

Citation: Kufakunesu, M; Chinyoka, K & Madusise, S. (2020). Certification and Job Expectations among College and University Students in Zimbabwe: Prospects and Potential of Employment. *Journal of African Interdisciplinary Studies*, 4(4), 44 – 56.

Certification and Job Expectations among College and University Students in Zimbabwe: Prospects and Potential of Employment

By

Moses Kufakunesu¹, Kudzai Chinyoka² and Sylvia Madusise³

¹mkufakunesu@gzu.ac.zw, ²chinyokak@gmail.com and ³smadusise@gzu.ac.zw
+263772831054, +263773551922, +263773778886

^{1,2}Associate Professors in Psychology of Education, Department of Educational Foundations,

³Senior Lecturer in Mathematics, Department of Teacher Development
Great Zimbabwe University, P.O Box 1235, Masvingo, ZIMBABWE

*Corresponding Author: ¹Email: mkufakunesu@gzu.ac.zw

Abstract

The research manuscript was an endeavour to explore the assorted perceptions of college and university students in Zimbabwe on the extent to which higher and tertiary education facilitates vertical social mobility. The researchers became enthusiastic to undertake this study after detecting a steady increase in the number of students enrolling for higher and tertiary education amid a diversity of inimical countervailing variables. Theoretically, the study was anchored on the psychological theories of Maslow, Herzberg and Erikson. The mixed method approach involving the descriptive survey research design and the chi-square test was employed. Questionnaires, telephone interviews and focus group discussions were used to gather data during the empirical investigation. A gender balanced sample of 80 students from colleges and universities was selected using the stratified random sampling method. The study revealed that the students strongly believed that higher and tertiary education provides an avenue to a financially stable social life, despite the expenses to be incurred and the apparently glaring uncertainties. The researchers also established that some students pursued higher and tertiary education for other reasons apart from financial and social benefits. The researchers recommended, among other things, that other researchers interested in the explored domain should conduct related longitudinal research studies in which cohorts of research participants are studied over a long period of time in an attempt to determine the extent to which attaining higher and tertiary education translates to automatic vertical upward social mobility.

Key words: Credentialism, hygiene factors, satisfiers, higher and tertiary education, generativity versus stagnation, diploma disease phenomenon, quest for self-actualisation

Citation: Kufakunesu, M; Chinyoka, K & Madusise, S. (2020). Certification and Job Expectations among College and University Students in Zimbabwe: Prospects and Potential of Employment. *Journal of African Interdisciplinary Studies*, 4(4), 44 – 56.

Certification and Job Expectations among College and University Students in Zimbabwe: Prospects and Potential of Employment

By

Moses Kufakunesu,¹ Kudzai Chinyoka² and Sylvia Madusise³

Introduction and Background to the Study

Higher and tertiary education is pursued by students throughout the whole world for an assortment of reasons. One reason which is singled out explicitly or in some cases implicitly by a significant number of students is the zeal to strategically position oneself to ultimately get profitable remuneration packages. This was echoed by Pollard, Bates, Hunt and Bellis (2008) who indicate that numerous adult students believe that pursuing higher and tertiary education in universities, colleges and poly-technics is one apparent way to boost one's employability and career prospects as well as aiding personal development. Furthermore, some students believe that attaining higher and tertiary education qualifications entitles an individual to hefty remuneration packages which can improve one's standard of living because the individual will be able to afford housing and health costs, among other things. Nevertheless, Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley (2009: iv, x) warn that the attendant cost remains an apparent barrier to accessing higher and tertiary education in both developed and developing countries. The researchers embarked on the current research study with the intention to establish the extent to which students viewed higher and tertiary education as a catalyst for upward social mobility particular when one considers the financial expenses which one has to incur during higher and tertiary education.

In fact, the current study is a sequel to a study which was carried out by Kufakunesu, Ganga and Chinyoka (2012) with the title *Ascending or descending the ladder? Views of Great Zimbabwe University students on higher Education as a vehicle for vertical social mobility*. Kufakunesu, et al (2012) examined the extent to which higher education qualified as a vehicle for vertical social mobility in Zimbabwe particularly focusing on student teachers. Moreover, the study by Kufakunesu, et al (2012) was confined to student at a single university who were strictly pursuing qualifications in the teaching profession.

The Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture in Zimbabwe (2002:1) indicates that Zimbabwe has undergone dramatic expansion in educational opportunities since independence which resulted in positive results as confirmed by the 2002 national census. Kariwo (2007:45) reiterates that higher and tertiary education in Zimbabwe witnessed a rapid expansion in 1999 mainly in response to the demand which started in 1980 when Zimbabwe attained its independence. The sudden demand for higher and tertiary education can be ascribed to the fact that the students who had benefited from the floodgates of educational opportunities introduced soon after independence in Zimbabwe had then reached the higher and tertiary education tier. Nevertheless, the increase in the demand for higher and tertiary education to some extent strained the government's ability to adequately fund the higher and tertiary education expenses of all the students (CARA/IOM, 2010:18).

