



# “Strategic planning of the program content and graduate’s employability skills in selected state universities in Cameroon”.

BY:

**RHEA ETA AGBOR (Faculty of Education, Department of Curriculum and Evaluation, University of Yaounde 1, Cameroon).**

**Co-author:**

**Pr. Henri Rodrigue NJENGOUÉ NGAMALEU (Lecturer, University of Yaounde 1, Cameroon)**

## Abstract

This work aims at examining the relation between strategic program content and graduate employabilities. The growing need for the higher education system to produce graduates with capabilities in terms of skills and attitudes useful for solving youth unemployment challenges has prompted education reforms in Cameroon. Many school leavers, especially those from the universities in the country after graduation are not easily integrated into the job market due to their lack of employable skills which were not imbibed into them during their training. The ways in which employability skills can be incorporated in the program content of university have been under-researched in Cameroon and stands as the need for higher education. This research aims at filling this gap by exploring the planning of the program content and its relationship with graduates employability skills in some state universities. The research employed the employability, the human capital and the goal setting theories. The research applied a quantitative approach and a descriptive correlation survey design. The population of the study were university graduates of state universities in Cameroon. The participants were 160 graduates selected for the research through simple random sampling and the snow ball sampling technic. The validity and reliability of the research instruments were determined, and pilot testing done. The data collected was analysed using the SPSS version 25.0, the Pearson Correlation and the ordinal regression analyses. The following results were obtained from the findings, the finding reveals a correlation coefficient of 0.74.25(74.2%) for the content program and 0.665 (66.5%) for quality assurance and control. Overall, the research findings indicate a significantly positive relationship between strategic planning of program content and graduates employability skills in the university of Yaounde I and Buea. The study greatly recommends that graduates should be provided

with soft skills (communication, technical, practical), which is highly needed in the job market. The universities should restructure their curricular to gear towards entrepreneurial and employable skills and vocational education should be encouraged to permit youth gain employment in Cameroon.

**Keywords:** Strategic planning; Employability Skills; program content; quality assurance

## 2.Introduction

The purpose of this study is to get an in-depth understanding of the relationship between strategic planning of the program content and graduates employability skills acquisition in the context of universities in Cameroon. This included exploring the relationship between the program, the program quality and its relationship between graduates employability skills and the link between quality assurance of the program on graduates skills development. Since 1990, the government of Cameroon, backed by the IMF/World Bank-led economic recovery programme, restructured the educational system and redefined its goals to address unemployment and social development. Additionally, Vision 2035, known as the Strategy for Growth and Employment Paper (GESP), published in 2010 sets the Government of Cameroon's goals for the country's growth and development; the main aim being for Cameroon to become an emerging economy by 2035. (Ntemgwé, 2016 ,p.35).

Among other aspects, the GESG identifies youth unemployment and weak productivity as key challenges for the country's development. There is thus the need to review the education received in higher education in Cameroon from its traditional content-based approach to the adoption of a pedagogic paradigm relating to the more pragmatic and functional Competency-Based Teaching Approaches (CBTAs) in line with the goals of the 2010 Growth and Employment Strategy Paper (GESG). However, although education stakeholders in Cameroon claim that the education system is competency-based, there is no clear evidence from research which indicates the extent of the implementation of this policy or factors that militate against its smooth implementation (Esongo, 2017). We shall be looking at strategic planning of the program content and the quality assurance of the program.

The content program in school is skewed towards academic preparation as evident in widespread unemployment among youths (ILO, 2013). Besides, research has demonstrated that employers want employees who possess interpersonal skills, effective communications skills, problem solving and critical thinking skills as well as the ability to work well within a team (Billing, 2003). A similar result from a study of employers' needs from new employees in the workplace was reported by Shivpuri and Kim (2004). Further, in its report on Global Employment Trends for Youths, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) maintained that youth unemployment is widespread throughout the globe because of a shortfall in young people's skills, job experience, job search skills as well as the lack of the financial resources to find work (ILO 2009). This challenge, the report noted, is compounded in developing countries by the competitive economic and social pressures brought about by the ever-growing pool of people available for work. Despite the recognition that unemployment is a global phenomenon, unemployment and underemployment amongst young people in Cameroon is high (Nkamta, 2017, pp.7-20).

