

THE EXPERIENCES AND LIVELIHOODS OF UNEMPLOYED GRADUATES  
IN WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA.

A RESEARCH PROPOSAL SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR MASTERS OF ARTS DEGREE IN DEVELOPMENT  
STUDIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

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OCTOBER 2022

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## **ABSTRACT**

The experiences and livelihoods of unemployed graduates in Windhoek, Namibia. Graduate unemployment is a global phenomenon and is not only known to the nation of Namibia. There have been numerous research conducted on graduate unemployment worldwide but less research has been conducted on graduate unemployment in Namibia especially focusing on their experiences and livelihoods. This study aimed to examine the experiences and livelihoods of unemployed graduates residing in Windhoek, the capital city of Namibia. This study sought to find out how the Namibian nation is affected by the high number of unemployed graduates with the main focus being on the unemployed graduate. This study assessed the impact unemployment has on graduates by focusing on the following research questions; what are the experiences of unemployed graduates seeking employment and what are the livelihood activities of unemployed graduates? A qualitative approach has been used using narrative interviews as a method. The total number of participants interviewed was thirty participants selected using purposive and snowball sampling. The key findings of the study were that graduates are finding it difficult to obtain employment, the main reason being graduates lack the number of working years' experience required by employers. Secondly, unemployed graduates are struggling to earn a living and have engaged in a range of ad hoc and informal activities to survive. The study also showed that for unemployed graduates residing in Windhoek, livelihoods are not sustainable. The participants discussed various strategies that can be implemented to better their experiences and livelihoods and these were considered as recommendations for practice and policy.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

<b>CV</b>	Curriculum Vitae
<b>FES</b>	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Namibia
<b>HEI</b>	Higher Education Institutes
<b>HPCNA</b>	Health Professions Council of Namibia
<b>GAO</b>	General Accounting Offices
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>IUM</b>	International University Management
<b>UNAM</b>	University of Namibia
<b>NCHE</b>	National Council for Higher Education
<b>NUST</b>	Namibia University of Science and Technology
<b>PDNA</b>	Post-Disaster Needs Assessment

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Firstly, I would like to thank God Almighty. A special word of appreciation goes to my parents for their support, without their help and encouragement the completion of this thesis will not have been possible. This thesis is dedicated to my parents, my father Fernando, and my mother Letticia. It is because of their constant love that I can do my Master's today.

Secondly, I want to acknowledge my supervisor Dr. Shivoro thank you for your time, effort, and input. Thank you Dr. Shivoro for your patience and for guiding me through the whole process of writing my thesis. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Kamanzi thank you very much for all of your assistance. Mrs. Kaundjua, thank you very much for pushing me and believing in my abilities as a student. Lastly, I would like to thank all the thirty participants who participated in this study.

## **DEDICATION**


This thesis is dedicated to my Father and Mother, words are not enough to say thank you for believing in me.

## DECLARATIONS

I, Maravihla Matondo, hereby declare that this study is my own work and is a true reflection of my research, and that this work, or any part thereof has not been submitted for a degree at any other institution.

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Name of student M.Matondo..Signature: ...  ...Date: October 2022

## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Unemployed graduates' experiences and livelihoods are becoming a vital concern as the number of unemployed graduates tends to increase worldwide. Ndyali (2016) asserts that unemployed graduates face serious difficulties in getting a firm foothold into the labor market. Unemployed graduates represent a tremendous potential development of human capital which a nation cannot afford to neglect, (Ndyali, 2016). According to Iyambo and Shikulo (2021), unemployment among graduates is becoming a challenge in most countries with many local authorities implementing different economic projects for their graduates to thrive but the problem continues to persist especially in Africa.

Graduate unemployment is a global phenomenon that many countries are experiencing and is not a problem only known to Namibia. According to Mwinga (2012), Namibia is facing an unemployment crisis and the country is failing to create new jobs and the existing jobs are being reduced. In 2018, Namibia recorded 67,000 unemployed graduates. This was revealed by the deputy director in the Ministry of Higher Education Training Innovation, Nhlanla Lupahala during a public dialogue on the perspectives of unemployed graduates held in April 2018, (Ikela, 2018). This study focused on the experiences and livelihoods of unemployed graduates in Windhoek, Namibia. The participants who participated in this study graduated from the University of Namibia (UNAM), Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST), and

the International University of Management. According to the National Council for Higher Education (2019), the main providers of higher education in Namibia are the three universities, two public and one private. UNAM was established in 1992. NUST started as the Polytechnic of Namibia in 1994 and was transformed into a university in 2015. The Internal University of Management (IUM) is the only private university. It started as Institute of Higher Learning and obtained university status in 2002. There are also fifteen other private HEIs in the country but the researcher decided to focus mainly on the three which are UNAM, NUST, and IUM.

Banks (2016) expresses that research on unemployed graduates' livelihoods emphasizes their need for ingenuity and resourcefulness as they try to make their way in economies and societies that offer little scope for their participation. Ismail and Stephen (2015) contend that unemployed graduates engage in multiple activities to secure their livelihoods and they are mainly involved in informal activities. This study explored the circumstances and processes that unemployed graduates use to construct and make sense of their lives. This study also explored pathways into the livelihood activities of unemployed graduates with the opportunities and constraints they experience, (Ismail, Stephen, & Fortune, 2015). Numerous studies have been done on graduate unemployment but few focus on the experiences and livelihoods of unemployed graduates. This study focused on the experiences and livelihoods of unemployed graduates in Windhoek, Namibia.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Students enter the university with the hope that after graduation, they will be able to secure a good livelihood but their expectations are usually short-lived when they face the harsh reality of being an unemployed graduate and now have to struggle to sustain their livelihoods. These are graduates with diplomas, honors degrees, and master's

degrees between the ages of 21–39 years. Banks (2016) explains that there are multitudes of obstacles facing unemployed graduates in their quest for decent work and secure livelihoods. This research aims at contributing to help fill the gap in this less investigated area of graduate unemployment.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

This research aims to answer the following questions.

1. What are the experiences of unemployed graduates seeking employment?
2. What are the livelihood activities of unemployed graduates?

### **1.4 Significance of the study**

This study on the experiences and livelihoods of unemployed graduates will inform stakeholders in tertiary institutions and policymakers about the impact unemployment has on graduates and thus can provide useful information for tertiary institutions on how they can enhance the entire tertiary education system to produce employable graduates. The findings of this study will give insights to policymakers about the interventions that can be utilized to assist the labor force in creating jobs that can absorb unemployed graduates into the labor force.

### **1.5 Limitation of the Study**

The study is limited to the city of Windhoek, and hence has a small geographical coverage. However, participants will be asked some questions that refer to their colleagues' experiences who are outside this small geographical coverage.

### **1.6 Delimitations of the Study**

The study focused on unemployed graduates living in Windhoek because of the time and resource constraints of the study, the researcher was unable to conduct the study in other towns. The researcher also chooses the city of Windhoek for the following

reasons. The University of Namibia has four campuses in Windhoek, which are the Main Campus, Khomasdal Campus, Hage Geingob Campus, and Neudam Campus. The International University of Management has two campuses in Windhoek, Dorado Park Campus and Windhoek City Campus and The Namibia University of Science and Technology has one Campus in Windhoek, because of the number of campuses the researcher found it suitable to conduct the study in Windhoek.

### **1.7 Conclusion**

In summary, this chapter introduces the reader to the background of the study. The matters raised in this study provide reasons for the necessity for more research into the experience and livelihoods of unemployed graduates in Namibia. This is because research has proven that graduates experience difficulties in securing employment. Chapter 2 focused on existing literature, what has been published in regards to graduate unemployment their experiences and livelihoods starting with research done globally, regionally, and research that was conducted in Namibia. All these literature was useful in knowing what has been researched and whether the research conducted in other countries can be applied within the Namibian context. Chapter 3 focused on the research methodology that was applied to carry out the study, these are the research method, research design, sample, research instruments, procedures, and research ethics. Chapter 4 focused on the research findings and analysis, the information the researcher obtained from participants who participated in the study, and what all the information obtained means. Lastly, chapter 5 focused on the conclusion and recommendations of the study.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.**

### **2. Introduction**

This chapter presents the literature, which is relevant to the study of the experiences and livelihoods of unemployed graduates. The literature also served as a basis to guide the interviews that were conducted in Chapter 4, to uncover whether certain phenomena were applicable in the Namibian context. Numerous studies have been conducted on graduate unemployment but few studies focus on the experiences and livelihoods of unemployed graduates within the Namibian context, thus making this literature relevant.

#### **2.1 Definition of concepts**

**Experience-** in this study means the events or occurrences which leave an impression on somebody, as well as how their meaning is built and what their mutual implications are, (Daher,2015).

**Graduates-** Moerane (2016) defines graduates as holders of bachelors or higher degrees from a university. He also defines graduates as individuals who have obtained an undergraduate or post-graduate degree or have completed secondary school and in addition obtained a certificate or diploma of at least six months' full-time duration. The term graduates in this study refer to all young people who have successfully met the requirements to obtain a diploma, degree, or master's offered by universities in Namibia.

**Unemployed-** The term unemployed in this study refers to all people who are 21 years and older, who are without work, but who are available for work, and who are job searching, (Van De Rheede, 2012). Moerane (2016) explains that unemployed persons

are those who have had no employment during the reference week, were available for work, except for temporary illness, and had made specific efforts to find employment sometime during the four weeks ending with the reference week. To be considered unemployed in South Africa, an individual must meet the following three criteria simultaneously: the individual must be without work, currently available to work, and taking active steps to find work, (Moerane, 2016).

**Livelihoods-** can be defined as an ensemble of strategies and activities carried out by a household to make a living. It involves the utilization of various household assets (natural, physical, financial, human, and social) to produce income (monetary or in-kind) and resulting in certain living conditions. A household asset provides labor income (through the use of the household members' capacity to work in-home or productive activities) and other sources of income (such as property rentals, remittances from relatives abroad, and others), (PDNA, 2014). According to Mhazo (2019), livelihoods are how the necessities of life are procured and are sustainable when they can maintain or enhance their capabilities to provide livelihood opportunities for the next generation. Livelihoods consist of the activities, assets, and capacities essential for a means of living. Livelihoods are also seen as the means of securing the necessities of life such as food, shelter, water, and clothing, (Mhazo, 2019). This means that people undertake many strategies that yield them food and money while using various assets and resources.

**Employment-** is any work executed by an individual for pay or profit who during the reference week worked for at least one hour or more, (ILO, 2018).

## **2.2 Conceptual Discourse on Graduate Unemployment**

Kouakou and Koba (2015) express that the transition to the labor force is often a difficult one for young graduates. On average, young job seekers remain unemployed for 4 years before landing their first job. At the same time, companies are seeking qualified employees, in the occupational fields in which youth are educated and are not finding the right candidates. Whitaker (2017) expands that young graduates in the current generation are struggling to build a career more so than older graduates, this is because job availability has narrowed, meaning students are less likely to receive work unless their degree of study aligns with the needs of the labor force. A survey of firms suggests that many employers believe that youth do not possess the qualifications that are required for various positions, (Kouakou & Koba, 2015).

Mhazo (2019) emphasizes that in both developed and developing countries there are structural characteristics whereby there tends to be a mismatch between the skills demanded by the labor market and those supplied by the labor market entrants. The justifications given by Azikwe (2010) for graduate unemployment are low availability of high skilled jobs and a low value placed on skills gained through the system. He further explains that tertiary institutions have a problem producing graduates yearly, yet these very graduates enter the world of work and realize they lack the right skills that are required for today's job market. Tertiary institutions are failing to update curriculums fast enough to keep up with the demands of employers, (Azikwe, 2010).

Madoui (2015) shares that in Malaysia, researchers have found out that job mismatch, English proficiency, misguided educational qualification, and lack of employable skills were held as factors responsible for university graduates' unemployment. Another study conducted in Malaysia highlights that some causes of unemployment among new graduates can be due to a lack of employable skills, poor communication,

problem-solving skills, and self-marketing skills as well as the selective attitude of the type of jobs with high salary demands. There could be many other reasons why graduates don't find employment or create one such as the mismatch of innovative skills between graduates entering the market and employers' demands or the size of the economy in terms of available employment and open opportunities for new projects, (Ndyali, 2016). The interesting finding of the study that was done in Malaysia reports foreign workers as competitors for the local graduates were about 1.7 million in 2017 which made it difficult for the local graduates to enter the workforce, (Ndyali, 2016).

The explanation given by Madoui (2015) as responsible for graduate unemployment in Algeria is the disconnection between the university education system and the world of work. Madoui maintained that the skills that are obtained from the tertiary institutions appeared to be dysfunctional and not relevant. Some university graduates, therefore, found themselves in problems as a result of the gap in the skills they obtained from the university and skills demanded by employers of labor in Algeria. The reason why graduates find it difficult to secure jobs after graduation may be traced to the inadequate curriculum adopted by their institutions. It is claimed that graduates do not have the appropriate job competencies required by their employers. Similarly, some of these graduates do not bring their traits to their search behavior through adopting creative and innovative strategies that promote job creation and even security, (Madoui 2015).

According to Mncayi (2016), graduate unemployment in South Africa is characterized by age, race, type of qualification, and to a certain extent gender. He adds that younger graduates are twice more prone to be unemployed than those graduates who are older than 35 years. Job opportunities available for women are more restricted compared to

those for young men resulting in higher unemployment rates for young women, (Mncayi, 2016). Mhazo (2019) believes that the majority of African unemployed graduates are those who have graduated in the humanities and business fields because these graduates always find themselves with lower prospects of employment. These are the graduates who are often underemployed because they settle for surviving jobs to sustain a living despite having tertiary education qualifications, (Mhazo, 2019).

In Kenya majority of students learn through lectures and academic textbooks and are academically sound but graduates have limited opportunities of acquiring practical experience by using machinery, equipment, and practical techniques associated with the professions, (Ndyali, 2016). Ndayli expresses that there is a lack of consultation with the private sector which has led to the teaching of the outdated curriculum, outdated resources, and outdated teaching methods. For the skilled graduates, market competition for the job, experiences, and their preferences for formal employment make them more likely to be unemployed as opposed to being employed.

