

**ENHANCEMENT OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS IN PRE-SERVICE
TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMMES IN TEACHER TRAINING
INSTITUTIONS IN UGANDA: A CASE OF KYAMBOGO
UNIVERSITY**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DIRECTORATE OF
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NOVEMBER, 2025

DECLARATION

This dissertation is my original work and has not been submitted for a degree at any other university.

Signature.....Date.....

APPROVAL

As university supervisors, we confirm that the candidate completed this work under our supervision.

Signature Date

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Signature..... Date

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Sheikh Hussein Rajab Kakooza and Hajat Janat Ndagire Kakooza, whose unwavering support, prayers, and love have been the foundation of my academic journey. I also dedicate it to Prof. Shuaib Lwasa, my mentor, for his invaluable guidance and support in my professional growth. Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to Sheikh Abdul-Wahab Butane, my primary school teacher, whose encouragement has continued to inspire me throughout my academic journey.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CAEP	Accreditation of Educator Preparation
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
HCT	Human Capital Theory
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
NCHE	The National Council for Higher Education
TIISA	Teacher Initiative in Sub-Saharan Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USA	– United States of America

ABSTRACT

This study explored the enhancement of employability skills in pre-service teacher training programmes in Uganda, using Kyambogo University as a case study. Grounded in Human Capital Theory, the research was motivated by the growing concerns that graduates of pre-service teacher education programmes, while often proficient in pedagogical and subject content knowledge, often lack the employability skills needed for a dynamic and competitive labour market. The study sought to identify the employability skills valued by employers of graduate teachers, assess the extent to which these skills are incorporated in pre-service training, and propose strategies for their enhancement. Hinged on an interpretivist paradigm, a qualitative case study design was employed. Data was collected through key informant interviews with lecturers, department heads, and employers; focus group discussions with final-year pre-service teacher trainees; and documentary analysis of curriculum materials. Purposive sampling yielded a total of 38 participants. Thematic analysis was conducted using an inductive approach. Findings revealed that employers prioritise employability skills such as communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, leadership, problem-solving, adaptability, time management, emotional intelligence, and self-sufficiency. However, these skills are not explicitly and systematically addressed within the current curriculum. Their development is often incidental, varying across course units and largely dependent on individual lecturers. Challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, limited faculty capacity, inconsistent assessment practices, and inadequate institutional support further constrain the enhancement of employability skills. The study recommends a comprehensive strategy to enhance employability skills in pre-service teacher training programmes. This includes curriculum reform to explicitly embed these skills across learning outcomes, instructional methods, and assessments; fostering institutional linkages with secondary school employers; building lecturer capacity; implementing holistic assessment frameworks; and establishing supportive policy and administrative structures. These measures are vital for equipping graduate teachers with the competencies to thrive in evolving educational and workplace contexts.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Employability skills are fundamental to graduates for they determine their employability capacity (Kashefpakdel et al., 2019). Appropriate employability skills enhance employees' effectiveness at workplace which in turn benefits the employing organisation (Sarkar et al., 2020). Further, graduates who possess relevant employability skills, fulfil the manpower needs of the employing organisation (Macqual et al., 2021). Therefore, it is imperative that employability skills are appropriately integrated in higher education programmes to enable students acquire education that equips them with skills necessary to become productive (Cheng et al., 2022).

Pre-service teacher training programmes for secondary is among the programmes in Teacher Training Institutions that requires the integration of employability skills, aimed at equipping pre-service teacher education trainees for secondary with employability skills (Ministry of Education, 2018a). However, it has been noted that secondary school teachers lack employability skills, which may be due to the way they are trained (Malunda, 2017). Thus, this study investigated the enhancement of employability skills in pre-service teacher training programmes for secondary in Teacher Training Institutions in Uganda.

1.1 Background

The historical, theoretical, conceptual, and contextual perspectives on the integration of employability skills in teacher education programmes for Secondary form the basis of this study.

1.1.1 Historical Perspective

Globally, the integration of employability skills into pre-service teacher training programmes has evolved over time in response to the changing demands of the workforce (Venkatraman et al., 2017). Employers increasingly prioritise abilities such as critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, cooperation, and flexibility (OECD, 2018; Tejan & Sabil, 2019a). As a result, it has become evident that educators must acquire employability skills to manage the intricacies of the teaching profession, interact with various stakeholders, and proficiently provide quality education that equips students for the dynamic labour market in the Western world, especially in nations like the United States and Europe (Singh Malik, 2018).

Efforts have therefore, been made to improve the quality of education in order to equip students with the skills demanded by employers (International Labour Organisation, 2011). Accreditation organisations, such as the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), have significantly contributed to promoting the incorporation of employable skills into teacher preparation programmes (Comer & Kolodziej, 2022). Ferguson-Patrick et al. (2018) further emphasised the need for teacher preparation programmes to demonstrate that their graduates have the necessary competencies, including employability skills, to effectively fulfil the role of educators.

In Sub-Saharan Africa such as Rwanda, Ghana, Kenya, and Mozambique (Blimpo & Pugatch, 2019), there has been a rising realisation of the significance of incorporating employability skills into pre-service teacher training programmes in order to enhance educational quality and prepare teachers for the ever-changing demands of the workplace (Haslip & Gullo,

2018). This is reflected in new education legislation in many Sub-Saharan African countries, where the inclusion of employability skills in teacher preparation has been prioritised (Moon & Villet, 2017). Caena and Redecker (2019) observed that frameworks and curricula for pre-service teacher preparation have been updated to explicitly incorporate the development of employability skills.

In East Africa, the idea of employability skills for pre-service teacher training graduates emerged due to concerns about the mismatch between the skills possessed by graduates and the requirements of employers in the region (Guàrdia et al., 2021a). Teacher Training Institutions have been encouraged to integrate employability skills training into pre-service teacher training programmes (Assan & Nalutaaya, 2018).

In Uganda, there have been significant curriculum revisions in Teacher Training Institutions over the years, such as the inclusion of employability skills in the pre-service teacher training programmes (Kintu et al., 2019). The National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) assesses university courses for labour market relevance as part of Uganda's quality assurance and accreditation systems (NCHE, 2014). Among these changes are specific programmes that emphasise the development of skills in areas such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication, cooperation, and information and communication technology literacy (Ministry of Education, 2018a; Olema et al., 2021). Beyond theoretical instruction, pre-service Teacher Training Institutions increasingly recognised the importance of incorporating employability skills into their programmes to facilitate the development of these employability skills (Ajambo et al., 2021).

Consequently, pre-service teacher training programmes in Uganda emphasise the cultivation of critical thinking, communication, problem-solving, teamwork, and other key employability skills (Bagonza et al., 2021). These initiatives demonstrate Uganda's commitment to aligning teacher training with the changing demands of the workforce and underscore the importance of equipping pre-service teachers with the competencies required for professional success in the contemporary labour market.

1.1.2 Theoretical Perspective

The Human Capital Theory (HCT), developed by Schultz and Becker in the 1960s, served as the basis for this study. Individuals may enhance their economic and social position by investing in their education, training, and skills, according to the HCT, which implies that this potential exists. In addition to this, it presupposes that an individual's productivity and earning potential will rise as a result of education and training, and that employers would provide higher compensation to persons who possess a greater amount of human capital (Wuttaphan, 2017). In addition, the theory assumes that individuals make rational decisions about investing in their human capital based on the expected returns on that investment (Popkova & Sergi, 2020). In the context of the labour market, individuals enter the workforce with varying levels of education, knowledge, skills, abilities and expectations. It can be reasonably assumed that an individual with higher levels of education and training will perform work that is of greater value and productivity than someone with lower levels of education and training.

Human capital theory is widely recognised as a strategy for improving organisational performance. Consequently, one of the main drivers of value

creation within an organisation is the collective expertise, knowledge and skills of its workforce. In this study, HCT informs the integration of employability skills into pre-service teacher education curricula. By applying HCT, educators can better prepare future teachers to adapt to the changing demands of the education sector and to contribute effectively to student learning outcomes. The theory highlights the importance of continuous learning and skills development to enhance workforce productivity and competitiveness (Popkova & Sergi, 2020).

HCT emphasises the importance of continuous learning and skills development to increase the productivity and competitiveness of the workforce. By incorporating HCT into pre-service teacher training programmes, educators can better prepare future teachers to adapt to the changing demands of the education sector and contribute effectively to student learning outcomes.

1.1.3 Conceptual Perspective

The key concepts in this study are employability skills, employability skills integration and pre-service teacher training programmes. Employability skills are transferable, non-technical abilities that enable individuals to perform effectively in the workplace, including communication, teamwork, adaptability, critical thinking, problem-solving, and emotional intelligence (Yorke, 2006; Knight & Yorke, 2004). These skills are essential across various employment contexts and professional competencies, which are role-specific technical and pedagogical skills required for effective teaching, such as mastery of subject content, lesson planning, classroom management, assessment literacy, and understanding of child development (Shulman, 1987; MoES, 2013). While both skill sets are necessary, employability skills enhance a graduate's adaptability

and success across diverse contexts. In this study, employability skills are defined as general, non-technical competencies essential for acquiring, maintaining, and advancing in a job, including teamwork, critical thinking, adaptability, and digital literacy (Rajan, 2023).

