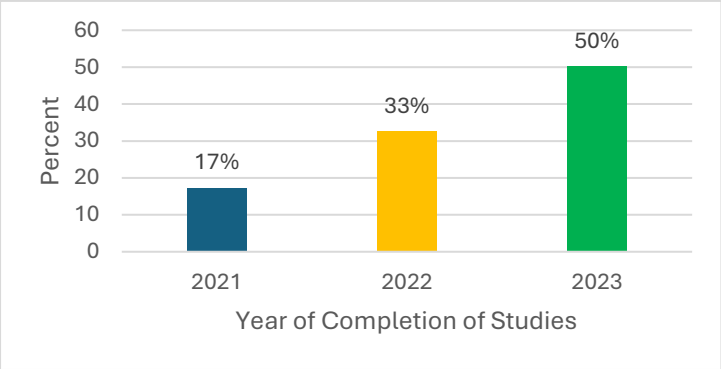
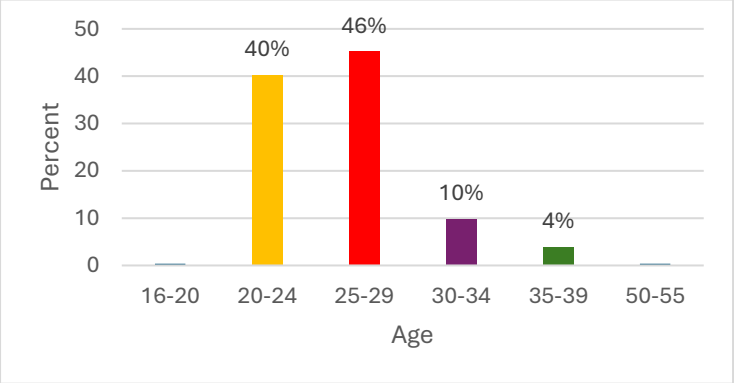


Figure 4: Percentage Distribution of Graduates Over Three Year Period (2021-2023)



The graduates were mainly aged between 20 and 29 years as shown in figure 5. This trend aligns with the structure of the current education system, where most learners complete their 12 years of schooling and graduate between the ages of 18 and 20 (World Bank, 2020). This means that many students (up to 86 percent) in TEVET institutions were fresh graduates from secondary school.

Figure 5: Graph Showing the Age of Graduates



Quantitative Findings

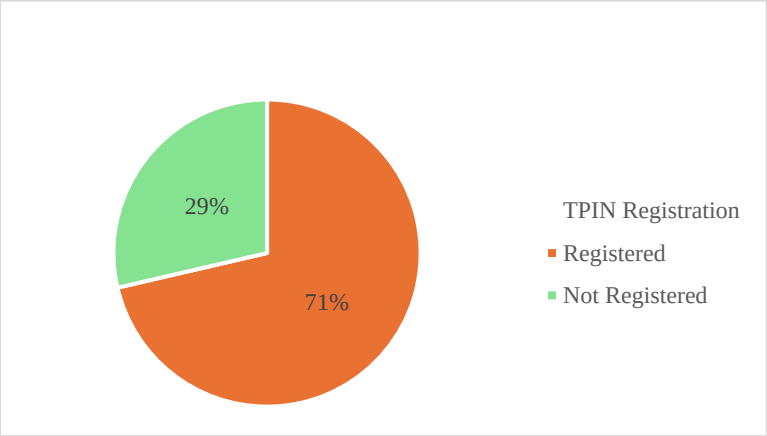
The quantitative findings cover aspects of registration for tax with the Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA) as a benchmark for involvement in income generation activities. They also cover employment status and employment type, job search dynamics, income earned, job readiness and satisfaction and relevance of skills to current job.

Taxpayers Identification Number Registration

In Zambia, all taxpayers are required to register with the Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA), the agency responsible for collecting taxes on behalf of the government (National Assembly of Zambia, 2025). Upon registration, taxpayers are assigned a unique Taxpayer Identification Number (TPIN). Anyone engaged in income-generating activities, whether through employment or self-employment, is expected to be a registered taxpayer. The ZRA maintains a public register of all taxpayers on its website (ZRA, 2020). This study used the data from this register to ascertain whether there was a relationship between the employment status reported

by graduates on the questionnaire with their tax registration status. Figure 4 shows the status of TPIN registration

Figure 4: Taxpayers' Registration

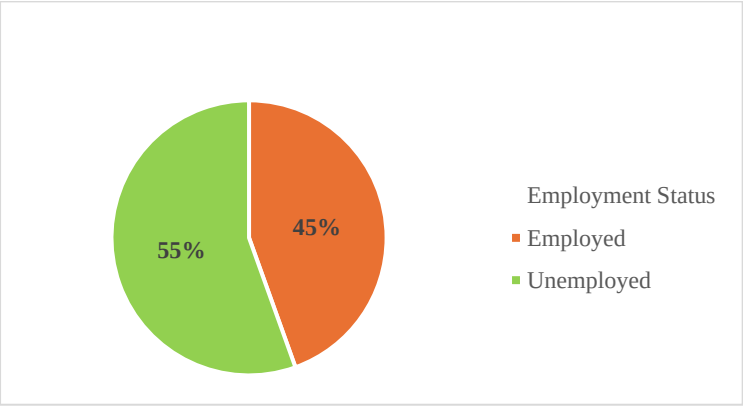


Most of the graduates (71 percent) were registered and active taxpayers. This was an initial indication that they were involved in some sort of income-generating activities. It also meant that they probably had a bank account and so were participating in the financial system of the country. In the next segments of the findings, the relationship between being registered for tax purposes and employment status, employment type and monthly income is explored.

Employment Status

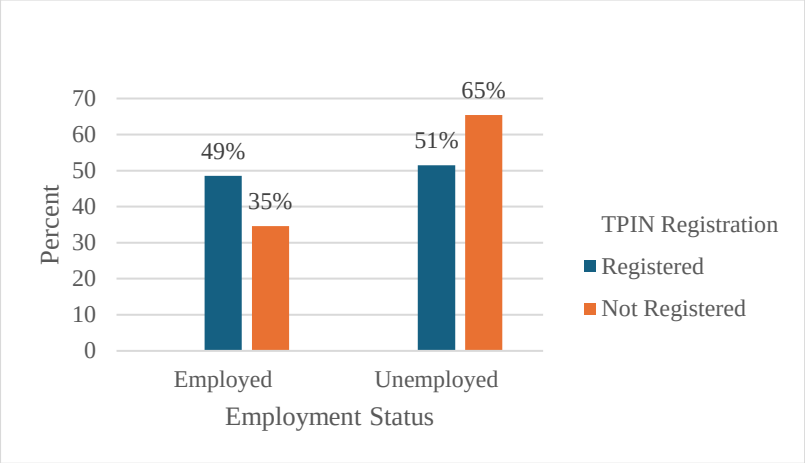
This variable measured the employment status of respondents including self-employment. The findings are presented in figure 5. Less than 50 percent of those who graduated in the period 2021 to 2023 were employed. More than half were still unemployed.

Figure 5: Employment Status



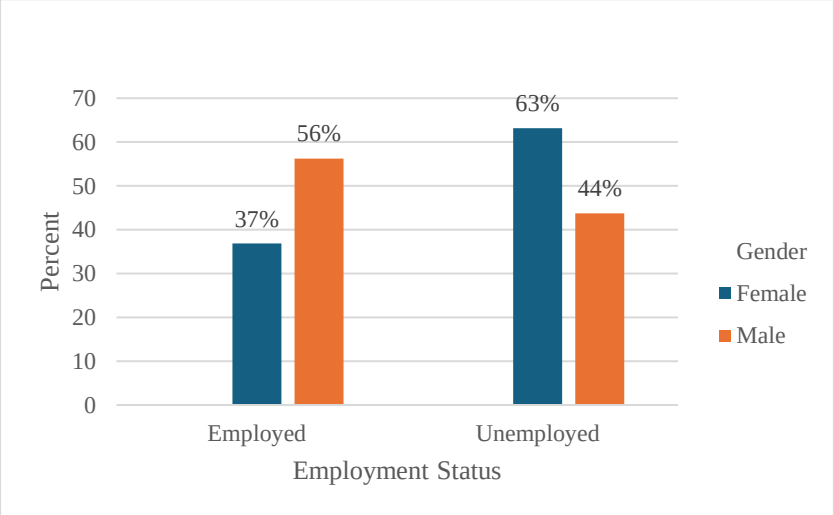
TPIN Registration Status for employed and Unemployed Graduates. Figure 6 shows the percentage of employed and unemployed graduates who were registered taxpayers. More than half of the unregistered taxpayers were unemployed. However, a larger percentage of those who were registered as taxpayers were still unemployed. There was also a significant percentage (35 percent) of graduates who were employed but not yet registered as taxpayers. This might be due to casualization and non-use of the formal banking system for payment of wages and salaries.

Figure 6: TPIN Registration Versus Employment Status



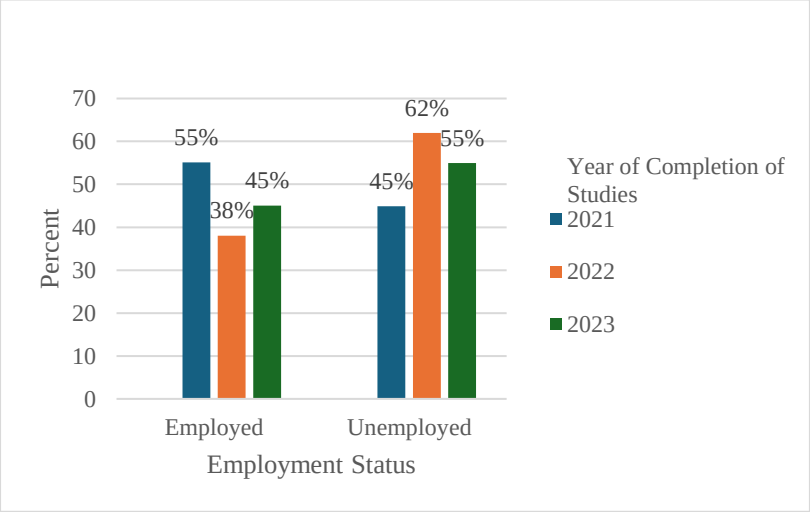
Employment status by gender. As shown in figure 7, a higher percentage of males (56 percent) were employed as compared to their female counter parts at 37 percent.