While college and university fees were greatly subsidised by the Zimbabwean government particularly in the first decade after independence, that is, 1980 to 1990, the changes in the economic arena, among other things, have substantially changed the complexion of the situation in colleges and universities. Nevertheless, Kariwo (2007) comments that, despite some spells of economic recession which sometimes bedevil Zimbabwe, the demand for higher and tertiary education has largely and consistently increased. It was this ironic phenomenon of a significant

Citation: Kufakunesu, M; Chinyoka, K & Madusise, S. (2020). Certification and Job Expectations among College and University Students in Zimbabwe: Prospects and Potential of Employment. *Journal of African Interdisciplinary Studies*, 4(4), 44 – 56.

increase in demand for higher and tertiary education in Zimbabwe amid an equally significant increase in the accompanying expenses that primed the researchers to undertake the current study. CARA/IOM (2010:5) maintain that one serious challenge facing Zimbabwe's higher and tertiary education institutions are the heightened fees for both tuition and accommodation. Altbach, et al (2009: x) further emphasise that students are increasingly responsible for bearing the burden of paying tuition fees and meeting other allied expenses. Kariwo (2007) maintains that there is still a recognisable difference between the post-qualification earnings of higher and tertiary education students and the fees they pay to undergo higher and tertiary education. One is then tempted to wonder if the expenses incurred during one's pursuit of higher education will not lead to relatively enduring financial woes which will cast their long shadows for a long period of time during one's post-qualification employment.

In 1976, Ronald Dore coined the term 'diploma disease' which researchers in higher and tertiary education issues find to be quite relevant. According to Dore and Whittaker (2001:13) as well as Dore, Stony and Nish (2003:286), the 'diploma disease' phenomenon, which is also called qualification escalation or credentialism, is a situation whereby students exert great effort to attain higher qualifications not for the pleasure of learning, but for more qualification earning geared to ultimately facilitate job attainment. Jain and Jain (2005:4) view qualification escalation as a ritualistic and laborious exercise characterised by anxiety and boredom which can ultimately translate to low curiosity and imaginative power. Chillias (2010) alludes to the prevalence of credentialism whereby students harbour the belief that an undergraduate degree needed to be supplemented with postgraduate qualifications in order to succeed in the labour market. Vaitilingam (2009:21) reiterates that the acquisition of high-level skills through participation in higher education is fundamentally important for combating professional obsolescence due to under-qualification. While Dore analysed qualification escalation in countries such as Japan, Sri Lanka, Kenya and Britain, the current was situated in Zimbabwe.

Universities UK (2010:50) outlines a research study which was undertaken in the United Kingdom which established that there is ample evidence to confirm that students are increasingly choosing subjects in which there is a high likelihood of gainful post-qualification employment. Hicks, Dismore, Lintern and Rith (2009:6) outline a research study which established that the incentive to study for foundation degrees was based on the premise that participation in higher and tertiary education would enable the students to develop a career and capitalise on any lucrative future employment opportunities. Universities UK (2010: 18) indicates that there has been a pronounced increase across the United Kingdom in the number of students aged at least 25 years who seek higher and tertiary education for the sake of being strategically positioned to outwit the prevailing or anticipated future economic difficulties. However, a research study by Woolhouse, Dunne and Goddard (2009) in Hicks, et al (2009:30) in which Teaching Assistants studying for a foundation degree took part established that attaining foundation degrees does not guarantee career achievement and financial prosperity. It was after considering such conflicting research findings that the researchers decided to explore the views of students regarding higher and tertiary education as a vehicle for having a better standard of living as a result of the resultant employment.

A research study conducted by the UK HECSU (2005) with applicants to full-time UK Higher Education courses established that the students' reasons for embarking on higher and tertiary education differed on the basis of gender. More male than female students disclosed that their decision to embark on higher and tertiary education was dominantly influenced by the zeal to have better employment opportunities. Reay (2003), who researched on the experiences of mature female students, empirically established that students were more influenced by process motivators of completing the course, than by outcome motivators or subsequently career achievements. Time

Citation: Kufakunesu, M; Chinyoka, K & Madusise, S. (2020). Certification and Job Expectations among College and University Students in Zimbabwe: Prospects and Potential of Employment. *Journal of African Interdisciplinary Studies*, 4(4), 44 – 56.

was also taken by the researchers in the current study to determine if there were any differences between the view of male and female Zimbabwean students regarding the role of higher and tertiary education in facilitating vertical social mobility.

Altbach, et al (2009: x) have emphasised that higher and tertiary education students and their families are increasingly becoming responsible for paying tuition and other fees. According to Universities UK (2010:35, 51), a research study conducted in the United Kingdom established that some students work on part-time or full-time basis while studying principally to help to pay for the essential living expenses and meeting study costs rather than for gaining work-related experience. Pollard, et al (2008) concede that higher and tertiary education is expensive and there remains the probability that some students will run into debt as they attempt to meet some higher and tertiary education expenses. Such a financial set-up is suggestive of the view that pursuing higher and tertiary education is a financial adventure which is equivalent to descending the economic ladder as one's social status degenerates as an upshot of the resultant debts and limited affluence.

