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The Influence of Religious Institutions' Initiatives on Graduates Employability: A Case of the Christian Council of Tanzania (CCT) Chaplaincies

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Graduate employability is a persistent challenge globally. Tanzania among the developing countries has been affected, despite numerous efforts by the government and other stakeholders, including religious institutions. The aim of this study is to examine the influence of religious institutions' initiatives on graduate employability in Tanzania. Using the Christian Council of Tanzania (CCT) chaplaincies as a case study. Cross-sectional survey, a total of 160 respondents were obtained, including four leaders from the CCT head office, four Chaplains from CCT chaplaincies and finalist students from the Institute of Rural Development Planning (IRDP), University of Dodoma (UDOM), Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), and Mzumbe University (MU). Primary data were collected from key informants through interviews using a checklist of questions, and from a sample of finalist students through a structured questionnaire survey. The findings revealed a significant role played by religious institutions. The CCT's role was manifested through chaplaincies' activities such as communication, entrepreneurship training, and seminars. The study concludes that while religious institutions enhance employability through the development of essential soft skills and entrepreneurial abilities, these initiatives alone are insufficient to directly influence employability outcomes. The study recommends that the CCT head office and Chaplaincies should establish a specific desk or unit which among other functions will identify soft skills that limit the graduate employability and develop programmes to provide such skills in the course of the students' training across all chaplaincies at higher learning institutions as they continue to attend CCT programmes.

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INTRODUCTION

The university and college graduates' employability is an ongoing critical challenge facing the global economy (Öhlmann, 2022). Its intensity is more critical in developing countries due to the high level of poverty, which requires people to work in order to ensure their survival (Fox *et al.*, 2020). Moreover, the number of opportunities available is very limited compared with that of graduates entering the labour market every year (Mabala, 2019). The government of Tanzania and other stakeholders at the international and national levels have been trying to introduce different initiatives as a contribution to enhancing graduate employability, through projects like "Building a Better Tomorrow - Youth Initiative for Agribusiness (BBT-YIA)" (URT, 2022), the allocation of 4% to youth as interest-free loans (Kapama, 2019). Likewise, religious institutions have been conducting seminars and training on integrity, entrepreneurship, moral behaviours, self-determination, networking, leadership and other life skills which are important for youth employability (Robertson *et al.*, 2020). All these initiatives have been done as a way of fighting against the unemployment challenge.

However, despite these efforts, there is a high prevalence of unemployment; for instance, according to a report by the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2022), globally unemployment is 13.7%. In addition, it is estimated that unemployment increases over time due to rapid population increase, world economic recession and other global crises like COVID-19 (Peric and Vitezic, 2016; Counted *et al.*, 2022). In Africa, graduate unemployment remains a major political and socio-economic challenge, despite the recent strong economic growth performance of many

African countries (Neo, 2020). The ILO (2022) reported that Africa has an estimated unemployment rate of 8.4% while Niger has the lowest unemployment rate of 0.6% and South Africa has the highest unemployment rate of 34%. In Tanzania, unemployment is estimated at 13.4% (NBS, 2021). The ILO (2019) reported that the graduate unemployment rate in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), accounted for 13.3% of the labour force in 2018, which is higher than other populous regions of Asia. The AFDB (2018) says that while 10 million graduates join the job market every year only about 3 million formal jobs are available, which makes the menace of graduate unemployment in Africa very severe, pervasive and multifaceted.

Like many other sub-Saharan African countries, Tanzania has about 700,000 graduates from universities and colleges entering the labour market every year (Mabala, 2019). Peter (2014) showed that only 5.7% get employed in the formal sectors and 60% of the unemployed are constituted by youth. Graduates who are unemployed in Tanzania were estimated to be 13.4% by the year 2021 (NBS, 2021). As a result, some of them tend to be involved in various misconducts, including drug abuse as "Idle hands are devil's workshop" (Holly Bible Proverb, Chapter 16:27); hence leads to moral degradation. Mabala (2019) pinpointed some of the moral degradation issues instigated by youth unemployment, including theft and vulnerability to evils (Temu, (2019). Graduate unemployment has, therefore, become an issue of great concern not only to the Government of Tanzania but also to other stakeholders including religious organizations.