Figure 7: Employment Status by Gender



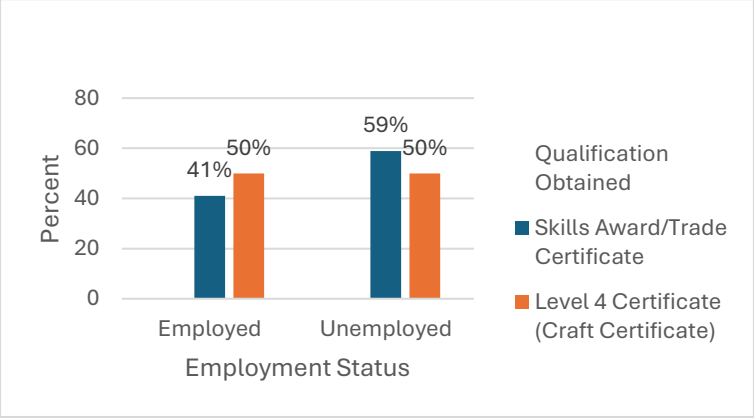
Employment status by year of Completion of Studies. Figure 8 provides a comparison of employment status by the year of graduation. A larger percentage of graduates for 2021 were employed in comparison to 2022 and 2023. Of those who were unemployed the larger percentage of 62 percent was for 2022. The difference between the employed and unemployed graduates for 2023 was marginally small (5 percent).

Figure 8: Employment Status by Year of Completion



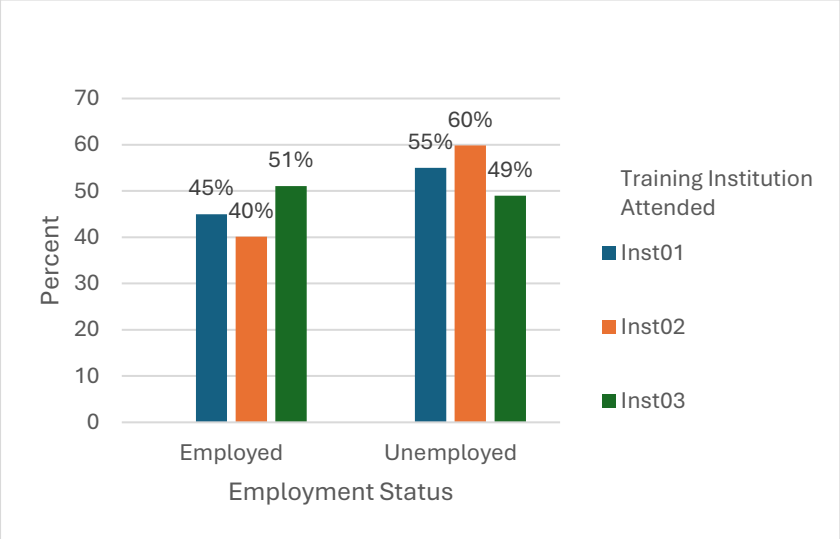
Employment status by qualification obtained. The findings shown in figure 9 indicate the dynamic that the level of qualification played on employability. The percentage of graduates with higher qualifications of level 4 certificate who were employed was higher compared to those with lower qualification of skills/trade certificate. In fact, half of the graduates with a higher qualification were employed while a larger proportion of up to 59 percent of graduates with a skills award, which is a lower qualification, were still unemployed.

Figure 9: Employment Status by Qualification Obtained



Employment status by institution attended. As shown in figure 10, more than half of the graduates from the institution three were employed. The other two institutions had more than half of their graduates still unemployed. However, the overall differences were marginal. This underscores the fact that there is a marginal effect on the rate of employment based on the training institution attended.

Figure 10: Employment Status by Training Institution Attended

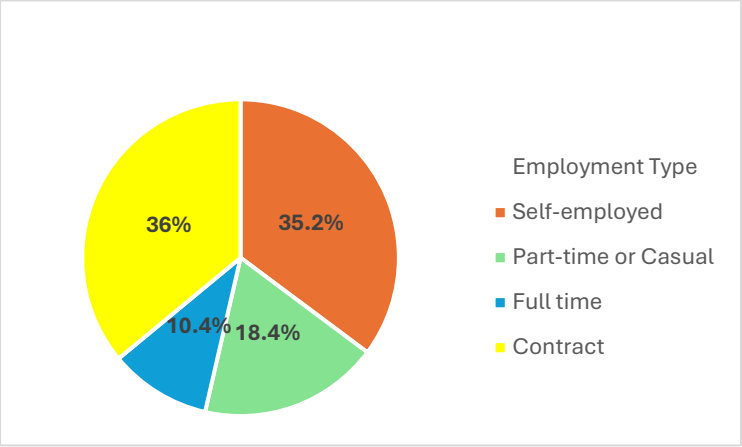


Type of Employment

The study identified whether graduates were self-employed or employed by others. For those employed by others, the study also categorized their type of employment. In addition to self-employment, the International Labour Organization (ILO) classification was used, which includes three general categories: temporary or casual, contract, and permanent or full-time employment. The findings are illustrated in Figure 11.

The largest proportion of employed graduates (36 percent) were engaged in contractual jobs, while 35.2 percent were self-employed. The smallest proportion was in full-time employment, with part-time or casual employment accounting for 18.4 percent.

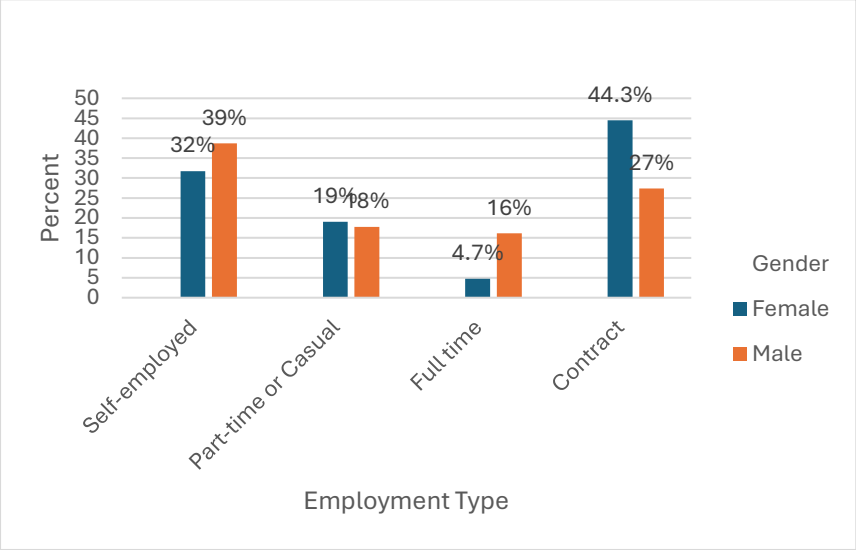
Figure 11: Distribution of Graduates by Type of Employment



Type of employment by gender. Figure 12 shows the percentage distribution of graduates by employment type against their gender. Among the females the larger percentage of 44.3 percent were on contract while 32 percent were self-employed. Only a small percentage of 4.7 percent of females were in full time or permanent employment. The males were leading in self-employment of up to 39 percent. Also, the percentage of males in full time employment was higher than that of females. Interesting the percentage of females involved in casual jobs was

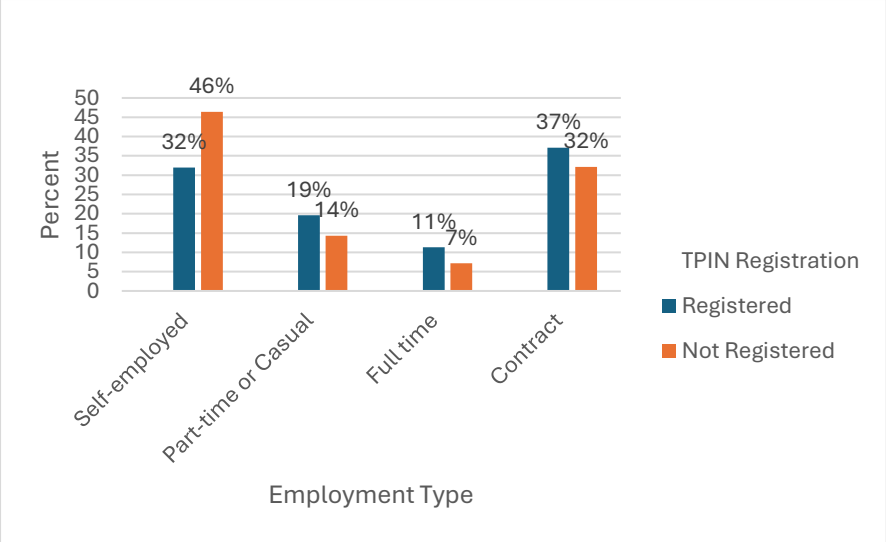
higher than that of males. Generally, the males were doing better than females in creating their own employment and in finding more stable jobs.

Figure 12: Employment Type by Gender



TPIN Registration for different types of employment. The findings presented in Figure 13 reveal that a significant proportion of self-employed graduates were not registered taxpayers. In contrast, other employment types had a higher percentage of registered taxpayers compared to those who were not registered. Among the employment categories, contract employment had the highest percentage of registered taxpayers, accounting for 37 percent. However, this category also reported a notable proportion of unregistered individuals, at 32 percent.