According to the International Labour Organization's (ILO, 2013) report, the unemployment rate in Cameroon is 30% and that of underemployment is 75%. The report showed that, there are about 4-6 million, able and ready to work young people who are currently unemployed in Cameroon. Cameroon remains strategic in terms of institutional arrangement, which involves issues of the younger age group, yet the lack of adequate technical and professional education for youth especially those completing higher education continues to be a major concern and is one of the main causes for the high rate of youth unemployment in Cameroon (Teneng, 2016).

### 3. Research Problem

The increasing problem of graduate unemployment has been linked to the low level of graduate competency or skills acquisition and quality of graduates that does not match with employers' expectations (Ma'dan et al., 2020, pp. 137-165). The author further described the difficulty for employers today to find candidates who possess a variety of skills to facilitate and enhance the organization's productivity. It is therefore vital to address the enhancement of graduates' competency to ensure that graduate employment matches market needs in the future. Hence, the research is motivated to find ways to improve graduate skills that can meet industry demand.

As highlighted by Saleh and Rosli (2023, pp.18212-18231) and by Periera, Vilas-Boas and Rebelo (2020), one strategy to enhance graduate employability vis-à-vis industry demand is focusing on work-life competency and the key skills needed for the advancement of the organization. This is a complex challenge that demands transformation at the higher education institutional level, taking into consideration the perspectives and momentum of the various interest groups concerned (Anicic & Divjak, 2020; Sin & Neace, 2016).

Unfortunately, it has been observed and experienced by the researcher in the reality of Cameroon that, when you move around the streets of Cameroon, you meet first degree holders, masters and even PhD holders roaming the streets hopelessly. All because they lack employability skills that are supposed to make them worthy of employment. The planning system is probably not successful as the goals, objectives, missions, strategic planning process, the strategic content planning and quality assurance are not effectively employed and felt by all stakeholders. Most often, the strategic plan is imposed on the body from the macro to micro level, whose view was never asked during the drafting process.

According to the Cameroonian Graduates Tracer Study (Ministry of Higher Education, 2017), a total of 53,373 graduates from across different Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) were unemployed upon graduation, constituting approximately 3.5% of the unemployment rate in the country. The largest cohort came from public universities, where the total was 26,776 compared to private universities (24,808), polytechnics (1,234), community colleges (291), and others (268). Other empirical observation from ILO in 2019 shows an increase in unemployment rate from 4.4 to 4.20 which is too low to enable emergence of Cameroon by 2035.

This statistic shows that, striving for high qualified and competitive candidates remain a challenge for most universities today. Thus, the planning system is probably not successful as the program content and its

quality are not effectively employed and felt by all stakeholders. This limitation and mismatch in skill-set creates a gap between the graduates and the fast-changing job market. Graduates often find it hard to explore their careers due to their skill deficiencies (Makki, 2015). Because of this gap, graduate job seekers in this competitive era usually cannot be employed as employers require specific skills and competences from workers to improve productivity.

From the above peril, there is bound to be a limitation and mismatch in graduates' skill-set that impede graduate's employment. This lack of employability skills and skills that do not match the demands of the labour market are the obstacles of getting employment, (Teneng, 2016). This limitation and mismatch in skill-set creates a gap between the graduates and the fast-changing job market. Graduates often find it hard to explore their careers due to their skill deficiencies (Makki, 2015). Because of this gap, graduate job seekers in this competitive era usually cannot be employed as employers require specific skills and competences from workers to improve productivity. As a result, the rate of unemployment among graduates in Cameroon in 2018 was 4.4 according to ILO, in 2019, it increased to 4.20 (UNESCO, 2019) too high to enable 2035 emergence.

There is however, a mismatch between training and employment and the lack of training for self - employment (Ibid). The ways in which employability skills development can be incorporated in the content program of schools have been under-researched in Cameroon and stands as the need for vocational education, rather than a constitutive part of the curriculum development process. This research aimed to get an in-depth understanding into whether if young people are given sufficient opportunities through higher education to raise their skills, they would be qualified for available jobs (Samfoga, 2016).