According to a study done by Ndebele and Ndlovu (2018) corruption (i.e. impairing integrity, virtue, or moral principle) and nepotism (i.e. the favoring of relatives or personal friends because of their relationship rather than because of their abilities) was found to be a dominant factor contributing to graduate unemployment. Mhazo (2019) considers the lack of applicable business and social networks to secure employment as one of the biggest obstacles unemployed graduates encounter in both developed and developing countries. Graduates who have social and business networks within the labor market are often very successful when seeking employment compared to those that do not have any social networks. According to a study conducted in Namibia by the National Council for Higher Education in 2019, the duration of job search is often taken as a key indicator of the labor market situation of tertiary education graduates.

The longer the duration of the job search, the worse the labor market situation, an assumption that is not always true. Some graduates search longer because they prefer to work in areas where they can use their competencies related to their field of learning this is known as the horizontal match and or in the aim of a position in the hierarchy of the company/organization which is appropriate to their level of education, this is known as the vertical match. The report reveals that finding a related field and the appropriate job is a complex process, which requires a lot of activities on the side of the graduates but also activities and opportunities on the side of the employers, (NCHE, 2019).

The lack of professional and social relationships also appears to be a major contributor to graduate unemployment. Moreover, it should be noted that securing a job does not only depend on a paper qualification but also personal background and several traits related to the job, (Iyambo & Shikulo, 2021). Iyambo and Shikulo expound that there is always a certain role of race, gender, and socioeconomic condition in hiring an applicant. That means if graduates are not exposed or well conversant with the market realities due to their background, one gets more disadvantaged if they never got an opportunity to do internships during their tertiary studies.

Furthermore, institutions attended also contribute to graduate unemployment. The interesting finding was based on the institution of higher learning attended, it seems employers are using the university attended as a benchmark, (Ndebele & Ndlovu, 2018). Oluwajodu, Blaauw, Greyling & Kleynhans (2015) argue that graduate unemployment may be due to graduates' unrealistically high expectations. Graduates usually assume that their qualifications will ensure high salaries and managerial positions immediately. A study that correlates with the findings of Oluwajodu et al.,

(2015) is that of Iyambo and Shikulo. The Study of Iyambo and Shikulo was conducted in Swakopmund, Namibia.

Iyambo and Shikulo (2021) discovered that unrealistic dreams and expectations that are not matching the reality in the job market are some of the challenges faced by graduates when seeking employment. The discord in the graduate's dreams and the job market reality creates a feeling of anger in the life of a new graduate. Every graduate dreams big about their pursued professions but what they face in the job market differs from their expectations hence many of them tend to quit their jobs and end up jobless. Similarly, the study found that graduates are too selective on the job offers while they lack needed experience. The study further reported that most of the graduates looking for employment lack basic job experience which serves as prerequisite soft skills for many positions. By implication, the industry is forced to spend resources to retrain the graduate on basic skills which could be acquired during internship programs. New graduates face the challenges of unrealistic expectations in their search for jobs after graduation. In many instances, graduates do not want to start from a lower level, which should serve them well in terms of gaining job experience, (Iyambo & Shikulo, 2021).

However, a report from the NCHE (2019) elucidates that the start of job search is not easy to define and different graduates have different experiences. Some graduates started searching for employment already before the completion of their studies while others might be engaged in other activities before they started searching for employment. Job search is not a full-time activity and, in this sense, not an exclusive activity, (NCHE, 2019).

### **2.3 Conceptual Discourse of Graduate Unemployment in Namibia**

A study done by Iyambo and Shikulo (2021) reveals that factors influencing unemployment among graduates in Swakopmund are characterized by several factors. The study revealed that globalization and sourcing trends, favoritism, and lack of collaboration between the job industry and tertiary institutions are some of the causes of graduate unemployment. Tertiary institutions ought to train students and add value to the needed human capital but the training should be done within the confines of the industry needs. Iyambo and Shikulo added that mismatches of needed skills between graduates and employers' demands can be a titanic factor in finding employment for entry-level graduates.

Researcher Kandume (2018) contends that there is an over-production of graduates in certain fields, leading to some overflow as supply exceeds demand. Kandume explains that there has also been a problem of prioritization as there is concentration in certain areas and neglect in other areas of specialization that the country needs so dearly. One example to illustrate this is that Namibia is still producing more geologists than what the country needs as we neglect the shortage of quantity surveyors, that is why we reconsider decisions and bring back expatriates in this area, (Ikela, 2018). Additionally, Iyambo and Shikulo established that changing technology trends also contributes to low employment opportunities for graduates. External market changes such as the current new normal that was caused by the COVID-19 pandemic can potentially affect employment opportunities. Due to harsh economic factors and changes in the business environment, many companies might only employ graduates who have the potential to resuscitate their business operations by adding value. It is therefore of paramount importance that graduates possess employability skills, good

communication skills, and innovative ideas which are not limited to using technology and problem-solving skills, (Iyambo & Shikulo, 2021).

The study conducted by the NCHE in 2019 revealed that the unemployment rate is relatively high among graduates from the fields of Agriculture (51 percent), Sciences (36 percent), and Business (35 percent). The qualification type or degree level seemed to be an important factor in the employment situation of the graduates. Graduates who completed their studies with a Diploma or Certificate had a much higher unemployment rate (47 percent) compared to other high qualification levels. The qualification type or degree level seemed to be an important factor in the employment situation of the graduates. Graduates who completed their studies with a Diploma or Certificate had a much higher unemployment rate (47 percent) compared to other high qualification levels employed (23 percent). Few graduates (5 percent) were unemployed because of child-rearing and family care. The causes of graduate unemployment in Namibia were over-education which is used to describe a situation where an individual graduate possessed a level of education above what is required for his/her particular job. The term vertical link or vertical match between higher education and employment is sometimes also used to differentiate the concepts of over-education (vertical match) from skill mismatch (horizontal match), these were the main causes of graduate unemployment in Namibia. (NCHE, 2019).

#### **2.4 Types of Unemployment**

Frictional unemployment; occurs when young people search for jobs that best suit their skills and preferences, (Kanapano, Rayel, Imbun, & Jacka, 2016). For example, if one is a graduate and spends six months looking for the right job, they could be counted among the frictionally unemployed during that period. First time graduates tend to do this more often, in the first year of having graduated, it appears that most graduates

search for jobs in the field that they graduated in and only realize later that if they continue searching for jobs in the field of their study they can be unemployed for a longer time.

Structural unemployment; is one of the determinants of graduates being unemployed. It usually results from shifts in the pattern of demand for goods and services or changes in technology in the economy that affect the profitability of hiring young graduates in specific industries. It also refers to a skills mismatch between the fields of education supplied by graduates and those demanded by employers. Therefore, there is a difference between the skill that the employers require and those that employees offer, (Van De Rheede, 2012).

Cyclical unemployment; according to Kanapano et al., (2016) cyclical unemployment results from recurring depressions and cyclical fluctuations in business activities and government projects. It is also attributable directly to a cyclical decline in the real gross national product (GNP). Cyclical unemployment is the amount of unemployment resulting from declines in real GNP during periods of construction or recession when the economy fails to operate at its potential level. Van De Rheede (2012) explains that when graduate unemployment increases during periods of economic downturns and decreases during boom periods, the nature of the unemployment is cyclical.

Technological unemployment; this type of unemployment arises due to the advancement of science and technology, resulting in the invention of labor-saving machines and other devices to accelerate production, (Kanapano, Rayel, Imbun, & Jacka, 2016).

Seasonal unemployment; arises during certain periods that usually result from the reduction in demands for labor. This is likely attributed to the seasonal pattern of

consumers' habits or variation in production associated with climatic change. (Kanapano, Rayel, Imbun, & Jacka, 2016).

Van De Rheede (2012) emphasizes that although all types of unemployment may be relevant in the case of graduates, structural and cyclical unemployment seem predominantly to affect new graduates.

## **2.5 Unemployed Graduates in the City**

According to Banks (2016) by the year 2035, the majority of Africans are projected to be living in cities. Since it is rarely driven or accompanied by economic growth founded in industrialization and urban-located investment, urbanization has not been accompanied by sufficient job creation across the continent, leaving residents reliant upon their own devices to secure their livelihoods in oversaturated labor markets. Numerous unemployed graduates are struggling to maintain their livelihoods. Small businesses and informal enterprises offer critical income-generating opportunities, but limited investment capital, narrow product portfolios, oversaturated markets, and limited entrepreneurial skills and experience limit their profitability and potential, (Banks, 2016).

Iyambo and Shikulo note that unemployed graduates hardly progress through various stages of the business life cycle. The situation is not only a personal business challenge to the graduates but also the stagnation of their lives has an implication to the vision 2030 goal of the Namibian government, which envisages the country to promote the creation of a diversified, open market economy, with a resource-based industrial sector and commercial agriculture, placing great emphasis on skills development. Malumo (2012) adds that by the year 2030 Namibia is expected to have reduced the level of unemployment to only five percent, achieved macro-economic stability and sustainable democratic practice as well as an increase in the manufacturing sector.

Offiong (2014) expresses many people have come to accept that economic transformation, employment generation, and capacity utilization are associated with industrialization, however, African industries still find it difficult to absorb labor produced by African universities and institutions.

Iyambo and Shikulo posit that graduates need to undertake a possibility study to see if their study programs are on-demand or marketable. It is also feasible that graduates get innovative to be self-starters upon completion of their tertiary education. Ndyali (2016) demonstrates that the results on geographical location reveal that graduates who live in urban areas are about 2.6 times more likely to be unemployed than being employed. Graduates are more likely to be employed in rural areas where informal employment prevails more than formal employment. Ghafar (2016) expresses that with increased unemployment, more and more university graduates are either finding jobs in the informal sector or informal employment in the private sector. Fraser (2012) expands that unemployed graduates have several options namely; to migrate to other regions or countries in search of work; to start their enterprise, but young graduates are often considered to be high risk with lenders unwilling to lend; to continue with further education to Masters or Ph.D. level; or to continue waiting for a good job opening, with the support of their family. However, it is important to note that many graduates have limited or no social safety nets to fall back on, so end up trading down and being under-employed. It is for this reason that the researcher decided to focus only on unemployed graduates residing in Windhoek, the capital city of Namibia.

## **2.6 The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach**

According to Arkoh, (2019), an important tenet of human development is the capability of individuals to live sustainably. A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources), and activities required for a

means of living. Agwani (2014) emphasizes that the approach is people-centered because it concerns itself with what the people have (e.g. assets or capital) and what they do (e.g. livelihood activities), thus moving attention away from what they lack and, in doing so enable their capabilities to be strengthened. In this regard, the SLA takes into account the capabilities, indigenous knowledge, and other qualities of the individual to assess where assistance can best be made towards a sustainable livelihood. This is to say that the approach focuses on people themselves, their strengths (what they can do) and recognizes the several ways these individuals employ to stay alive. This information is beneficial to the study of the experiences and livelihoods of unemployed graduates. The researcher will thus concentrate on what unemployed graduates do which is their strength and the various means these unemployed graduates use to meet their basic needs.

A livelihood is more sustainable when it has a higher probability to withstand external shocks such as natural disasters, economic instability, or personal hazards such as death or incapacitation of working members of the household, (PDNA, 2014). Arkoh (2019) extends that a livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in the short and long-term. Mhazo (2019) asserts that livelihoods are secured when the necessities can be met on a sustainable basis. Therefore a set of activities must be performed repeatedly, either individually or as a group by using existing endowments to acquire the necessities. This study focused on unemployed graduates living in the capital city which is Windhoek, to understand whether their livelihoods are sustainable and whether graduates perceive their livelihoods to be sustainable or not, if graduates

perceived their livelihoods to be unsustainable, how do these graduates plan to overcome this unsustainability?

Capabilities can be defined as, the ability of people to access and use their opportunities, this study focused on the access and opportunities available for unemployed graduates and how these unemployed graduates access and use the opportunities which are available to them, (Mhazo, 2019).

Assets refer to the tangible and intangible resources that could be used by individuals to engage in productive activities that can help them make a living, (Chambers and Conway, 1992 p7 cited in Arkoh, 2019). Arkoh (2019) clarifies that for capabilities, assets, and activities to become sustainable, they should have the capacity to be maintained and enhanced in their present and future use. Sustainability is therefore dependent on how people use their abilities concerning the assets and opportunities they have. The primary concern of the SLA is the need for livelihoods to be capable enough to recover from stress, shocks, and critical life situation or circumstances. This study observed the livelihoods of unemployed graduates to uncover whether their livelihoods are sustainable or not and what unemployed graduates plan to do concerning their livelihoods. Mhazo (2019) elucidates that there are five categories necessary for the pursuit and maintenance of positive livelihood outcomes. These are human capital, social, natural, physical, and financial capital.

**Human capital:** This represents the skills development, knowledge, and ability to labor in good health which is important for the achievement of different livelihood strategies. All these are needed for productive work, (Mhazo, 2019).

**Social capital:** is taken to mean resources such as the relationship of trust, membership of groups, networks, and access to wider institutions upon which people draw when pursuing various livelihood strategies, (Agwani, 2014).

**Natural capital:** This comprises land, water, forests, air quality, erosion protection, biodiversity degree, and rate of change from which resources flow and services that are beneficial to derive livelihoods, (Agwani, 2014). Mhazo (2019) explains that it is from natural capital that humans derive a range of services, which makes human life easy.

**Physical Capital:** is made of the basic infrastructure and producer goods which are utilized to make the manufacturing process or simple to create smooth positive livelihood outcomes, (Mhazo, 2019).

**Financial Capital:** Income from the sale of products and the financial resources that people use to achieve their livelihood objectives, (Agwani, 2014).

### **Livelihood Strategies**

Livelihood strategies constitute the range and combination of activities and choices that people undertake to achieve their life goals, (Agwani, 2014). This study looked into the actions unemployed graduates take in achieving their life goals or whether they live one day at a time, hoping one day to be employed. This will be an interesting finding, to observe whether unemployed graduates put in all their effort to achieve their desired livelihoods or have come to peace with the fact that they are unemployed, and now only need to survive to meet their basic needs and hope for the day they are finally employed to achieve their livelihood goals.