Different countries have adopted different strategies to meet the demand for higher and tertiary education in a cost-effective way. According to Altbach, et al (2010: iv), income-contingent loans where repayment plans are tied to post-qualification earnings have gained popularity in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Court (1999) indicates that the University of Makerere has responded to declining government subventions by charging economic fees for private students, raising 40% of its revenue in the process. According to Altbach (2010: iv) Chile has introduced a new loan programme reserved for students from low-income families. The current research study focused on the students in Zimbabwe who were being affected by different financial pressures as well unique terms of fees payment schemes. Moreover, the geographical, methodological and contextual differences between the outlined research studies and the current study arguably justify the undertaking of this study since the possibility of unearthing novel findings could not be ruled out.

Statement of the Problem

People from different countries the world over have been seen pursuing higher and tertiary education against a diversity of circumstances. Some students struggle to raise money for paying fees and meeting other allied financial obligations but surprisingly they continue to relentlessly pursue college and university education against all odds. The quest to establish the motivation behind embarking on higher and tertiary education despite the various militating factors was the central aspect in the study. Motivation is a psychological concept which focuses on exploring the reasons why people commit time, energy and resources to undertake certain activities. The researchers deemed it necessary to scrutinise the justifications for exploring higher and tertiary education by students from different backgrounds so as to furnish research-based information to stakeholders such as prospective students, employers and government ministries. Such information could be use by interested stakeholders to decide how best to appropriate resources.

Theoretical Framework

Three psychological theories, that is, Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory and Frederick Irving Herzberg's two-factor theory provided the theoretical underpinning for the current study. The hallmark of Maslow's need theory is that human beings can only attempt to achieve higher needs if the basic needs such as physiological needs and security needs are reasonably met (Nevid, 2012; Feldman, 2009; Szarkowicz, 2006:85). Maslow, by virtue of being a humanistic psychologist, believes that people have an inherent quest for self-actualisation, that is, being the best, they can be (Feldman, 2009; Nevid, 2012). According to

Citation: Kufakunesu, M; Chinyoka, K & Madusise, S. (2020). Certification and Job Expectations among College and University Students in Zimbabwe: Prospects and Potential of Employment. *Journal of African Interdisciplinary Studies*, 4(4), 44 – 56.

Zastrow and Kirst-Ashman (2010:449), self-actualisation is, ‘the sense that one is fulfilling one’s potential and doing what one is suited for and capable of.’ The researchers made reference to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs in an attempt to figure out if higher and tertiary education was undertaken by the respondents for mere professional self-actualisation or for the sake of elevating their social status through lucrative employment.

Erik Erikson advanced the psychosocial theory which claims that people pass through a series of lifelong stages in which a particular crisis has to be resolved at each stage (Meggitt, 2006 :162; Bee & Boyd, 2004:15). Of importance in the current research study was the seventh stage, which Erikson branded *generativity versus stagnation* and is the stage to which the majority of the research participants belonged. Zastrow and Kirst-Ashman (2010:102) posit that generativity refers to the dedication by middle-aged adults to the provision of skills, resources and creativity principally to enhance the quality of their societies. According to Santrock (2004:71), generativity focuses on, among other things, one’s ability to garner material possessions, accumulate qualifications or have children so as to leave a legacy for the next generation (Lahey, 2009; Meggitt, 2006:163). The researchers were to some extent keen to establish if the enthusiasm by students to obtain higher and tertiary education qualifications was in any way related to Erikson’s psychosocial theory or to other factors having something to do with social mobility.

Herzberg, in his two-factor theory, which is also called the motivation-hygiene theory, postulates that job satisfaction and motivation are usually brought about by the intrinsic factors called motivators while job dissatisfaction is normally attributable to external variables called hygiene factors (Sapru, 2006:213; Naidu, 2005:124). According to Schermerhorn (2008:348) examples of motivators include recognition at work, responsibility, profession growth and advancement. On the other hand, examples of hygiene factors include salary, security, working conditions, company policy (Robbins & Coulter, 2002:427). The motivation-hygiene theory claims that, while addressing hygiene factors leads to a reduction in job dissatisfaction, it does not translate into job satisfaction (Schermerhorn, 2010:299; Naidu, 2005:124). Instead, job satisfaction is brought about by addressing motivators. This implies that Herzberg believes that factors which produce job satisfaction and factors which lead to job dissatisfaction are mutually exclusive (Robbins & Coulter, 2002:428). Some of the views of the respondents were analysed relative to Herzberg’s two-factor theory as well as the quest for vertical mobility.

Guiding Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How does attaining higher and tertiary improve the quality of one’s social life?
2. What are some of the financial challenges which students grapple with during higher and tertiary education?
3. Which factors motivate students to embark on higher and tertiary education apart from the anticipated financial gains?
4. Is there any association between the reasons for embarking on higher and tertiary education and gender?