The central question the researcher ask is what then is the relationship between strategic planning of the program content and graduate's employability skills in some Cameroon state universities ? It is in a bid to answer this fundamental question that this work would be examining the two research objectives.

#### **4.The research objectives**

- 1.To examine the relationship between the program content and graduates employability skills
- 2.To analyse the link between quality assurance and graduates employability skills

#### **Research questions**

- 1.What is the relationship between the content program and graduates employability skills?
- 2.What is the link between the quality assurance and graduates employability skills?

#### **The research hypotheses**

**Ha:** There is a relationship between the program content and graduates employability skills

**Ho:** There is no relationship between the program content and graduates employability skills

#### **5. Literature Review**

There is a growing interest through research on how higher education can become influential economic growth and development as well as employability of graduates. Studies on Cameroon included; Fonkeng and



Ntembe (2009), investigated the potential of HE in the development of Cameroon, using household survey data from the first Cameroon household survey, analyzing the effect of education attainment on earnings and private returns to education, revealing among other things, a positive and significant relationship between HE and economic growth. Doh (2012), investigating the responses of HE in the alleviation of poverty in the country and in triggering economic growth, analyzed the transformation processes used by the Cameroonian government to use HE as a driver of its poverty reduction strategies in becoming an emergent nation by 2035. He used the National Innovative System (NIS) in depicting the systemic environment of HE to suggest that university's contribution to socio-economic development in Cameroon could be more direct given a strong macro support system with linkages. Samfoga (2015), evaluated the Strategic objectives of HE through the Balanced Scorecard (BSC), evaluating the increasing need of accountability and relevance to varying stakeholders with differing expectations

Agborbechem (2016), curriculum structure and the Cameroonian labour and industrial market education in Cameroon, he affirmed that, the labour market has come under serious criticisms for failing to deliver in accordance with its promises as stipulated in the education law. With the improving situation of democracy and freedom in Cameroon, entrepreneurship becomes a major prerequisite for the rapid economic development of the nation. The study revealed that the present curriculum no longer meets the demands of the society. A curriculum revision was recommended from the findings.

Internationally, there is a wide variety of studies on the phenomena of skills and graduate employability. York and Knight (2004) point out that a needs analysis is necessary from the beginning, where HE providers find out the skills that make students employable and how these can be embedded in the curricula, to achieve desired employability. Phillips (2007) argued for the inclusion of work experience in the higher education curriculum on the basis that work experience improves students' employability and equips them with such skills as team building and business awareness.

Doost Mohammadina (2017,p.36) perceives that, a strategic plan is an important management tool. It sets a clear direction for the organization, improves performance, helps resolve current challenges and avoid future problems, and provides a framework for decision-making. Strategic planning therefore is "the process by which the guiding members of an organization envision its future and develop the necessary procedures and operations to achieve that future".

Building programs and making many procedures carried out by departments and colleges and scientific management in the enterprise can be summarized as the most important requirements for the construction of new programs (Accreditation Body and Ensure the Quality of Higher Education Institutions, 2011) as follows; The context of the program includes general information about the university, and a comprehensive study of the program shows the message and the overall objective and sub-goals, study Plan for the program and learning outcomes, curriculum and teaching methods and means of evaluation, human resources and qualifications available and financial resources and facilities (halls, the library, and related laboratories).

Quality assurance; this is an all-embracing term referring to an ongoing, continuous process of evaluating (assessing, monitoring, guaranteeing, maintaining, and improving) the quality of a higher education system, institutions, or programmes. As a regulatory mechanism, quality assurance focuses on both accountability and improvement, providing information and judgments (not ranking) through an agreed upon and consistent process and well-established criteria. (Garvin, 1988)..(UNESCO, 2022).

Quality assurance agencies; Quality assurance agencies aim to evaluate and guide careers services and employability provision, influence related policy, and encourage best practice. Such agencies act as “important mechanisms” through which HE institutions can be encouraged to “enhance the employability of their graduates” (Blackmore et al, 2016, p.20).