Among several efforts made by the Government of Tanzania (GoT) to curb graduate unemployment is the allocation of 4% of the District Council's

revenue to be issued as interest-free loans to undertake various income-generating activities (Kapama, 2019). Moreover, recently the GoT through the Ministry of Agriculture, the private sector and development partners launched another programme; “Building a Better Tomorrow - Youth Initiative for Agribusiness (BBT-YIA)” (URT, 2022).

Religious institutions have also been playing a great part in different ways through formal and informal employment (Jones, 2018), such as providing them with soft skills, integrity, moral behaviours, self-determination and other life skills which are important for youth employability (Robertson *et al.*, 2020). In this study, the term “institutions” refers to both organizations and rules. According to Uphoff and Buck (2006), although institutions can represent diverse patterns of behaviour, they can also function as organizations or as structures of recognized and accepted roles that serve a purpose. This study focuses on the Christian Council of Tanzania (CCT), which is an institution with some organizational structure seeking to make it more amenable to improvement. Regardless of the initiatives undertaken by the government, religious institutions and other stakeholders, graduate employability is still a critical challenge in Tanzania.

A number of studies similar to the present study have been conducted in Tanzania. Many studies cover the efforts and success of government and non-government organisations to reduce the unemployment rate while there are limited studies showing the efforts and success of religious institutions, especially those chaplaincies around universities, in reducing the unemployment rate. The studies include Haji (2015), Banks (2016), Osabuohien *et al.* (2020), Lesseri (2022) and Benfica *et al.* (2021), who focused on drivers of employment. Koola (2017), focusing on the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT), highlighted the consequences of youth unemployment in the pastoral ministry, as one of their roles in making sure that the youth contribute to the economy through formal and/or informal employment.

The current study adopts a mixed methods approach (quantitative and qualitative methods), unlike Koola’s study which adopted the qualitative approach as the sole data collection method. Furthermore, the study focuses on the CCT using the selected higher learning institutions’ chaplaincies as a case, which in addition to the ELCT, has other members including Anglican, Moravian, AICT, Kanisa la Mungu, Uinjilisti, Upendo wa Kristo Masihi, Bible Church, Baptist, Mennonite, Salvation Army, and Presbyterian Churches. The study goes further by assessing the strategies adopted by the CCT to improve employability. The results from this study have practical implications for the ongoing programmes for addressing graduate employability through collaborative efforts that involve religious institutions and the government as important stakeholders.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theory of Rational Choice

The study was guided by the Rational Choice Theory (RCT), whose central idea is that an individual will use their self-interest to choose whether an option is right for them or not (Ogu, 2013). The process of graduating to make the decision of the perception of being employable is influenced by a number of factors like resource scarcity, opportunity, institutional norms, and quality of information or knowledge acquired (Burns and Roszkowska, 2016). However, religious institutions play a significant role in sharpening graduates on leadership and mindset-changing seminars, offering entrepreneur skills, and ethical teaching, which ultimately helps to enhance the chance of a graduate being employable.