The integration of employability skills in pre-service teacher training refers to the deliberate inclusion of such skills within teacher education programmes to enhance graduates' readiness for the labour market (Ornellas et al., 2019; Sakamoto & Sung, 2020). This integration takes place at two interrelated levels. At the curriculum design level, employability skills are embedded in programme learning outcomes, course objectives, syllabi, instructional content, and assessment frameworks. At this stage, curriculum developers and academic boards ensure that these skills are aligned with national education standards and labour market requirements (Bennett, 2016; Wheelahan, 2010). At the teaching implementation level, employability skills are enacted through pedagogical strategies such as group work, project-based learning, real-world problem-solving, microteaching, practicum, and formative assessment, all of which reinforce the acquisition of employability competencies (Tymon, 2013; Tran, 2016). Effective integration, therefore, depends on lecturers' ability to create authentic learning environments and to assess both subject knowledge and workplace-relevant skills.

A programme refers to a set of prescribed courses offered for a specific degree, diploma, or certificate (Kyambogo University, 2018). In this study, pre-service teacher training programmes are educational programmes designed to prepare individuals for a career in teaching, awarding qualifications such as Bachelor of Arts, Science, Vocational Studies, Business, and Engineering with

Education. These programmes equip future secondary school teachers with pedagogical knowledge, subject expertise, and practical teaching skills, while the inclusion of employability skills prepares them to thrive in diverse professional environments, adapt to evolving educational standards, and collaborate effectively within their schools and communities.

1.1.4 Contextual Perspective

Kyambogo University is a public university in Uganda with a mandate to provide teacher education. The university develops curriculum and provides courses for both pre-service and in-service teachers (Ddungu-kafuluma et al., 2018). Kyambogo University's motto is to provide knowledge and skills for service, which is in line with the university's primary objective of transforming the teaching profession by preparing knowledgeable, skilled and globally competitive human resources (MoES, 2018). The Teacher Initiative in Sub-Saharan Africa (TIISA) report (2013) revealed inadequate pre-service teacher training programmes in Uganda, highlighting the need for more effective pre-service and in-service training programmes for teachers, as well as the need to provide teachers with more support and resources to improve their skills and knowledge (UNESCO, 2013). Uganda's National Teacher Policy (MoES, 2018) identified several gaps in pre-service teacher training, including inadequate employability skills. In pre-service teacher training programmes, pre-service teachers are trained in both professional subjects and teaching subject areas such as history, mathematics and chemistry to equip them with relevant knowledge and skills (Arinaitwe et al., 2019). However, little attention is paid to integration of employability skills such as communication skills, critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative skills (British Council, 2019;

Kashefpakdel et al., 2019; Sarkar et al., 2020). These are required in the world of teaching for a graduate teacher to be competitive (Abdu et al., 2021). Pre-service teacher training programmes do not seem to adequately integrate employability skills to prepare pre-service teacher trainees to meet the ever-changing needs of the profession (Malunda, 2017). Today's employers are looking for graduate teachers with the knowledge, skills and competencies to adapt to the demands of the workplace (Mai, 2020). Therefore, there is a need to explore the integration of employability skills in pre-service teacher training programmes in higher education institutions.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The integration of employability skills into pre-service teacher training programmes is increasingly recognised as essential for equipping future teachers with competencies required to function effectively in contemporary educational contexts (Annan-Brew et al., 2024). Employability skills such as communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, adaptability, and digital literacy are now regarded as essential for enabling teachers navigate dynamic classroom environments and contribute meaningfully to the education sector (Singh, 2024). Kyambogo University, Uganda's largest teacher training institution, has made notable efforts to address this need through curriculum reforms, practicum placements, and selected course units designed to foster soft skills. Nevertheless, the integration of employability skills within its programmes remains limited in scope, depth, and consistency (Arinaitwe et al., 2019; Kigozi, 2022). Evidence from Uganda National Planning Authority (2023) underscores a persistent mismatch between the skills imparted in higher education institutions and the competencies demanded by the labour market,

particularly within the education sector. This misalignment diminishes the capacity of graduate teachers to meet employers' expectations in both formal classroom practice and wider educational roles. Furthermore, reports from school administrators, district education officers, and policymakers indicate that many Kyambogo University graduates lack core soft skills, including communication, adaptability, digital competence, and teamwork, that are critical for effective teaching and leadership in 21st-century schools (Musisi & Sessanga, 2019; Bagonza et al., 2021; MoES, 2023). Although Uganda has undertaken curriculum reforms aimed at integrating employability skills into teacher education (Kintu et al., 2019), questions remain regarding the extent to which these reforms have been effectively implemented at the institutional level and their impact on graduate preparedness. This gap underscores the necessity of investigating how employability skills are currently integrated into pre-service teacher training programmes at Kyambogo University and identifying strategies for strengthening this integration to enhance graduates' employability and responsiveness to workforce demands.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to examine how employability skills can be enhanced in pre-service teacher training programmes in Uganda, with particular emphasis on Kyambogo University. Specifically, the study sought to identify the employability skills most desired by employers, they are integrated in pre-service teacher training programmes and to propose strategies for strengthening their integration to enhance the job readiness of graduate teachers.

1.4 Research Objective

- i. To identify the employability skills that employers desire from pre-service teacher training graduates in Uganda.
- ii. To examine how employability skills are currently integrated into the pre-service teacher training programmes in Teacher Training Institutions in Uganda.
- iii. To propose strategies for enhancing the integration of employability skills in pre-service teacher training programmes in Teacher Training Institutions in Uganda

1.5 Research Question

- i. What employability skills do employers desire from pre-service teacher training graduates from Teacher Training Institutions in Uganda?
- ii. How are employability skills integrated into the pre-service teacher training programmes in Teacher Training Institutions in Uganda?
- iii. In what ways can employability skills be enhanced in the pre-service teacher training programmes in Teacher Training Institutions in Uganda?

1.6 Scope of the Study

1.6.1 Content Scope

The study focused on employability skills in pre-service teacher education with specific attention to three dimensions: employability skills most desired by employers of teacher training graduates, the extent to which these skills are integrated into the pre-service teacher training programmes, and strategies through which their integration can be enhanced.

1.6.2 Geographical Scope

The study was conducted in Kampala district, specifically at Kyambogo University, located approximately eight kilometres from the city centre along the Kampala-Jinja highway. More precisely, the investigation focused on the School of Education. Kyambogo University was selected because it is the second-largest public university in Uganda and has historically been at the forefront of teacher education. Established with the mandate to promote knowledge and skills development, the institution has long served as the principal hub for teacher training in the country. Moreover, it is the only university in Uganda that offers a wide range of education programmes, including the Bachelor of Business Studies with Education, the Bachelor of Agricultural Vocational Studies with Education, the Bachelor of Home Economics and Vocational Studies with Education, and the Bachelor of Vocational Studies in Art and Design with Education, the Bachelor of Technical Education and Special Needs Education.

1.6.3 Time scope

The scope of the study spans the period 2003 to 2024. The year 2003 was chosen as the starting point because it marks the establishment of Kyambogo University following the merger of the Institute of Teacher Education Kyambogo (ITEK), Uganda Polytechnic Kyambogo (UPK), and Uganda National Institute of Special Education (UNISE). This merger consolidated the institution as a leading centre for teacher education in Uganda. The selected timeframe enables a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of employability skills within pre-service teacher training programmes over a two-decade period. The year 2024, which serves as the endpoint, captures the most recent curriculum reforms and

ongoing efforts to align teacher training with the demands of the 21st-century workforce. This scope ensures both historical and contemporary perspectives on the integration and enhancement of employability skills at Kyambogo University.

1.7 Justification of the study

The significance of employability skills in the contemporary workforce is well established, particularly within the education sector where teachers are increasingly required to demonstrate not only subject knowledge and pedagogical competence but also transferable skills such as communication, collaboration, adaptability, and problem-solving. In Uganda, persistent concerns expressed by employers and school administrators highlight the limited preparedness of pre-service teacher graduates to meet these expectations, thereby exposing a gap within existing teacher training programmes.

As the principal institution responsible for preparing the majority of teachers in the country, Kyambogo University plays a pivotal role in shaping the quality and relevance of Uganda's teaching workforce. Nevertheless, existing evidence indicates that the integration of employability skills within its pre-service teacher education programmes remains inadequate. Addressing this issue is therefore of critical importance, as it offers insights for improving curriculum design and delivery, aligning teacher education with national development goals, and enhancing the labour market competitiveness of graduates.

The justification for this study rests on three interrelated dimensions. First, from an academic perspective, the study contributes to the body of

knowledge by generating contextual evidence on the integration of employability skills in teacher education in Uganda. Second, at a practical level, it identifies actionable strategies for strengthening the professional preparedness of pre-service teacher graduates. Third, from a policy standpoint, the study provides empirical evidence to inform curriculum reforms and institutional practices in teacher training, thereby supporting Uganda's broader aspiration to produce a skilled, adaptable, and employable workforce.

1.8 Significance of the Study

This study holds significance across several dimensions. First, from a practical perspective, it provides insights to guide teacher educators and curriculum developers in enhancing the design and delivery of pre-service teacher training programmes, with particular emphasis on the integration of employability skills. Second, at an academic level, it contributes to the existing body of literature on teacher education and graduate employability by generating contextual evidence from Kyambogo University, Uganda's leading institution for teacher preparation. Third, for policymakers, the study offers evidence-based recommendations to inform national curriculum reforms, teacher education policies, and quality assurance frameworks. Finally, the findings are of direct relevance to pre-service teachers, as they highlight the employability skills most valued within the education sector, thereby supporting graduates' professional preparedness and competitiveness in the labour market.