Employability from the perspective of HEIs is therefore about producing graduates who are University of Sydney believes that graduates should be more employable, more able to cope with change and more developed as people. In specific terms, graduates of any faculty, board of study or college of the university should have knowledge skills, thinking skills, personal skills, personal attributes and practical skills (Bridgestock, 2019, pp.143-152 ; Andreas & Dimitri,2020,p. 294).

### **Theoretical framework**

The independent variable is program content while the dependent variable is graduates employability skills. From the independent variable we were inspired by the following models and theories. We shall start with the dependent variable which is graduates employability skills

#### **The Magic Model of Employability**

Harvey (2002, pp. 97-101) presented the Magic Bullet Strategy, a straightforward framework for increasing graduate employment. This paradigm supports the notion that a college degree can assist students in acquiring employability skills that result in employment. This model demonstrates how Higher Education Institutions (HEI) assist graduates in developing their employment abilities. The model, however, says nothing about the development strategies referred to as employability development strategies in this study. A variety of approaches are needed to effectively enhance graduate employability due to the diversity of higher education institutions and students (Harvey, 2002). Figure 18 depicts the Magic Bullet model.

Harvey (2002), in his Employability and diversity, presented another model after considering all the parties involved in this process and all important employability factors. The author pointed out the importance of linking all factors together with all parties involving this process to develop graduate attributes. Three main parties involved in this process are graduates (students), HEIs and employers. Graduates have the responsibility to choose and engage with the employability development opportunities provided by HEIs and they also can use their extracurricular experiences to enhance these skills. The author identified employability development

activities as the development of employability attributes, work experience, the development of self-promotional and career management skills and a willingness to learn and reflect on learning.

### **The employability model**

The model presented three core processes having an impact on employability, a) a pedagogic process that encourages development, b) self-reflection by the student and c) the articulation of experiences and abilities. The author also pointed out that employability development opportunities, to some extent, are affected by the Sub Theme A -Enhancing Employability through Quality Assurance, through subject disciplines of the graduate and some programs areas tend to be more active in promoting employability.

### **The Human Capital Theory, by Becker (1974).**

The “Human Capital theory” (HCT) was founded by Becker in 1974 to facilitate the formulation of higher education policies. It links economic success to the education of the workforce. According to Becker (1974), manpower or human resources should be trained to permit the graduates to impact the skills in the economic sector of the economy in order to permit economic growth and development of the country. In this light, Knight, &Yorke (2014) affirmed that the development of employability in graduates has become a significant expectation that governments around the world have to vary extend imposed on national higher education systems.

According to Becker, expenditure on schooling and medical care and lectures on the virtues of punctuality and honesty are human capital. This is because it raises earnings, improves health and adds to a person’s good habits in society. They are called human capital because people cannot be separated from their knowledge, skills, health or values in the way they can be separated from financial and material assets. In contribution to this, Allan Fisher in 1946 emphasised the economic dimension of educational policy and the need to consider it as an instrument of economic policy. In his argument, he considers that human progress has been too handicapped by the neglect of human capital, visibly in the limitation of the imperfect system of education. This has created bottlenecks in the economic process due to scarcity of skilled labour. Lack of skilled labour is tantamount to unemployment and thus a fall in economic growth (Rosen, 1989, p. 145).

The independent variable is strategic planning of the program content in this work it is instrumental by the following models and theories

### **The System Theory- Ludwig (1956)**

This theory was developed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy in 1956. Koontz and Weihrich (cited in Martha, 2005) postulate that an organized enterprise does not exist in a vacuum; it depends on the environment in which it is established. They added that the input from the environment is received by the organization and then transformed into output. Robbin (2005) argued that organizations were increasingly described as absorbs, processors and generators and that the organizational system could be envisioned as made up of several interdependent factors. System advocates, according to Robbin (2005) have recognized that a change in any factor within the organization has an impact on all other organizational components. Thus, teachers as input have

to be updated and upgraded to highly influence the teaching and learning process and to achieve the desired target which is better students 'academic performance. Conclusively, when you consider the nature of the topic under investigation you realize that System Theory works so well therefore, this study employed it.