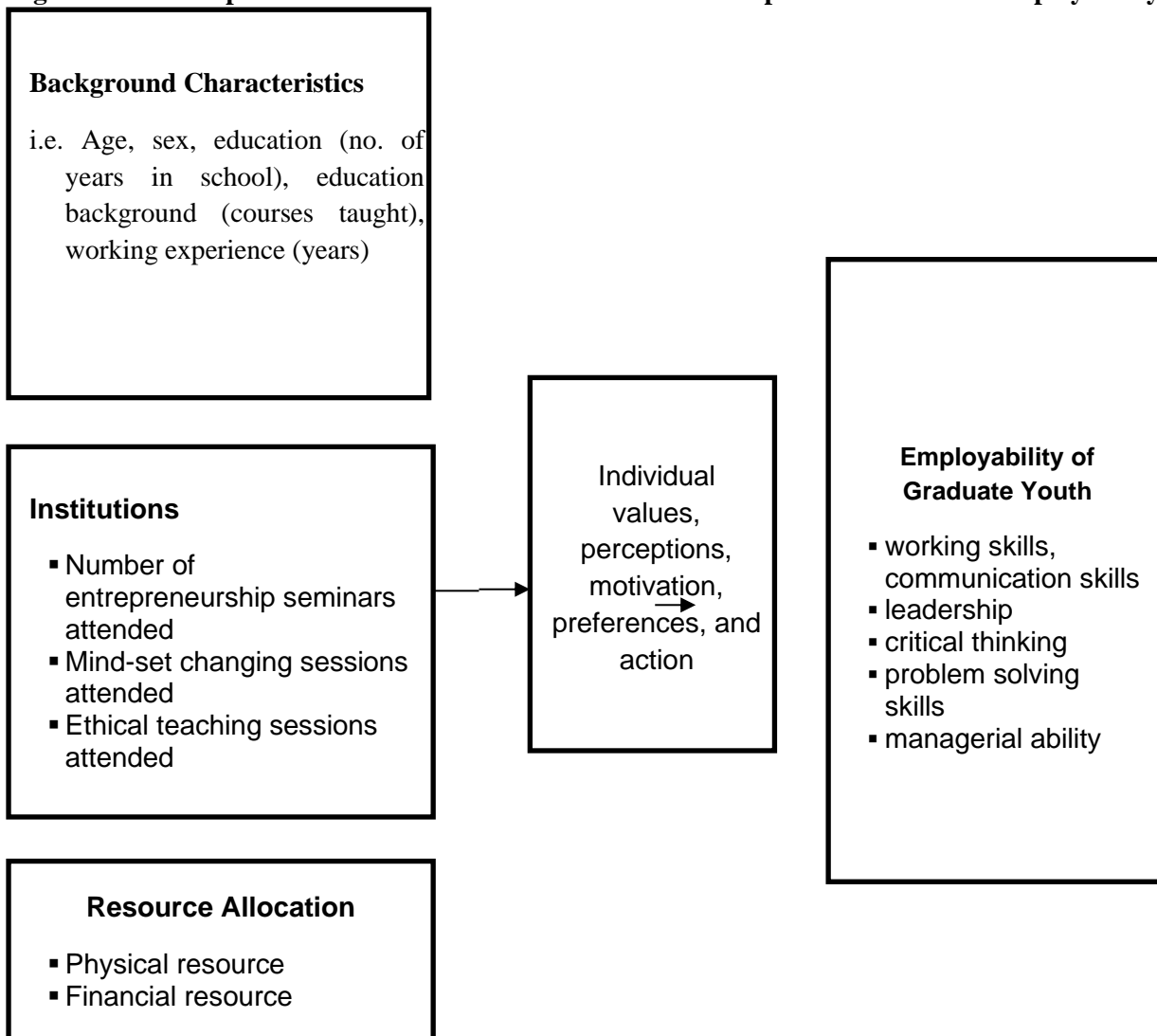
Conceptual Framework

Employability of an individual, which in this case is the dependent variable, is a function of a number of factors, which can be grouped into background characteristics such as age, sex, education background, household size; institutional factors and resource endowments. These factors influence individual’s preferences and motivation towards employment opportunities and their employability. In this study, employability is denoted by working skills, communication skills, leadership, critical

thinking, problem-solving skills and managerial ability (Figure 1).

A Conceptual Framework on the Role of the CCT Chaplaincies on Youth Employability.

Figure 1: A Conceptual Framework on the role of the CCT Chaplaincies on Youth Employability



METHODOLOGY

Study Area

The study was conducted in Dodoma City and Morogoro Region in Tanzania. This study area was selected because it has about 73% of the total graduates under CCT Chaplaincy (CCT Chaplaincies Guidelines, 2023).

Study Design

The study used a cross-sectional study design whereby data were collected once at a single point in time. The design enabled the collection of information to address the specific objectives of the study, including data regarding the initiatives by chaplaincies to address graduate employability. Also, the design enabled the examination of factors

influencing the performance of the CCT in dealing with graduate employability.