1.9 Chapter Summary

Chapter one introduced the study, which examined the enhancement of employability skills in pre-service teacher training programmes in teacher training institutions in Uganda. Although these skills are critical for preparing

graduates to meet workforce demands, evidence indicates that competencies such as critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and problem-solving remain insufficiently embedded within pre-service teacher education.

The chapter outlined the study's theoretical foundation in Human Capital Theory, which emphasises the value of investing in education and skills as a means of enhancing productivity. Within this framework, employability skills were defined conceptually as transferable attributes integrated into both teaching content and practice. The study was situated at Kyambogo University, where, despite ongoing curriculum reforms, gaps persist in aligning teacher preparation with labour market expectations.

The chapter further presented the purpose of the study: to address the mismatch between graduate competencies and employer demands by examining the current state of employability skills integration and proposing strategies for their enhancement. Guided by three research questions, the study covered the period 2020 to 2024. Its significance was underscored for curriculum developers, policymakers, educators, and researchers seeking to strengthen pre-service teacher training and foster graduate employability.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical foundation and a review of related literature that informed this study. The discussion is structured around research questions, with emphasis on the integration of employability skills into pre-service teacher training programmes. The review critically evaluates existing scholarship, highlighting contributions, identifying gaps in knowledge, and situating the present study within the broader academic discourse.

2.1 Theoretical Review

The study was grounded in Human Capital Theory (HCT), originally developed by Schultz and Becker in the 1960s provided the foundation for this study. According to Wuttaphan (2017), HCT has evolved into several variations. The traditional form emphasises the investment in skills and education to enhance individual productivity and income. The specific human capital perspective highlights the importance of firm-specific skills that may not be transferable to other contexts, while the general human capital perspective stresses the cultivation of versatile skills applicable across industries. Related perspectives include signalling theory, which views education as a signal of capability to employers; social capital theory, which underscores the role of networks and interactions; and intellectual capital theory, which emphasises knowledge, creativity, and innovation as drivers of productivity. Collectively, these perspectives illuminate the complex process of cultivating and using human capital.

This study was informed by the conventional formation of HCT, which posits that investment in education enhances individual productivity, skills, and capacities, thereby improving employment outcomes (Wuttaphan, 2017; Popkova & Sergi, 2020). Kuzminov et al. (2019) define human capital as the knowledge, skills, and attributes that enable individuals to generate economic and social value for themselves, their employers, and society. From this perspective, graduate employability is best understood in terms of the skills and competencies demanded by employers (Tomlinson & Anderson, 2021). Teacher training institution therefore, plays a crucial role in creating the human capital necessary for knowledge economies (Sedyastuti et al., 2021). In line with this, the study adopted HCT to explore the enhancement of the employability skills, particularly communication, creativity, critical thinking, and teamwork, into the pre-service teacher training programmes in Uganda (Mole et al., 2017).

Despite its wide application, HCT has also been criticised. Marginson (2019) argues that it lacks realism, often oversimplifying the relationship between education and labour markets through linear models, closed systems, and multivariate analyses that neglect contextual complexity. Critics further note that the theory inadequately explains disparities in wages, the role of status, and the mechanisms by which education increases productivity (Fix, 2018). Nevertheless, recent research highlights the enduring value of employability skills: Wright and Constantin (2021) observe that employers often prioritise employability skills such as adaptability and communication over formal qualifications when recruiting. Similarly, Bihag-boholano (2020) contends that teacher training institutions must align their programmes with industry standards and workplace structures to better prepare graduates for employment.

While alternative frameworks such as the Capability theory (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2000) offer valuable perspectives by emphasising individual freedoms, well-being, and human flourishing, this study adopted Human Capital Theory because of its closer alignment with the research objective—assessing how pre-service teacher education equips graduates with skills demanded by the labour market. Whereas the Capability Approach prioritises opportunities and choices, HCT foregrounds the economic and productivity outcomes of education, making it particularly suitable for examining employability within Uganda’s pre-service teacher training system.

Accordingly, HCT informed the research problem, design, and analysis by framing education as an investment in employability skills essential for productive work. It guided the examination of how employability skills are embedded within curriculum design and classroom implementation, and how their integration shapes the job readiness of graduates. The theory also influenced data collection (e.g., curriculum documents and stakeholder perspectives) and interpretation, particularly regarding the alignment between training and labour market demands.

Thus, Human Capital Theory provided the conceptual lens through which this study investigated the enhancement of employability skills into pre-service teacher training programmes in Ugandan teacher training institutions, with a specific focus on Kyambogo University.

2.2 Review of Related Literature

2.2.1 Employability Skills Desired by Employers from Pre-Service Teacher Training Graduates

Employability skills refer to a set of transferable, non-technical competencies that enable individuals to obtain, maintain, and progress in employment (Rajan, 2023). These skills extend beyond technical expertise to encompass communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, collaboration, adaptability, and emotional intelligence (Bernate et al., 2024). Within teacher training, employability skills are particularly critical for managing dynamic classrooms, engaging with diverse stakeholders, and responding to emerging educational demands (Adhikari & Budhathoki, 2025). This section reviews the existing literature on the employability skills most valued by employers of graduates from pre-service teacher training programmes, with a focus on sector expectations and their implications for curriculum enhancement.

Globally, employers increasingly demand that graduates possess both domain-specific knowledge and transferable skills such as communication, collaboration, adaptability, critical thinking, and problem-solving (Tejan & Sabil, 2019; Sarkar et al., 2020). In Uganda, this demand is particularly pressing. Musisi and Sessanga (2019) found that many education graduates enter the labour market with inadequate employability skills, notably in communication, innovation, and teamwork—gaps attributed to limited emphasis during pre-service training.

Similarly, Kigozi (2022) notes that Ugandan employers seek teachers who are flexible, digitally literate, collaborative, and capable of meaningful engagement with parents and communities. The National Planning Authority

(2023) further identified a set of priority employability skills: effective oral and written communication, critical thinking and problem-solving, creativity and innovation, teamwork and interpersonal skills, digital literacy, time management and personal initiative, adaptability and emotional intelligence. These are regarded as essential not only for classroom effectiveness but also for leadership and community engagement roles. Despite these contributions, significant gaps remain. Firstly, few studies systematically examine employer perspectives across diverse contexts (e.g., rural versus urban, public versus private schools). Second, limited research captures the lived experiences of pre-service teachers as they transition into the workforce. Such omissions constrain the ability of policymakers and curriculum designers to make evidence-based reforms. This study, therefore, seeks to generate context-specific insight into the employability skills most valued by Ugandan employers, lecturers, and pre-service teacher trainees.

Caingcoy (2021), in a scoping review of teacher education graduates in the Philippines, identified communication, ICT, problem-solving, critical thinking, collaboration, teamwork, research, and leadership as the most in-demand skills. Similarly, Hoque et al. (2023), in a quantitative study of employer perspectives in Bangladesh, highlighted communication skills, teamwork and collaboration, problem-solving, digital literacy, integrity, diligence, adaptability, time management, leadership, and personality. While informative, these studies revealed contextual and theoretical gaps. Both were conducted in socioeconomic and cultural contexts different from Uganda and did not explicitly anchor findings in human capital theory. Moreover, although Hoque et al. (2023) employed a qualitative approach aligned with this study's

methodology, there remains a methodological gap regarding Uganda-specific evidence. This study addresses such limitations by applying Human Capital Theory to the Ugandan teacher training context.

Communication skills have received particular attention in employability studies. Coffelt et al. (2019) in a US corporate context, found employers prioritised oral and interpersonal communication skills over written and digital competencies. Güleç and Leylek (2018), examining Turkish primary teachers, found variations in communication abilities by alma mater but not by gender or years of service. However, both studies presented empirical and contextual deficiencies: they did not focus on pre-service teacher preparation, nor were they situated in Uganda. Furthermore, neither explicitly engaged with human capital theory. Both relied on quantitative methods, leaving unexplored the qualitative dimensions of communication skills in pre-service teacher education. This study, therefore, investigates communication skills within Ugandan training institutions, combining human capital theory with quantitative methodologies.

Other studies underscored the importance of broader competencies. Herlina (2022) emphasised communication and ICT proficiency as crucial for educators in digital-era Turkey. Macdermott and Ortiz (2017), in the US, highlighted written communication as central to graduate work preparedness. Yet these findings, situated in different cultural and socioeconomic contexts, reveal an empirical gap in understanding the role of such competencies in pre-service teacher training in Uganda. Neither study applied Human Capital Theory, and both relied on non-qualitative methodologies. This study, therefore, extends their insights to Uganda, situating communication within teacher

training through a theoretical and methodological framework that addresses these gaps.

Collaboration has also been examined internationally. Patrick (2022), using goal-setting theory, found that goal clarity and commitment influenced collaborations in Tennessee's Instructional Partnership Initiative. Valera (2023), in the Philippines, identified leadership teams, peer forums, and stakeholder consultations as key strategies for fostering collaborative cultures. However, both studies addressed in-service teachers rather than pre-service teacher training contexts, creating an empirical and contextual gap in Uganda. Moreover, neither incorporated Uganda's educational policies nor linked collaboration to employability frameworks such as Human Capital Theory. This study bridges these gaps by exploring collaboration as an employability skill within in-service teacher training in Uganda, guided by qualitative analysis.