This theory is important in the evolution of this project in that from it we understood the importance of the environment in planning. the environment plays a fundamental role in planning processes when a good SWOT analysis is done by planners everything being equal the plans of activities in the structure would be well done and of course, the goals and objectives of the structure would be achieved.

## 6.Methodology

The research design used for this study was a survey. This study that looked into the contemporary education crises focused on strategic program content and graduates employability skills. The study sample was made up of graduates from the university of yaounde I and the University of Buea in the South West Region. Two (02) faculties were selected from each University by using purposive sampling. Table 1 shows the distribution of the sample according to sex in each Faculty

**Table 1**

*Table on the study sample*

University	Faculty	department	female	male	total
Yaounde I	FALSH, FSE	4	50	50	100
Buea	Social and management sciences, Engineering		30	30	60
Total	4	8	80	80	160

**Source** :adapted from Agborbechem, 2016,p.26

In this part of the study the researchers decided to investigate into the school programmes of some universities and with the aim of evaluating how their programmes are adapted to the demands of graduates employability needs.

**Instrumentation;** The research applied a quantitative approach and a descriptive correlation survey design . The population of the study were university graduates of universities in Cameroon. The participants were 160 graduates selected for the research through simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques. Strategic planning sub- scales and employability skills questionnaire scales were used to collect the required data. The validity and reliability of the research instruments were determined, and pilot testing done. The data collected was analysed using the SPSS version 25.0, the Pearson Correlation and the multiple regression analyses.



## 7. Results and discussion

In this section the responses to the various questions addressed the questionnaires were treated

### Responses on strategic planning with respect to program content

**Table 2**

#### *Responses On Strategic Planning With Respect To Program Content*

MEASURES	SD	D	A	SA	Mean	SD
The syllabuses covered are inspired from strategic plans especially at the levels of objectives, content and outcomes.	71 (14.2)	60 (12.0)	163 (32.6)	206 (41.2)	3.1	1.05
The teaching approaches , methods and materials are well defined in school strategic plans	85 (17.0)	56 (11.2)	163 (32.6)	196 (39.2)	3	1.088
Each teaching modules spells out a set or sets of practical skills to be acquired by graduates	67 (13.4)	70 (14.0)	174 (34.8)	189 (37.8)	3	1.027
The quality of lecturer is rightly defined by the plan especially in terms of possession of relevant skills	80 (16.0)	77 (14.4)	172 (34.4)	171 (34.2)	2.9	1.059
Course contents significantly articulate plan goals and objectives.	71 (14.2)	92 (18.4)	159 (31.8)	178 (35.6)	2.9	1.048
There is effectiveness in the teaching and learning processes carried out in your university	74 (14.8)	79 (15.8)	149 (29.8)	198 (39.6)	3	1.07
Lecturers carryout effective curriculum coverage using adequate methods and techniques	49 (9.8)	67 (13.4)	188 (37.6)	196 (39.2)	3.1	0.957
The various teaching strategies employed effectively enhance the acquisition of relevant skills	78 (15.6)	65 (13.0)	214 (42.8)	143 (28.6)	2.9	1.009
The various evaluation methods and techniques used by the school permits students to exhibit salient skills	72 (14.4)	76 (15.2)	194 (38.8)	158 (31.6)	2.9	1.015
MRA	647 (14.4)	642 (14.3)	1576 (35.0)	1635 (36.3)	<b>2.97</b>	<b>0.039</b>

The results of the findings shows that the general mean of 2.97 is above 2.5 which is the cut off mean This indicates that, the program content is significantly related to graduates employability skills The standard deviation also stood at 0.03 which is greater than 0.25 which is the cut off point. This shows a positive relation between the program content and graduate employability skills.. Respondents affirmed that ;the syllabuses covered, the teaching approaches, methods and materials used affect the employability skills of graduates. the teaching modules, the quality of the lecturers, the courses content, the pedagogic process is effective, the various teaching strategies all enhances the acquisition of skills of the graduate at a high degree .