Research Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted a mixed method approach in which one part of the research involved the interpretive research paradigm paired with the qualitative research approach in which the descriptive survey was used as the research design. The second part involved a chi-square test for independence which added a positivistic and quantitative flavour to the research methodology as a

Citation: Kufakunesu, M; Chinyoka, K & Madusise, S. (2020). Certification and Job Expectations among College and University Students in Zimbabwe: Prospects and Potential of Employment. *Journal of African Interdisciplinary Studies*, 4(4), 44 – 56.

way of ensuring methodological triangulation. According to Kufakunesu (2011:31) a descriptive survey research design as an investigation technique in which the researcher concentrates on describing and interpreting the existing phenomenon particularly with regard to aspects such as effects, attitudes, processes and beliefs. This was reiterated by Chinyoka and Kufakunesu (2017) who maintain that a descriptive survey is a qualitative research design which endeavours to describe and interpret the existing phenomena in the form of processes, effects, attitudes and beliefs. The descriptive survey was deemed appropriate because it accorded the researchers ample time and means to explore higher and tertiary education dynamics.

Data Gathering Instruments

Questionnaires, telephone and face-to-face interviews together with focus group discussions were used to collect the relevant data from the respondents as a form of methodological triangulation (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010:173). Kufakunesu and Chinyoka (2017) view a questionnaire is a document which contains relevant questions that the researcher intends to pose to the research participants. Therefore, a questionnaire is a list of methodically and carefully structured items prepared by the researcher to elicit responses from respondents during the empirical investigation (Kufakunesu & Chinyoka, 2017; Chiromo, 2006). Due to the respondents' high levels of literacy, the researcher deemed it appropriate to make use on questionnaires.

Face-to-face Interviews were also conducted in a bid to capture some non-verbal forms of communication among other things. Telephone interviews were employed to collect information from geographically distant research participants. Haralambos and Holborn (2008:827) back the use of individual interviews by saying, "It may be easier to establish rapport, confidentiality can be ensured, and the respondent is not distracted or influenced by the presence of other interviewees". Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2010:208) define a focus group discussion as, "a carefully planned series of discussions designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment." Morgan (2006) in Haralambos and Holborn (2008:828) argues that focus group discussions are more appropriate when the group members have a shared interest or area of expertise and this was quite applicable to the research study. Moreover, Wilkinson (2004) in Haralambos and Holborn (2008:828) contends that focus group discussions significantly reflect social reality as they are more naturalistic than one-to-one interviews.

Population and Sample Details

The target population was composed of students studying at colleges and universities in Zimbabwe. Their ages ranged from 18 years to 48 and students came from virtually all the 10 provinces of Zimbabwe, thereby increasing the degree of generalisability of the research findings.

A sample of 80 respondents was selected using the proportional stratified random sampling method. Chilisa and Preece (2005:103) view stratified random sampling as sampling procedure in which a sample is randomly selected in such a way that it is proportionally representative of each stratum. The stratification was done according to the enrolments at the colleges and universities involved and also relative to gender. Moreover, the resultant sample members had an assortment of characteristics relative to variables such as specialisation areas of their diploma or degree programmes, age, socio-economic background and career ambitions.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers coded the names of the students using both letters and numbers in an attempt to observe the ethical principle of anonymity (Chiromo, 2006:11). Male students were identified with the letter M and the numbers 1 to 40, that is, M1, M2 up to M40. Similarly, female students were

Citation: Kufakunesu, M; Chinyoka, K & Madusise, S. (2020). Certification and Job Expectations among College and University Students in Zimbabwe: Prospects and Potential of Employment. *Journal of African Interdisciplinary Studies*, 4(4), 44 – 56.

identified using the letter F and the numbers 1 to 40, that is, F1, F2 up to F40. The researchers also heeded other ethical principles such as informed consent, non-maleficence, confidentiality and the right to privacy. The students also benefitted through empirically witnessing how data is collected during the research process using questionnaires, individual interviews and focus group discussions, thereby confirming that the researchers took heed of ethical the principle of beneficence.

Research Findings

Below are the research findings which emerged when the researchers analysed the data which was collected during the empirical investigation:

- (a) Data showed that 75% (60) of the respondents believed that higher and tertiary education qualified as one of the chief agents of upward social mobility.
- (b) Facilities such as bank loans, credit sales, hire purchase and insurance policies were mentioned by the respondents as the lucrative benefits of embarking on higher and tertiary education which subsequently enables one to ascend the socio-economic ladder.
- (c) Data revealed that 87.5% (70) of the research participants admitted that financial resources for meeting expenses such as fees, accommodation, food and stationery among other things, were a serious challenge since they were on a half- salary scheme with no housing and transport allowances.
- (d) The study showed that 62.5% (50) of the sampled students conceded that they had to sell some of their assets to supplement their fees.
- (e) The respondents unanimously agreed that the benefits of attaining higher and tertiary education were in most cases unable to offset the expenses incurred during training within a few years of post-qualification employment.
- (f) The prospect of working in and around urban areas was singled out by more female respondents than males as another key reason for enduring the challenges of undergoing higher and tertiary education.
- (g) Fear of professional obsolescence and redundancy was cited by 80% (64) of the respondents as a cogent justification for embarking on higher and tertiary education despite the countervailing circumstances.
- (h) The chi-square test employed to explore if there was an association between gender and factors such as vying for promotions, becoming knowledgeable and enhancing one's chances of branching into a new career domain while holding other variables constant revealed that the reasons for embarking on higher and tertiary education were independent of gender at 5% significance level. The results remained the same even when a less stringent significance level of 10% was considered.
- (i) 85% (68) of the respondents expressed the view that they were nursing the hope of reaping the benefits of attaining higher and tertiary education when the economic climate in the country improved.