Hairida et al. (2021) assessed Indonesian students' scientific collaboration skills through inquiry- and project-based learning, reporting high levels of cooperation based on observational markers. Similarly, Haryani et al. (2021) investigated how Indonesian science teachers integrate the 4Cs—creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication—into science education. Their findings highlighted the effectiveness of professional development programmes, open resources, and Teacher Professional Education (TPE) in supporting the 4Cs integration. While both studies provide valuable insights, they are limited to in-service teachers and students in Indonesia; little is known about how collaboration and the 4Cs are developed in Ugandan pre-service teacher training. Neither study is grounded in educational theory nor does it evaluate professional development in pre-service contexts. Both also

relied primarily on descriptive and survey methods, with limited exploration of how the 4Cs—particularly collaboration—are taught, modelled, and assessed. The present study addresses these gaps by applying Human Capital Theory and qualitative methods, including key informant interviews and documentary analysis, to investigate the employability skills valued by employers of graduate teachers in Uganda.

Palavan (2020) investigated the impact of critical thinking education on pre-service teachers in Turkey using a pretest-post-test design with 57 participants. Employing the California Critical Thinking Disposition Scale and semi-structured interviews, the study demonstrated the value of critical thinking in managing complex classroom dynamics. Similarly, Mihail (2022), through qualitative analysis in Romania, emphasised the importance of integrating critical thinking into pedagogy for preparing students in a globalised world. Both studies affirm the importance of critical thinking, but offer little insight into Uganda's pre-service teacher training context. Neither study clearly defines critical thinking within the teacher training curriculum nor situates findings within a theoretical framework, and both lack qualitative inquiry specific to Uganda. This study sought to address these gaps by applying human capital theory and qualitative methods to explore how critical thinking is developed and valued in Ugandan pre-service teacher training.

Okolie et al. (2022) assessed critical thinking skills among students in Asia, the Middle East, and several African countries. Their surveys and interviews showed that students in Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, and Zambia often struggled with problem-solving requiring critical thinking, leading them to recommend that teacher training institutions prioritise such skills. Vânder

Zanden et al. (2020), focusing on Dutch secondary school teachers, found wide variation in how educators conceptualised and promoted critical thinking. While both studies emphasise its importance, they do not capture the Ugandan context. Neither study how national policies influence the integration of critical thinking into pre-service teacher training nor how the skill is embedded in teacher preparation programmes. This study extends the discussion by focusing on Uganda and applying Human Capital Theory and qualitative methods to examine how critical thinking is developed and valued in pre-service teacher training programmes.

Franklin and Harrington (2019) studied how instructors in the United States of America foster critical and autonomous thinking, showing that teachers' roles extend beyond content delivery to supporting students' broader social and academic development. Manca and Delfino (2021), analysing Italy's shift to online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighted adaptability as essential for sustaining continuity and supporting students remotely. These studies point to the values of critical thinking, adaptability, and effective pedagogy, yet their contexts differ markedly from Uganda, and they overlook how skills are integrated into pre-service teacher training programmes. They also lack explicit theoretical grounding and do not use methods such as documentary analysis or key informant interviews. This research builds on these insights by examining how such competencies are incorporated into Ugandan teacher training programmes.

Mulalić (2022) analysed critical thinking in Sarajevo, using descriptive and deductive methods to argue that embedding it in language instruction enhances students' academic outcomes. Al-Husban (2020) analysed critical

thinking indicators in asynchronous online discussion forums at the Arab Open University in Jordan, applying diagnostic models from Garrison (2001) and Newman (1995). While both affirm the value of critical thinking, their scope is narrow: Mulalić focused on language education and Al-Husban online discussion forums. Neither considers pre-service teacher training more broadly, nor the perspectives of employers. Their contexts also differ significantly from Uganda, and both rely on methods not tailored to the Ugandan higher educational system. This research addresses these gaps by employing Human Capital Theory and qualitative approaches to examine how critical thinking is cultivated and valued in Ugandan pre-service teacher training education.

Khikmah (2019) investigated English language learning activities in Indonesia through interviews with teachers, showing that effective activities must align with students' interests, age, proficiency levels, school policies, and resources. The study recommended professional development programmes such as CELTA and DELTA to strengthen pedagogy. Nguyen et al. (2020), focusing on Australian universities, found that complementary courses and student-centred approaches fostered innovation and multi-skilled graduates. Both studies highlight the importance of creativity and innovation, but their findings are context-specific and not directly transferable to Uganda. They do not examine how innovative approaches are embedded in pre-service teacher training or how national policies influence practice. Although both studies used qualitative methods, little research addresses the integration of creativity and innovative teaching methods into pre-service teacher training in Uganda. This research, therefore, applies Human Capital Theory and qualitative methods to

investigate how creativity and related employability skills are developed within Ugandan pre-service teacher training.

Shah (2019) explored the perceptions of teacher leadership in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context and a higher educational institution in Saudi Arabia regarding the knowledge and skills necessary for their leadership roles. Using qualitative case study, he highlighted the importance of personality traits such as reliability, honesty, empathy, confidence, friendliness, and professionalism for effective leadership at the EFL. Similarly, Puspitaningrum et al. (2021) examined the relationship between leadership, commitment, culture, and performance in Indonesian public high schools through quantitative path analysis. Their findings underscored the role of teacher commitment in sustaining in a professional work environment, with highly committed teachers expected to demonstrate consistency, dedication, and contributions to institutional performance. While both studies provide valuable insights, their contexts differ significantly from Uganda, and neither examines pre-service teacher training. Moreover, Shah adopted a qualitative case study approach, while Puspitaningrum et al. employed quantitative analysis, leaving limited qualitative exploration of leadership skills and commitment within Ugandan pre-service teacher training. This study addresses these limitations through qualitative methods, including documentary reviews and key informant interviews, to investigate employability skills sought by employers of Ugandan pre-service teacher training graduates.

Selamat et al. (2023) investigated essential employability skills for graduates in Malaysia, identifying leadership, interpersonal skills, and information technology proficiency as key to meeting employer expectations.

They argue that leadership skills enable graduates to guide teams, interpersonal skills support workplace collaboration, and ICT competence is indispensable in increasingly digitalised industries. The study emphasised the need for universities to collaborate with employers to align curricula with labour market demands. In Indonesia, Suryana et al. (2020) examined classroom leadership through a descriptive qualitative approach. Their findings highlighted practices such as active listening, empathy, flexibility, relationship building, fostering student self-confidence, and creating spaces for self-expression as central to teacher leadership. Although both studies stress the values of leadership, interpersonal skills, and information technology proficiency, they are context-specific and offer little insight into how such skills are cultivated in Uganda's pre-service teacher training programmes. Methodologically, Selamat relied on a literature review, while Suryana et al. employed descriptive qualitative analysis. There remains a lack of qualitative inquiry into leadership as an employability skill in Ugandan pre-service teacher training programmes. This research fills this gap using documentary analysis and interviews to examine employer expectations in Uganda's pre-service teacher training graduates.

Kovalchuk et al. (2022) investigated emotional intelligence in teacher training, employing mixed research methods and a theoretical framework of emotional importance. Their findings showed the importance of interpersonal relationships, social adaptation, and professional success across educational contexts. Ahmed et al. (2020), using a quasi-experimental pre-test post-test non-equivalent design, demonstrated that a positive emotional classroom climate enhanced students' social-emotional competence, promoting confidence, sociability, and participation. Aldrup et al. (2020) developed and validated a

Situational Judgement Test to assess teachers' social-emotional competence, showing that teachers with stronger emotional regulation provide greater support and build healthier relationships with students. Although these studies highlight the importance of emotional intelligence and social-emotional skills, they focus on varied contexts, such as teacher training, classroom settings, and in-service teachers; none address pre-service teacher training programmes in Uganda. Methodologically, Kovalchuk et al. (2022) applied mixed methods, while Aldrup et al. emphasised quantitative approaches, leaving little qualitative investigation of how these skills are integrated into pre-service teacher training in Uganda. This research addresses this gap by employing qualitative methods, such as documentary analysis and key informant interviews, to examine how employers value emotional and social-emotional competencies in in Ugandan pre-service teacher education.

Hoque et al. (2023) employed a qualitative approach to examine employers' perspectives on graduate employability and work readiness in Bangladesh. Their findings emphasised problem-solving skills as a crucial skill, with employers highlighting the need for analytical thinking, critical reasoning, and the ability to devise and implement solutions to diverse workplace challenges. Similarly, Güleç (2020) investigated social studies teachers' perceptions of problem-solving skills in Turkey using the Problem-Solving Inventory developed by Heppner and Petersen (1982) and adapted into Turkish by Şahin et al. (1993). The study demonstrated that problem-solving abilities are essential for teachers to manage challenges within instructional contexts and broader school environments, including interactions with students, parents, and colleagues. Despite their contributions, both studies have limitations.

Conducted in Bangladesh and Turkey, the study offers little insight into the Ugandan context, particularly pre-service teacher training. While they underscore the importance of problem-solving skills, they do not address how these skills are explicitly developed and integrated into pre-service teacher training programmes in Uganda. The present research addresses this empirical, contextual, and conceptual gap through qualitative methods such as documentary reviews and key informant interviews.

Sharma and Pandey (2022) explored innovative teaching strategies, focusing on pedagogical practices, digital technologies, and approaches for managing large class sizes. Their findings underscored the value of innovation in enhancing teaching and learning processes. Complementing this, Dicker et al. (2019) examined faculty, students, and employer perspectives on excellence in higher education. They concluded that high-quality education is associated with passionate, competent, and caring instructors. While these studies contribute to the discourse on innovation and quality education, they remain limited in scope. Neither explores how innovative practices and quality standards are embedded in pre-service teacher education, particularly in Uganda, where resource constraints and policy contexts shape teacher preparation. Methodologically, Sharma and Pandey (2022) relied on a qualitative examination of pedagogical practices, whereas Dicker et al. (2019) employed mixed methods. This study extends their insights by exploring how Ugandan employers perceive the integration of innovation and quality into pre-service teacher training programmes.