Based on the findings the results reveal a mean of 2.97, we therefore observe that there is a significant relationship between the program content and graduates employability skills.The level of significance is 0.00 thus lesser than 0.05 which is the alpha and the standard error margin. The correlation coefficient of 74.25 (74.25%) indicates that the link is positive and moderate. Since the  $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ , we therefore conclude that the program content, is significantly related to graduates employability skills. We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and as such accept the research hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) which states that, there is a link between the program content and graduates employability skills in the universities of Yaounde I and Buea.

**Table 3: Responses on Strategic Planning With Respect To Quality Assurance And Control Mechanism**

**Table 3**

*Responses of strategic planning with respect to quality assurance and control mechanisms*

Measures	SD	D	A	SA	Mean	SD
Quality assurance teams from the ministry do check on the quality of program contents students are studying	141 (28.2)	119 (23.8)	123 (24.6)	117 (23.4)	2.5	1.131
The quality of programs studied in your university could permit Cameroon to become an emergent economy by 2035	92 (18.4)	243 (48.6)	88 (17.6)	77 (15.4)	2.3	0.942
Pedagogic inspectors do visit your institution to check on the quality of pedagogic processes as well as tools and material	67 (13.4)	104 (20.8)	218 (43.6)	111 (22.2)	2.8	0.95
The inspectors are knowledgeable and do carry out effective inspection	66 (13.2)	99 (19.8)	180 (36.0)	155 (31.0)	2.9	1.007
Inspectors have been trained in quality	63	88	194	155	2.9	0.989

assurance	(12.6)	(17.6)	(38.8)	(31.0)		
Inspectors equally Check for program	135	123	101	141	2.5	1.165
competitiveness in relation to other universities	(27.0)	(24.6)	(20.2)	(28.2)		
In the LMD system your university	80	77	172	171	2.9	1.059
graduates are competitive in the Job market	(16.0)	(15.4)	(34.4)	(34.2)		
During inspection, the teachers and administrators are equally assessed	141	119	123	117	2.5	1.131
	(28.2)	(23.8)	(24.6)	(23.4)		
MR	552	610	988	850	<b>2.66</b>	<b>0.087</b>
	(18.4)	(20.3)	(32.9)	(28.3)		

The results of the findings shows that the quality assurance of the program influence graduates employability skills. The general mean of 2.66 shows that the respondents are in agreement with the fact that the quality of programs influence graduates employability skills. This mean is higher than the cut off mean which is 2.5. Moreso the standard deviation at 0.087 which is above 0.5 shows a positive association between quality assurance and graduates employability skills. Respondents strongly agreed that quality assurance teams from the ministry carry out regular checks on the university, the pedagogic teams do visit the universities, the inspectors are knowledgeable and carry out their work well, inspectors have been trained in quality assurance, following the LMD system the learners are competitive in the job market, during inspection the lecturers are also assessed. This indicates quality assurance of the program contents significantly influence graduates employability skills

Based on the findings the results reveal a mean of 2.66, we therefore observe that there is a significant relationship between quality assurance and control mechanisms and graduates employability skills. The level of significance is 0.00 thus lesser than 0.05 which is the alpha and the standard error margin. The correlation coefficient of 66.5 (66.5%) indicates that the link is positive and moderate. Since the  $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ , we therefore conclude that quality assurance, is significantly related to graduates employability skills. We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and as such accept the research hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) which states that, there is a correlation between quality assurance and control mechanisms and graduates employability skills in the universities of Yaounde I and Buea.

## 8. Discussion and Recommendations

Strategic planning application provides an opportunity for planners to act proactively not just reactively to welcome the future and look at human, technology, and the environment as a whole. The image of an ideal

educational system (destination) should be given importance to first, and then an agreement is achieved through technical review, analysis, and successive modifications on methodologies to be adopted.

The study also recommends the identification specific skills within disciplinary fields .Whilst some STEM subjects have direct links to industry and a natural path from education to employment, other subjects with less tangible skillsets still pose a significant challenge. For example, Mourshed et al., in “Education to Employment” (2012, p.67) note that:

The apprenticeship programme often leads to “career-long, well-paying jobs in the industry”, which is reflected in the statistic that “all 26 students who have gone through the [BMW Scholars] programme so far have accepted offers for permanent positions”.(Oliver, 2015, pp.56-65 as cited by Blackmore et al).