Discussions of Findings

Varied sentiments were expressed by the 80 students who took part in the current study. Firstly, 75% (60) strongly pointed out that higher and tertiary education remains the major gateway to a better social life especially in countries where skills and qualifications are properly considered. The respondents highlighted that gaining higher and tertiary education qualifications usually brings about a plethora of benefits which will boosts the quality of one's social life. They emphasised that higher and tertiary education graduates normally enjoy beneficial and life-changing facilities such

Citation: Kufakunesu, M; Chinyoka, K & Madusise, S. (2020). Certification and Job Expectations among College and University Students in Zimbabwe: Prospects and Potential of Employment. *Journal of African Interdisciplinary Studies*, 4(4), 44 – 56.

as bank loans, credit sales and hire purchase agreements as well as insurance policies and funeral policies by virtue of being formally employed. It can therefore be argued that the views of the respondents significantly tallied with those of students in the United Kingdom regarding the role of higher education as an agent of upward social mobility. The respondents remarked that such facilities definitely enhance the quality of the social lives of the beneficiaries thereby enabling them to live a better social and economic life.

Moreover, the respondents remarked that attaining a higher and tertiary education qualification usually emancipates an individual from a variety of barriers. They pointed out that the negative effects of militating variables such as poor socio-economic background or being an orphan can all be diluted and minimised by attaining higher and tertiary education qualifications. Fifty-six out of the 80 students claimed that the negative effects of factors like as gender differences or whether one hailed from a rural or urban background could be evened out and smoothened through undergoing higher and tertiary education.

The researchers also gathered that the respondents believed that attaining higher and tertiary education qualifications usually enables an individual to get a job in which one would be earning a reasonably high regular salary thereby enjoying increased affluence. The research participants further elaborated that earning a regular salary would enable one to undertake strategic planning with regard to the various social developmental projects one would be interested in. From the respondents' point of view, such strategic planning would most likely lead to a better social life thereby enabling them to experience upward vertical social mobility.

Fifty-eight, that is, 72.5% of the respondents pointed out that they in one or the other entertained the dream of working in urban schools where the quality of their lives would improve substantially through using amenities such as better transport facilities, electricity, taped water and some cheaper commodities. More female respondents than males were found to be particularly passionate about working in and around urban areas. Of the 58 respondents who indicated that they embarked on higher and tertiary education to increase their chances of working in and around urban areas, 29 were female. Moreover, it came to the attention of the researchers that the students believed that working in urban settings was somehow strategic for vertical social mobility since one would stand a better chance of benefitting from housing schemes which are rarely accessed by those based in rural settings. The informants claimed that working in urban schools would increase their probability of ultimately purchasing valuable properties such as houses and cars. The research participants registered the belief that there was a myriad of social role models in towns whom they could imitate and finally ascend the social ladder all because of having attained higher and tertiary education qualifications.

Nevertheless, the majority of the respondents conceded that undergoing higher and tertiary education was not cheap. Seventy out of the 80 respondents (87.5%) acknowledged that a lot of financial resources were required when one is undergoing higher and tertiary education. This confirmed the claims by other previous researchers that higher and tertiary education in Zimbabwe is relatively expensive to a significant proportion of the students (Pollard, et al, 2008; CARA/IOM, 2010:5; Kariwo, 2007). Apart from fees, the informants pointed out that money was needed for meeting accommodation expenses, transport costs and for purchasing food and stationery. The students indicated that their financial plight as students was aggravated by the fact that some of them had children who also needed school fees, food, clothes and other basic necessities. This partly tallied with the sentiments of Altbach, et al (2010: x) who established the students and their families usually bear the brand of extortionately high college and university fees. Some of the respondents indicated that they were regularly grappling with the feeling that they were actually being impoverished in their quest to become diploma or degree holders. They pointed out that they

Citation: Kufakunesu, M; Chinyoka, K & Madusise, S. (2020). Certification and Job Expectations among College and University Students in Zimbabwe: Prospects and Potential of Employment. *Journal of African Interdisciplinary Studies*, 4(4), 44 – 56.

sometimes felt as if they were sinking into a financial pit where they were likely to remain trapped for a significant period of time, if not forever. Nevertheless, some students, while conceding that sometimes attempting to attain a higher and tertiary education qualification was almost tantamount to descending the social ladder, they were still entertaining the hope of ascending the social ladder through the use of their such qualifications.