### **Livelihood Outcomes**

In the context of the framework, livelihood outcomes are the results of livelihood strategies, such as more income (cash), increased well-being (non-material goods, like self-esteem, health status, access to services, sense of inclusion), reduced vulnerability (better resilience through an increase in asset status), improved food security (increase in financial capital to buy food), and more sustainable use of natural resources

(appropriate property rights) (Chambers and Conway 1992; DFID, 2000 cited in Agwani 2014).

## **2.7 Theoretical Framework**

Mhazo (2019) insists that Africa has revealed that a high level of educational attainment does not necessarily mean increased employment prospects, despite the numerous investments made by African governments to increase and improve the quality and quantity of education. Mhazo claims that African states do not have advanced economies and the result is a very low demand for highly skilled labor. Nevertheless, the signaling theory, posits that education per se does not enhance productivity, rather it is used by employers as a signal about an applicant's potential productivity, including their ability to learn on the job. (Van Der Merwe, 2010). The signaling theory suggests that job market candidates pursue higher education degrees to signal intellectual competency to prospective employers. Although the candidate might verbally express their intellectual abilities during an interview, possessing a university degree provides more tangible, behavioral evidence of intellectual competency to the prospective employer. The signaling theory can be applied to this study and Namibia as a whole. Having an honors degree or master's degree does not guarantee employment. As in the context of Namibia where there are thousands of graduates who are without employment. The honors degree or master's degree one has in possession can only inform the employer of the graduates' educational background or intellectual ability but does not guarantee that a graduate will find employment. Thus making the Signaling Theory applicable in the Namibian context, all the qualifications a graduate possesses are only used as indicators to show potential employers, a person's intellectual capacity and hence does not increase productivity.

## **2.8 The Perceived Role of Tertiary Education**

According to Ali and Jalal (2018) employment is the rising up agenda, as thousands of graduates with high qualifications continue to be jobless for one or other reasons. Tertiary education is reshaping its objectives to support students for careers, opportunities, progressive employment, training for the working world, and a better understanding of their capacities. Tertiary education helps students to build employability skills, which means that of enabling students to get and keep a job, allow them to bring changes to the working world, and similar proficiency for development, (Ali & Jalal, 2018).

There is a long-established idea that graduates are expected to have certain general qualities and attributes as a result of their tertiary education experience. According to Moerane (2016), a report in the United Kingdom argued that the aim and mission of tertiary education are ‘to enable persons to grow their competencies to the highest potential levels throughout life so that they develop intellectually, are well trained for employment/work, can effectively contribute to society and achieve personal accomplishments. Hence since 1990, there have been numerous reports advising the tertiary education sector to take important, core, exchangeable, and employability skills into the heart of their students’ learning experiences (Moerane, 2016).

A good academic achievement alone does not guarantee a job in the 21st century if the graduate does not demonstrate any potential to transform the organization or add value to their operations. On the other hand, tertiary institutions should either collaborate with the industry to train work-ready graduates or produce innovative job creators with some entrepreneurial skills. The collaboration between educational institutions and the industry is an investment towards training graduates for work preparation, (Iyambo & Shikulo, 2021). Iyambo and Shikulo add that it is therefore imperative that educational

institutions design authentic assessment activities that are more aligned with industry practices, standards, and approaches.

According to Hwang (2017), university students spend their time, money, and efforts trying to obtain advantages unavailable to those who only have a high school certificate. However, when faced with unemployment they are more vulnerable to unfavorable economic circumstances because they spend all their resources on pursuing higher education. Tertiary education has become a central means by which young adults equip themselves for working life or working adults refresh their skills. In other words, Universities should produce job-ready graduates for the industry through collaboration, (Iyambo & Shikulo, 2021).

## **2.9 Vulnerability and Unemployment**

According to Agwani (2018) vulnerability denotes the external environment which is made up of the trends (demographic trends, resources trends, and trends in governance, economic indicators such as prices), shocks (human, livestock or crop health shocks, natural disasters/hazards like earthquakes or flooding; economic shocks; conflicts in the form of national or international wars) and seasonality (seasonality of prices of products or employment opportunities) and represents the part of the framework that lies furthest outside stakeholder's control. Arkoh (2019) further explains that unemployment generally puts people in a vulnerable situation. In navigating this vulnerable situation in developing countries where there are no unemployment benefits, people need to use the resources available to them. The extent and depth of capital or assets that a person has access to will most likely influence their abilities, capabilities, and strategies for seeking employment and productivity. For instance, one's level of education and skill set as well as cognitive skills (i.e. human capital) may be influential in that person landing a job, in Namibia, this is proving to be false

as the number of unemployed graduates appears to be increasing every year. Also, a person's access to economic capital can play a huge role in self-employment or investments in education, this is applicable in Namibia. Notwithstanding, the policies, institutions, systems, and processes that exist in a place will also determine the extent to which job opportunities are available for people that could take advantage of them, (Arkoh, 2019). This is also applicable in Namibia and to this study of the experiences and livelihoods of unemployed graduates.

Banks (2016) contends that it is important to explore how local and global structures and processes create a hostile economic and social environment in which unemployed graduates search for livelihoods. Only then can people identify how urban poverty brings insurmountable constraints on unemployed graduates' agency. Banks adds that there is a need to understand the multitude of obstacles facing unemployed graduates in their quest for decent work and secure livelihoods, how these differ by gender and educational status, and the implications of this for their longer-term social and economic development.

## **2.10 Consequences of Unemployment**

According to Moerane (2016), medical research confirms that graduate unemployment sometimes leads to psychological symptoms such as loss of confidence and depression. A survey that was done in Australia proved that unemployed young graduates have poor health conditions and have chronic sickness more than employed people. In support, the studies held in Norway, the UK, and Scotland established that there is a strong positive correlation between smoking as well as drug possession with being unemployed, (Moerane, 2016).

Bigenius (2014) states that consequences of unemployment including financial problems and shaming experiences can become the reality for many unemployed

graduates. Financial problems are common among unemployed graduates, especially for those who are mothers or fathers and have to take care of themselves and their children, in other words, those that have dependents, those that have people depending on them, for food, clothing, and other basic needs. Madoui (2015) has asserted that apart from the fact that unemployed graduates are deprived of earning a salary, he is equally deprived of the socialization effect of work and removed from social ties and relationships. As a result, this unemployed graduate starts to withdraw slowly from society avoiding peers and family because they want to avoid some of the following questions. What are you doing now? Are you still looking for a job? What do you plan to do if you do not get employed? (Madoui, 2015).

Bigenius adds that the problem, therefore, is that an unemployed person does not live up to standards and expectations from their social surroundings. It can be dishonorable and shameful to be unemployed. The unemployed persons' feelings of being humiliated and criticized can develop into shame when they are excluded from a social group; the employed persons. The unemployment situation can lead to feelings of being less valuable since employment is considered normal and decent, (Onoyase, 2019). When a person is not employed, he/she can lose the feeling of being competent and respected by others, making them vulnerable to how others consider them. If people keep handling the unemployed with negative comments about their unemployment, social contacts might become something the unemployed avoid, (Bigenius, 2014).

Murungi, Njoki, and Muthaa (2019) express that education is meant to develop capacity and enable members of society to become productive. This represents not just a gigantic pool of untapped talent, it is also a source of social unrest and individual despair, if graduates who have worked hard to graduate from school and university

cannot secure decent jobs and the sense of respect that comes with them, society will have to be prepared for outbreaks of anger or even violence. Murungi et al., (2019) explain that the evidence is in the protests that have recently occurred in Chile, Egypt, Greece, Italy, South Africa, Spain, and the United States (to name but a few countries). Additionally, Onoyase (2019) states that this makes the unemployed graduates exhibit a kind of nonconforming and negative social vices that are found in Nigeria today, for example, kidnappers. Onoyase (2019), believes that Nigeria's spiraling graduate unemployment can be said to have significantly contributed to the dramatic rise in social unrest and crime such as Nigeria Delta militancy, Boko haram, and Jos crisis. Unemployment may lead to anti-social behavior such as prostitution in females and arm robbery or kidnapping in males, (Onoyase, 2019).

## **2.11 Conclusion**

The literature presented in this chapter illustrates the importance of this study titled the “Experiences and Livelihoods of Unemployed Graduates in Windhoek, Namibia.” This chapter firstly presented the basic concepts that are used throughout this chapter and are important for the research of the experiences and livelihoods of unemployed graduates. The literature focused on the conceptual discourse of graduate unemployment, and livelihoods in detail. The literature represented in this chapter took into consideration what is happening worldwide in terms of graduate unemployment thus making graduate unemployment a global phenomenon. This section also aimed to fill the gaps in knowledge, especially within the Namibian context, to see what has been researched in terms of graduate unemployment and livelihoods. The literature review reveals that not much research has been done in Namibia that focuses on the livelihoods of unemployed graduates, thus proving the importance of this study.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

The chapter discusses the methodology used in conducting the study. Furthermore, the chapter also outlines the various research components about the research design, population, sample, research instruments, procedure, data analysis as well as research ethics.

#### 3.2 Research Method

This study utilized the qualitative approach of research using narrative interviews as the method. The researcher chose the qualitative approach because participants can freely share their experiences without constraint. Mohajan (2018) explains that qualitative research is a form of social action that focuses on how people interpret and make sense of their experiences and that is to understand the social reality of individuals. It is exploratory and seeks to explain ‘how’ and ‘why’ a particular social phenomenon, or program, operates as it does in a particular context. It tries to help people understand the social world in which they live, and why things are the way they are, (Mohajan, 2018). Muliro (2009) elucidates that qualitative research is good at simplifying and managing data without destroying complexity and context. Qualitative methods are highly appropriate for questions where pre-emptive reduction of the data will prevent discovery. If the purpose is to learn from the participants in a setting or a process the way they experience it, the meanings they put on it, and how they interpret what they experience, the researcher needs methods that will allow for discovery and do justice to their perceptions and the complexity of their interpretations. Qualitative methods have in common the goal of generating new ways of seeing existing data,

(Mohajan, 2018). Eyisi (2018) adds that theory emerges from data. The emergence of theory from data allows the researcher to construct and reconstruct theories where necessary, based on the data the researcher generates, instead of testing data generated elsewhere by other researchers. Expressions and experiences of the participants are easily understood even when there is little or no information about them. Moreover, a qualitative research approach views human thought and behavior in a social context and covers a wide range of phenomena to understand and appreciate them thoroughly. Human behaviors, which include interaction, thought, reasoning, composition, and norms, are studied holistically due to an in-depth examination of phenomena. Eyisi (2016) characterizes qualitative research as meanings, a concept, a definition, metaphors, symbols, and a description of things. This shows that qualitative research contains all necessary instruments that can evoke recall which aids problem-solving. Qualitative data instruments such as observation, open-ended questions, in-depth interviews (audio or video), and field notes are used to collect data from participants in their natural settings. He further explains that the methods employed in data collection give a full description of the research concerning the participants involved. Hence, the qualitative research approach provides abundant data about real-life people and situations. Secondly, the system through which data are retrieved in the qualitative research approach is regarded as being unique. The reliance on the collection of non-numerical primary data such as words and pictures by the researcher who serves as an instrument for themselves makes qualitative research well-suited for providing factual and descriptive information. The close relationship that exists between the researcher and the participants in this approach makes it easy for the participant to contribute to shaping the research. This, however, accounts for a significant understanding of

experiences as its participants understand themselves and also understand experience as unified, (Eyisi, 2016).

Narratives are composed of actions, happening, characters, setting, and discourse, the way the story is communicated, (O'Leary, 2014). In telling the stories of life, previously unheard or silenced voices open up the possibility for new, even radically different narrations of life experiences, (Holt, 2010). Telling stories is a means to help people apprehend what an experience can do to people who are living that experience. Furthermore, storytelling is the precise role of narrative interviews to offer a way of experiencing those effects without experiencing them with our own lives. Researchers have argued that such interviews produce more detailed and authentic accounts of people's experiences, (Riessman, 2008). In response to these points, narrative interviews were selected as the most appropriate method for this study aimed to investigate the experiences and livelihoods of unemployed graduates.

### **3.3 Research Design**

This study was a case study of unemployed graduates, who graduated from the University of Namibia, Namibia University of Science and Technology, and the International University of Management residing in Windhoek, Namibia. A case study is an analysis of a group or an individual and it is used to make generalizations about a larger group or society as a whole, (Davies & Beaumont, 2011).

### **3.4 Population and Sample**

The research sample consists of 30 unemployed graduates with the following characteristics. The participant must have graduated from the following institutions: The University of Namibia (UNAM), Namibian University of Science and Technology (NUST), and the International University of Management (IUM).

- i. The participant must be between the ages of 21 and 39 years. The reason for starting with the age of 21 is because it is the age where most students graduate with their first degree.
- ii. The participant must be a holder of a diploma, honors degree, or master's degree.
- iii. The participant must be an unemployed graduate.
- iv. The maximum number of years to be unemployed is 12 years. The researcher wanted to discover whether there were graduates who were unemployed for more than ten years, if that was a possibility or whether it was only new graduates who were struggling to secure employment.
- v. The participant must reside in Windhoek.

Purposive sampling and snowball sampling was applied in this study. Purposive sampling is selecting participants based on the particular purpose of the research, (O'Leary, 2014). The researcher choose purposive sampling because it enabled the researcher to squeeze a lot of information out of the data, the researcher collected. This also allowed the researcher to describe the major impact findings have on the population.

To reach the desired size of the study sample, snowball sampling from the study population was implemented. Snowball sampling is when the sample is made up by approaching one participant who then helps the researcher to identify other similar people within the study population to make up the complete study sample, (O'Leary, 2014). The researcher choose snowball sampling because referrals make it easy and quick to find participants as they come from reliable sources. The method is also cost-effective as referrals are obtained from a primary data source. The researcher was not referred to unemployed graduates with PhDs only to a graduate who was a final year

Ph.D. student, thus the reason why there are no unemployed graduates with PhDs in this study.