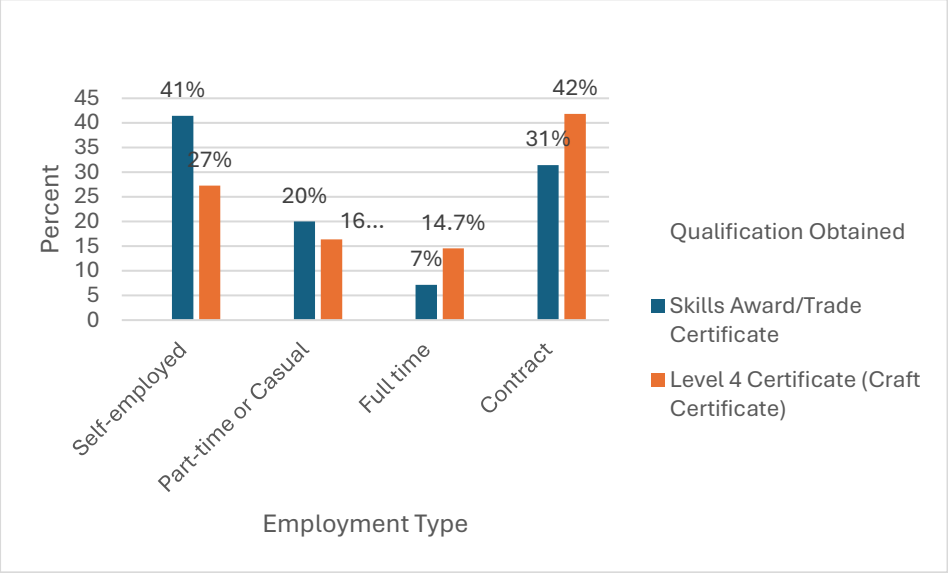
Figure 13: Employment Type and Registration for Tax



Employment type by qualification obtained. Graduates with lower qualifications, such as the Skills Award, had a higher percentage (41 percent) engaged in self-employment compared to Level 4 Certificate graduates, who accounted for 27 percent, as shown in Figure 14. Part-time or casual employment was also dominated by Skills Award graduates at 20 percent, while full-time employment was more common among Level 4 Certificate graduates at 14.7 percent.

This suggests that graduates with lower qualifications are more inclined toward entrepreneurial activities, whereas those with higher qualifications tend to prioritize job-seeking opportunities.

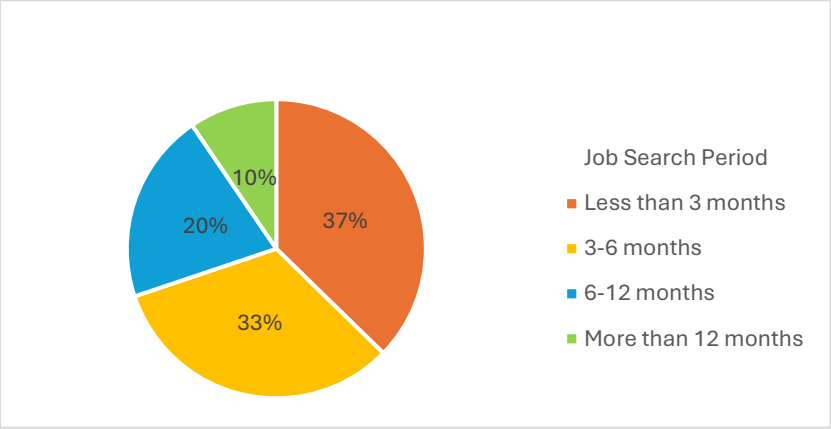
Figure 14: Employment Type Versus Qualification Obtained



Job Search Period

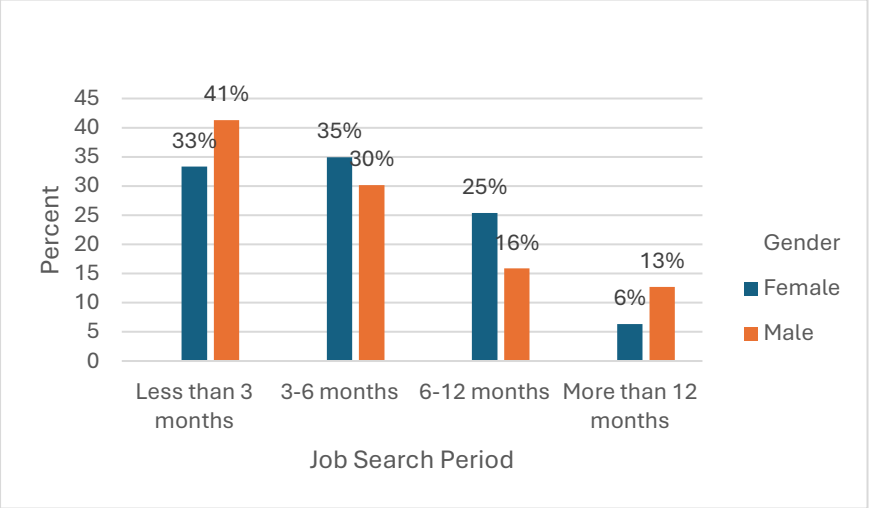
The study aimed to determine the time it took for graduates to either establish their own enterprises or secure employment. Among the graduates who found employment, 37 percent were employed within three months, while 33 percent secured jobs between three and six months after graduation, as illustrated in Figure 15. This indicates that many graduates (a combined 70 percent) found employment within six months of completing their studies. In contrast, only a small proportion, 10 percent, took more than 12 months to find employment.

Figure 15: Job Search Period



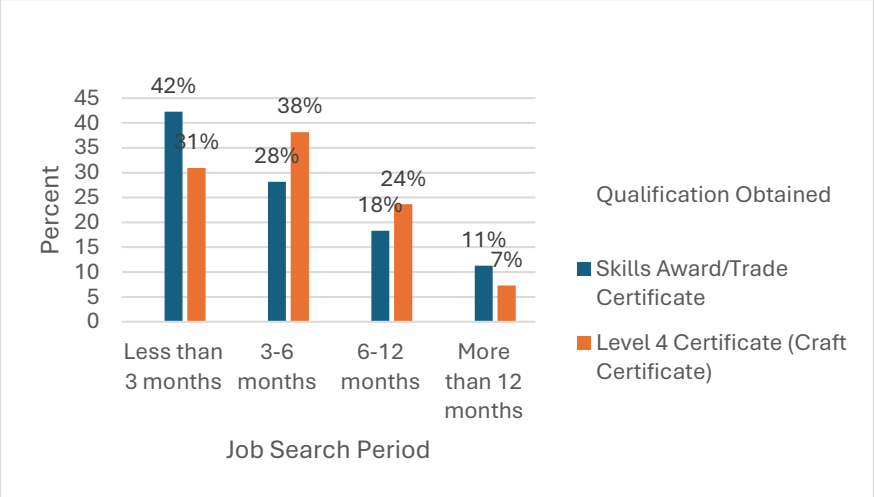
Job search period and gender. Figure 16 illustrates the percentage distribution of job search periods by gender. A higher proportion of males secured employment within less than 3 months. However, up to 13 percent of males took over 12 months to find employment. For females, the largest percentage found employment within 3 to 6 months, and only 6 percent required more than 12 months to secure a job.

Figure 16: Job Search Period by Gender



Job search period by qualification obtained. The data in Figure 17 indicates that individuals with higher qualifications generally secured employment more quickly. A notable 42 percent of skills award graduates found employment within less than 3 months. Among Level 4 certificate graduates, 38 percent obtained jobs within 3 to 6 months. However, for those who took more than 12 months to find employment, a higher proportion were skills award graduates (11 percent) compared to Level 4 certificate graduates (7 percent).

Figure 17: Job Search Period by Qualification



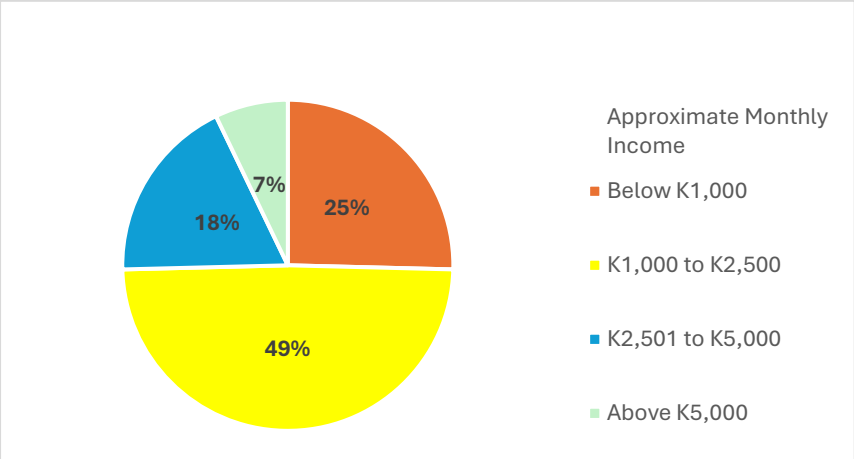
Monthly Income

The study utilised the level of monthly income to compare earnings between two qualifications: the Skills Award and the Level 4 Certificate. Additionally, earnings were analyzed across *genders* to determine differences and to calculate the average income in the field of agriculture. The overall findings are illustrated in Figure *18*.

Nearly half of the graduates earned between K1,000 and K2,500, while only a marginal 7 percent earned more than K5,000. Pay Lab (2024), a website that specializes in tabulating salaries across various worker categories worldwide, reports that the minimum average salary for Zambians is K3,870—significantly higher than the average salary of general agriculture

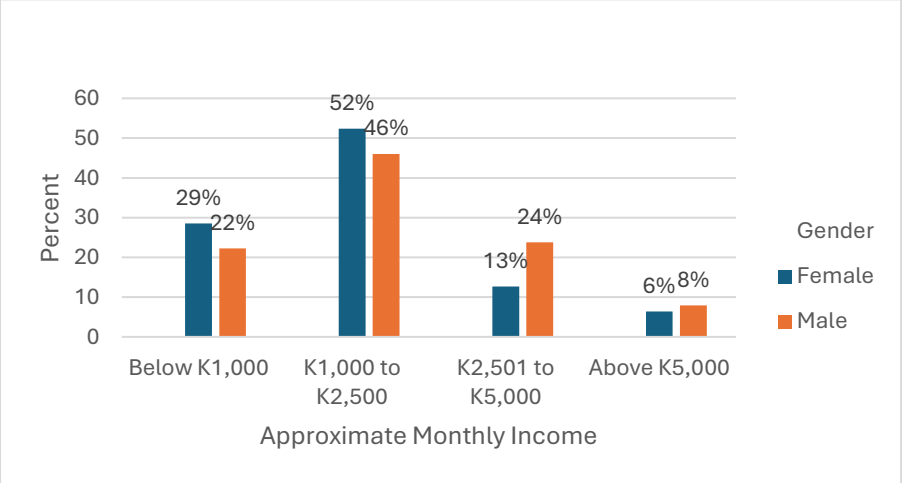
graduates, which is K1,750. Furthermore, the Ministry of Labour in Zambia, through a 2023 government gazette, set the minimum wage for domestic and general workers at K1,300 to a maximum of K4,638. This data highlights that general agriculture graduates are being underpaid.