The researchers gleaned from the respondents that the fees which were required were significantly exorbitant and difficult to raise to a significant number of students. During the empirical investigation, the college and university fees were far much higher than the salaries of most public service employees. In some cases, the fees were more than three times the salaries of the generality of the public service employees. The research participants disclosed that various means were used to raise the required university fees. While 62.5% (50) of the respondents pointed out that they raised part of their fees through selling some of their assets such as furniture items and some electrical gadgets, other students talked of selling precious beasts such as cattle, pigs and goats in a bid to make sure that their fees were paid.

Respondents M27 and F19 indicated that they sold all the furniture which they once bought for their respective families. Apart from selling such valuable assets for the sake of raising fees for their higher and tertiary education, 45% (18) of the students revealed that they engaged in cross-border trading as a way of meeting some of the expenses. This tallied with the findings of Universities UK (2010: 35, 51) which established that students actively attempted to solve the problem of exorbitant university fees. While the students in the United Kingdom engaged in part-time or full-time employment, some of the respondents in the current raised money through disposing some of their assets. Somehow, the majority of the respondents conceded that if one only considered the financial challenges associated with undergoing higher and tertiary training, one could view this as an impoverishing adventure which leads to a downward social mobility.

A substantial proportion of the informants conceded that they were quite aware of the fact that the post-qualification remuneration packages on offer were to a large extent not adequate to immediately offset the losses they would have incurred during training. Some students admitted that it was possible to eventually fail to recover some of the assets which they had sold for the sake of attaining higher and tertiary education qualifications. They indicated that if the economic terrain suddenly becomes highly inflationary, as is characteristic of Zimbabwe, one may encounter difficulties in re-procuring valuable assets such as pieces of furniture and electrical gadgets. Hence the students acknowledged that there was a probability of descending the social ladder due to higher and tertiary education expenses and probably remaining trapped in a worse off position after matriculation.

The respondents' confidence to take the financial gamble was based on the ardent hope which most of these students seemed to be harbouring. It was pointed out by 85% (68) of the sampled students that they strongly believed that the situation would improve in future in Zimbabwe during their productive and active years. Despite acknowledging that the financial resources required for tertiary training were substantial enough to put them in financial doldrums, thereby descending the economic ladder, most respondents generally did not show any signs of despair. They maintained that they were entertaining the hope of living in a world where those with better higher and tertiary education qualifications would get satisfactory remuneration packages.

The sample members pointed out that they were not alarmed by the meagre notches which were being used in the existing grading system. More than 72% of the students banked their confidence of benefitting at some point in future on the fact that the economic situation in Zimbabwe as the country vacillated and it once steadily stabilised and improved from 2009 to 2017 due to a variety of factors which included the 'dollarisation' process. The 2009 to 2017 economic climate in

Citation: Kufakunesu, M; Chinyoka, K & Madusise, S. (2020). Certification and Job Expectations among College and University Students in Zimbabwe: Prospects and Potential of Employment. *Journal of African Interdisciplinary Studies*, 4(4), 44 – 56.

Zimbabwe was lucrative for many gainfully employed individuals and it contrasted the 2007 to 2008 era in which a form of economic recession prevailed in the country.

It also came to the attention of the researchers that some students embarked on higher and tertiary education for other reasons apart from merely boosting the quality of their social lives. Exactly 80% (64) of the sample members pointed out that they were pursuing higher and tertiary education primarily to insulate themselves from sinking into professional obsolescence and redundancy as established by Vaitilingam (2009:21). They dreaded being declared under-qualified or unwanted at their work places as a result of there being other people with better qualifications and skills. Such sentiments confirmed the presence of the qualification escalation phenomenon which Dore identified in countries as Japan, England and Kenya (Dore & Whittaker, 2001: 9, 13).

Apart from the anticipated financial benefits of better higher and tertiary education qualifications, factors such as becoming eligible for promotions, being knowledgeable and enhancing one's chances of venturing into a new career field were cited by some respondents. The researchers undertook two chi-square tests to establish if there was any association between the three aforementioned variables and gender using the contingency table shown as Table 1. At 5% significance level, the researchers found no association between gender and reasons such as the desire to be promoted, being more knowledgeable and being better positioned to pursue a different career line. This means that male and female respondents advanced basically the same reasons for pursuing higher and tertiary education relative to the three variables. The results remained the same even after considering a less stringent significance level of 10%.

Table 1: Contingency table showing gender and some reasons for embarking on higher and tertiary education: n= 80

Gender	Promotion	Pursuing other Career Lines	Becoming Knowledgeable	TOTAL
Female	15 (19)	17 (14)	8 (7)	40
Male	23 (19)	11 (14)	6 (7)	40
TOTAL	38	28	14	80

Some respondents pointed out that they were pursuing higher education for the sake of enhancing their professional efficiency and effectiveness. They argued that attaining higher and tertiary education qualifications would enhance their social and professional self-esteem. Forty-five out of the 80 sample members (56.25%) remarked that their quest to embark on higher and tertiary education was spurred by the desire to ultimately gain professional recognition and job enlargement and not only for financial mileage. The researchers ascribed such sentiments to Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory which emphasises that recognition, professional growth and enhancement are satisfiers which lead to job satisfaction while financial benefits are hygiene factors which only serve to minimise job dissatisfaction without necessarily acting as motivators. The research findings were to some extent similar to those of Ruthankoon and Ogunlana (2003:333) who established that Herzberg's two-factor theory is applicable in the job setup although more variables need to be manipulated to enhance employee motivation and job satisfaction.