**Theoretical implication:** Employability involves the ability and willingness of employees to remain attractive in the labour market by reacting to and anticipating changes in tasks and the work environment. Through this work, we learn of the theory of employability by York and Knight (2003a) which determines four main determinants of employability understanding U, skills S, efficacy beliefs and metacognition M. (USEM). (Bennett & Ananthram 2022, pp. 1311-1325).

The factors affecting employability which are academic branding, academic performance, technical skills, communication skills, personality, leadership and motivational skills and teamwork and problem-solving skills are also identified in this study. Their effects on the employability of the learners are also seen in the work. Employability is a set of achievements skills understandings and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations which benefits themselves the workforce the community and the economy (Robles, 2012, pp.453-465; Suleman, 2018; Alfari, 2019; Idaka, 2016; Nisha 2018, pp.29-37).

From the study, we learn of the Career edge model, which explains in a clear and practical manner that employability development encompasses personal educational career and professional development and is not solely concerned with the job-getting elements ( Small et al,2018; Dacre et al 2014, pp.303-313).

Scientifically benefiting from this study we discover the top skills which employers look for which are; critical thinking and problem-solving, teamwork and collaboration, professionalism and strong work ethic, oral and written communication skills and leadership skills. (Summanasini et al, 2018). Employability skills are also known as soft skills, foundational skills work-readiness skills or job-readiness skills. Employability can be measured through the following aspects which are employment rate, job type, timing, further learning, graduate employment rate and employability skills (Esther et al,2023).

## Policy Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the findings the following recommendations are made:



1. Developing graduate employability skills would be a priority for universities if the Cameroonian Tertiary Education Commission (CTEC) enforces the teaching of employability studies as a requirement in the curriculum design of all tertiary institutions.

2. There is the need for the government to increase investments in education in order to emphasis on academic excellence and the development of the skills of the learners in the higher education. This is essential for youth unemployment rate to reduce in Cameroon. The university graduates should be empowered with the skills they need today to succeed in the competitive job market (Ngwa & Ngonga, 2020).

3. There is the need for universities to restructure their curricular that should gear towards entrepreneurial and employable skills related. (Ngu & Teneng)

4. The study also recommends the interdependent relationship between curriculum development, employability skills and youth unemployment. It posits that employability skills are concerned with increasing individuals' skill sets to enhance their attractiveness to prospective employers. It also encourage vocational education for the problem of un employment in Cameroon. Vocational education provides useful skills to prepare young people to gain employment (Tomilson, 2017). It also focus on the match between skills and the job markets needs because the problem of skills mismatch is often considered as the main cause of high unemployment rates particularly in developing countries in general and Cameroon higher education in particular (Osmani et al 2015, pp.367-379).

## 9. Conclusion

Strategic planning plays a significant role in enhancing graduate employability skills in state universities in Cameroon. By developing and implementing effective strategies, these institutions can better align their educational programs with the needs of the job market, thereby equipping graduates with the necessary skills and competencies to succeed in their careers. One of the key aspects of strategic planning is in curriculum development. State universities need to regularly review and update their curricula to ensure they are relevant and up-to-date with industry requirements. This involves identifying the skills and knowledge that employers seek in graduates and incorporating them into the curriculum. By doing so, universities can bridge the gap between academia and industry, ensuring that graduates possess the skills that are in demand.

In the context of graduate employability skills, quality assurance and control mechanisms play a crucial role in ensuring that graduates possess the necessary skills and competencies demanded by employers. By examining these mechanisms in some state universities in Cameroon, we can gain insights into their effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. Examining the quality assurance and control mechanisms on graduates' employability skills in some state universities in Cameroon requires a comprehensive analysis of various factors. Curriculum design, teaching methods, assessment practices, industry collaboration, and overall quality management systems all contribute to the employability of graduates. By continuously improving these mechanisms, state universities can better equip their graduates with the necessary skills for successful employment and as such attain development and eventual emergence by the year 2035.

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