Figure 18: Average Monthly Income



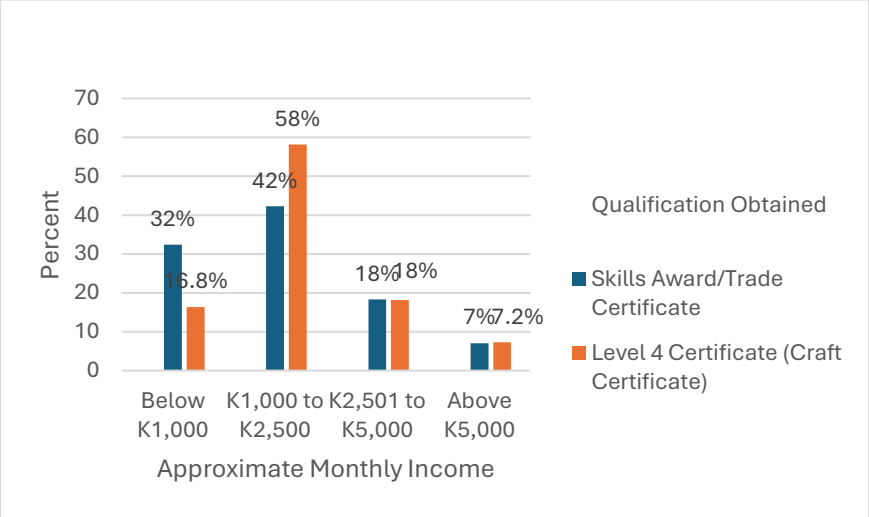
Monthly income by gender. Figure 19 illustrates the average monthly income distribution by gender. Many of both males and females earn between K1,000 and K2,500, accounting for 52 percent of females and 46 percent of males. Notably, a greater proportion of females fall within this income bracket. Specifically, more than half of all females (52 percent) earn less than K2,500. In contrast, a higher percentage of males earn incomes exceeding K2,500 compared to their female counterparts.

Figure 19: Average Monthly Income by Gender



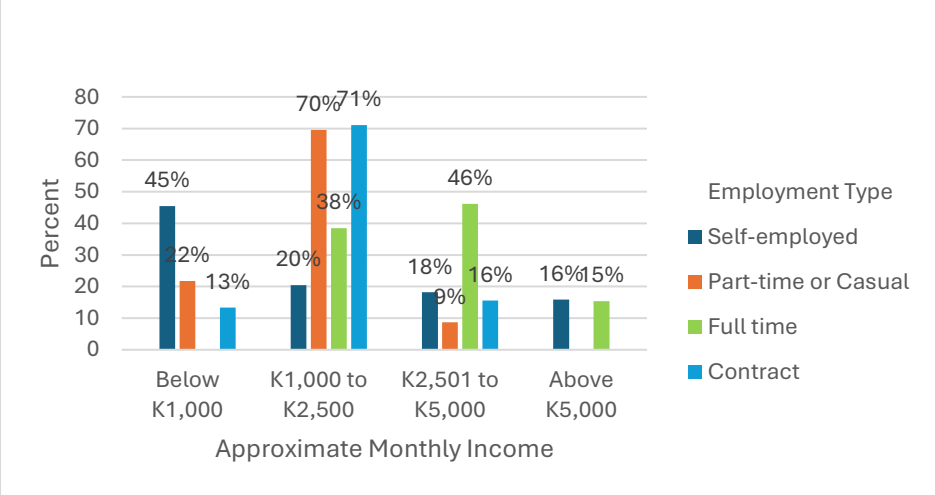
Monthly income by qualification. The two qualifications were nearly comparable in the category of highest earners, with both reporting incomes exceeding K5,000 per month, as illustrated in Figure 20. However, a notable 42 percent of skills award graduates reported earning between K1,000 and K2,500 per month. Additionally, skills award graduates were overrepresented in the lowest income bracket, with 32 percent earning less than K1,000 per month, compared to only 16.8 percent of Level 4 certificate holders in this category.

Figure 20: Average Monthly Income by Qualification



Monthly income by employment type. Figure 21 presents the findings. A higher percentage of full-time employed graduates earned between K2,501 and K5,000. Most part-time and contract-employed graduates earned between K1,000 and K2,500, with 70 percent and 71 percent in these income ranges, respectively. Only full-time and self-employed graduates earned above K5,000. Additionally, no full-time graduate earned below K1,000. A larger proportion of self-employed graduates earned below K1,000, although they were represented across all income categories.

Figure 21: Average Monthly Income by Employment Type

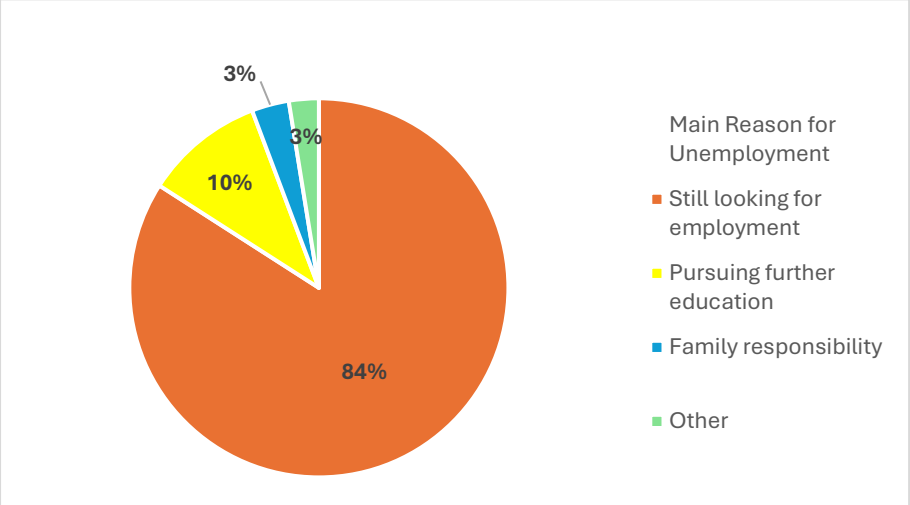


Main Reason for Unemployment

To determine the reasons for continued unemployment among graduates, the study utilized a multiple-choice question with four options. The results, presented in Figure 22, show that most graduates (84 percent) were still actively seeking employment. Ten percent cited pursuing further studies as the reason for their unemployment, while 3 percent attributed it to family responsibilities. The remaining 3 percent consisted of four graduates who provided the following explanations: “I am doing distance learning while looking for employment,” “I am looking for capital to employ myself while also seeking employment,” “I lack capital to start a

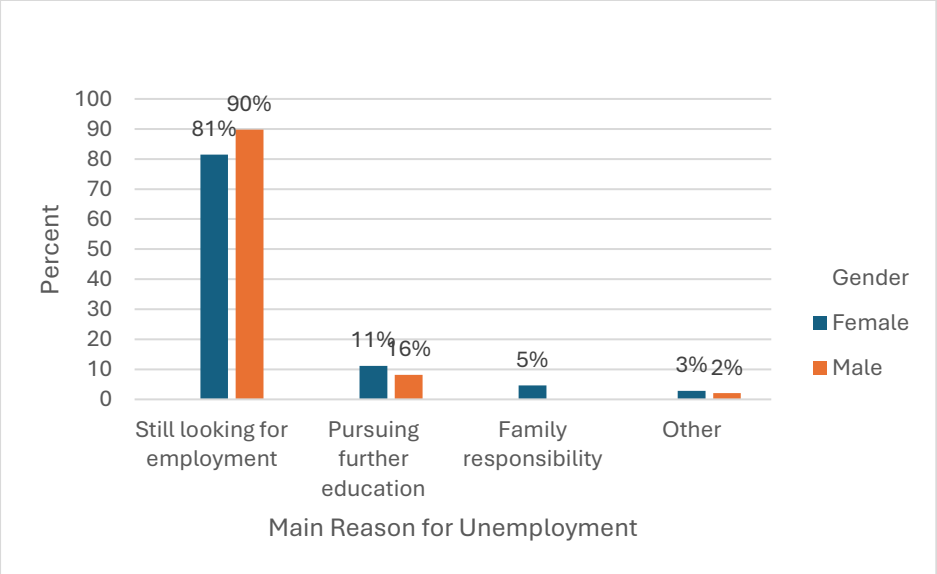
business," and "I do not have equipment to use." These responses all indicate that the graduates were still in search of employment.