Population, Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Study Population

The study population was the finalist students from CCT Chaplaincies in higher learning institutions in Dodoma and Morogoro Regions. The study used finalist students as respondents because they have been benefiting from chaplaincy services for at least the last two years (in the case of three-year degree programmes), so they clearly know how and what chaplaincies have been doing. Moreover, the finalists, being in their last year of study, are likely already thinking about their employment prospects

in the near future. In the study, graduates, chaplains and CCT head office staff were interviewed as key informants. The CCT staff including those from the office and chaplains were purposively selected because they are responsible and are aware of the strategies and programmes provided to students. It was also expected that the finalists and graduates would be able to define the type of services they received from chaplaincies and the likely impact of the knowledge and skills they receive on their employability. The two regions have been purposively selected because they are among the regions with more than one higher learning institution with CCT chaplaincies. The study purposively selected four chaplaincies from these regions, which account for 73% of the total number of students under CCT in the six higher learning institutions with CCT chaplaincies.

Sample Size

The study's sample size was 160 continuing finalist students, who were members of the CCT. The sample size was considered adequate based on the recommendation by Roscoe (1975), Dalice (2010) and Memon (2020), that a sample size greater than 30 and less than 500 is suitable and generally sufficient for most social science studies. The proportional allocation method as developed by Kothari (2004) was used to compute the contribution of each institution to the desired sample size of 160 (Table 1).

$$n_1 = n * P$$

.....(i)

$$P = \frac{N_s}{N_t}$$

..... (ii)

Where;

n_1 = Total sample size of the strata

n = required sample size to be drawn from each stratum

P = Ratio of the strata population and total population

N_t = Population within each stratum

N_s = Total population of all strata

Sampling Procedure

Probability sampling, particularly simple random sampling was used to select respondents from the finalist CCT students whereby each higher learning institution contributed proportionally based on its respective finalist students' population (Table 21). While the sampling was primarily based on student population size, graduates from particular institutions e.g. SUA were assumed to a uniform regardless of their specialized programs. This was done to account for the varying employability challenges and opportunities that graduates from different academic backgrounds might face.

Table 1: Sample Size for Each of the Selected Institutions

Strata (CCT Chaplaincy)	Strata population (Ns)	Ratio of Strata population (P)	Required sample size to be drawn (n)	Sample size of the strata
UDOM	310	0.4155	160	54
SUA	240	0.3217		45
Mzumbe	120	0.1609		38
IRDP	76	0.1019		23
Total (Nt)	746			160

Non-probability and probability sampling methods were used in this study. Purposive sampling was used to select the chaplaincies. Out of six CCT chaplaincies in Tanzania, four chaplaincies whose total number of students was 746 were purposively selected from the study regions. The four chaplaincies - two in Dodoma City (the University

of Dodoma - UDOM and the Institute of Regional Development Planning - IRDP) and two in Morogoro Region (Sokoine University of Agriculture - SUA and Mzumbe University - MU) - accounted for 73% of the total number of students under CCT in the six higher learning institutions.

Data Collection

Primary data were collected directly from the study areas through a survey of the finalists using a structured questionnaire in face-to-face interviews. The structured questionnaire had both open-ended and closed-ended questions. Questions were prepared to address the key issues related to youth employability and CCT Chaplaincy initiatives. The research tools were pre-tested prior to the survey and updated accordingly. The questionnaires were then used to collect primary data from 160 finalist students through face-to-face interviews using well-trained enumerators. A checklist of questions was used for the key informant interviews; including four CCT head office staff, four chaplains and eight finalist students who participated in the research as key informants. The selection of the participants was based on their knowledge and experience about CCT Chaplaincies' initiatives in promoting youth employability and their actual involvement in designing and implementing the initiatives.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software. Descriptive statistics summarized the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, while a chi-square test explored associations between employment status and socio-demographic factors. Binary logistic regression examined factors influencing finalists' employability perception. Qualitative data from the key informant interviews were processed through content analysis, where data collected through interviews were categorized into themes and then summarized into strings of words in keeping with the purpose of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The distribution of respondents across various chaplaincies was slightly different from the proposed sample, this is due to the percentage which was taken depending on the number of finalists from