### **3.5 Research Instrument**

A semi-structured interview guide was utilized to address the research questions. An interview guide is a list of topics or questions that the interviewer plans to cover during an interview, (DeCarlo, 2018). This acted as a guide to prompt an in-depth discussion about the experiences and livelihoods of the participants that took part in the study.

### **3.6 Procedure**

The researcher did not know 30 unemployed graduates residing in Windhoek. It is for this reason that the researcher started with participants the researcher knows and then asked the participants who participated in the study, to refer other unemployed graduates who would not mind being part of the study to reach the desired sample size. Arrangements were made with those who have agreed to take part in the study. Participants were then reminded a day before the interview and two hours before the agreed time of the interview. All interviews were done telephonically and each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. The call was put on a loudspeaker, to record the entire interview on a multimedia recorder. Thus, the use of the telephone provided participants with a resource to both control their own social space and to protect them from being interrupted by other family members, a resource which would not have been available in face-to-face interview encounters, (Stephens, 2007).

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

The data collected through narrative interviews with the aid of an interview guide was qualitative thus was analyzed making use of the content analysis method. Content analysis is a systematic research method for analyzing textual information in a

standardized way that allows evaluators to make inferences about the information they have received. The main idea in content analysis is that the many words of the text are classified into much fewer content categories, (GAO, 1996). In this section, both manifest and latent content analyses were employed. According to Moerane (2016) manifest content analysis, is comparable to the surface structure present in the message, whereas latent content analysis is the deep structural meaning conveyed by the message. Bengtsson (2016) contends that there is no need to use different main stages for manifest and latent analysis since the stages of the analyzing process are mainly the same regardless of interpretation. Thus the researcher has employed the following five steps in analyzing the data.

1. The researcher read through all the transcripts to get an overall understanding of the responses of the participants.
2. The interview texts were divided into ‘meaning units’; that is, words and statements related to the same central meaning;
3. Each meaning unit was condensed and shortened in length to lessen the number of words describing the content, but still, preserve the core of the text;
4. The condensed meaning units were then interpreted and labeled with a code. The meaning units with connecting codes were sorted into the relevant content area;
5. Using the four steps, the researcher was now ready to interpret the condensed meaning units for latent analysis. Subcategories were formed that included codes and meaning units with similar content. The subcategories were then organized and sorted into more comprehensive categories. A category can be described as a group of content that shares a commonality, (Bengtsson, 2016).

### **3.8 Research Ethics**

Qualitative research involves asking people to be open in disclosing fine details of their lives. Research must be conducted with sensitivity to the consequences for the participants. Through this involvement, they should not be deceived, exploited, or harmed in any way, (O'Leary, 2014). The researcher applied for ethical clearance from the University of Namibia. Accordingly, the researcher hopes to conduct an ethical study using the following research ethics guidelines.

**Informed consent-** participants were informed about the key elements of the study and what their participation involved.

**Anonymity-** the names of participants were kept confidential to protect their identities and this was done by keeping any identifying information out of published studies.

All information obtained from the interviews will be stored on a multimedia recorder and this information will only be kept for six months, after completing the study, information received from participants will be permanently deleted from the multimedia recorder.

### **3.9 Conclusion**

The chapter focused on the research design that was applied to carry out the study. The population, sample size, research instruments, data collection procedure, data analysis as well as research ethics. Additionally, the study employed a case study approach between 3 universities, namely the University of Namibia, Namibia University of Science and Technology, and the International University of Management to provide valuable insights into the experiences and livelihoods of unemployed graduates residing in Windhoek Namibia.

## CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter consists of the responses of the participants who participated in the study titled the experiences and livelihoods of unemployed graduates in Windhoek, Namibia. Narrative interviews were used as a method of data collection, because it is by sharing lived experiences that people come to have an understanding of what graduates went through and are going through and this is physically, mentally, and emotionally. The findings are supported by the literature in the literature review.

The total number of participants was thirty, of which 22 were females and 8 were males. 21 graduated from the University of Namibia, 7 were from the Namibian University of Technology and 2 graduated from the International University of Management. 4 of the participants have obtained their master's degree, 13 have honor's degrees, six have bachelor's degrees and 7 have obtained their diploma's.

**Table 4.1 Gender and number of participants who participated in the study.**

Gender of Participants who participated in the Study	Number of Participants
Females	22
Males	8

Table 4.1 represents the gender of participants, of those that participated in the study of which 22 were females and 8 were males. The number of unemployed graduates who are females was more than that of males, meaning in this study more female graduates were unemployed as opposed to males.

## 4.2 Description and characteristics of participants

Table 4.2 summarizes the characteristics of the thirty participants who were telephonically interviewed.

<b>Participant code</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>University attended</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>	<b>Number of years of Seeking employment</b>	<b>Year Participant graduated</b>
<b>Participant 1</b>	Female	30	UNAM	Diploma in Local Government Honors Degree in Public Management Masters in Political Science	6 years	2015
<b>Participant 2</b>	Female	39	NUST	National Diploma of Business Administration Honors Degree in Entrepreneurship	10 years	2011
<b>Participant 3</b>	Female	23	UNAM	Diploma in HIV/AIDS Management Counselling	2 years	2019

<b>Participant 4</b>	Female	22	UNAM	Honors Degree in Industrial Psychology	8 months	2021
<b>Participant 5</b>	Female	26	NUST	Bachelor's Degree in Tourism Management	1 year	2020
<b>Participant 6</b>	Female	27	NUST	Bachelor's Degree in Tourism Management	3 years	2018
<b>Participant 7</b>	Female	26	NUST	Bachelor's Degree in Tourism Management	3 years	2018
<b>Participant 8</b>	Female	27	UNAM	Honors Degree in Industrial Psychology Masters in English Studies	5 years	2016
<b>Participant 9</b>	Male	26	UNAM	Honors Degree in Fisheries and Aquatic Science	3 years	2018
<b>Participant 10</b>	Female	25	UNAM	Honors Degree in Fisheries and Aquatic Science	3 years	2018

<b>Participant 11</b>	Female	23	UNAM	Honors Degree in Environmental Biology	8 months	2021
<b>Participant 12</b>	Female	32	IUM	Diploma in Secretarial and Office Administration Honors Degree in Business Administration	5 years	2016
<b>Participant 13</b>	Female	30	UNAM	Honors Degree in Media Studies	5 years	2016
<b>Participant 14</b>	Female	26	UNAM IUM	Honors Degree in Fisheries and Aquatic Science Post graduate Diploma in Education	3 years	2018
<b>Participant 15</b>	Male	22	UNAM	Honors Degree in Chemistry	8 months	2021
<b>Participant 16</b>	Female	25	UNAM	Diploma in Accounting and Auditing	1 year	2020
<b>Participant 17</b>	Female	31	UNAM	Honors Degree in Accounting	2 years	2019

<b>Participant 18</b>	Male	26	UNAM	Diploma in Education	8 months	2021
<b>Participant 19</b>	Male	24	UNAM	Honors Degree in Education	8 months	2021
<b>Participant 20</b>	Female	25	UNAM	Diploma in HIV/AIDS Counselling Diploma in Education	5 years	2016
<b>Participant 21</b>	Female	23	NUST	Bachelor of Logistics and Supply Chain Management	8 months	2021
<b>Participant 22</b>	Male	24	UNAM	Honors Degree in Industrial Psychology	8 months	2021
<b>Participant 23</b>	Female	28	NUST	Bachelors of Public Management	4 years	2017
<b>Participant 24</b>	Male	38	UNAM	Honors Degree in Public Management	5 years	2016
<b>Participant 25</b>	Male	27	UNAM	Honors Degree in Agriculture Masters in Food Science	3 years	2018

<b>Participant 26</b>	Female	22	NUST	Bachelor of Property Studies	8 months	2021
<b>Participant 27</b>	Male	36	UNAM	Honors Degree in Agriculture Majoring in Food Science and Technology	4 years	2017
<b>Participant 28</b>	Female	27	UNAM	Honors Degree in English Studies Masters in English	5 years	2016
<b>Participant 29</b>	Female	25	UNAM	Diploma in Education	8 months	2021
<b>Participant 30</b>	Female	25	UNAM	Honors Degree in Public Management	2 years	2019

Table 4.2 outlines everything about the participants who participated in the study starting with their gender, their age, where they graduated from, what they studied, how long they have been unemployed as well as the year they graduated. It is evident from the table that young and older graduates are struggling to secure employment and these graduates studied different courses, some went to different universities and not all graduated in the same year, but what they all have in common is that all graduates who participated in this study are unemployed.

The following are the themes that discuss the research findings. The Disheartening Experience, Taught but not trained, The Struggle to Survive, The Pain is Real but We Move, It's not what you know but who you know, If not for Family and Friends, Help, I am unemployed graduate, The Perceived Future of Tertiary Education, Namibia's future is crying for Help and The Summary of Participants Interviewed.

#### **4.2 The Disheartening Experience**

The theme 'the disheartening experience' is all about what unemployed graduates face daily when going out in search for employment. The question posed to the participants was "what were and are your experiences of seeking employment." All unemployed graduates interviewed explained that their job hunting experience is disheartening. The following is true although thousands of students graduate, not all secure employment. The signaling theory posits that education per se does not enhance productivity, rather it is used by employers as a signal about an applicant's potential productivity, including their ability to learn on the job. (Van Der Merwe, 2010). The signaling theory suggests that job market candidates pursue higher education degrees to signal intellectual competency to prospective employers. Although the candidates might verbally express their intellectual abilities during an interview, possessing a university degree provides more tangible, behavioral evidence of intellectual competency to the prospective employer. The signaling theory can be applied to this study and Namibia as a whole. Having an honors degree or master's does not guarantee employment.

**Figure 4.3 Number of years seeking employment**



Figure 4.3 shows the number of years graduates have been seeking employment. Some graduates have been unemployed for 8 months and one graduate has been unemployed for ten years which the researcher finds shocking, that there are graduates who have been unemployed for ten years, this finding brings forth many questions as to how many graduates are out there who have been unemployed for ten years or more and what does this mean for the Namibian nation and tertiary education?

Below are just some of the responses from the participants when asked what were and are their experiences of seeking employment. Participant 12 shares her experience,

*“The discouragement when you apply for a job and you hope for the job but you don’t get called back to go for an interview that’s very discouraging. In my case, I have been applying for jobs but I have not been called to go for an interview that is very discouraging and there was a time that I gave up until now. I just gave up applying for jobs because I was like am applying but I am*

*not getting any response and that's very discouraging not being called to go for an interview. I have been waiting for 5 years, it's very discouraging at least I should go for an interview and say I didn't make it past the interview I would feel better."*

Participant 3 narrates her experience. *"I have been seeking employment at the hospital, when I went to various hospitals for employment, they would normally say, no we don't have patients that need counseling. I also tried going for internships but they said they do not give internships to students anymore due to the unethical behavior certain students had the year before I came to the university, it is so hard. I looked for employment at every health institution and organization. I went there and they said no we don't have jobs now"*.

Participant 7 tells her story, *"Unemployment is very hard, especially for someone like me. I stay at home. I was just in my thoughts most of the time. I didn't think of anything to better my livelihood. I went into a stage of depression. It was really hard mentally. It was so hard for me and still is."*

Participant 8 shares her story *"my experience has not been easy. I find it quite difficult especially with the field of study that I did. I have an honors degree in Industrial Psychology and English. The market for getting a job is not there, you hardly see any advert stating that they need an industrial psychologist or they need somebody to do English, I feel like my qualification is not valid in the market. It has been difficult. I have sent CVs but I hardly get responses and if I do get a response they state that I am overqualified or I am not really what they need for the job. My experience has not been great."*

Participant 17 narrates her experience. *“Most of the posts that I apply for, I don’t receive any response, especially government positions. I was never called for an interview, even from private companies. It’s very hard looking for a job.”*

Participant 19 shares his story, *“it has been tough and there is a lot of competition out there. Some have been unemployed way before I graduated making it even more difficult. I am now realizing that after graduation there’s a possibility that I will be staying at home for two to three years.”*

Kouakou and Koba (2015) express that the transition to the labor force is often a difficult one for young graduates. On average, young job seekers remain unemployed for 4 years before landing their first job. At the same time, companies are seeking qualified employees, in the occupational fields in which youth are educated and are not finding the right candidates. A survey of firms suggests that many employers believe that youth do not possess the qualifications that are required for various positions, (Kouakou & Koba, 2015). This can be a possible explanation of why graduates who have just graduated are finding it difficult to be employed. The finding in this section is, graduates are finding it difficult to be employed, some participants reported that they have never been called for an interview despite their efforts of sending in CVs for years, as a result, some graduates are discouraged to even apply for jobs, and participants describe their experience of seeking employment as disheartening.

### **4.3 Taught but not trained**

This section mostly focuses on graduates who participated in the study, who believe that the reason they are unemployed is that they lack the skills that are needed in the working world. The question the researcher asked participants was “where does the

problem lie? Why do you think you are unemployed?” They believe that the course they studied at the university did not allow them to have practical skills and that is the main reason they are facing unemployment today but the researcher has found this not to be the case as there were participants who participated from other universities, who have working experience and they got this experience from being interns for more than three years but still find it difficult to secure employment. The finding here is that, yes experience is what is required but what some graduates don’t know is that at least five years of working experience is required, having three years of working experience is not sufficient it seems with the responses received from participants. The section starts with those graduates who believe that they were not adequately prepared for the world of work due to a lack of experience, followed by graduates who were and are still interns.

**Table 4.4 University Attended**

University Attended	Number of Participants
UNAM	21
NUST	7
IUM	2

Table 4.4 demonstrates which institutions of higher learning participants graduated from.