Figure 22: Main Reason for Unemployment



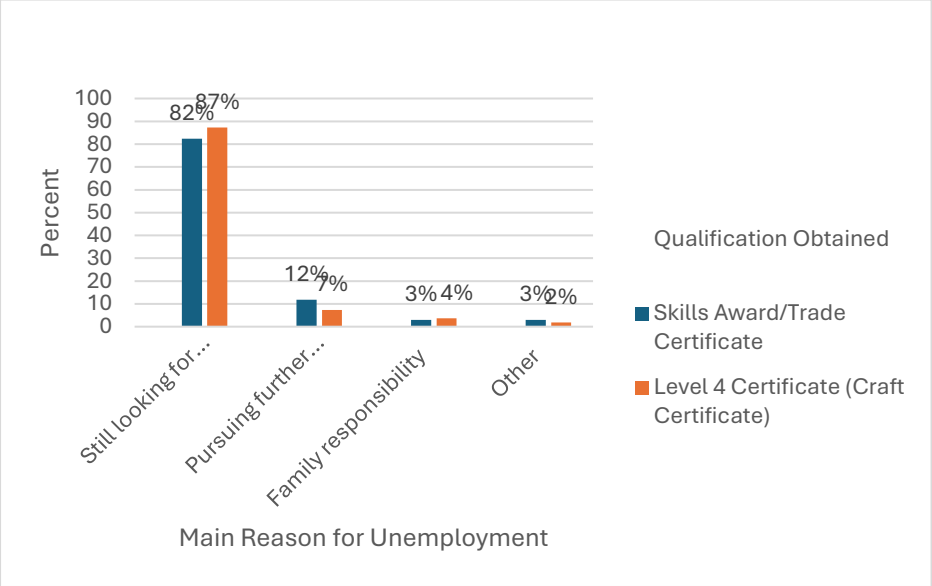
Main reason for unemployment by gender. The findings in Figure 23 indicate that a larger percentage of both genders were still seeking employment. However, a higher percentage of females were pursuing further education compared to males. Interestingly, only females cited family responsibility as the reason for their unemployment. This data highlights a long-standing cultural norm in Zambia, where females are primarily seen as caregivers, a role that can impact their employability.

Figure 23: Main Reason for Unemployment by Gender



Main reason for unemployment by qualification. As shown in figure 24, many graduates holding both types of qualifications were still seeking employment. In comparison, a higher proportion of skills award graduates were pursuing further education than those with level 4 certificates. A small percentage of graduates with both qualifications cited family responsibilities as the primary reason for their unemployment.

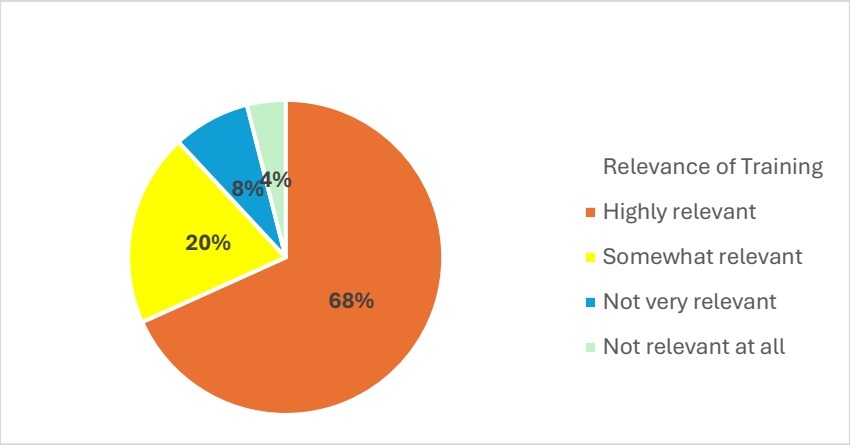
Figure 24: Main Reason for Unemployment by Qualification



Relevance of Training

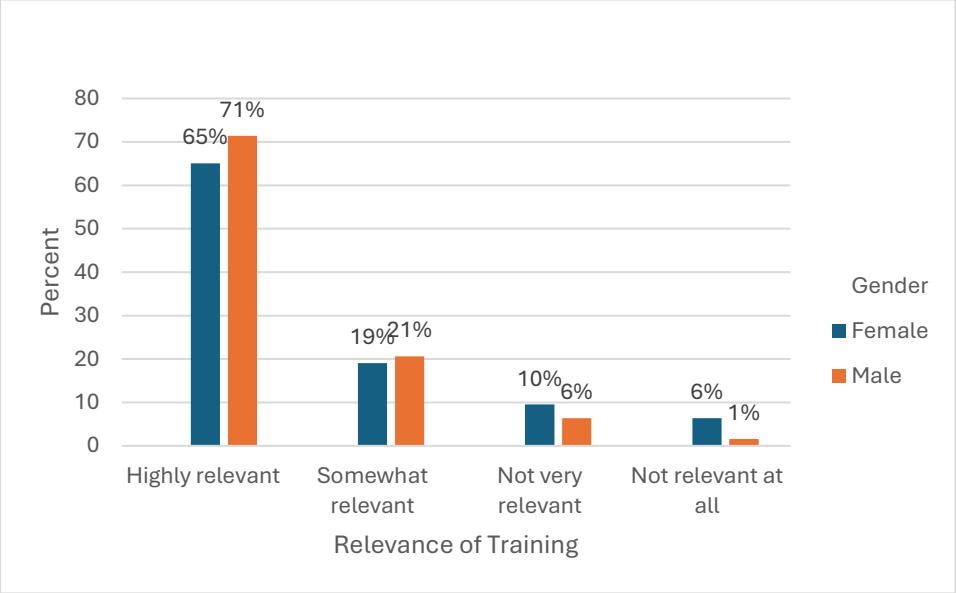
Graduates were asked to evaluate the relevance of their training to their current employment. The findings, shown in Figure 25, reveal that more than half of the graduates considered the training highly relevant to their jobs. Only 4 percent believed the training was completely irrelevant, while 12 percent expressed some doubt about its relevance. In total, 88 percent of graduates affirmed the relevance of the training they received.

Figure 25: Relevance of Training



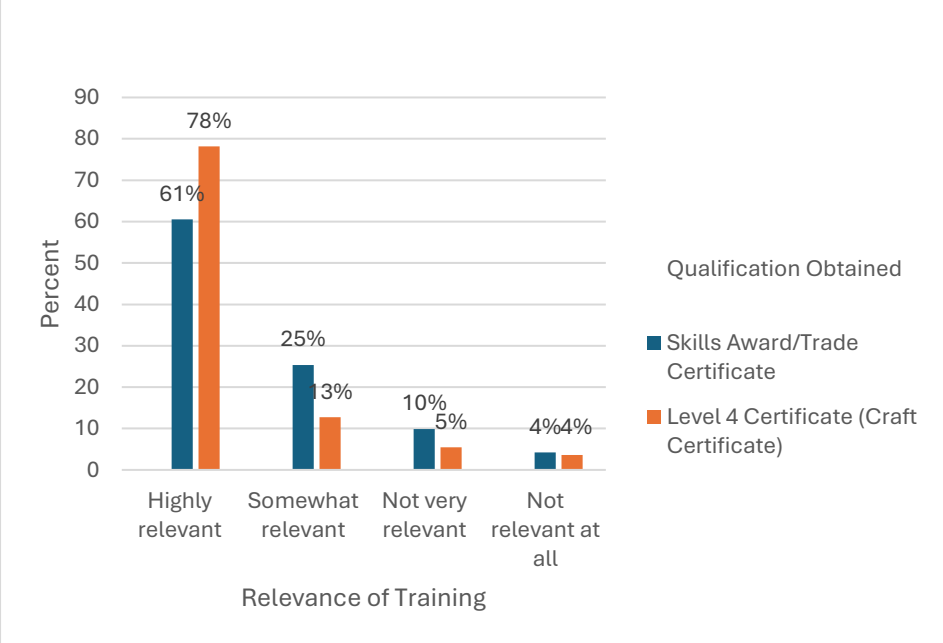
Relevance of training by gender. The percentage of males who felt the training was relevant to their current employment (71 percent) was higher than that of females (65 percent). However, the reverse was true for the categories "not very relevant" and "not relevant at all," as illustrated in Figure 26.

Figure 26: Relevance of Training by Gender



Relevance of training by qualification. The results presented in Figure 27 show that graduates with higher qualifications (Level 4 certificate) reported a higher percentage of training relevance to employment, at 78 percent, compared to 61 percent for skills award graduates. Additionally, an equal proportion of 4 percent of both groups indicated an extreme lack of relevance of their training.

Figure 27: Relevance of Training by Qualification

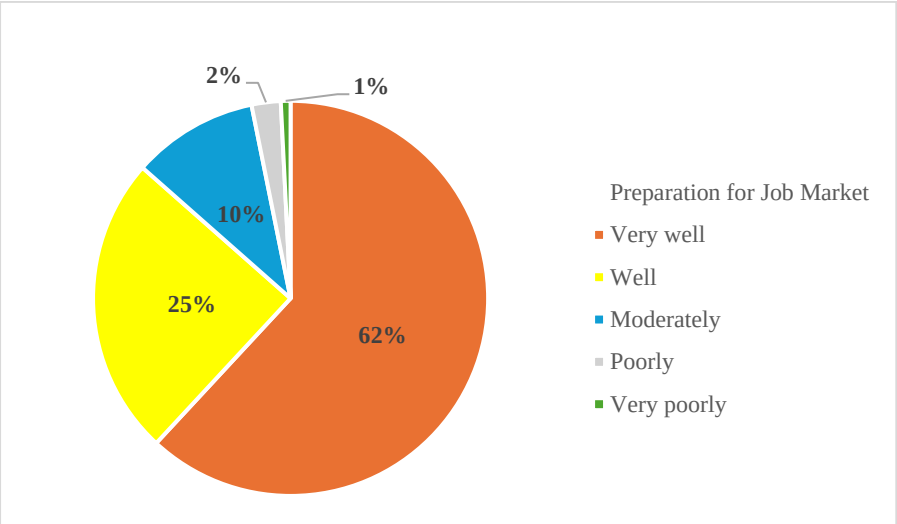


Preparation for Job Market

Using a Likert scale, graduates were asked to assess their level of preparation for the job market. The results, shown in Figure 28, indicate that 62 percent of graduates felt very well prepared for their current jobs, while an additional 25 percent felt well prepared. This brings the total percentage of graduates who felt prepared for the job market to 87 percent. Only 2

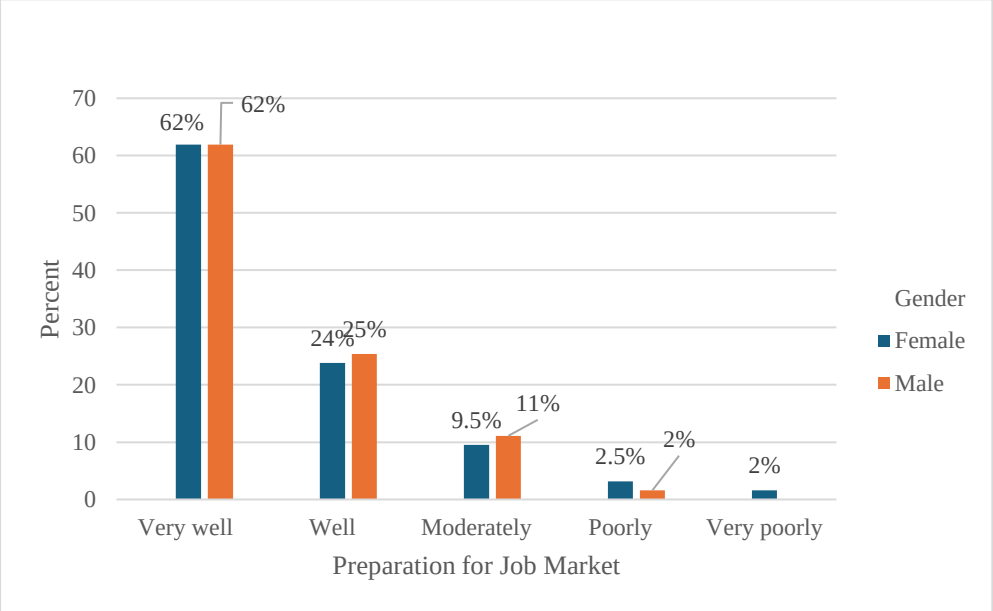
percent of respondents felt poorly prepared, and 1 percent reported feeling very poorly prepared.