those chaplaincies. Nonetheless, the relative proportions remain highest from UDOM (33.7%), followed by SUA (27.9%), Mzumbe (23.7%), and IRDP (14.7%). This provides room for a comprehensive overview of the context in different educational settings. Distribution by sex among the respondents indicates a higher representation of females (58.4%) compared to males (41.6%). As for their age, the majority (83.7%) of the respondents fall within the 18-25 age categories, with only a small proportion (16.3%) in the 26-35 age range. This predominance of younger students suggests that most respondents are directly from secondary schools, which could influence their perspectives on employability upon graduation. The majority (94.4%) were undergraduate students, and only 5.6% were pursuing postgraduate studies. This demographic profile indicates that the findings are primarily reflective of undergraduate perceptions regarding employability and may highlight specific challenges or expectations unique to this group. Marital status data shows that most participants (94.7%) are single, with only 5.3% being married (Table 2.2).

The employment status of the students reveals that the majority (78.8%) are not employed, with smaller percentages employed in the public sector (10.6%), self-employed (10%), and in the private sector (0.6%). This proportion of respondents not being employed underscores the fact that the majority of respondents were undergraduates directly from high school. Hence, they expect to enter the labour market upon graduation. Lastly, the data on training indicates that a substantial, close to three-quarters of the respondents (73.7%) have received some form of training which are essential soft skills such as leadership, communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, mindset changing and ethics from the CCT chapels, while 26.3% have never participated on any training at CCT chapels. This suggests that while many students are seeking to enhance their employability through additional training, there remains a notable portion (about a quarter) that may need further support in this area.

Table 2: Socio-demographic Characteristics (n=160)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Chaplaincy	IRDP	23	14.7
	Mzumbe	38	23.7
	SUA	45	27.9
	UDOM	54	33.7
Sex	Female	97	61.4
	Male	63	38.6
Age category	18 – 25	134	83.7
	26 – 35	26	16.3
Education level	Postgraduate	9	5.6
	Undergraduate	151	94.4
Marital status	Married	8	5.3
	Single	152	94.7
Employment status	Employed in the private sector	1	0.6
	Employed in the public sector	17	10.6
	Not employed	126	78.8
	Self-employed	16	10
Training from CCT chapel	No	39	26.3
	Yes	121	73.7

Association between Employability Status and Contextual Variables

Table 2.3 explores the association between respondents' perceived or actual (since some of the respondents (21.2%) were already employed) employability status and various sociodemographic variables among the finalists from higher learning institutions. The Pearson Chi-Square Tests reveal significant associations with employability for several variables. Gender shows a significant association ($p = 0.040$), with males being more likely to be employed or perceive they will be employed compared to females. Among the reasons why men perceive more likelihood of employment compared to their female counterparts is the cultural context, working environment, and unlimited selection of jobs. The age category also demonstrates a strong association ($p = 0.000$), indicating that older respondents (26-35) have a higher likelihood of being employed or perceive they would be employed compared to younger (18-25) respondents. This should be expected since respondents in the high age group a most likely students who joined the universities as mature-age students, hence coming as employed or self-employed individuals. Meanwhile, as argued earlier, the younger respondents a most likely undergraduate students, direct from high school,

with no prior employment experience, hence having lower employability perceptions.

Marital status is another significant factor ($p = 0.000$), with married students having a higher likelihood of perceived employability compared to single students. Again, the argument is similar to that for age, since married respondents are likely older, hence coming from a work environment and being already employed. Training such as mindset-changing sessions, entrepreneurship, ethics, leadership and mentorship seminars significantly enhance employability prediction ($OR = 4.1998$, $p = 0.041$). Students who have undergone training are substantially more likely to be employable than those who have not. This underscores the critical role of skill development and training programmes in bridging the gap between professional education and employability skills, which consistently supports the positive impact of targeted training on employability, suggesting that well-designed training programmes can equip students with the necessary skills and competencies demanded by the labour market.