Time management has also been identified as a critical professional skill. Patkar (2023) surveyed 60 secondary school teachers in Mumbai,

revealing that effective time management improves productivity, reduces stress, and supports work-life balance. Similarly, Hasbullah and Nasri (2023), using a quantitative design, examined the effects of work pressure on time management among teachers in Malaysia. Their findings confirm that the ability to allocate time effectively is essential for managing their daily teaching responsibilities. However, both studies focus on in-service secondary teachers and overlook how time management skills are cultivated in pre-service teacher training programmes. Furthermore, little is known about how Ugandan teacher training institutions address time management within their programmes. This study responds to this gap by investigating employer expectations regarding the time management abilities of Ugandan pre-service teacher trainees.

Research has also highlighted the role of self-efficacy and adaptability in teacher effectiveness. Udemba (2021) investigated secondary school teachers in Anambra State, Nigeria, finding a strong link between self-efficacy, job satisfaction and performance. Loughland (2019) validated a Teacher Adaptive Practice Scale and demonstrated that teacher autonomy and self-efficacy predict adaptability, which in turn enhances students' critical and creative thinking. Both studies underscore the importance of individual traits in adaptive teaching, but they are contextually and conceptually distant from Uganda's pre-service training system. While they focus on in-service teachers, little is known about how self-efficacy and adaptability are fostered during initial teacher preparation in Uganda. Furthermore, correlational methods and validation methods employed provide limited insight into qualitative perspectives on these skills. This research addresses these gaps through qualitative inquiry into employers'

views on the relevance of self-efficacy and adaptability in Ugandan teacher training graduates.

2.2.2 Integration of Employability Skills into the Pre-Service Teacher Training Programmes

Integration of employability skills refers to the deliberate incorporation of employability skills such as communication, collaboration, adaptability, problem-solving, and critical thinking into the design, delivery, and assessment of academic programmes (Fahimirad et al., 2019). Within pre-service teacher education, this involves embedding such skills in course objectives, learning activities, practicum experiences, and assessment methods to prepare graduates for the demands of the 21st-century classroom and education labour market. This section reviews empirical studies on how employability skills are integrated into pre-service teacher education programmes, highlighting models, approaches, and challenges across contexts.

In Uganda, policy-level attention to employability skills has increased; however, their integration into teacher training institutions remains inconsistent. Arinaitwe et al. (2019) note that curriculum reforms intended to mainstream soft skills are often fragmented and poorly implemented, with institutions placing greater emphasis on subject knowledge and pedagogy than on practical guidance for teaching or assessing employability skills. Similarly, Bagonza et al. (2021) observed that while institutions like Kyambogo University include elements of teamwork, communication, and digital competencies in their course units, these components are rarely reinforced through explicit assessment or school practice. Kintu et al. (2019) further argued that the absence of clear performance indicators for employability skills in curriculum documents and

teaching practice manuals constrains their operationalisation. The Ministry of Education and Sports (2020) echoes these concerns in the Education Sector Strategic Plan, acknowledging that although employability is a national priority, teacher training curricula require further refinement to embed 21st-century skills in both content and pedagogy.

Despite reform efforts, several critical gaps remain. First, few empirical studies have examined how employability skills are implemented across the stages of teacher training in Uganda, particularly within public institutions such as Kyambogo University. Second, little is known about how teacher educators interpret and apply employability skills during classroom instruction and practicum supervision. Third, there has been no systematic evaluation of whether curriculum structures and assessment practices adequately support the integration of such skills. These gaps justify a focused investigation into the extent of employability skills integration into Uganda's pre-service teacher training programmes, and how this integration might be strengthened to better prepare graduates for workforce realities.

Abdullah et al. (2022) explored employability skills in Malaysian Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes, comparing perceptions of novice and experienced trainers. Both groups rated communication, collaboration, self-discipline, and interpersonal skills as highly important, while leadership, conceptual, and learning abilities were considered less critical. The study recommended curriculum reforms to explicitly integrate employability skills into learning outcomes and to position institutions as centres of lifelong learning. Similarly, Mahara (2024) investigated teachers' perspectives on in-service teacher training in Nepal, using a qualitative design.

Findings highlighted that while pre-service training equips teachers with pedagogical knowledge, it often neglects practical employability skills essential for diverse educational settings. Although these studies provide valuable insights, they also present limitations. Conducted in Malaysia and Nepal, their findings may not be directly transferable to Uganda. Furthermore, while both highlight the need to integrate employability skills, they do not explicitly situate their findings within theoretical frameworks relevant to teacher training. This leaves a gap in the understanding of how employability theories, such as human capital theory and employability skills frameworks, apply within pre-service teacher education in Uganda. Addressing this gap, this study adopts Human Capital Theory to examine how employability skills are embedded in Ugandan pre-service teacher training programmes.

Mailool et al. (2020) explored lecturers' experiences in imparting soft skills to pre-service teachers in Indonesia's Teacher Profession Education Programmes (TPEP), using a qualitative design grounded in transcendental phenomenology. Findings emphasised the centrality of soft skills in teacher education and the need for effective teaching and assessment strategies to develop competent educators. Similarly, Cotronei-Baird (2020) investigated how Australian academics integrate employability skills into teaching and assessment processes, drawing on semi-structured interviews, content analysis, and classroom observations. The study revealed that while academics in accounting and economics acknowledged the value of employability skills and aligned their definitions with industry norms, integration into curricula was inconsistent and often superficial. Variability stemmed from differences in teaching practices, academic rank and experience, and disciplinary context,

creating a gap between stated beliefs and actual implementation. Although strategies such as discussions and demonstrations were used, they were not systematically applied across subjects, resulting in a fragmented approach.

These studies highlighted methodological, conceptual, and contextual gaps. While Mailool et al. (2020) and Cotronei-Baird (2020) emphasise the significance of employability and soft skills, they do not offer clear definitions or examine their integration within Ugandan pre-service teacher training programmes. Moreover, both studies are situated in markedly different contexts, limiting their applicability to Uganda. This study addresses these limitations by employing qualitative methods, including documentary reviews and key informant interviews, to examine the integration of employability skills in Ugandan pre-service teacher training programmes.

Sarkar et al. (2020) investigated science academics' perspectives on embedding employability skills within university courses using a mixed-methods approach combining surveys and semi-structured interviews. Results showed that while problem-solving, analytical thinking, critical reasoning, and written communication were addressed in over 75% of units, other competencies, such as leadership, adaptability, ICT skills, and business acumen, were insufficiently developed in more than half the courses. Similarly, time management and collaboration received limited attention. These findings indicate an overemphasis on a narrow set of abilities, potentially leaving graduates underprepared in areas employers consider valuable. The study concluded that comprehensive curriculum mapping and reforms are needed to strengthen alignment between employability skills development and labour market expectations. Although insightful, Sarkar et al. (2020) present both

empirical and contextual gaps. The study focuses on generic employability skills within science curricula, without examining pre-service teacher training or the influence of Uganda's educational practices and policies. This study, therefore, contributes to filling the gap by examining how employability skills are integrated into pre-service teacher education in Uganda's training institutions.

Kadel (2021a) investigated pre-service teachers' perceptions of the employability skills at Tribhuvan University, Nepal, using a narrative inquiry design. Eight pre-service teachers (four female, four male) participated through extensive interviews. Results revealed deficiencies in higher-order thinking, personal and social skills, and communication abilities. Although participants demonstrated strong subject knowledge, they lacked the competence and confidence to transfer this effectively to students, largely due to insufficient training in employability skills. Romanova (2022), drawing on data from the 2020 Monitoring of Education Markets and Organisations (n = 9,178), assessed the impact of explicitly integrating employability skills into vocational education and training (VET). Findings indicated that structured inclusion of social, self-directed learning, and entrepreneurial abilities positively influenced students' self-evaluations and aspirations, with those exposed to entrepreneurial training more likely to pursue business ownership. While valuable, these studies are situated in distinct cultural and institutional contexts—Nepal and Russia—limiting their transferability to Uganda. Moreover, they highlight the benefits of explicit integration of employability skills but do not explore how cultural, social, and institutional factors shape this process. This study addresses these gaps by examining how employability skills are integrated into in Ugandan pre-

service teacher training programmes and how institutional, social, and cultural factors influence their effectiveness.

Nelson (2021) investigated the effect of active-learning simulations on pre-service instructors, focusing on their role in managing student behaviour. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study examined how service-learning cooperation and simulation-based teaching enhanced critical thinking and job-skill training. Findings confirmed that active-learning simulations and collaborative instructional approaches significantly improved pre-service teachers' critical thinking, professional competencies, and classroom performance. The study emphasised the importance of hands-on experiences and real-world interactions in building confidence and preparing teachers for practice. Mushaandja-Mufeti and Molosiwa (2021) explored the challenges faced by educators and students in large classroom settings in Namibia. Key issues included limited individual attention, restricted opportunities for clarification, difficulties with online discussions, insufficient teaching resources, and challenges in assessment and feedback. These findings highlighted the complexities of teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms and underscore the need for strategies to address such challenges. Shi (2020) analysed the role of micro-teaching programmes in developing pre-service and novice English language teachers in southern China. The study assessed evaluation methods used in micro-teaching and found that beginner teachers initially lacked confidence in presentation, questioning, reinforcement, and lesson closure. Participants in the programmes, however, improved teaching competence and increased confidence.