Figure 28: Preparation for Job Market



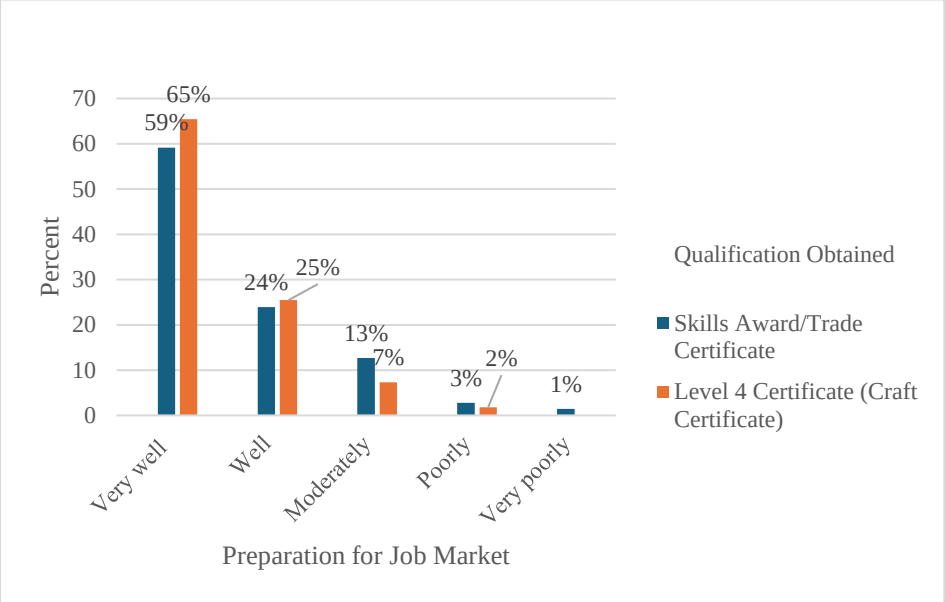
Preparation for job market by gender. An equal percentage of both genders reported feeling very well prepared for the job market, as shown in Figure 29. Only 2 percent of females felt that they were very poorly prepared.

Figure 29: Preparation for Job Market



Preparation for job market by qualification. As shown in Figure 30, 65 percent of Level 4 Certificate graduates reported being "very well prepared," compared to 59 percent of Skills Award graduates. Notably, only Skills Award graduates indicated being "very poorly prepared," with 1 percent selecting this option.

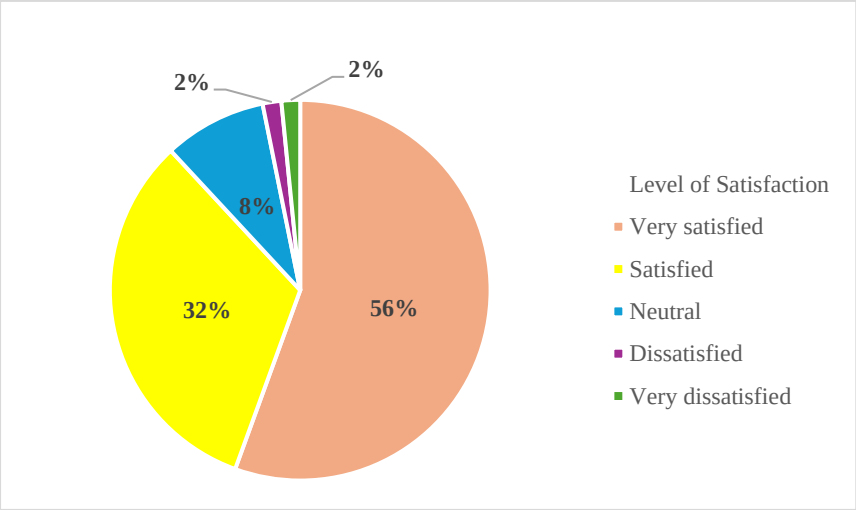
Figure 30: Preparation for Job Market by Qualification



Level of Satisfaction

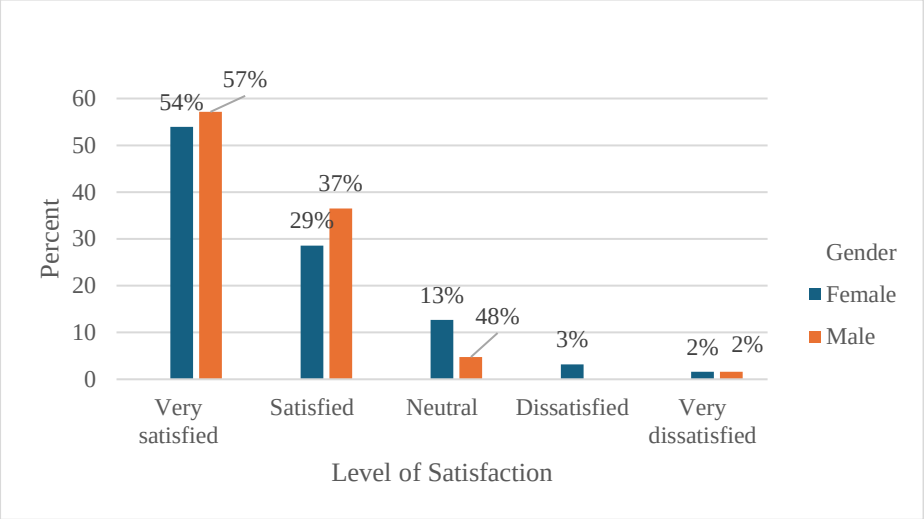
A Likert scale, ranging from "very satisfied" to "very dissatisfied," was employed to assess the level of satisfaction with the training received. The results, presented in Figure 31, reveal that over half of the graduates (56 percent) reported being very satisfied with the training, while 32 percent expressed satisfaction. In contrast, 2 percent of graduates indicated dissatisfaction, and another 2 percent were very dissatisfied.

Figure 31: Level of Satisfaction



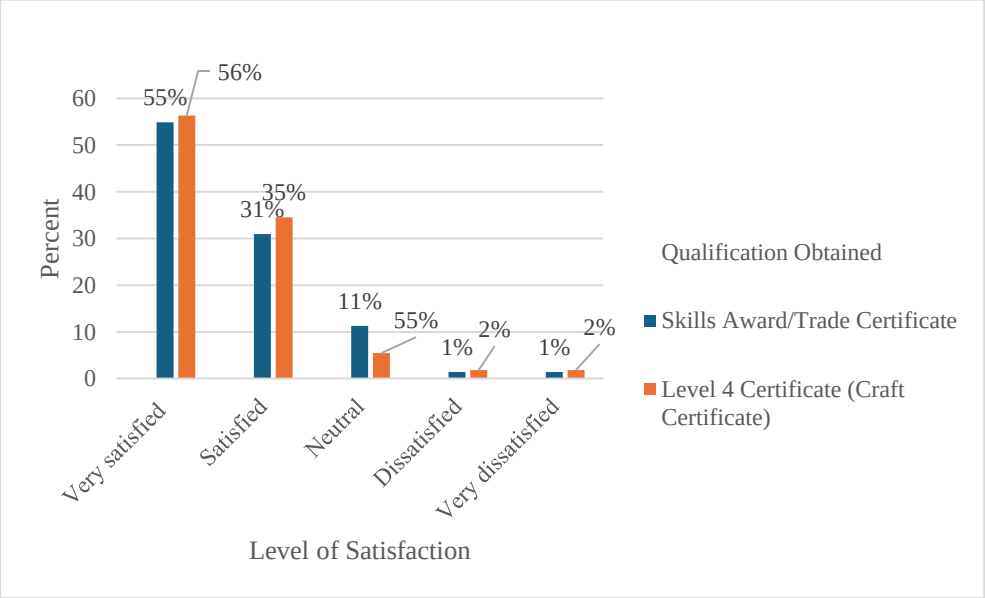
Level of Satisfaction by Gender. As shown in Figure 32, a higher percentage of males (57 percent) expressed being very satisfied with the training, compared to 54 percent of females. Additionally, only females reported dissatisfaction, with 3 percent indicating dissatisfaction, while both males and females had a 2 percent very dissatisfied rate.

Figure 32: Level of Satisfaction by Gender



Level of Satisfaction by Qualification Obtained. The findings presented in Figure 33 indicate that graduates with higher qualifications reported a higher percentage of "very satisfied" responses regarding training, with 56 percent compared to 55 percent for those with lower skills qualifications. Notably, the percentage of respondents indicating themselves "very dissatisfied" was higher for those with a Level 4 certificate at 2 percent, compared to just 1 percent for those with a skills award.