Some research participants also made reference the issue of realising one's potential as a convincing reason to endure the financial challenges which are associated with attaining higher education qualifications. Fifty-one out of the 80, that is, 63.75% of the respondents categorically indicated that they were pursuing higher education principally as a way of trying to be the best they could be professionally. The researchers attributed such remarks to Maslow's hierarchy of needs which postulates that the desire to self-actualise is an inherent attribute of human beings (Lahey,

Citation: Kufakunesu, M; Chinyoka, K & Madusise, S. (2020). Certification and Job Expectations among College and University Students in Zimbabwe: Prospects and Potential of Employment. *Journal of African Interdisciplinary Studies*, 4(4), 44 – 56.

2009; Feldman, 2009). The researchers also interpreted the respondents' views by making reference to Erik Erikson's psycho-social theory which postulates that people in the generativity versus stagnation stage are enthusiastic to be productive in many ways including attaining a number of educational qualifications so as to find something show their peers and those in the next generations was also considered (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2010:102). Hence from this point of view, higher and tertiary education was pursued for potential realisation and generativity while financial gains were probably a welcome by-product.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Just like in the study undertaken by Kufakunesu, et al (2012), the current researchers found out that a substantial number of informants ardently believed that higher and tertiary education is a catalyst for vertical upward social mobility. Nevertheless, the same research participants conceded that one has to endure the accompanying financial hardships before one can meaningfully enjoy the benefits of higher and tertiary education. No statistically significant gender differences were found regarding the justification for embarking on higher and tertiary education. The researchers concluded that the inherent quest to embark on higher and tertiary education was heavily anchored on the unsubstantiated hope to reap the lucrative rewards of higher and tertiary education qualifications at some point in the indefinite future. The majority of the respondents were prepared to descend the economic ladder hoping to ascend the very same ladder at some point in the future. It was also revealed in the current study that sometimes the quest to embark on higher and tertiary education was not entirely spurred by the desire to harvest financial rewards at some point in the future. Variables such as the intrinsic desire to self-actualise or to amass qualifications as a means of averting professional obsolescence coupled with boosting one's professional self-esteem were found to be contending justifications for embarking on higher and tertiary education.

The researchers made the following recommendations guided by the outcomes of the current study: Higher and tertiary education institutions such as colleges, poly-technics and universities should somehow attempt to charge fees which are consistent with the prevailing earnings of the generality of the population. Alternatively, such higher and tertiary institutions should gazette payment schemes which will ensure that the financial circumstances of the students are considered while simultaneously ensuring that the full fees are eventually paid with a given time period.

Colleges and universities should aim to offer more programmes which are meant to lighten the financial burdens of the students. This can be done by offering the programmes on block-release basis. Alternatively, higher and tertiary education institutions can embark on outreach programmes in which the college and university lecturers will visit strategic centres within the students' localities to conduct lectures. This will reduce accommodation and transport expenses on the part of the students. Such a development can increase the number of students who attain higher education qualifications and subsequently become positioned to undergo vertical social mobility if what the respondents' views are anything to go by. The research can safely confirm that some universities are already doing this in Zimbabwe.

To generative comprehensive information regarding the variables explored I the current study, future research can undertake allied studies with variations in theoretical orientations, research methodology or geographical location. Furthermore, other researchers may conduct longitudinal research studies in which research participants belonging to a particular cohort are challenged to evaluate their socio-economic status over a given period of time well after attaining higher and tertiary education qualifications.

Citation: Kufakunesu, M; Chinyoka, K & Madusise, S. (2020). Certification and Job Expectations among College and University Students in Zimbabwe: Prospects and Potential of Employment. *Journal of African Interdisciplinary Studies*, 4(4), 44 – 56.