The findings align with the result reported by Ebareotu and Nkemdili (2021) that, investment in education and training increases an individual's productivity and employability.

These findings underscore the importance of gender, age, marital status, and training in influencing respondents' employability outcomes, suggesting areas where religious institutions could focus their efforts to enhance employability practical experience for students and proper information when and where these training are done. However, no significant associations were found between

perceived employment status and chaplaincy affiliation or education level because all respondents were drawn from the same larger population involving high school graduates who joined undergraduate degree programmes as well as undergraduates who joined as mature-age entrants as well as those who joined post-graduate programmes.

Table 3: The Association between Employability Status and Socio-demographic Variables (n=160)

Variable	Category	Employability status						Pearson Chi-Square Tests		
		No		Yes		Total		Chi-square	Df	Sig.
		Frequency	Percent (%)	Frequency	Percent (%)	Frequency	Percent (%)			
Chaplaincy	IRDP	19	81.8	4	18.20	23	14.70	6.296	3	0.098
	Mzumbe	31	81.58	7	18.42	38	23.70			
	SUA	28	62.22	17	37.78	45	27.90			
	UDOM	48	88.8	6	11.11	54	33.70			
Gender	Female	97	61.8	14	42.40	111	58.40	4.207	1	0.040*
	Male	60	38.2	19	57.60	79	41.60			
Age category	18 – 25	142	90.4	17	51.50	159	83.70	30.269	1	0.000*
	26 – 35	15	9.6	16	48.50	31	16.30			
Education level	Postgraduate	15	51.72	14	48.28	29	15.26	1.500	1	0.221
	Undergraduate	133	82.61	28	17.39	161	84.74			
Marital status	Married	2	1.3	8	24.20	10	5.30	28.851	1	0.000*
	Single	155	98.7	25	75.80	180	94.70			
Training	No	46	29.3	4	12.10	50	26.30	4.150	1	0.042*
	Yes	114	70.7	29	87.90	140	73.70			

The Chi-square statistic is significant at a 0.05 level.

Influence of the CCT Initiatives in Improving Graduates' Employability

The discussion is structured around the initiatives undertaken by the CCT chaplaincies and their influence on employability. CCT chaplaincies have implemented several initiatives aimed at improving the employability of graduates. The initiatives were identified by the key informants, including the Chaplains at the CCT head office and graduates, and the finalist students. These initiatives include mindset-changing sessions, entrepreneurship training, ethical training, and mentorship seminars.

The initiatives are part of the CCT's strategic plan. They align with the CCT's mission to foster holistic development and prepare students for the labour market through a comprehensive approach that includes spiritual, ethical, and practical training (Jones, 2018). The initiatives and kind of knowledge provided to students were explained by the key informants as follows.

"Our chapel has been conducting seminars to prepare finalists for their lives after university training. We are preparing graduates to be ready to employ themselves or develop their skills as they are waiting for employment from the government and private sector. The training we offer to students, including socialization, team-working, mindset changing, leadership, communication, spirituality and ethics have a significant positive influence on employability skills" (KI I, Dodoma, 19/06/2024).

"The programmes that we have in our chapel for graduates provide an insight into how they can write application letters and how to appear in interviews. We teach them that they should change their mindset and be ready to socialize with others, to have self-discipline, be trustworthy, have the ability to work and communicate confidently with others." (KI II, Morogoro, 19/06/2024).

"CCT strategic plan specifically on the part of students' empowerment is designed to equip graduates with essential soft skills such

as leadership, communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities. Chaplaincies have been implementing these programmes in different ways depending on the environment and the funds they get" (KI III, CCT- Head Office, 19/06/2024).

"CCT has decided to have different programmes in chapels because youth in university value spiritual services and therefore they come to chapels. So, themes like critical thinking, ethics, leadership, time management, networking, etc., should be taught because chapels can make a significant difference to the lives of youth" (KI IV, CCT- Head Office, 19/06/2024).

The results clearly imply that the initiatives which chapels present to their members are diverse and have a great impact on their lives because the skills provided are not only required in the job market but are also essential for self-employment.