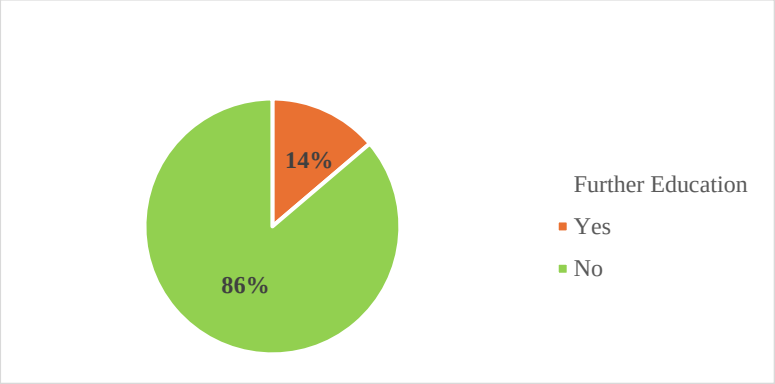
Figure 33: Level of Satisfaction by Qualification



Further Education

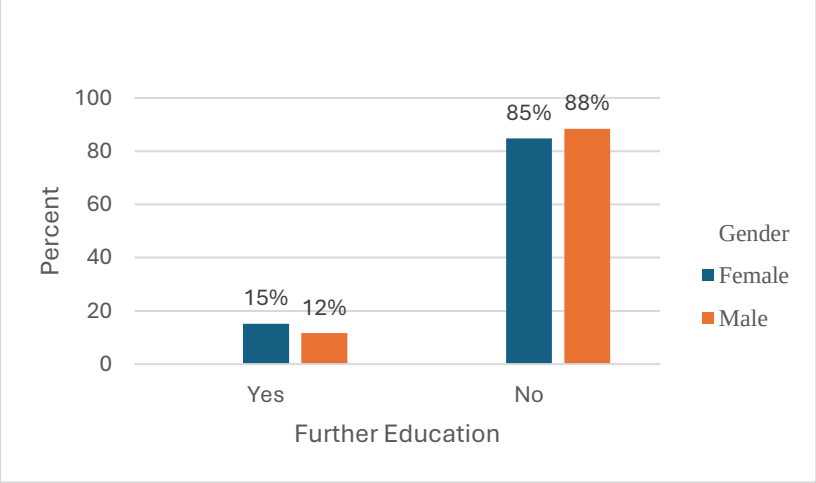
To assess graduates' prospects for further education, they were asked whether they were currently pursuing additional studies. The findings, presented in Figure 34, indicate that only a small percentage (14 percent) were engaged in further education, with an average duration of 0.27 months.

Figure 34: Further Education



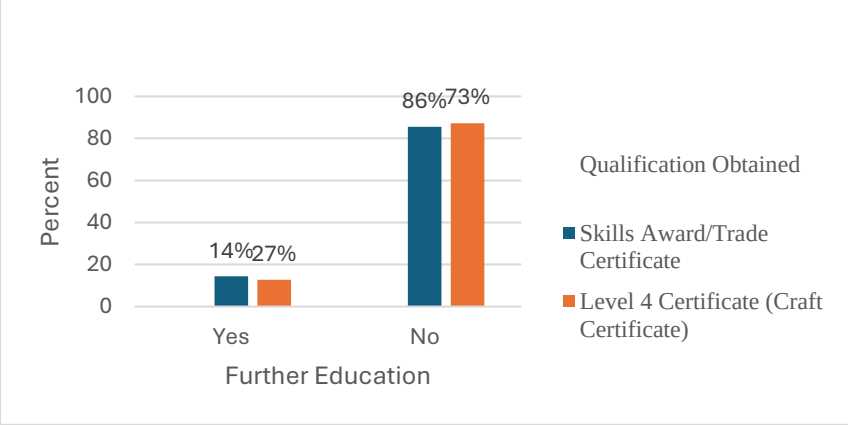
Further Education by gender. Although the overall percentage of individuals pursuing further studies was relatively small, totalling just 14 percent, the proportion of females was higher than that of males, as illustrated in Figure 35.

Figure 35: Further Education by Gender



Further Education by Qualification. The findings presented in Figure 36 show that graduates with a Skills Award had a higher percentage (14 percent) pursuing further education, compared to 27 percent of Level 4 Certificate graduates.

Figure 36: Further Education by Qualification



Qualitative Findings

The analysis of qualitative data led to eight distinct themes with varying levels of emphasis. These were practical and hands-on training, curriculum alignment with industry and labour market needs, entrepreneurship development, recognition and advocacy of TEVET qualifications, Soft Skills Development, Stakeholder Engagement and Industry Partnerships and Program Duration and Depth.

Practical and Hands-On Training

Practical training emerged as the dominant theme, with 35 percent of respondents highlighting a critical gap between theoretical instruction and real-world application. Many graduates expressed frustration with the limited opportunities for hands-on learning, citing insufficient equipment and inadequate exposure to industrial environments. One respondent noted, “Adequate practical equipment and machinery should be provided,” while another added, “Practicals should be improved because the market demands tangible results more than theories.”

Respondents emphasized extending the duration of industrial attachments and investing in modern equipment to enhance practical learning. These measures would enable TEVET graduates to transition seamlessly into the workforce, better prepared to meet employer expectations.

Curriculum Alignment with Industry and Labour Market Needs

A significant portion of respondents (20 percent) underscored the need to modernize and align the TEVET curricula with current industry demands. Graduates (respondents) frequently highlighted the outdated nature of the General Agriculture, citing lack of incorporation of advancements like mechanization and technology. One graduate passionately remarked, “Revise the curriculum to meet current trends in the industry,” emphasizing the urgency to include skills like automation and communication.

Participants recommended that institutions collaborate with industries to ensure curricula reflect the skills demanded by today’s workforce. By doing so, TEVET graduates would be better positioned to compete in a technologically advanced labour market.

Entrepreneurship Development

Amid limited formal employment opportunities, 15 percent of respondents stressed the importance of entrepreneurship training in fostering self-reliance. Graduates called for the integration of business skills such as financial management and marketing into the curriculum. One participant urged, “Empower graduates with seed capital to start businesses,” while another emphasized, “Focus on entrepreneurship, as most graduates lack the business acumen to thrive.”

Enhancing entrepreneurial training into TEVET programs, coupled with post-graduation support like grants or mentorship, could empower graduates to create their own opportunities and contribute to national economic growth.

Recognition and Advocacy for TEVET Qualifications

Only 3 percent of respondents specifically mentioned the undervaluation of TEVET qualifications in the labour market, yet their concerns were poignant. One participant lamented,

"The government does not employ those with trade certificates," while another emphasized, "TEVET graduates need to be given equal opportunities."

Advocacy efforts to enhance the recognition and credibility of TEVET certifications are critical.

Soft Skills Development

While not tied to a specific percentage, the importance of soft skills training was widely acknowledged. Respondents emphasized communication, teamwork, and leadership as vital components of employability. One participant noted, "Soft skills are essential for graduates to adapt to collaborative work environments."

Incorporating workshops and mentorship programs into TEVET curricula could address this need, equipping graduates with the interpersonal skills required to thrive in dynamic workplace environments.

Stakeholder Engagement and Industry Partnerships

Approximately 12 percent of respondents emphasized the importance of fostering strong partnerships between TEVET institutions and industries. Internships and job placements were identified as essential for bridging the gap between education and employment. One graduate suggested, "Institutions should have a direct link with industry," while another urged, "Establish partnerships with companies for internships and job placements."

Respondents also recommended hosting job fairs and formalizing partnerships with industries. Developing Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with businesses could facilitate internships and pave the way for eventual employment, reducing the challenges graduates face in navigating the job market.

Such collaborative efforts would ensure that TEVET programs align with labour market demands, providing graduates with clear pathways to meaningful employment.

Program Duration and Depth

Five percent of respondents called for extending the duration of training programs to allow for deeper learning and practical exposure. One graduate suggested, "Courses should extend to six months to provide full knowledge," reflecting the sentiment that short courses often fail to prepare students adequately.

Extending program durations, where necessary, would enhance the quality of education and better equip graduates for the complexities of the workforce.

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The following section integrates quantitative and qualitative findings to provide a comprehensive and holistic understanding of the findings. The integrated findings are presented on TPIN registration, employment status, employment type, job search, monthly income, main reason for unemployment, relevance of training and preparation for the job market.

Taxpayer Identification Number Registration

The quantitative findings indicate that 71 percent of graduates were registered taxpayers, suggesting engagement in income-generating activities. While there were no qualitative

findings dealing with tax registration, the quantitative insights further revealed that some employed graduates had not registered for tax, raising concerns about informal employment practices, such as casualization or avoidance of formal banking systems for wage payments. This discrepancy highlights the need for further inquiry into barriers to formal tax registration, particularly among self-employed individuals.

Employment Status

Quantitatively, less than 50 percent of graduates were employed, with males having a higher employment rate (56 percent) compared to females (37 percent). The qualitative data supported these findings, noting societal and structural factors affecting female employment, such as traditional caregiving roles. The marginal differences in employment by institution attended and the significant disparity based on qualification levels emphasize the role of higher qualifications in improving employability, which was also reflected in graduates' perceptions of the need for advanced skills to secure jobs.

Employment Type

Quantitative findings show that 35.2 percent of employed graduates were self-employed, with males outpacing females in entrepreneurial ventures. Qualitative data highlighted the challenges faced by self-employed graduates, such as limited capital and equipment, which were cited as reasons for unemployment by some respondents. The dominance of contract-based employment (36 percent) and the low percentage of permanent roles reflect the precarious nature of the job market. Qualitative narratives emphasized the instability of contractual and casual employment, which impacts long-term career planning and financial stability.

Job Search Dynamics

Most graduates (70 percent) found employment within six months, with males generally securing jobs faster than females. The findings further note that females often face extended job search periods due to factors such as family responsibilities. Graduates with higher qualifications reported shorter job search periods, reinforcing the quantitative trend of qualification levels influencing employability.

Monthly Income

Quantitatively, almost half of the graduates earned between K1,000 and K2,500, which is below the national average salary. The qualitative data revealed feelings of underemployment and dissatisfaction among graduates, particularly those in self-employment or casual roles. Graduates highlighted the mismatch between their earnings and living costs, with females earning less than males across all income categories, a disparity linked to gendered employment opportunities.