References

- Altbach, P.G., Reisberg, L. and Rumbley, L.E. (2009) *Trends in Global Higher Education: Tracking and Academic Revolution*. A Report Prepared for the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education: UNESCO.
- Bee, H. and Boyd, D. (2004) *The Developing Child (10th Edition)*. Illinois: Pearson Education.
- CARA/IOM (2010) *Zimbabwe Higher Education Initiative Consultation Findings*. Harare: Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education.
- Chilisa, B. and Preece, J. (2005) *Research Methods for Adult Education in Africa*. Gaborone: UNESCO Institute for Educators.
- Chillas, S. (2010) Degrees of fit? Matching in the graduate labour market. *Employee Relations*, 32(2):156-170.
- Chiromo, A.S. (2006) *Research Methods and Statistics in Education: A Students' Guide*. Gweru: Midlands State University.
- Court, D. (1999) *Financing Higher Education in Africa: Makerere, The Quiet Revolution*. Washington DC: World Bank and the Rockefellers Foundation Education Group.
- Dore, R.P., Stony, R. and Nish, I. (2003) *Collected Writings of Dore (on Modern Western Scholars on Japan)*. Tokyo: Routledge
- Dore, R.P. and Whittaker, D.H. (2001) *Social Evolution, Economic Development and Culture: what it means to take Japan seriously*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Groenewald, T. (2004) A Phenomenological Research Design Illustrated. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*: 3(1), 42-55.
- Haralambos, M. and Holborn, M. (2008) *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives*. London: Collins Education.
- HECSU (2005) *Embarking on Higher Education*.
<http://www.hecsu.ac.uk/assets/documents/researchreports.html> (Retrieved on 22.10.19)
- Hicks, H., Dismore, H., Lintern, M. and Rith, S. (2009) *What do Foundation degree graduates do? Part4*. Plymouth: University of Plymouth Higher Education Learning Partnerships and Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning
- Jain, M. and Jain, S. (eds) (2005) *Healing Ourselves from the Diploma Disease*. Rajasthan: Shikshanta (The People's Institute for Rethinking Education and Development).
- Kariwo, M.T. (2007) Widening Access in Higher Education in Zimbabwe. *Higher Education Policy*, 20:45-59.
- Kufakunesu, M. and Chinyoka, K. (2017) "Shattered spider web? Developmental challenges faced by secondary school adolescent learners in Zimbabwe." *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 22 (09):26-35.
- Kufakunesu, M. and Chinyoka, K. (2017) Biting the Technological Bait? Teachers' Views on the English Language Proficiency of Secondary School Learners in Zimbabwe. *Educational Research International (August 2017)*, 6(3):90-102.
- Kufakunesu, M., Ganga, E. and Chinyoka, K. (2012). Ascending or descending the ladder? Views of Great Zimbabwe University students on higher Education as a vehicle for vertical social mobility. *Journal of African Studies and Development*, 4(5):122-129.
- Kufakunesu, M. (2011). *Teachers' attitudes towards counselling adolescents: The case of Masvingo Urban Secondary Schools*. Saarbrücken: Lambert Academic Publications
- Maypole, J., & Davies, T. G. (2001). Students' perceptions of constructivist learning in a community college American History II. *Community College Review*, 29(2):54-80.
- Meggitt, C. (2006) *Child Development: An illustrated guide (2nd Edition)*. Oxford: Heinemann.

Citation: Kufakunesu, M; Chinyoka, K & Madusise, S. (2020). Certification and Job Expectations among College and University Students in Zimbabwe: Prospects and Potential of Employment. *Journal of African Interdisciplinary Studies*, 4(4), 44 – 56.

Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture-Zimbabwe (2007) *Report on the Development and State of the Art of Adult Learning and Education in Zimbabwe, 1997-2007*. Harare: Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture-Zimbabwe.

Naidu, S.P. (2005) *Public Administration: Concepts and Theories*. New Delhi: New Age International Publishers.

Pollard, E., Bates, P., Hunt, W. and Bellis, A. (2008) *University is Not Just for Young People: Working Adults' Perceptions of and Orientation to Higher Education*. <http://www.dius.gov.uk/research/documents/DIUS-RR-08-06.pdf> (Retrieved on 22.10.19).

Reay, D. (2003) A risky business? Mature Working-Class Women Students and Access to Higher Education. *Gender and Education*, 15(3):301-317.

Robbins, S.P. and Coulter, M. (2002) *Management (7th edition)* New Delhi: Prentice Hall India.

Ruthankoon, R. and Ogunlana, S.O. (2003) Testing Herzberg's two-factor theory in the Thai construction industry. *Engineering, Construction and Architectural Management* 10(5): 333-341.

Santrock, J.W. (2004) *Educational Psychology (2nd Edition)*. Santiago: McGraw-Hill.

Sapru, R.K. (2006) *Administrative Theories and Management Thought*. New Delhi: Prentice Hall of India.

Schermerhorn, J.R. (2010) *Exploring Management (Second Edition)*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Shermerhorn, J.R. (2008) *Management (9th Edition)* Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.

Szarkowicz, D. (2006) *Observations and Reflections in Childhood*. Belmont: Thomson Social Sciences Press.

Universities UK (2010) *Changes in Student Choices and Graduate Employment*. London: Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).

Vaitilingam, R. (2009) *Recession Britain: findings from economic and social research*. Swindon: Economic & Social Research Council.

Woolhouse, C., Dunne, L. and Goddard, G. (2009) Lifelong Learning: Teaching Assistants' Experiences of Economic, Social and Cultural Change following Completion of a Foundation Degree. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 28(6):763-776.

Zastrow, C. and Kirst-Ashman, K.K. (2010) *Understanding Human Behaviour and the Social Environment (8th Edition)* Belmont: Brooks/Cole Cengage Learning.