Participant 1 shares her sentiments,

*“You can be qualified but because you don’t have experience, employers don’t give you a chance. I feel like the university itself has not prepared students for the market, that students become employable after graduation. It is a struggle,*

*even to find internships it is a struggle. I feel like the university should have prepared students in terms of just putting students on the path of internship that is part of the program itself so that students find themselves better integrated into the employment sector.”*

Participant 27 shares his view, *“employers are requiring two to three years working experience but when we walk out of the university. We walk out with only six weeks of experience and that is not sufficient for any position. I have had three interviews so far but all were unsuccessful. When the curriculum review has to be done, they should incorporate internships that graduates can do. If a student can work out with one years’ experience that makes a graduate more employable. Positions are available but what is not available is working experience.”*

Participant 28 narrates her story,

*“Nothing has come through ever since I got my first degree. I lack the experience that is needed and when it comes to acquiring that experience it is another story. It is not a smooth process. I had holiday jobs but it is unrelated to what I am studying so getting the experience I need for becoming an English tutor or lecturer is not getting it. I do volunteer at a special need school but I still don’t have a job.”*

The following statement comes from Participant 4. *“It’s been hard to find a job and the reason is I am young and inexperienced”.*

Participant 22 states,

*“It’s so stressful because most organizations want experience. Experience plays a major role as opposed to the qualification one has obtained, for instance, there will be a post that I am qualified for but what works against me*

*is that I do not have the necessary experience they are looking for. Employers are also not well informed with Industrial Psychology they are more acquainted with Human Resources. I feel like universities should also give internships opportunities to every student for them to pick up momentum and gain experience because what is the use of going to the University for four years just to do theory, it's not like I am going to apply theory in my workplace.”*

As stated earlier there are graduates from other universities who did internships and are still doing internships but have not secured employment yet, one of them is Participant 23, she shares her story,

*“It's really hard. I have been applying but nothing has been coming out. The economy is also so down. It's very hard to get employed nowadays. Experience is what is making it hard to get employed. You find a post advertised but then the experience required is just too much for a graduate. The posts advertised usually look for 5 years of working experience graduates do not have this type of experience. I did my internship while I was still studying at a certain organization, I finished studying but I am still an intern at that organization, but the problem is, you are just there as an intern, there's no promise of getting a job, years are passing by opportunities are presented for employment but as it is a policy of that organization, interns are not allowed to apply for vacant posts. You will find people with Honours, Masters but they just remain interns. Interns are not given the opportunity and interns are also scared to leave and start applying for jobs. No one wants to sit at home, that's a whole other story. For now, we are just allowing ourselves to be exploited. It's very hard due to*

*the fact of experience and the competition between graduates is very high. Everyone wants to work.”*

The reason given by Madoui (2015) as responsible for graduate unemployment in Algeria is the disconnection between the university education system and the world of work. Madoui maintained that the skills that are gotten from the tertiary institutions appeared to be dysfunctional and not relevant. Some university graduates, therefore, found themselves in problems as a result of the gap in the skills they got from the university and skills demanded by employers of labor in Algeria.

Participant 6 appears to agree with Madoui’s statement, she expresses,

*“I think the whole system in terms of graduates, the university, and the labor market are not matching, I would say that a lot of students are graduating. Universities are too theoretical. You come into the market without experience. The positions in government might be looking for a director or some kind of management position and the requirement is only a degree and 9 years experience then you find this person who just came out of the university and does not have that kind of experience. Graduates end up applying for administrative jobs that require grade 12, which makes them overqualified and it’s not matching their qualifications, those with certificates can find jobs easily but those with degrees and master’s, when they go into the market, are qualified but don’t have the experience and no platform is allowing them to integrate into the market. There’s no link between what you have studied and what you are doing. There is no match for people who are doing degrees. You rarely finish your master's with one or two years experience and you are going to work that is equivalent to your qualification. It’s either you start somewhere*

*lower which is okay at least you are given the opportunity. There's so much emphasis on experience than qualifications maybe that is why graduates are struggling. The emphasis for the job market is experience and not qualifications. It's okay to have the average qualification but the requirement is experience. I feel like the job market favors those with experience. I feel like the system needs to be upgraded, it's an old system and it was focused on when people were not focusing on qualifications, now that people are going for qualifications the system is still not upgraded."*

Participant 2 gives the following account, *"when you study at a tertiary institution you want to be employed immediately after graduation but now what's the point the people want to get jobs, they want to work. Then you get a person that ends matric, they get into the workplace, they get the experience that is needed for the job title and then you get someone who has just finished at the university and has no skills, no experience but they got the qualifications. Tertiary education is theoretical, there are no practical activities, like internships to assist one to become good at the job you are doing"*.

Another participant, Participant 26 states that *"the fact that people do not have enough skills, especially with the online teaching, students are not doing a lot of practical work now it's just based on theory. Internships should be compulsory. Employers want experience, and from the deduced information it appears to be that the experience most employers want is 5 years working experience and more."*

#### **4.4 The Struggle to Survive**

This section focuses on the livelihoods of unemployed graduates. What unemployed graduates do to meet their basic needs? The challenges they face daily and how they overcome the challenges they encounter. Arkoh, (2019) contends that an important tenet of human development is the capability of individuals to live sustainably. A

livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources), and activities required for a means of living. Capabilities are thus defined as, the ability of people to access and use their opportunities and assets refer to the tangible and intangible resources that could be used by individuals to engage in productive activities that can help them make a living, (Arkoh, 2019). The question was “what are your livelihood activities?” According to Banks (2016) small businesses and informal enterprises offer critical income-generating opportunities, but limited investment capital, narrow product portfolios, oversaturated markets, and limited entrepreneurial skills and experience limit their profitability and potential, The statement of Banks has proved to be true in this study and the evidence is the responses of the participants when asked about their livelihoods, starting with Participant 10, the following is her account. *“I sell second-hand clothes, that’s how I survive. I also buy products from Oshikango. I am a hairdresser, and I do hair just to get a dollar.”*

This is the livelihood of Participant 17 she narrates,

*“I sell eggs and I started a salon at home. I started my salon before COVID, my business was going well but when Covid started, the number of customers declined and I just started having a few customers who come in month-end but during the month no customers at all. There’s no other way, you just have to wait for customers at the end of the month.”*

Participant 25 shares that *“I tried to start a garden but then it didn’t work out because of capital, I couldn’t manage. Sometimes, I clean yards or help someone who is moving to load their possessions”*.

Participant 27 explains that

*“I would sometimes help people that are setting up food factories and they would sometimes ask for a certain analysis that I can carry out with that I get a few hundred. I also help students with research and I get money from that, as well as help my friends who have a printing business to get customers and through that, I get a commission. There’s no formal business that I have that can give me a constant income.”*

The following Participant 13 explains that *“I try to design posters here and there. I design posters, business cards, logos and I have an online talk show. I get invited but it’s not as if it brings in an income daily. I receive phone calls to give motivational speeches. I have a daughter that I have to take care of, sometimes she might need something and I am unable to afford it. People have been really helpful, when I open up and say that I want to do something, either for myself or my daughter, those who care do get to help me and the father of the child, he supports me here and there. Sometimes I get to survive from my daughter’s money and it’s not the way of living for me. I want to be standing and be established so that I can be secure that this month I am going to do this and that.”*

Additionally, Participant 14 states *“I order things online and start selling. I also help write research projects for students”*.

To add to the livelihoods of unemployed graduates is the livelihood of Participant 15, who expresses, *“I just look for something, when someone asks for my assistance and we negotiate. People ask me to tutor them, assist them with their assignments. Sometimes you want to do something for yourself but you cannot. I want a class where*

*I can tutor students but I am finding it very hard to get a classroom I can use because of the monthly rent that needs to be paid.”*

The next participant, Participant 18 explains that

*“I have a car wash and a driving school, this is where I get money to sustain me while I wait to be employed. I face financial challenges. I have family that is looking up to me and they expect me to provide for them, that is the challenge I am experiencing right now, sometimes I don’t have money especially when younger siblings go back to school, it’s a challenge for me to raise that money. That is the biggest challenge that I am facing.”*

This is the story of Participant 20 she shares,

*“I am on my own, both my parents have passed on, my cousin who used to take care of me also passed on. I am a hostess and I make money out of that, I am invited to be the master of ceremonies at certain events. I also started a haircut business, I make haircuts for any occasion, this is how I am keeping myself busy and meeting my basic need. I don’t earn a lot of money and I have to buy electricity and pay for water. I don’t have a job but I have to maintain a whole household, it’s tough and your siblings are looking at you but I don’t have a job. It’s tough.”*

Participant 3 explains,

*“I started a small business where I sell popcorn, ice, and fudge. I normally sell these products during school hours for the kids that are in my location that is how I meet my basic needs. At home, there are things I don’t have, so I need to make a plan to get them. I live with my cousin and we only live two. There’s no adult living with us, there’s no elder person to maintain the household, it’s only*

*the two of us and sometimes we don't have the necessities in the house. It's a bit of a struggle and what I usually do is I save up, when I usually get pocket money I save up and when things in the house finish. I have to buy."*

Adding to the list of the livelihoods of unemployed graduates is the livelihood of Participant 5 she shares, *"I make braai plates and I make chilly sauces at home that I sell. I mostly sell foodstuff. My location is a challenge, I don't get too many customers, sometimes I would be sitting outside my yard and it all just depends on who comes by, or sometimes I invite a few friends to come and support me and that's the only time they will come but on a day to day basis there are not a lot of customers unless you make it on paydays."*

This is the livelihood of Participant 11 she shares,

*"I have decided to venture into online marketing, I do herbal life, that's the only thing that is helping me cope with unemployment because you know when you are done with school, your parents and everybody else starts to cut the allowances. They don't give you allowances anymore because now they believe that I am capable of fending for myself. I live with 4 of my unemployed cousins as well and we are primarily dependent on the renting income, we have built a flat in our yard and the people there are also experiencing salary cuts and what not and they can't even afford their rent now, we have to step in and take out money from your pockets to buy food because all of us are dependent on what they give us and the money they give is not even enough to pay for electricity and water. The food is cut out now you have to try and find means to buy food just to meet your basic needs when my body lotion and deodorant run out and*

*I don't get money the next month, it's a struggle because now you have to make a way."*

Bigenius (2014) states that consequences of unemployment include financial problems and shaming experiences can become the reality for many unemployed graduates. Madoui (2015) has asserted that apart from the fact that the unemployed graduate is deprived of earning a salary, he is equally deprived of the socialization effect of work and removed from social ties and relationships. Bigenius and Madoui's statements are true for Participant 12 she explains,

*"I came up with an idea to start a business to make some income. I had a boutique but it is closed now due to COVID. I cook and I have a home shop. I have a shop in the north whereby we sell goodies, that idea came up when I couldn't find a job and I was like let me try. I am doing business that's where I get income which is not much. Pressure from family, they disrespect me and they don't include me in family gatherings when there are family meetings I am not included and that is very painful. I feel like is it because I don't have money? I have some other income to support myself financially and I can buy food and cosmetics. The main challenge is just family."*

Participant 19 expresses, *"I do forex. Forex (i.e. it's a short form of foreign exchange. For is derived from foreign ex for exchange. It's kind of like a marketing flowing, you get to deposit your money and you get to exchange it on the market-wide) and my main challenges one of them is this stress factor. I hoped that after graduation I was going to get a job somewhere and earn respect from others. I have noticed that when you are not employed people start to discriminate and question your abilities. There's just a lot of stigma and this is very discouraging. There's a lot of disrespect."*

This section ends with the thoughts of Participant 21 *“I sell vintage clothes. You see your peers get employed and you feel like when is my time is going to come? and when your parents are still supporting you, after all, they have supported you and you know you also want to repay them. You would like your parents to take pride in you and say this is my daughter who studied at the university now she is working and she helps us and takes care of us, that is my main challenge.”*

With the deduced information it is clear that none of the livelihoods of the participants are sustainable because according to Arkoh (2019) a livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in the short and long-term.

The following are the livelihoods (i.e. the strategies participants undertook to yield them food and money, while using various assets and resources) of unemployed graduates in this study, two participants started selling second-hand clothes, two participants own hair salons, two participants help students with research projects, two participants are hostess and are invited to be the master of ceremony for events, one participant cleans yards, one participant started a driving school and has a car wash, one participant sells braai plates and this is only on the weekends and one participant sells herbal life products. These graduates shared that although they have something that they are doing to earn income, it is not enough to pay the bills, such as water, electricity, and to buy food. These graduates are struggling to survive with their current livelihoods, some had business before but had to close because of the Covid pandemic, for others sales dropped drastically because of the pandemic. The finding here is that graduates are struggling to meet their basic needs.