Main Reasons for Unemployment

Quantitative data shows that 84 percent of unemployed graduates were actively seeking jobs. Qualitative responses expanded on this, mentioning barriers such as lack of capital, equipment, and support for entrepreneurship. Female graduates were more likely to cite family responsibilities as a reason for unemployment, reflecting cultural expectations that disproportionately affect women.

Relevance of Training

Quantitative findings show that 88 percent of graduates found their training relevant to their employment. Qualitative data supported this, with graduates expressing appreciation for the technical skills acquired but suggesting that curricula could better align with industry demands. Female graduates were slightly less likely to perceive their training as relevant, citing limited job opportunities that matched their skillsets.

Preparation for the Job Market

While most graduates rated their job market preparation positively, qualitative feedback highlighted gaps in soft skills and practical exposure. Graduates suggested integrating internship opportunities and entrepreneurial training into programs to enhance readiness.

Chapter Four: Implication of Findings

This chapter discusses the findings in view of the research questions for the study; (a) What percentage of TEVET graduates who studied General Agriculture program from 2021 to 2023 are employed or self-employed? (b) How relevant are the skills acquired through TEVET General Agriculture programs to the current job market in Zambia? (c) Which level of qualification has the highest and lowest employability rates? (d) What are the key factors influencing the employability of TEVET graduates?

Employment Rate of TEVET Graduates in General Agriculture (2021-2023)

Quantitative data reveal that fewer than 50 percent of TEVET graduates from the General Agriculture program are employed, with 35.2 percent engaging in self-employment. These findings indicate that a significant proportion of graduates remain outside formal employment, relying on self-employment as an alternative. The data further highlight a notable gender disparity in employment rates, with males achieving a higher employment rate (56 percent) compared to females (37 percent). Despite efforts in Zambia to promote self-employment, particularly in the agricultural sector as a solution to unemployment, this study shows that the uptake of such initiatives among graduates remains relatively low.

Qualitative feedback reinforced these findings, with graduates discussing the challenges of accessing stable employment in the agricultural sector, particularly in rural areas. Limited access to capital and resources for self-employment was mentioned by several respondents, indicating that entrepreneurship, while a potential pathway, is often constrained by external factors.

Relevance of TEVET General Agriculture Skills to Zambia's Job Market

The relevance of skills acquired through the General Agriculture program was seen as positive, with 88 percent of graduates reporting that their training was relevant to their employment. However, qualitative responses pointed to areas for improvement, especially in terms of aligning the curriculum more closely with the needs of the current agricultural job market in Zambia. Graduates appreciated the technical skills they learned but felt that there were gaps in the inclusion of new farming technologies, modern agricultural practices, and business management skills that are increasingly required by employers in the agricultural sector. Female graduates were slightly less likely to view their training as relevant, with some citing a lack of job opportunities that directly aligned with their specific skill sets, suggesting a disconnect between education and market needs.

Highest and Lowest Employability Rates by Qualification Level

The data indicates a significant relationship between the level of qualification and employability rates. Graduates with higher qualifications, reported higher employment rates, with a faster rate of securing jobs compared to those with lower qualifications. This trend was particularly evident in the quantitative data, which showed a higher percentage of level 4 certificate holders employed, as well as a shorter job search period for those with advanced

qualifications. The qualitative data further emphasized the importance of higher qualifications in securing stable and better-paying jobs. Lower-level qualifications, on the other hand, were associated with longer job search times and greater difficulty in finding employment. This highlights the importance of promoting advanced training and specialized skills in the TEVET sector to enhance employability.

Key Factors Influencing the Employability of TEVET Graduates

Several key factors emerged as influencing the employability of TEVET graduates, both from the quantitative and qualitative data. These include qualification level, gender, self-employment barriers, job market conditions and family responsibilities.

Qualification Level

As noted earlier, graduates with higher qualifications reported higher employability rates. This finding was consistent across both quantitative and qualitative findings, with graduates indicating that higher qualifications were essential for securing job opportunities.

Gender

The gender disparity in employment rates is a significant factor, with male graduates having a higher employment rate than female graduates. Qualitative data revealed that societal factors, such as traditional caregiving roles, often limit the ability of female graduates to seek or accept employment. This suggests that gender-related social expectations continue to impact employability.

Self-Employment Barriers

A sizeable portion of 37 percent of graduates turned to self-employment due to the lack of formal job opportunities. However, barriers such as limited access to capital, equipment, and resources for entrepreneurship were cited by 2 percent of the graduates. These challenges point to a need for better support for graduates pursuing self-employment, including access to funding and mentorship.

Job Market Conditions

The agricultural sector in Zambia, while significant, often offers informal or low-paying jobs, which can affect graduates' long-term career prospects. This was particularly noted in the qualitative data, where graduates mentioned that, despite their training, job opportunities were scarce or mismatched with their qualifications.

Family Responsibilities

Female graduates in particular cited family responsibilities as a barrier to employment. This aligns with cultural expectations that women are primarily responsible for household duties, which can interfere with job searches or acceptance of employment. This social dynamic underscores the importance of policies and programmes that support work-life balance and create more opportunities for female graduates.

Chapter Five: Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, several recommendations are proposed to enhance the employability of TEVET graduates, particularly those from the General Agriculture programme, and to improve the relevance and quality of TEVET training in Zambia.

Enhancing Curriculum Relevance and Alignment with Market Needs

The curricula for General Agriculture programmes should be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect the evolving demands of the agricultural sector. This includes integrating modern farming technologies, sustainable agricultural practices, and business management skills to ensure graduates are well-prepared for current job market needs.

Establish closer partnerships between TEVET institutions and industry stakeholders, including farmers' cooperatives, agribusinesses, and government agencies. This collaboration can ensure that training programmes align with market demands and provide graduates with industry-relevant skills.

Graduates expressed the need for improved soft skills like communication skills, teamwork, and entrepreneurial training. There is need to relook into how entrepreneurship skills are taught in training institutions. Integrating these skills into the curriculum has the potential to improve both employment and self-employment opportunities in the agriculture sector.

Support for Self-Employment and Entrepreneurship

Establish support mechanisms such as low-interest loans, grants, or micro-financing options for graduates who wish to pursue self-employment in agriculture. Providing access to tools, equipment, and startup capital is critical to overcoming the barriers many graduates face when starting their own businesses.

Develop mentorship programmes and networking opportunities that connect graduates with experienced entrepreneurs, industry experts, and business leaders. These networks can provide valuable guidance, market insights, and collaboration opportunities for self-employed graduates.

Introduce specialized courses or workshops on agricultural entrepreneurship, covering aspects like business planning, marketing, and financial management, to ensure graduates have the knowledge and skills to successfully run agricultural ventures.

Addressing Gender Disparities

Develop policies that support female graduates in balancing work and family responsibilities, such as flexible work arrangements, parental leave, and childcare support. These policies can help reduce the barriers women face in seeking or retaining employment.

Ensure that both men and women have equal access to training opportunities and employment prospects. Promote gender equity through targeted outreach, mentorship programmes, and awareness campaigns to reduce societal and cultural biases that limit women’s participation in the workforce.

Implement programmes aimed at empowering women in agriculture, such as women-focused entrepreneurial training and leadership development programmes. These initiatives can help

break down traditional gender roles and encourage more women to enter and thrive in the agricultural sector.

Improving Employment Opportunities for Graduates

Partner with businesses, government agencies, and NGOs to provide internship and work placement opportunities for students and recent graduates. This exposure will give graduates hands-on experience, increase their employability, and provide a better understanding of the job market.

Establish dedicated career services within TEVET institutions to assist graduates with job search strategies, resume building, interview preparation, and job placement. In addition, online job matching platforms could help connect graduates with potential employers in the agriculture sector and other relevant industries.

Many General Agriculture graduates are from rural areas, where job opportunities may be limited. Initiatives that promote rural employment, such as support for local agribusinesses, infrastructure development, and rural entrepreneurship programmes, can create more jobs and retain skilled graduates within these areas.

Enhancing Taxpayer Registration and Formal Employment

Provide incentives for employers to register employees and offer formal contracts, especially in the agricultural sector where informal employment is common. Graduates should also be educated about the importance of formal tax registration and its benefits.

For graduates engaged in informal work, it is important to provide pathways for transitioning into the formal economy. This can include simplifying tax registration processes and offering tax education to self-employed individuals, helping them to understand the benefits and requirements of formalization.

Policy and Institutional Support

The government should consider creating policies that support the employment and self-employment of TEVET graduates. This could include providing financial support for young entrepreneurs, creating tax breaks for employers who hire graduates, and incentivizing the private sector to invest in agricultural development.

Continue conducting graduate tracer studies to track the employability and career progression of TEVET graduates. These studies can inform the development of targeted policies and programmes to address gaps in training, employment, and entrepreneurship opportunities.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

The Graduate Tracer Study (GTS) of Zambia's Technical Education, Vocational, and Entrepreneurship Training (TEVET) sector provided crucial insights into the employability and relevance of training among General Agriculture graduates from 2021 to 2023. The findings reveal that less than 50 percent of graduates secured employment, with 35.2 percent engaged in self-employment. Male graduates had higher employment rates than their female counterparts, emphasizing the persistent gender disparities in the job market. Graduates with higher qualifications demonstrated better employment prospects, reinforcing the importance of advanced training.

Most graduates (88 percent) found their training relevant to their current employment, yet some noted gaps in curriculum alignment with industry needs, particularly regarding modern agricultural technologies and business management. While many graduates expressed satisfaction with their training, the study highlighted a need for enhanced practical exposure, entrepreneurship support, and stronger industry linkages. Income levels remained low, with many earning below the national average, and structural barriers such as access to capital further hindered self-employment.

To address these challenges, the study recommends curriculum updates, improved industry partnerships, targeted support for self-employment, and gender-focused policies to enhance employability. Institutionalizing graduate tracer studies will ensure continuous monitoring of employment trends and training relevance, ultimately strengthening the TEVET sector's contribution to Zambia's socio-economic development.

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