From the graduates' point of view, remarks from a graduate key informant were as follows:

"I, as a former student of CCT Chaplaincy from UDOM, I have seen and tested the initiatives of the chaplaincy and benefited in terms of improved self-confidence; having something positive to do; being encouraged to start small business; and to get opportunities to gain voluntary work experience in CCT Headquarter. Hence, I recommend that CCT Headquarters finds financial support so that youth can also learn practically, because they value projects which build strong supportive relationships, rather than day-to-day teaching in service led by their Chaplain. At the same time when the chapel has finalist training or seminars, I suggest they can make it open to anyone who is ready to attend not for only their members" (KI V, CCT Head Office, 19/05/2024)

These findings underscore the significant role that the CCT chaplaincies specifically play in enhancing graduate employability. Implicitly, the CCT has been playing an important role in using the strategies currently in place to ensure that

skills on employability are acquired among graduates in all chapels. This aligns well with the Rational Choice Theory which in that the students testify that the choices they made were highly influenced by programmes they attended at CCT chaplaincies.

The study findings show further that, the CCT initiatives were instrumental in addressing graduates' habits/attitudes towards employment. In this regard, a substantial proportion of the respondents (63.2%) identified habits or attitudes that they believed could have hindered their employability, but which were addressed through their participation in the CCT programmes. This was particularly true for female students (72.2%) and those in the 18 to 25 age group (63.5%). Additionally, such habits or attitudes were more prevalent among single students (63.9%) compared to their married counterparts.

The findings from the Chi-square test for sex suggest that males were more likely than females to acknowledge and modify employment-related behaviours after receiving CCT interventions ($\chi^2 = 4.7$, p-value 0.03). As for age, the findings ($\chi^2 = 0.56$, p-value = 0.81) suggest no significant association between age category and reported changes in attitudes or habits, indicating that responses were relatively consistent across age groups. Likewise, there was no statistically significant association between marital status and reported changes, suggesting that both single and married individuals exhibited relatively similar patterns in their responses ($\chi^2 = 0.8$, p-value = 0.3).

University-level variations regarding the influence of the CCT initiatives on graduates' employability were observed. The highest positive influence was reported at SUA (73.6%), followed by UDOM (70.3%), and Mzumbe (64.4%), with the IRDP seeing the least influence (25%). The Chi-square test confirmed a statistically significant association between university attendance and perceived change. These findings suggest that while CCT

Chaplaincy services effectively enhance employability-related attitudes, their impact varies by institution, possibly due to differences in programme implementation, institutional culture, or student engagement. The notably lower impact of the IRDP shows the need for further investigation to optimize the programmes' effectiveness across all universities.

Findings from the logistic regression analysis (Table 2.4) show that the CCT chaplaincies' initiatives have a significant positive influence on graduate employability. Specifically, students who participated in these initiatives demonstrated higher employability, characterized by improved teamwork skills, communication skills, leadership, and other employability attributes. The findings support the claim that structured and targeted interventions by religious organizations can effectively address the gap between academic education and market needs (Miaari *et al.*, 2019; Öhlmann, 2022).

The significant associations between employability and factors such as gender, age, marital status, and training highlight the nuanced impact of these initiatives. Male, older and married respondents as well as those who received training from CCT chaplaincies perceived that they were more likely to be employed upon graduation. This suggests that while the CCT chaplaincies' initiatives are broadly beneficial, their impact can be moderated by socio-demographic factors. Hence, tailored approaches that consider these factors could enhance the effectiveness of such initiatives (Peter, 2014; Helmke & Levitsky, 2004).

Overall, the findings suggest that the CCT programmes may play a transformative role in shaping individuals' mindsets and work-related behaviours, potentially enhancing their employability. These results underscore the potential effectiveness of CCT services in fostering behavioural and attitudinal shifts that contribute to improved job prospects.