#### 4.5 The Pain is real but We Move

This section is all about the coping strategies unemployed graduates use when dealing with unemployment. The term we move simply means yes the pain of being an unemployed graduate is real but there is a need to continue moving forward. Participants responded to the questions “how do you cope being an unemployed graduate and what coping strategies do you use?” Fraser (2012) suggests that unemployed graduates have several options namely; to migrate to other regions or countries in search of work; to start their enterprise, but young graduates are often considered to be high risk with lenders unwilling to lend; to continue with further education to Masters or Ph.D. level; or to continue waiting for a good job opening, with the support of their family, in this study the result is that the graduates who have participated in this study have either opted to continue studying towards their Masters or Ph.D. while others are waiting for a good job opening with the support of family and friends. The following is an account of Participant 28 she stresses that,

*“It is very difficult and there are times when I am super frustrated and I wonder if anything good really going to come out of all this studying and whether I will ever be employed right now I just feel like I am over qualifying myself for positions. My only coping strategy is studying. After obtaining my honors degree in English, I went on to study for my Master's, after my Master's, I went ahead to pursue my Ph.D. There's no way I will just sit at home and get frustrated over little things.”*

Participant 6 expresses, *“I don't cope. I am still studying which keeps me occupied. If I was not studying, I would have been depressed and felt like I am not doing anything. I was in a period where I was doing nothing, I was just home taking care of my son, I became depressed just by staying at home the whole day, not doing anything thinking*

*about how I could have progressed, applying and nothing is coming up, I know I am qualified but I don't even get a call back for interviews”*

Participant 30 expounds, *“I have decided to apply for another course and that is what is keeping me busy at the moment. I just stay calm and tell myself that it is a temporary situation that I am in”*. Moreover, Participant 25 states that *“I try to keep myself busy by doing short online courses that are free”*. Participant 10 explains that *“I am into fitness. I spend my time exercising and also doing some yoga. Currently I am studying and I use my time doing my assignments”*. These are some of the graduates who have continued studying and use it as a coping strategy. Others, have engaged in sports Participant 5 states, *“I have hobbies. I play tennis and I love drawing and writing to stay sane.”*

Other participants have found other things to keep them busy Participant 7 explains that

*“I live with my sister now and I take care of her kids that takes away the attention from myself and you get to give the attention to the kids, that helps me to cope a lot because I am not just thinking about my situation but I am putting my energy into something useful.”*

Furthermore, some participants have come to terms with being unemployed graduates Participant 18 is one of them, he expresses, *“I understand the situation that we are in now. I am not in a hurry in securing employment in the education sector. I am looking at other things that can keep me busy.”* Participant 8 clarifies, *“you just learn how to take each day. You just keep on encouraging yourself that one day you will get what you want and you keep on trying to motivate yourself as well as motivation from family members. My family encourages me is not the end of it all and you just keep on moving*

*each day and if you don't put it to mind. It can be quite depressing being at home without doing anything but then as days go by I think you eventually get used to it and you learn how to live with it."*

Participant 13 reveals that,

*"At some days you tell yourself at least I am an unemployed graduate, you have a roof over your head, you have food to eat but sometimes it gets tough. You went to school, you went to study because you want to become someone in life and you want to secure a career and some of us are very passionate about what we studied but now when you don't get that job it becomes really difficult, it starts to play with your emotions because you want to work and you want to use the knowledge that you gained in school for something better but you are struggling to get a job, it's a bit difficult because looking at your colleagues, they say comparison is not good but it does get to you here and there. Some days you are motivated, some days you are discouraged but thank God for these days the youth are getting closer to God. When you go to church, you get to be motivated daily. I meditate on the Word of God and it uplifts me."*

Lastly, Participant 14 states, *"you cope knowing that you are not alone and knowing that somehow, someday you will get something. I try to find different things to do"*.

Some graduates could not help but talk about the pain and the thoughts they wrestle with every day like Participant 21 expresses,

*"It's very hard sometimes because it leads to a lot of thoughts of regret, telling myself maybe it was useless for me to go to the university just to find myself being at home, doing nothing. I am bored and full of stress as well."*

Participant 23 relates with Participant 21 she enunciates that,

*“It’s very hard and it’s very stressful and this can lead to anything because as a person when you are in hardship, it can be problematic for anyone because you don’t know how to make ends meet and you can end up doing things that are not even right. I have been coping just like that but I cannot say that I am coping, it is really difficult.”*

Ending with the thoughts of Participant 19, he shares, *“I have friends that I have graduated with and we seek employment opportunities together in that way I don’t stress myself. I enjoy my time with friends, attending family gatherings. I have realized that staying alone gives me a lot of stress and I experience anxiety.”*

#### **4.6 It’s not what you know but who you know**

This section is all about knowing the right people to get the job, the perceptions of unemployed graduates. According to a study done by Ndebele and Ndlovu (2018) corruption (i.e. impairing integrity, virtue, or moral principle) and nepotism (i.e. the favoring of relatives or personal friends because of their relationship rather than because of their abilities) was found to be a dominant factor contributing to graduate unemployment. The participants who participated in this study seem to agree with the study that was carried out by Ndebele and Ndlovu, as most of them stated that if you do not know anyone in Namibia, it will be difficult to find a job. Participants were asked, “do you agree with the following statement or disagree, it is not what you know that matters but who you know and elaborate.” The following is what unemployed graduates had to say, starting with Participant 21 she believes that *“it’s not what you know but it’s really about who you know. People are only hiring the ones that they know and because of this, corruption is very high, imagine you are applying for a post*

*and they are only asking for grade 12, you apply for the job but the person who gets the job is not even someone who passed grade 12, they end up getting the job just because they know someone in that company.”*

These are the views of Participant 22 he believes that *“to get something done, you have to know someone in Namibia. It’s all about connections, and if you want something done, you also need to help someone somewhere, for instance, if I was an SRC at a university and then I help someone with registration and later they see me looking for internships they will be more likely to help me.”*

Participant 23 argues that *“the reality is that you will find a post that is advertised but then hundreds of applicants apply but with this, it is clear that they already have their preferred candidate. People know now that there are no jobs and now people just contact a family member that they know and employers are also just helping family members and friends”.*

Participant 6 expresses,

*“Regardless of what you know, if you do not have the network or the opportunity to get to where you want to be or work, if you don’t have that networking, you will not see or get that opportunity. The corruption in Namibia is very high, there are a lot of people who are qualified and competent to do jobs all we see is nepotism and favoritism in terms of promotion or recruitment it’s happening a lot now in Namibia.”*

These are the opinions of Participant 24 *“In some companies, you find that if you know somebody there then you will be employed, even though you don’t have the qualification and some even don’t meet the requirements for the job and you wonder how certain people got certain positions. Sometimes they advertise a post but that post*

*is already taken. They just advertise to blind the people that they are promoting fairness and transparency.”*

Participant 25 shares his experience.

*“Talking from experience, you find that there is an advert for a vacant post and they are asking for three years experience and your colleague that knows someone in that organization gets called for an interview but I haven’t received any call. I then realized it’s all about who you know and sometimes you find instances whereby people are going for an interview but people already have their candidate who is going to have the job. The interview is just for formality.”*

Participant 29 believes that *“it’s all about who you know in a certain department if you do not know anyone, tough luck for you. For you to have a job, you need to know someone”* Participant 30 contends that *“you have to know somebody to hear about a specific position in a specific company and for you get hired. It’s all about the kids of the prominent people that are getting jobs, left, right, and center that are getting jobs. We that don’t come from prominent families have to struggle on our own to find employment.”*

Participant 11 declares,

*“What you know does not matter because I realized that even the companies that are releasing vacancies are just doing it for formality, people are releasing vacancies but it’s just for formality, it’s to say the position was vacant and that nothing was done back door but in actual sense, they are releasing vacancies but they already have someone for the job in mind. You find 70 people attending an interview for one position but when you go back and do some*

*research you find out that not even one person from the 70 people that attended the interview was called back which means that there was already someone for that position and the advert was just for formality.”*

These are the sentiments of Participant 14 *“In Namibia, it’s about knowing people if you do not know anyone you will struggle. Sometimes we go for an interview the answer should come after two weeks but just the following day you hear someone was already appointed for the position, this is because people know people and they put their people in front without qualifications and leaving those that have qualifications.”*

Participant 2 expresses,

*“It’s who you know in this country that you get ahead, like this one’s father’s friend or this one’s cousin’s uncle, it’s who you know and that is so frustrating because you know you can do the job then Tom Deacon Harry comes along and Tom Deacon Harry’s knows this person. You want to kick yourself and you want to kick the person for actually doing that to you. It’s horrible. That’s a Frustrating note”.*

These are the opinions of Participant 4 *“Sometimes you just know when you go for a job interview, the job already belongs to someone else. In Namibia, you can’t go without connections”* Participant 9 shares, *“I have seen some people who know people and they get jobs as opposed to those who don’t know anyone.”*

All participants interviewed in this study believe is not what you know but who you know that matters. Participants are convinced that interviews are just for mere formality and nothing will come out of that interview unless you know someone in that specific company or organization that can help you get the job. Mhazo (2019) considers the lack of applicable business and social networks to secure employment as

one of the biggest obstacles unemployed graduates encounter in both developed and developing countries. Graduates who have social and business networks within the labor market are often very successful when seeking employment compared to those that do not have any social networks. As a result, the lack of professional and social relationships tends to be a major contributor to graduate unemployment. Mhazo's considerations are applicable in this study as most participants think that not having any social networks makes the whole seeking employment experience a difficult task.

#### **4.7 If not for Family and Friends**

This section is about unemployed graduates who have not started any business yet but are solely dependent on family and friends as well as those graduates who do not earn much from what they do. Bigenius (2014) argues that financial problems are common among unemployed graduates, especially for those who are mothers or fathers and have to take care of themselves and their children, in other words, those that have dependents, those that have people depending on them, for food, clothing and other basic needs. What these graduates wish for is to have a normal life including a job, which would make them able to pay bills and other expenses, and have a social life, e.g. going to the cinema, restaurants, amusement parks, etc. Most of the participants who have participated in this study have admitted to having financial problems but are fortunate enough to have family and friends that care for them and support them, as a result, lifting financial burdens from them. The question asked was “who supports you financially?”

This is the account of Participant 6 she articulates that,

*“I am dependent on my mom now. I have no other source of income. I live in my mom’s house. She takes care of the bills and buys food. I have no income. I do sell Avon products but it is not sufficient and not sustainable.”*

Participant 22 states that “all my siblings take care of me”. Participant 25 explains “my parents help me out, cousins as well and some friends that were fortunate enough to get jobs.” Participant 26 shares that “my parents support me and I stay under my parent’s roof so, for now, I don’t have any challenges” Participant 28 states that “my parents have been supporting me since day one and they are still funding for my PhD. My parents cater for everything.” Participant 14 reveals that “my support system is mainly from my parents, with their help I can apply for jobs and buy the things I need.”

Participant 16 tells that “my siblings and my mother support me”

Participant 19 expresses, “my big brother takes care of me. He has been my head from day one” Participant 1 shares, “I depend on my parents for financial aid. I am dependent on my parents” Endless accounts from participants that get support from family and friends. This is the account of Participant 2 “I got family around me that supports me financially. I try and keep myself busy by coping I would say that my family supports me”.

Participant 4 elucidates “my parents support me with everything I need” With a heart full of gratitude Participant 7 shares “I stay with my mother and that has made my unemployment easier because I don’t have to pay rent or buy food” Participant 6 shares “I stay with my sister and she has been very helpful.”

This is the account of Participant 8,

*“My family members help me at times when you need something you go to them and my friends. You need money to make copies and courier CV’s my family helps me with that. They come through every time I need assistance and friends also help me as such.”*

These are but some of the accounts of participants who participated in the study. They are fortunate enough to have family and friends to support and care for them, that is why this section was titled if not for family and friends, where would these unemployed graduates find themselves today.

#### **4.8 Help, I am an Unemployed Graduate.**

This section is all about the courses unemployed graduates think have the highest number of unemployed graduates. It is basically what graduates think about the courses offered at universities. Participants were asked, “Which courses do you think have the highest number of unemployed graduates?” A study conducted in Namibia by the National Council for Higher Education in 2019 reveals that the unemployment rate is relatively high among graduates from the fields of Agriculture (51 percent), Sciences (36 percent), and Business (35 percent). The qualification type or degree level seemed to be an important factor in the employment situation of the graduates. Graduates who completed their studies with a Diploma or Certificate had a much higher unemployment rate (47 percent) compared to other high qualification levels. The qualification type or degree level seemed to be an important factor in the employment situation of the graduates. Graduates who completed their studies with a Diploma or Certificate had a much higher unemployment rate (47 percent) compared

to other high qualification levels employed (23 percent). Few graduates (5 percent) were unemployed because of child-rearing and family care, (NCHE, 2019).

This section will start the perceptions of Participant 11

*“Currently looking at Namibia, it is still a developing country and some of the courses that are offered, there is no market for it. When you look at the current situation education is one of the primary employers and then there’s nursing both are what is needed in the Namibian industry but when you look at the science faculty, let’s look at environmental biology, looking at tourism the borders are partially closed, there’s not a lot of tourist coming into the country, this means that there are no tour guides that are needed because who are you touring. You can have your tourism degree but at this time what are you going to do with it. It’s the same with the engineering industry, how many graduates are being produced each year, and is there a market for these graduates? Microbiology, environmental biology, biochemistry, and the biology-related graduates those are suffering the most in terms of unemployment.”*

Participant 16 seems to agree with Participant 11, *“she believes that “courses that have the most unemployed graduates, are the science students, especially those who studied Microbiology.”* Participant 14 contends that *“in Fisheries, those people only have vacant positions for five people in three to five years. People should know before applying for any course they should be well informed about the employment opportunities of the sector, you wish to study in. Courses that are more likely to have unemployed graduates are Microbiology, those environmental courses, for me. It’s a waste of time because they have a lot of unemployed graduates”*

Participant 22 is also of the same opinion he states that *“it’s the Science related courses because looking at Namibia, we can see that our country is not well-grounded in Science, let’s say someone who is doing their bachelors in Science is not guaranteed a job”*. The last participant who agrees with all the previous participants is Participant 26, she shares that *“the science field, all those science courses there’s no job opportunities for them”*.

Mhazo (2019) claims that the majority of African unemployed graduates are those who have graduated in the humanities and business fields because these graduates always find themselves with lower prospects of employment. These are the graduates who are often underemployed because they settle for surviving jobs to sustain a living despite having higher education qualifications. The following is the account of those participants who believe that students who study Human Resource, Entrepreneurship, and Accounting are more likely to be unemployed. These are the observations of Participant 12.

*“The course I did business administration is a very easy course, we have so many people that studied business administration making it very difficult just imagine, it’s a just one post but there are hundreds of graduates out there, I think.”*

Participant 17 shares the same sentiments as Participant 12 she believes that *“courses with high unemployed graduate are Accounting and Human Resource, there’s an oversupply of graduates in that field. Those who studied Human resources are finding it hard to find jobs. It is very hard for an accounting graduate to find a job”*. The following participants also share the same sentiments, Participant 18 expounds that *“education and Entrepreneurship most people that have studied business*

*administration are on the streets because they are financially challenged. After all, there are not able to be entrepreneurs, they need to be recruited before they start their businesses.”*

Participant 18 elucidates that. *“Any course that is business-related because what I have noticed is that most businesses are privately owned, like accountants those who did finance”*. Participant 7 believes that *“when you take a look at education, everybody has resorted to education because they perceive education to be the biggest employer when it comes to Namibia. The education sector is the biggest employer. There’s this perception if I study education, I am going to be employed and it’s much easier than someone who is doing tourism management and that’s true. If you take a look at human resources, there’s an oversupply of HR graduates.”*

Participant 24 believes that studying Public Management the chances of being unemployed is very high. This is his account.