Collectively, these studies revealed methodological, contextual, and theoretical gaps. Nelson (2021) employed a mixed-methods design, which remains underutilised in related research. (Mushaandja-Mufeti & Molosiwa, 2021; Shi 2020) examined specific contexts, particularly large classrooms in Namibia and high schools in southern China, yet their findings lack consistent methodological rigour and have limited applicability to Ugandan higher education. Furthermore, the application of Human Capital Theory to active-learning simulations and large-class contexts is underexplored. This study employs Human Capital Theory to investigate how employability skills are integrated into pre-service teacher training in Uganda.

Giacomazzi (2024) examined the integration of life skills and values into education in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. The highlighted how local perceptions of collaboration, problem solving, self-awareness, and respect are shaped by the communitarian cultural values central to East African identity. Similarly, Guàrdia et al. (2021) assessed perspectives from academics, employers, and civil servants on the skills gap in East Africa. Using a mixed-methods approach, they found that teacher training institutions tend to prioritise examinations and qualifications over practical skills, hindering graduate employability. Despite these insights, conceptual, contextual, and empirical gaps remain. Giacomazzi (2024) illuminates cultural influences on life skills but does not address their integration into Ugandan teacher training. A gap persists in understanding how culturally grounded generic skills can be embedded in curricula to improve employability. Both studies also point out the need for longitudinal research to examine the long-term effects of culturally adapted employability skills. This study addresses these deficiencies by using Human

Capital Theory, qualitative methods, and a cross-sectional survey to investigate employability skills integration into pre-service teacher training programmes in Uganda.

Ajuaba et al. (2023) explored the impact of learning practices on quality assurance in Ugandan higher education through a mixed-methods design. Participants included management, faculty, students, and administrators. Findings indicated that inadequate student preparation correlated with poor academic performance and, at times, academic dishonesty. Some students lacked commitment or interest in their courses, raising concerns about the quality and effectiveness of quality assurance. Sewagegn (2019a) investigated assessment practices in an Ethiopian university using a convergent parallel mixed-methods design. Findings revealed a heavy reliance on textual evaluations, with limited use of innovative assessment methods that could foster creativity and skill development. Teachers reported difficulties implementing unfamiliar but potentially more effective assessment methods. These studies present methodological and contextual gaps. While Ajuaba et al. (2023) linked learning practices to quality assurance, little attention was given to how such mechanisms might support the integration of employability skills in pre-service teacher training programmes. Similarly, context-specific assessment strategies in Uganda remained underexplored. This study addresses these gaps through qualitative methods, including documentary reviews and key informant interviews.

Winberg et al. (2020) conducted a literature review on employability in engineering education, identifying key competencies such as technical expertise, problem-solving, collaboration, communication, and professional

attributes. The study stressed the importance of experiential learning, embedding employability skills throughout curricula, and fostering academia-industry collaboration to provide practical exposure and networking opportunities. Yet, gaps remain in applying these insights to pre-service teacher training programmes. Current literature lacks a clear focus on human capital theory in this context, as well as empirical evidence from Uganda. This study draws on Human Capital Theory and employed qualitative methods to investigate employability skills integration into Ugandan pre-service teacher training programmes. Tan et al. (2019) investigated life skills integration among Malaysian business diploma students, using survey data from three states. The results demonstrated the necessity of embedding soft skills into curricula to prepare graduates for the labour market. Ferguson-Patrick et al. (2018) examined integrated curriculum implementation in Australia through surveys, policy documents, and curriculum analysis. Findings highlighted challenges, including curriculum overload, high-stakes testing, and limited institutional support. Nonetheless, several gaps persist. Research rarely applies a human capital lens to employability skills, particularly within Uganda. Concept gaps also exist regarding which employability skills are most relevant for teachers and how they should be incorporated into Ugandan pre-service teacher training programmes. Methodological gaps remain as well, with a need for qualitative approaches that capture stakeholder perspectives in depth. This study, therefore, applies Human Capital Theory and employs qualitative research to address these deficiencies.

Hashim and Mahfoodh (2021) explored employability skills integration into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) curriculum using digital platforms.

They demonstrated how such platforms can support teamwork, self-regulation, and communication while providing real-world practice and feedback. Similarly, Fahimirad et al. (2019) conducted a systematic review of employability skills development in Malaysian higher education, finding limited integration and implementation of challenges. These studies expose significant theoretical, contextual, and methodological gaps. The limited application of Human Capital Theory constrains understanding of how employability skills contribute to labour market outcomes. Moreover, little is known about how digital and innovative approaches could be adapted to Ugandan teacher training. Finally, demographic and conceptual gaps remain regarding which employability skills pre-service teachers require and how these can be effectively taught. The study aims to address these gaps by applying Human Capital Theory and employing qualitative methods to examine employability skill integration in Ugandan teacher training institutions.

2.2.3 Enhancement of Employability Skills Integration in the Pre-Service Teacher Training Programmes in Teacher Training Institutions

Enhancement of employability skills integration refers to strengthening the consistency and depth with which employability skills are embedded in teacher education programmes (Xin, J., et al, 2024). This involves refining curriculum design, updating pedagogical approaches, reforming assessment mechanisms, and aligning training with the labour market. Succi and Canovi (2020) emphasise that employability requires deliberate educational strategies aimed at fostering key employability skills alongside subject and pedagogical knowledge. The ultimate goal is to produce graduates equipped with both disciplinary expertise and the soft skills necessary for success in dynamic

educational environments. Globally, institutions have responded through competency-based curricula, project-based learning, school-industry partnerships, and assessment reform (Sarkar et al., 2020; Mole et al., 2017). These strategies seek to build problem-solving, creativity, teamwork, and digital fluency, competencies increasingly valued by employers.

In Uganda, several studies have emphasised the need to enhance the institutionalisation of employability skills within pre-service teacher education. Kigozi (2022) observed that many novice teachers still exhibit weakness in professional communication, adaptability, and collaboration, pointing to the limitations of current integration efforts. Arinaitwe et al. (2019) recommended a national competency-based framework with clear guidelines for embedding workplace-relevant skills and developing practical assessment tools. Similarly, the Ministry of Education and Sports (2020), through its Education Sector Strategic Plan, advocated for embedding 21st-century competencies, such as ethical reasoning, ICT proficiency, and collaboration, into curricula and for strengthening partnerships between teacher training institutions and host schools. Despite these initiatives, several gaps remain. First, there is limited evidence on which specific strategies are most effective in Uganda's teacher training context. Second, little is known about institutional and instructional barriers that hinder implementation, especially in public universities such as Kyambogo. Third, few empirical studies evaluate the impact of enhanced employability integration on graduate readiness or employer satisfaction. These gaps justify the present study, which investigates actionable strategies for enhancing employability skills integration in Ugandan pre-service teacher

training, using Kyambogo University as a case representative of national reforms.

Fede et al. (2018) demonstrated that community-engaged employment positively influences students' transferable skills, particularly initiative, collaboration, and problem-solving. Similarly, Verawati et al. (2019) showed that inquiry-based learning incorporating the conflict-cognitive technique enhanced critical thinking among pre-service physics teachers in Indonesia. While valuable, both studies highlighted gaps. Conducted in the US and Indonesia, their findings may not be directly transferable to Uganda. Empirical evidence is lacking on the application of community-based and inquiry-based approaches in Ugandan pre-service teacher training. Furthermore, both relied primarily on quantitative or mixed-methods designs, leaving limited qualitative insight into employability development in Uganda. The current study addresses these gaps by employing Human Capital Theory and qualitative methods, including documentary reviews and key informant interviews.

Kelly et al. (2022) examined assessment reforms during the COVID-19 pandemic, including online presentations, simulations, and open-book examinations, which aimed to enhance communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills while maintaining academic integrity. Wu et al. (2023), applying Outcome-Based Education (OBE), found strong links between communication proficiency and employability among Chinese engineering students. Despite their contributions, these studies reveal empirical, contextual, conceptual, theoretical, and methodological gaps. They do not address Uganda's pre-service teacher training, leaving unanswered how alternative assessment strategies and communication-focused training can be adapted to

this context. Additionally, both relied on quantitative surveys, overlooking qualitative exploration of stakeholder experiences. This study fills these gaps through Human Capital Theory and qualitative methods.

Roberts et al. (2023) addressed skill redundancy among ecology graduates in the UK by developing a work-simulated learning programme aligned with employer needs, while Othman et al. (2018) used data mining to identify factors such as internships, extracurricular activities, and English proficiency as key to employability in Malaysia. While informative, these approaches have limited applicability to the Ugandan teacher education system. Empirically, there is a lack of research on the adoption of work-simulated and data-driven strategies in Uganda. Contextually, little is known about how these interventions could be adapted to Ugandan teacher education. Conceptually, the integration of work-simulated learning in teacher training institutions remains underexplored. This study addresses these deficiencies using Human Capital Theory and qualitative methods.

Rees (2021) analysed best practices for employability in higher education at macro, meso, and micro levels, framing an ontology with 'entrepreneurial spirit' as central to innovation in teaching. Similarly, Choi-Lundberg et al. (2024), in a systematic review of 91 studies, highlighted student-centred experiential learning, such as internships, problem-based learning, and reflection practices, as effective in building employability. They also advocated for the use of e-portfolios to help students articulate their competencies. Yet, these insights remain broad and international in scope, with limited relevance to Uganda. Empirically, entrepreneurial and experiential learning strategies have not been sufficiently applied in Ugandan pre-service teacher training.