Table 4: The Binary Logistic Regression Showing the Influence of Contextual Factors on Employment Status (n=160)

Variables	Odds	SE. Odds	Z-Value	P-Value	95% C. I for Odds		VIF
					Lower	Upper	
Age							
26 – 35	6.2447	0.509	3.6	0.000*	2.301	16.950	1.07
Gender							
Male	1.449	0.45	0.82	0.41	0.600	3.499	1.01
Education level							
Undergraduate	0.1421	1.46	-1.35	0.177	0.008	2.426	1.01
Marital Status							
Single	0.0727	1	-2.61	0.009*	0.010	0.520	1.11
Chaplaincy initiatives							
Yes	3.5	1.00	2.17	0.030*	1.150	10.645	1.03
Constant	0.7	2.16	0.32	0.747			

*Indicate the significance at (0.05 level of significance)

The findings presented above (Table 4) regarding the influence of the CCT initiatives on graduate employability are further validated by the following key informant interview findings.

“What CCT chapel is doing to students is really recommendable because seminars which they prepare for students help us to prepare for our future. Speaking from what I have received especially skills on life after university helped me to start a garden and thereafter a small shop which gives me day-to-day income.” (KI VI, Finalist student, CCT IRDP Chaplaincy, Dodoma, 19/05/2024).

“The teachings on self-confidence and entrepreneurship helped me to employ myself. Currently I am selling honey and I transport my products to many customers all over the country.” (KI VII, Finalist student, CCT UDOM Chaplaincy, Dodoma, 19/05/2024).

“As a finalist I have observed that CCT provides more than two seminars in a year with different topics like leadership, entrepreneurship, financial freedom, presentation skills and other knowledge, aiming to support us as upcoming graduates for a better life. From the knowledge provided, I decided to start selling jewellery to gain income while studying, so that I will never remain idle after graduating.” (KI VIII, Finalist student, CCT SUA Chaplaincy, Morogoro, 19/05/2024).

“Using the knowledge, I acquire from seminars and trainings provided by CCT on different life and financial building skills, as a current finalist I decided to open my bank savings account since when I was in my second year aiming to start my own business after graduating. So in my view, CCT is doing a great job in preparing us as upcoming graduates for a better future so we remain competitive and employable in the job market.” (KI IX, Finalist student, CCT Mzumbe chaplaincy Morogoro, 19/05/2024).

The above-presented testimonies of finalist students indicate the fruits of the CCT initiatives, which means that CCT should continue to oversee and improve such programmes. This aligns with the Rational Choice Theory which guides this study in that the choices the key informants have made in their lives as a result of CCT training and seminars have enhanced their potential for self-employment in small businesses.

These findings are consistent with the observation by Kessy (2020) and ILO (2022) that skills such as leadership and communication are crucial in the modern job market and are often cited as lacking among graduates in developing countries. The focus on entrepreneurship training is particularly pertinent, given the limited availability of formal employment opportunities. By fostering entrepreneurial skills, CCT chaplaincies help graduates explore self-employment and informal sector opportunities,

which are vital in the context of Tanzania's economy (Fox *et al.*, 2020; Mabala, 2019).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Religious institutions have an essential role in the employability of university graduates. The CCT chaplaincies in Tanzania have made significant strides in addressing graduate employability through a range of targeted initiatives. These initiatives have had a positive influence on the employability of graduates. However, their effectiveness is influenced by various socio-demographic and contextual factors. To maximize the impact of these initiatives, there is a need for increased investment, strategic partnerships, and tailored approaches that consider the diverse needs of the diverse student population at higher learning institutions.

Based on these findings, the study recommends that CCT headquarters establish a desk, which will be dealing with graduates' empowerment to enhance their employability upon graduation. Henceforth, CCT chaplaincies should also have practical training, which will improve the training currently offered at the chapels from theory to hands-on. This could involve collaboration with financial institutions, setting up revolving funds, or implementing micro-financing schemes. The government and management of higher learning institutions need to cooperate with chaplaincies from all denominations, which have chapels in their institutions to promote the value of extracurricular activities, which contribute to graduate employability. The findings of this study provide valuable insights for policymakers, educational institutions, and religious organizations working towards improving university graduate employability in Tanzania.

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