*“Bachelors of Public Management, most of the graduates that graduated in that course, they never get a job in the line of their specialization. Let’s say out of 100% only 10% even our intake and our seniors most of them are just unemployed.”*

A different view is that of Participant 28, she thinks that *“the whole humanities and social science faculty are struggling with employment”*. Participant 29 believes that studying education, the chances of being an unemployed graduate is high, she argues that *“education, especially those majoring in Junior Primary Education. I think it’s best for now if the university stops offering education in junior primary for now, since we already have thousands of teachers that are unemployed because it does not make sense training more teachers in the junior primary.”*

However, there were participants whose views were different from all the other participants. This is what Participant 30 had to say,

*“Every course has unemployed graduates. I don’t think that there is a specific course that has a high number of unemployed graduates. All the courses offered at the university have a high number of unemployed graduates. The whole issue is not the course offered but the market that is there to absorb those graduates. There is no large market to absorb these graduates, that’s why there’s such a high number of unemployed graduates.”*

Participant 10 agrees she believes that *“all courses offered at the university are good courses the problem comes with the industry. Is the industry providing opportunities for graduates? We need everybody, every course that was introduced at the university is needed, and the problem comes with those that are responsible for that department of creating jobs. They are not providing enough jobs for the available graduates. The courses are essential but the way they are conducted or the way they are conveying the information to the students, it’s not helping students to stand on their own. Every course is important it’s just how the course is conducted and the opportunities that are available for students. The lack of innovation.”*

Participant 14 believes that *“earlier on, it used to be like that but today even courses that people use to go for like teaching, nursing is also becoming harder and harder. It just depends on our nation”*. Participant 8 expressed that *“I feel like universities are offering courses that are not in the job market and that are not needed”*.

This section had interesting comments from participants as some believed that studying any science-related course, business administration, public management, education, or any course in the humanities and social science faculty graduating from

these courses chances of being an unemployed graduate was perceived to be high. Nevertheless, there were those participants that believed that there's nothing wrong with the course studied and that every course is significant, the only problem they expressed is the market to absorb the high number of graduates, they argued the market is the problem.

#### **4.9 The Perceived Future of Tertiary Education**

This section consists of a subject that most participants spoke about when asked about their unemployment experiences some could not help but talk about the future of tertiary education. The researcher did not ask about the future of tertiary education this is a topic that most participants spoke about during the interview. There is a long-established idea that graduates are expected to have certain general qualities and attributes as a result of their higher education experience. According to Moerane (2016), a report in the United Kingdom argued that the aim and mission of tertiary education are to enable persons to grow their competencies to the highest potential levels throughout life so that they develop intellectually, are well trained for employment/work, can effectively contribute to society and achieve personal accomplishments. Hence since 1990, there have been numerous reports advising the tertiary education sector to take important, core, exchangeable, and employability skills into the heart of their students' learning experiences (Moerane, 2016). Thus the reason for this section is to reveal what unemployed graduates feel when it comes to tertiary education. Starting with Participant 23.

Participant 23 expresses,

*“No one would want to waste their time as it is now people are just wasting their time. We are wasting our time, all those four years spend studying, after*

*that, and a graduate is just at home. To be honest, we are just wasting time, going to a vocational school is even better but for us who are studying theory, we are disadvantaged because of the experience factor. We are wasting our time, what is the point of us going to study when there are no job opportunities even teaching posts are difficult to get. In the future people, will not want to go to any university. Going to the university will be a waste of time because you will get nothing out of it.”*

Participant 24 shares his experience. *“I was in the village and there is this businessman, that man does not even have grade 10 but he is a very successful businessman, I used to go and assist this man sometimes and he told me one day, I don’t care about your degree, he said even though you are educated, you just went to waste your time and money at the university. In the future people will see tertiary institutions as useless. Most of the parents from villages tried hard to make sure their children get an education, some sell cattle just to send their kids to the university with the hope that maybe they will get a job and support the family but at the end of the day, nothing.”* Participant 29 shares that *“these institutions might even close because there are so many jobless graduates. People are likely to think that going to the university is useless because I am also telling myself, it was a waste of time going to the university.”*

These are the sentiments of Participant 11.

*It just depends on people’s perceptions regardless of the situation at hand. I think in two to four years to come people will not pay much attention to tertiary education because it feels like a waste of time, spending four years in varsity and then your life does not change anymore and most people will prefer to start*

*a business while it's not late instead of you going to the university, to waste your time and energy studying for a degree that is just going to be under the mattress and does not bring anything to the table, but with the rise of online marketing that is going on, people are finding things to do online. I don't think tertiary education is going to be that much of a big deal in five years to come.*

Participant 3 explains that *"it's a bit discouraging because people can already see from the graduates, it's not easy to find a job. In newspapers today we see graduates writing and complaining, they are with their degrees and master's degrees, there are at home, no jobs. It's so discouraging seeing all this in the newspapers, sometimes it feels like it is a waste of money because tuition fee is a lot of money that you invest and after investing at times you won't get something out of it, which is now job opportunities. It's discouraging but I advise graduates to create opportunities for themselves just to encourage other unemployed graduates, for them to learn from each other instead of sitting at home and waiting with their qualifications being frustrated that there are no jobs."*

All the above participants have expressed that tertiary education is a waste of time and money. Some have expressed thoughts of regret. This is a sad finding that the hope they had in going to the university and being employed after the completion of their studies was not met and they now have to look for other ways to maintain their livelihoods.

These are perceptions of Participant 14 *"tertiary education just doesn't hold the same importance it held years back, Universities just keep on introducing new programs that are so useless and there's no market. I feel like especially at the university I attended some of the courses offered in the future they will just phase out because our*

*job market does not correspond with what graduates are taught. Education is not the key, you study just to end up on the streets. Most of the kids are not concentrating in school anymore, they are now just finishing school for the sake of finishing school.”*

These are the views of Participant 1.

*We are in Africa, there's this belief of being educated, it is in our culture. When you are educated, it guarantees you a better life. Looking at the current situation that is quickly changing. People that are merely having grade 10 or 12, are better than those that have degrees. The norm is changing, very soon people will be having kids and they would advise their children to go to the university but they wouldn't find the need. The picture society has drawn for us, is those that who are educated are those that are in want, and those that are not educated, are the ones that live a little better. Being educated does not guarantee a better life as long as the situation does not change. Do I feel like universities would survive? If this continues, there will be a time when parents wouldn't want to send their kids to higher institutions of learning that will affect institutions and their credibility will die out. Some universities' credibility is slowly dying because when you look at the ratio of the unemployed graduates, most of them come from those universities, their credibility is dying, it doesn't seem like it is taking them anywhere. These informal talks can change people's perceptions. People are turning to vocational schools, where they are not only taught but trained, this is what makes them more employable than universities. I do not see Tertiary institutions surviving for a very long time.*

These are the perceptions of Participant 22 *“people might be discouraged to study because people are now asking what the use of tertiary education is? If in the end, it results in you being an unemployed graduate. People will get discouraged and would rather opt for looking for a job after grade 12, instead of going to the university for four years just to come back home with your degree.”* Participant 2 expresses that *“when you study at a tertiary institution you want to be employed immediately after graduation but now what’s the point the people want to get jobs, they want to work. Then you get a person that ends matric, they get into the workplace, they get the experience that is needed for the job title and then you get someone who has just finished at the university and has no skills, no experience and all they got is their qualifications.”*

The views of the above participants correlate with the study that was conducted by Hwang in 2017. According to Hwang (2017), university students spend their time, money, and efforts trying to obtain advantages unavailable to those who only have a high school certificate. However, when faced with unemployment they are more vulnerable to unfavorable economic circumstances because they spend all their resources on pursuing higher education. In the end, they are left with nothing except their qualifications, which they cannot use and their peers they left behind with high school certificates have moved on and are productive because the duration of a degree in Namibia is four years.

Participant 12 feels that *“people will start seeing qualifications as useless because graduates are not using their qualifications and I don’t think that there is a future for them.”* Participant 5 believes that *“seeing the ongoing trend those who are in grade 12 may refuse to go to the university, they might not regard furthering their studies as an option that is what I believe. They might start their side businesses and not pursue*

*tertiary education.” Participant 16 contends that “this is a very bad indicator for people that study because many are sitting at home with their qualifications. People won’t be motivated to study anymore, if people are not getting jobs, they will ask themselves what is the use of studying, just to be at home doing nothing.” Participant 30 explains that “people will have a negative perception of tertiary institutions because they will start to think that it is pointless to study. In the end, you will end up being an unemployed graduate.” Participant 19 expresses that “people will be discouraged to study or even to pursue their masters. Tertiary education is costly.” Participant 9 explains that “at first people did value tertiary education. It’s such a pride for parents to see their children going to the university but I feel like eventually because of this high unemployment rate people are starting to lose their hope in tertiary education. Parents are now realizing what is used to send their children to the university and then the possibility of them being unemployed is so high. If things don’t change people will start losing hope and rather venture into business than to go the university, waste years just to sit at home. Universities should look at the job market and train their students towards the opportunity that are out there.”*

These participants believe that people won’t see the point of tertiary education, they won’t value it because of the rising number of unemployed graduates.

However, there were two participants with different views. Participant 20 and Participant 7. These are the views of Participant 7.

*“I think we are headed into a positive light. I think that those who are in high school now are more open-minded. They are open to more careers that we previously didn’t know about, for us it was just doctor, lawyer, and engineer*

*but those in high school nowadays will mention jobs that you didn't even know existed. I think we are headed in the right direction."*

Participant 20 argues,

*"It's all about the power in charge, the people at the top, they have to create the job opportunities for the graduates. The problem of graduate unemployment lies with the power in charge. It is the government's job to employ graduates. The government should check, where do we go from here and how do we solve the problem at hand. The problem solely relies upon the government in charge. The government should be able to create job opportunities otherwise, it's just going to look bad. We graduate from universities, expecting opportunities to be presented to us for us to show and demonstrate our skills but after graduation, there are no opportunities. It's going to look like we have a weak system and it's not going to look good. How do you have thousands of graduates just sitting at home? The system itself, the government needs to change."*

Participants 7 and 20 were the only participants who had a positive outlook with regards to tertiary education. According to Ali and Jalal (2018), today employment is the rising up agenda, as thousands of students with high qualifications continue to be jobless for one or other reasons. They believe that because of the increase that is seen every year with regards to graduate unemployment tertiary education is now reshaping its objectives to support students for careers, opportunities, progressive employment, training for the working world, and better understandings of their capacities. Tertiary education helps students to build employability skills now, which means that of

enabling students to get and keep a job, allow them to bring changes to the working world, and similar proficiency for development, (Ali & Jalal, 2018).

#### **4.10 Namibia's Future is crying for Help**

Murungi et al., (2019) express that education is meant to develop capacity and enable members of society to become productive. Thus having a high number of unemployed graduates represents not just a gigantic pool of untapped talent, it is also a source of social unrest and individual despair. If young graduates who have worked hard to graduate from school and university cannot secure decent jobs and the sense of respect that comes with them, society will have to be prepared for outbreaks of anger or even violence. The evidence is in the protests that have occurred in Chile, Egypt, Greece, Italy, South Africa, Spain, and the United States, (Murungi, Njoki & Muthaa, 2019). This section is all about the future of Namibia, these are the comments of unemployed graduates regarding how Namibia's future will look like if nothing is done to rescue the current situation that is to rescue unemployed graduates by creating job opportunities.

Participant 13 strongly feels that,

*“Namibia is falling into minus and into a negative where we are just going to produce people that are going to be on the streets. The more we keep on producing graduates every year without employment opportunities. I believe we need to ask for wisdom from God. If we are going to continue, the school will become something people will do with no value, you just do it for formality knowing that it won't result in anything. We are killing the minds of the young ones and we are killing the whole tradition of this education is the key, it's no longer the key.”*

The following are the views of participants who believe that the youth are the ones that can bring a positive change to the Namibian economy. Starting with the views of Participant 11 she contends that,

*“Our economy is going down the drain and it’s really up to the youth to start doing their part. It’s solely dependent on us the youth now. Considering the number of unemployed youth, I feel like the youth need to find other means to help our economy otherwise in five years to come our economy will be wiped out and the result will be foreign markets will take over.”*

Participants with the same sentiments are Participant 12 she maintains, *“I feel like the youth must engage themselves in business and they must do something for themselves and not only depend on the government. They must try to do business because now our economy is going down, there’s no money in the country. We can try business in that way we will support the government”*. Participant 15 also believes that, *“the youth are the ones who are supposed to develop the country because they are creative. Namibia is wasting a lot of talent, the youth need to be employed to rescue the situation, the Namibian nation is facing”*

These are predictions of Participant 7 concerning the nation of Namibia.

*“The future of Namibia is doomed, the last time I checked the newspaper they were saying that there is 300 thousand unemployed youth, and that number was shocking. Where is Namibia going, if most of the people don’t have jobs, our economy is going to fall and we are going to keep on depending on other countries for goods and services because there are no jobs over here. Our economy is going to stumble and fall and people are going to become*

*depressed as I was. When you don't have a job you feel like, you don't have a purpose in life, some may turn to crime."*

Participant 14 believes that *"the Namibian economy will collapse. We should come up with initiatives that will bring up businesses. Namibia does offer grants but these grants are offered to less than 10 graduates and the universities are not producing less than 10 graduates, with these our economy will certainly collapse"* Participant 4 also believes that *"Namibia won't develop if graduates with honors degrees can't find jobs. The government should avail their ministries to take in these graduates and offer an internship. The government must invest in young entrepreneurs, especially those who did business courses"*.