Conceptually, how entrepreneurial approaches could be integrated into teacher training programmes is unexplored. The current study, therefore, investigates these gaps within Uganda's specific educational context, guided by Human Capital Theory and qualitative methods.

Oben et al. (2023) investigated how smart device integration in Cameroonian universities influenced the 21st-century employability skills, finding that smartphones and laptops had a moderate, positive impact. Similarly, Abdullah et al. (2022) examined Malaysian TVET trainer programmes, emphasising the importance of curricula that explicitly embed employability skills to support job readiness and lifelong learning. While informative, both these findings have limited applicability to Uganda's teacher training context. Empirical evidence is lacking on the use of digital tools and curriculum redesign to enhance employability in Ugandan pre-service teacher education, and the conceptual role of smart devices in skills development remains underexplored. This study addresses these gaps using Human Capital Theory and qualitative methods, including documentary reviews and key informant interviews.

Layaoen (2024) assessed employer perceptions of BSBA Marketing Management graduates in the Philippines, highlighting the value of employer feedback for aligning programmes with industry needs. Hahn and Gangeness (2019), focusing on the US, explored higher education-business collaboration, recommending practicum experiences, partnerships, and expanded faculty roles. Although valuable, these studies offer little insight into Uganda's teacher training system. Specifically, little is known about how employer feedback and industry collaboration could inform pre-service teacher education in Uganda.

Conceptually, the role of feedback in aligning teacher training with labour market expectations is underexplored. Methodologically, little qualitative research addresses these issues in Uganda. This study fills these gaps by applying Human Capital Theory and qualitative methods to investigate employability skills integration in Ugandan teacher training institutions.

Cacho et al. (2022) used a descriptive-survey design to assess employability among graduates of BTLE programmes in the Philippines, emphasising employer engagement in curriculum review. Similarly, Suleman (2018), through surveys, interviews, and job advertisement analysis in Portugal, underscored the importance of linking higher education outcomes with labour market expectations. While both studies point to the value of stakeholder input, their contexts differ significantly from Uganda. There is limited evidence on how tracer studies or employer feedback mechanisms are applied in Ugandan pre-service teacher training. Furthermore, neither applied a guiding framework such as Human Capital Theory. This study, therefore, investigates these gaps within Uganda's teacher education landscape using Human Capital Theory and qualitative methods.

Maina et al. (2022) examined Employability Skills Micro-Credentialing (ESMC) in three East African universities Maseno University (Kenya), Makerere University (Uganda), and the Open University of Tanzania—using a mixed-methods design involving students, lecturers, and employers. The study reported a shift toward active learning and alignment of course outcomes with employability skills. In contrast, Dewali (2022), working in Iraq, investigated learner-centred approaches in English writing instruction, finding improvements in grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and attitudes toward

collaborative learning. Although relevant, both studies reveal contextual and methodological gaps. Dewali's findings are situated in Iraq, while Maina et al.'s work, though including Uganda, focused on higher education rather than teacher training specifically. More targeted research is needed on how micro-credentialing and learner-centred methods can strengthen employability in Ugandan pre-service teacher training. Methodologically, there is limited qualitative research exploring the specific impact of these approaches on employability skill development in Ugandan teacher training institutions. This study addresses these gaps through Human Capital Theory and qualitative inquiry.

Spanjaard et al. (2018) examined experiential learning in Australia through field trips, guest lectures, and case studies and found positive effects on students' self-efficacy and workplace readiness. Similarly, Mashwama and Dywili (2023) reviewed South African teacher training in the built environment, highlighting industry partnerships and experiential learning as central to employability. While these studies affirm the benefits of practice-oriented approaches, their direct relevance to Uganda's teacher training is limited. Empirical evidence is scarce on how strategies such as fieldwork or industry engagement can be systematically integrated into Ugandan pre-service teacher training. Additionally, neither study explicitly links its findings to theoretical frameworks relevant to teacher education. This study addresses these gaps using Human Capital Theory and qualitative methods.

Delbart et al. (2023) evaluated classroom management training in Belgium, highlighting how reflective debriefing improved teaching strategies. Likewise, Ropohl and Rönnebeck (2019) analysed feedback practices in

Germany, demonstrating that formative assessment training enhanced pre-service teachers' capacity to provide constructive feedback. Both studies highlight the role of peer feedback and reflection in professional growth, yet European contexts differ markedly from Uganda. Little is known about how reflective practice and feedback could be institutionalised in Ugandan pre-service teacher training to support both teaching competence and employability. This study addresses this gap through Human Capital Theory and qualitative research, combining documentary analysis with key informant interviews.

Caingcoy (2021) conducted a scoping study in the Philippines, analysing fifteen publications on teacher education graduates' employability skills. The study identified key in-demand competencies—communication, ICT, problem-solving, critical thinking, teamwork, research, and leadership—and recommended curriculum review to strengthen these areas. Similarly, Thaanyane and Jita (2024) examined pre-service teachers' ICT integration competence in Lesotho's business education programmes. Their analytical review revealed that competence was shaped by self-efficacy, attitudes toward ICT, insufficient training, and institutional infrastructure, leading to recommendations for improved training and supportive policies. Despite their contributions, both studies are contextually limited. The findings of the Philippines and Lesotho do not directly translate to those of Uganda, where there is still little evidence on how to embed competencies such as communication, ICT, problem-solving, and leadership into pre-service teacher training. Moreover, while Caingcoy (2021b) employed a scoping review and Thaanyane and Jita (2024) used literature analysis, qualitative research in Uganda on these themes is scarce. This study addresses these gaps by applying

Human Capital Theory and employing qualitative methods key informant interviews and documentary analysis to examine employability skills integration in Ugandan pre-service teacher training institutions.

Podgórska and Zdonek (2024) explored interdisciplinary project-based learning (PBL) in a Polish technical university, showing that PBL fosters Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) awareness when supported by collaboration, funding, and institutional commitment. Similarly, Abelha et al. (2020) conducted a systematic review in Portugal, identifying strategies for improving graduate employability through curriculum alignment, practical experiences, and attention to both soft and technical skills. While informative, these studies are rooted in European contexts, limiting their direct relevance to Uganda. There remains a gap in applying PBL and curriculum alignment strategies to Uganda's pre-service teacher training. Moreover, neither study explicitly grounded its analysis in a theoretical framework suitable for teacher education. This study addresses these gaps through Human Capital Theory and qualitative methods, including documentary reviews and key informant interviews.

Stan et al. (2023) explored practical learning in Romanian urban planning and construction courses, finding that hands-on experiences better prepare students for employment and align education with labour market needs. Janib et al. (2022), examining Malaysian academics, found that reduced workload and enhanced professional commitment improve productivity and job satisfaction. While valuable, both studies differ significantly from Uganda's teacher training context. There is limited evidence on how practical experiences and workload-related interventions could strengthen employability among Ugandan pre-

service teachers. Conceptually, the role of experiential learning in preparing teachers for employment is underexplored in Uganda. This study addresses these gaps using Human Capital Theory and qualitative methods to examine employability skills integration in Ugandan teacher training institutions.

Syariah and Fithriani (2023) investigated Indonesian pre-service EFL teachers' challenges during distance learning, including poor internet access, platform difficulties, instructional barriers, and boredom. Participants addressed these issues through self-directed learning, peer support, and instructor guidance. Similarly, Abd et al. (2021) examined Malaysian pre-service teachers' online teaching internships, reporting challenges such as weak connectivity, low student engagement, and limited digital teaching skills. Both studies highlight the need to prepare teachers for digital and online instruction. However, their contexts differ from Uganda, where little is known about how pre-service programmes address similar challenges. Conceptually, strategies for integrating digital pedagogy into Ugandan teacher education remain underdeveloped, and neither study employed a guiding theoretical framework. This study responds to these gaps by using Human Capital Theory and qualitative methods documentary reviews and key informant interviews—to examine employability skills integration in Uganda's teacher training institutions.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a detailed account of the methodological approach adopted for this investigation. It elaborates on the philosophical framework that underpins the study, the chosen research methodology and design, the study area and population, the sampling strategy, the data collection methods and instruments, the operationalisation and measurement of study variables, the procedures for ensuring data quality, the techniques employed for data analysis, and the ethical considerations observed throughout the research process.

3.1 Philosophical Orientation

The study was guided by the interpretivist paradigm (Dworkin, 1978), which recognises multiple realities constructed through participants' lived experiences and social interactions (Nguyen et al., 2015). In this context, knowledge regarding the integration of employability skills in pre-service teacher training programmes was constructed based on the perspectives of the study participants. Drawing on a subjective ontology, the researcher assumed that knowledge (reality) concerning the integration of employability skills in pre-service teacher training is subjectively constructed through the perspectives of heads of departments, lecturers, pre-service teachers, and employers of graduate teachers for secondary education (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2019). Epistemologically, reality was explored using multiple methods (Rosenthal, 2018). Accordingly, key informant interviews were conducted with lecturers, pre-service teachers, and employers of graduate teachers of secondary education to obtain in-depth information on the topic under investigation. In addition,

documentary analysis was employed to identify the employability skills currently integrated into pre-service teacher training programmes. Axiologically, the researcher upheld ethical standards throughout the study, particularly with respect to the rights of the participants. The research was further conducted in a value-free environment, although the researcher remained actively engaged throughout the research process.

3.2 Research Approach

This study adopted a qualitative research methodology, which facilitated the exploration of meanings and insights within a specific context (Subramanian et al., 2020). Such an approach captures participants' values, interpretive frameworks, mental models, belief systems, and standards of living to enhance understanding of their realities (Omona, 2013). The researcher employed qualitative methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of participants' lived experiences regarding the integration of employability skills in pre-service teacher training. Data were collected using qualitative techniques including key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and documentary reviews (Creswell, 2014a) and were subsequently processed and interpreted according to emerging themes, thereby aligning the study with a qualitative research strategy.