Furthermore, some participants were pointing out the consequences that can happen, if nothing is done to rescue unemployed graduates. Participant 16 warns that *"young people will turn to robbery and crime is going to increase"*. Participant 18 predicts that *"the future is not looking good, the government is supposed to invest in the youth because, at the end of the day, they will have to take care of the country. If not the country will experience crime. Everyone is trying to do things that will make them earn a living. Namibia's future is not looking good at the moment."*

Participant 19 also predicts that,

*"The situation in Namibia is yet to worsen. The youth are supposed to be running and to be involved in activities but the young blood is on the streets, then who is to run the affairs of the nation. People say the youth are so much into social media and reckless. No, the youth is not reckless, the elders think they know better. There's a trap laid for the youth e.g. we have our elders running this country, you would find that there are fewer opportunities for the*

*youth in the decision-making process, we are just told what to do, we don't decide. Not allowing the youth to partake in the decision-making process, the result will be one day when the elders pass on the ideas they had, whatever we could have will be all in vain. The youth will have to start from scratch. There will be a scramble and not the scramble of Africa but the scramble of Namibia. This results in people cutting off communication with some people. People tend to rob, others may resort to suicide. "*

A participant's response that agrees with the statement made by the previous participant is that of Participant 6 she maintains, *"I feel like we are going to have a leadership gap. The people who are in leadership positions are older. We have younger people who are unemployed. If those people retire we will have a generation of qualified people that do not know how to lead because those graduates are not allowed to work, they don't have experience, they will not know the know-how and the government will be looking at those people who are about to retire."*

Participant 2 adds that *"at the end of the day, young people are the future. We want to see young people make a difference. Young people must be allowed to prove themselves. Young people are meant to step in the light. Young people should be the ones getting the experience. Step into the light, let the young people come into being and let them show themselves who they can be and will be in the future"*.

Another extrapolation comes from Participant 20, she predicts that *"it looks like the young people in Namibia are not worthy enough, people from the outside might say, they don't trust their education system. People will ask why they aren't accommodating the young people. I sense a war coming up. There's going to be a conflict between the young people and the elders that are in power. The youth want to*

*be trusted, they want to be allowed to do things but they are not given the opportunity. The youth are vibrant and creative”.*

Participant 23 also holds the same opinion, she foresees the following. *“I cannot say Namibia has a good future and things are just going in a bad direction economic-wise and all that. In short Namibia’s future does not look good at all. I perceive soon that Namibia will face an economic crisis. If Namibia is not careful, we will find ourselves being in a situation like Zimbabwe, whereby the unemployment rate will be high, there are a lot of graduates and there are a lot of people that can work but the work itself is not available. People might try to make business here and there and we will end up having a lot of businesses but the buyers are not there. Crime is likely to increase with the rising unemployment rate.”* Participant 25 shares the same sentiments, he expresses that *“if nothing is being done, we will find ourselves in a worst situation and Namibia will probably end up like Zimbabwe. Some farms are just there abandoned, government can use those unemployed graduates to revive certain farms to provide food security for the country. Namibia should focus on agriculture in return that will create jobs for graduates”.* Participant 24 extends that *“crime rate is likely to increase, prostitution. Namibia’s future is not looking good if nothing is done to solve the current situation.”*

Another participant that predicts something different is Participant 28, she expounds that *“Namibia is such a young country, for it to be facing problems such as graduate unemployment is quite worrisome. Unemployment means people can’t take care of themselves and this can trigger many things one of them being poverty. Namibia needs to build industries that way we can create employment”.* The following participant stresses that *“the future does not look too good for Namibia, they need to create a market and the private sector needs to step in because if we only rely on the*

*government, Namibia will not go anywhere”. This is the account of Participant 30. Participant 10 stresses that “high rates of crime, drug use and I feel like a lot of people will go into depression, graduate unemployment can even affect a graduate mentally because you know you have the skills and ability but one is unable to use his or her skills and ability. People will be forced to migrate to other countries for a better life”.*

This section will end with the comments of Participant 1,

*“The consequences have been evident throughout Africa and we have seen it in countries like Egypt. We have seen educated people rising, going to the streets and breaking things, vandalizing buildings. I believe it was called the Arab Spring and it happened around 2010 when the young Egyptians started protesting because people couldn’t find employment, which was frustrating and I feel like every country can be taken there. It will threaten the stability of our country when people have educated themselves, they didn’t obtain their qualifications free of charge. It is very painful that people cannot find a job, people can turn to violence, and it can threaten peace. Namibia is a peaceful country but this can happen to Namibia too, it’s not out of space.”*

All participants interviewed see the future of Namibia as that, which is crying out for help. Something needs to be done to rescue, the Namibian nation, its economy, and its people.

#### **4.11 Summary of Participants Interviewed**

This section focuses on the closing remarks of the participants interviewed. These are the concluding remarks of Participant 6 *“the government needs to realize what is going on. We cannot say that we must stop studying because the market cannot absorb*

*graduates. We need to advance. The market needs to be considerate in regards to the workforce that is coming in from the university. Experience comes with time.”*

Those who participated in this study expressed their disappointment and pain. Without a doubt with the deduced information, it is clear that unemployed graduates are struggling to make a living and need assistance. They need to practice the knowledge they have gained from the university and as such, they need to be employed to make use of the skills they obtained at the university. The end of this finding chapter will be the words of Participant 1.

*“It’s disheartening, the situation is disheartening. You have parents who have spent all they have to send their children to the university as their last hope for families at the end of the four years when the child is done studying for his honors degree. It’s not necessarily that the graduate is not seeking to be employed, it’s just there are no jobs in the country. The government should do its role and step up. I feel like our leaders should step up and give their attention to graduate unemployment. The country has inherited unemployment since independence but little has been done to improve it, which means our leadership is failing in that area. They should do something and provide strategic plans and think innovatively to deal with this problem.”*

In conclusion, the study has titled the experiences and livelihoods of unemployed graduates in Windhoek, Namibia. This section contained the responses of participants when asked about their experiences and livelihoods. Firstly, participants expressed that their experience of seeking employment is disheartening, they are unable to secure employment because they do not have the number of working experience required by employers. Secondly, their livelihoods are not sustainable, all of the participants

interviewed are dependent on family and friends, even those who have started a business are also dependent on family and friends because they do not earn much from the business they have started or what they are doing to meet their basic needs. None of the participants are standing on their own financially, they are all dependent on family and friends in one way or the other.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study. The relevance of this study “The Experiences and Livelihoods of Unemployed Graduates in Windhoek, Namibia”, cannot be overemphasized because graduate unemployment is a social problem that needs to be addressed as soon as possible because there are consequences that will be experienced by both the individual going through unemployment and society at large. There have been numerous studies conducted on graduate unemployment but not much research has been done on the experiences and livelihoods of unemployed graduates, especially within the Namibian context. Unemployed graduates face countless obstacles daily in search of employment and securing decent and sustainable livelihoods.

This study will shed light on the situation of unemployment among graduates because people do not know the impact until you talk to the people that are going through the situation. People who are employed may not necessarily know what is going on but once the researcher gets this information published, people will read about the impact graduate unemployment has on the graduate experiencing it and once people come to comprehend the impact only then will they know how to better assist graduates facing unemployment.

The research was guided by two research questions and sub-questions of which all were answered clearly by all the participants who participated in the study. The research questions were; what are the experiences of unemployed graduates seeking employment and what are the livelihood activities of unemployed graduates?

Three critical findings emerge from this research, it was selected based on the responses participants gave, because their responses were very similar. It was what the majority acknowledged when asked about their experiences and livelihoods.

Firstly, graduating from the university without working experience makes it difficult to secure employment as employers seek to employ people who have working experience and the shocking finding is that the experience, most employers are looking for is five years working experience and more, graduates don't have the experience that most employers require. Graduates are also finding it difficult to secure internships at various companies and organizations, making the whole experience of finding a job disheartening as most participants described their experience. Most students graduate without any working experience because there are universities that do not require their students to go for internships before they graduate and graduates are often left to themselves to secure employment which is proving to be a difficult task because graduates lack experience. Students who were privileged enough to have gone through internships before they graduated are also finding it difficult to secure employment as having one year of working experience is not sufficient. The demands from the labor market and what universities are offering students do not match as such there is a skills mismatch that can be attributed to graduate unemployment in Namibia.

Secondly, from all the participants that participated in this study, there was not one participant who said, what they are currently doing is sufficient for them to maintain their livelihoods, all participants who participated in this study are struggling to make a living and to meet their basic needs, the only participants who are not struggling are those who are dependent on parents and siblings but those who are left to fend for themselves are struggling and this makes their livelihoods unsustainable. Some graduates have even gone to the extent of cleaning yards of people just to have

something to eat, what most graduates earn is not enough to meet the monthly rent, needless to talk about food and clothing. These graduates are at the mercy of family and friends because most acknowledged that they are struggling but family and friends always come through and as a result, they can maintain their livelihoods only with the help of family and friends if they did not have family or friends to assist what would have become of these graduates.

Lastly, what people don't seem to notice is what unemployed graduates are going through physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially. Unemployed graduates are suffering inside, some have confessed, that they feel worthless, others have admitted to being depressed and others have lost respect from family as they are excluded from family gatherings. This is the sad finding that unemployed graduates are struggling mentally, they wrestle with their thoughts day and night some have confessed that they do not know what to do if the situation continues because they are struggling to survive as most participants explained.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

Based on the analysis of the findings, the researcher recommends that all universities collaborate with the labor market to rethink, repackage, and reposition their missions. It is in this manner that graduates will be ready to meet the demands of the labor market.

Universities should make internships compulsory to curb the experience problem. They need to send their students for internships and this needs to be incorporated from the first year, to meet the requirements of the labor market. An honors degree at the University of Namibia takes four years to complete, the university can use three years focusing on course work, and the fourth-year students can be sent out to do internships

for them to gain experience and leave the university with an honors degree and one years' working experience. Students can also assist themselves by apply for holiday jobs from grade 12 already as well as being willing to volunteer themselves at various compnies and organizations. This can make the whole employment seeking experience easier because they will have working experience, and not only will they be taught but they will also be trained on how to apply the knowledge they gained at the university in the labor market.

The private sector should lower standards to accommodate new graduates, this can be done by not expecting five years' experience from a graduate, they can startup programs such as graduate in training programs whereby graduates are taught and trained, on how the organization operates what is expected from them.

Further research should interview various stakeholders like the Vice-Chancellors of Universities so that students can understand why universities are offering certain courses and also investigate whether what is offered by universities is in line with the labor market.

The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Labor and Employment Creation also needs to be interviewed so that people can have insight as to how the ministry goes about creating employment and where the problem lies in creating employment for young people.

Lastly, research needs to be conducted to decide what can be done to better assist unemployed graduates on how they can better their livelihoods.

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## APPENDIX 1- ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



### ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

**Ethical Clearance Reference Number:** UNAM-DEC-HSS/01/04/2021    **Date:** 03/05/2021

This Ethical Clearance Certificate is issued by the University of Namibia Decentralised Research Ethics Committee (DEC) in accordance with the University of Namibia's Research Ethics Policy and Guidelines. Ethical approval is given in respect of undertakings contained in the Research Project outlined below. This Certificate is issued on the recommendations of the ethical evaluation done by the DEC's at the Faculty/Centre/Campus/Unit.

**Title of Project:** EXPERIENCES AND LIVELIHOODS OF UNEMPLOYED GRADUATES: A CASESTUDY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA, NAMIBIA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MANAGEMENT IN WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA.

**Nature/Level of Project:** MASTERS (NON HEALTH)

**Researcher:** MARAVIHLA MAMONA MATONDO

**Student Number:** 201308567

**Supervisor:** DR. PAULINA UUGWANGA & ROMANUS SHIVORO

**Faculty:** HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Take note of the following:

- (a) Any significant changes in the conditions or undertakings outlined in the approved Proposal must be communicated to the DEC. An application to make amendments may be necessary.
- (b) Any breaches of ethical undertakings or practices that have an impact on ethical conduct of the research must be reported to the DEC and the CRP.
- (c) The Principal Researcher must report issues of ethical compliance to the DEC (through the Chairperson of the Faculty/Centre/Campus/Unit Research Ethics Committee) at the end of the Project or as may be requested by DEC and the CRP.
- (d) Approval is valid for a period of one year from the date of issue.
- (e) A mid-year report to be submitted to DEC (where applicable), thereafter to the CRP
- (f) The DEC retains the right to:
  - (i) Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance if any unethical practices (as outlined in the Research Ethics Policy) have been detected or suspected,
  - (ii) Request for an ethical compliance report at any point during the course of the research.
  - (iii) Cognizance and the observation of Namibian's Research Science and Technology Act of 2004 which makes it compulsory for Non-Namibian Based researchers to obtain the compulsory Research Permit from the National Commission on Research Science and Technology (NCRST) FIRST, BEFORE the research can commence.

The DEC wishes you the best in your research.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Kalusopa', is written over a faint, illegible stamp or watermark.

Prof. T. Kalusopa, DEC Chairperson - FHSS

## APPENDIX 2 –INTERVIEW GUIDE



**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**

**INTERVIEW GUIDE**

**COURSE: MASTERS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

**RESEARCH TITLE: EXPERIENCES AND LIVELIHOODS OF UNEMPLOYED GRADUATES: A CASE STUDY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA, NAMIBIA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MANAGEMENT, IN WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA.**

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Good Day, my name is Maravihla Matondo from the University of Namibia. I am undertaking a research project in partial fulfillment of the requirements of a Master of Arts in Development Studies. As part of this project, I would like to ask some questions. This will be a narrative interview so more questions will arise as conversations between the researcher and participants develop. This interview will last approximately 45-60 minutes. Your name will not be used and your answers will be kept strictly confidential.

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**This research aims to answer the following questions.**

1. What are the experiences of unemployed graduates seeking employment?
2. What are the livelihood activities of unemployed graduates?

**Research Interview Questions (Narrative Interviews)**

1. At what university did you study? When did you graduate and how long have you been unemployed?
2. What were and are your experiences of seeking employment?

3. How do you cope with being an unemployed graduate? What coping strategies do you use?
4. Who supports you in coping with unemployment and looking for employment?
5. What are your livelihood activities? What are the challenges you face daily and how do you overcome these challenges?
6. What do you think can be done to better assist unemployed graduates?