3.3 Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative case study design to investigate the enhancement of employability skills in pre-service teacher training programmes at Kyambogo University. Case studies are particularly valuable for examining individuals, groups, programmes, or activities in depth (Mohd Ishak & Abu Bakar, 2014). The design was selected to explain how and why specific events

occur (Kabir, 2018a). According to Karlsson (2016), a case study enables the comprehension of phenomena in real-life contexts by drawing on naturally occurring information sources such as individuals and their interactions within the scope of the case. Heale and Twycross (2018) further observed that this approach allows the researcher to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. The features of a case study align closely with the interpretivist orientation, which underscores the importance of understanding the subjective dimensions of human behaviour and the contexts in which they arise (Harrison et al., 2017). Within this framework, the study employed key informant analysis to examine the integration of employability skills in pre-service teacher training programmes at Kyambogo University.

3.4 Selection of the case

Kyambogo University was selected as the case study site for this investigation. The choice was informed by the university's historical and continuing prominence in teacher education. Established primarily as a teacher education institution, Kyambogo University has earned recognition as Uganda's leading university for training highly competent and professional teachers (Otaala et al., 2013). Furthermore, the university is widely acknowledged for its ongoing development of teacher education programmes, offering qualifications ranging from diplomas to bachelor's degrees in education (Ndawula & Kyazike, 2024). Consequently, Kyambogo University provided an ideal context for gaining an in-depth understanding of the integration of employability skills, thereby serving as a benchmark for other teacher training institutions to emulate.

3.5 Study Population

The study population comprised full-time teaching staff, final year pre-service teacher trainees, and Employers of graduates from teacher training programmes. The main respondents of this study were final year pre-service teacher trainees. This is because they have lived experiences of how employability skills are integrated during the training. Full-time teaching staff were selected because they develop, implement, and review pre-service teacher training programmes and are in a position to explain how employability skills are integrated into the programmes. While employers were selected because they are in a position to provide their opinions about the employability skills they desire from pre-service teacher training graduates from Kyambogo University, and they can be enhanced.

3.6 Selection of Participants

Purposive sampling approaches are commonly used in qualitative research (Naderifar et al., 2017). In this study, homogeneous sampling was employed, as it targets participants with shared characteristics or experiences, thereby enabling an in-depth examination of a single subgroup (Mwange et al., 2023). The researcher purposively selected full-time teaching staff from two key departments Foundations and Educational Psychology, and Curriculum, Pedagogy and Education Media together with final-year pre-service teacher trainees and employers of graduate pre-service teacher trainees. Final-year trainees were chosen for their ability to provide insights into how employability skills are integrated into training alongside subject content, while employers were included to share their expectations regarding the employability skills they

consider essential for pre-service teacher trainees. The sample size was determined by the point of saturation (Boddy, 2015).

Lecturers: Eight lecturers were purposively selected from two key departments within the Faculty of Education at Kyambogo University. These comprised six lecturers from the Department of Foundations and Educational Psychology and two lecturers from the Department of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Education Media. The lecturers were chosen for their direct involvement in the design, delivery, and assessment of courses that influence the development of employability skills among pre-service teacher trainees.

The Department of Foundations and Educational Psychology plays a central role in cultivating the foundational knowledge, skills, and dispositions essential for preparing competent educators. Conversely, lecturers from the Department of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Education Media are responsible for implementing curricula through the use of effective teaching methods, relevant instructional materials, and appropriate assessment strategies (Aziz et al., 2018). Their combined expertise and perspectives were therefore critical to understanding how employability skills are currently integrated into teacher training programmes and how this integration might be further enhanced.

Pre-service Teacher Trainees: Twenty-two third-year pre-service teacher trainees were purposively selected because they were in the final stage of their training and had completed their school practice (internship). This experience enabled them to reflect on employability skills developed throughout the training programme, encompassing both coursework and practicum components. Their cumulative exposure positioned them to provide comprehensive insights into the employability skills expected by employers, the

extent to which these skills are integrated into the training programme, and recommendations for their enhancement.

Employers: Eight employers or administrators from both private and government secondary schools that hire graduates of pre-service teacher training programmes were purposively selected for interviews to obtain key informant perspectives on the employability skills they value in graduates of higher education institutions. Hays and McKibben (2021) argue that transferability in qualitative research is strengthened when findings are drawn from multiple, relevant contexts. Including both private and public schools enriched the credibility and applicability of the study’s findings across different institutional types, thereby enhancing their usefulness to curriculum developers, teacher educators, and policymakers

The participant selection for the study is summarized in Table 3.1 below:

Table 3. 1

Participants of the Study

Category	Sample size	Sampling technique	Data collection instrument
Lecturers	8	Purposive Sampling	Key informant Interviews
Final year pre-service teacher trainees	22	Purposive sampling	Focus group discussion guide
Employers	8	Purposive Sampling	Key informant Interviews
Total	38		

Overall, the actual sample size of participants was determined by saturation, which is the point at which no newer ideas are obtained from the participants (Sim et al., 2018). Further, the 38 study participants were chosen based on

Hagaman and Wutich's (2017) recommendation that sample sizes of 20 to 40 interviews can be used to ensure data saturation of meta-themes that cut across research sites.

3.7 Data Collection Methods

Three data collection methods were employed: interviews, focus group discussions, and documentary analysis. These methods were applied across all three research questions to ensure comprehensive coverage. The interview method facilitated a detailed key informant analysis by enabling comparisons of similarities and contrasts among individual cases nested within the phenomenon under study (Heale et al., 2018).

Focus group discussions involve participants coming together to share their views and opinions on pertinent issues (Creswell, 2014). They were selected for this study because they enable the collection of rich, detailed, and nuanced descriptions of social phenomena by encouraging participants to speak openly, thereby enhancing the researcher's understanding of their lived experiences.

Documentary analysis refers to the systematic examination of secondary source documents to derive relevant data (Adom et al., 2016). In this study, documentary analysis was conducted on curriculum documents, course outlines, and practicum guidelines to evaluate the extent to which employability skills are integrated. All data collection tools were developed based on insights gained from the literature review.

3.7.1 Interviews

The researcher conducted key informant interviews, guided by the interview tool provided in Appendix 3, with purposively selected full-time lecturers to

obtain information on the integration of employability skills in pre-service teacher training programmes. Additionally, key informant interviews were conducted, using the interview guide in Appendix 4, with purposively selected employers or school administrators from both private and government secondary schools that employ graduates of pre-service teacher training programmes from Kyambogo University. These interviews aimed to explore employers' perspectives on the integration of employability skills into pre-service teacher training offered by higher education institutions.

Data saturation for the interviews was achieved after seven lecturer interviews and seven employer interviews. At this point, no new themes or perspectives emerged from participants' responses, indicating that sufficient and comprehensive information had been gathered to address the research objectives.

3.7.2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

The researcher used a focus group discussion guide (Appendix 2) to conduct Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with third-year pre-service teacher trainees who had been exposed to core teacher training content in foundational courses specifically, Foundations of Education, Educational Psychology, and Curriculum and Instruction. Twenty-two participants were purposively selected from the following programmes: Bachelor of Arts with Education, Bachelor of Business Studies with Education, Bachelor of Science with Education, and Bachelor of Vocational Studies with Education.

Two FGD sessions were conducted, each comprising eleven respondents. Each group included six females and five males, distributed as follows: four from the Bachelor of Arts with Education, three from the Bachelor

of Business Studies with Education, two from the Bachelor of Science with Education, and two from the Bachelor of Vocational Studies with Education. The researcher ensured that the participants represented diverse viewpoints and experiences relevant to the subject under investigation.

Data saturation for the FGDs was achieved after the two sessions, as recurring themes emerged and no new substantial insights were generated, confirming that the data collected was sufficient to address the research objectives.

3.7.3 Documentary analysis

The researcher used a document analysis tool (Appendix 5) to examine the current integration of employability skills into pre-service teacher training programmes at Kyambogo University. Key documents reviewed included the pre-service teacher training programme and practicum guidelines, which were analysed to assess the extent of employability skills integration. A documentary analysis checklist was developed and aligned with the study objectives. All instruments were validated by experts in curriculum studies and pilot-tested to ensure clarity and relevance.

3.8 Data collection procedure

Following the presentation of the research proposal to the Department of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Educational Media, and its successful defence before the Faculty of Education Higher Degrees Committee, the researcher obtained an introductory letter to the Research Ethics Committee (REC) for ethical clearance. Subsequently, clearance was secured from the National Council for Science and Technology to authorise data collection.

After receiving these approvals, the researcher obtained an introductory letter from the Directorate of Research and Graduate Training at Kyambogo University, addressed to the University Secretary, to request permission to collect data from lecturers and final-year Education students. Additionally, an introductory letter from the Directorate of Research and Graduate Training was used to obtain permission to collect data from employers of graduate teachers at secondary schools. Data collection was carried out by four trained research assistants, and all interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accuracy and completeness.

3.9 Data Quality control

To ensure the quality of data in this study, the researcher adhered to the criteria proposed by Ghafouri (2018) to promote trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility refers to the methodological processes used to establish consistency between participants' expressions and the researcher's interpretations (Busetto et al., 2020).

To enhance credibility, the researcher employed debriefing or peer review, triangulation, and member checking, as recommended by Fitzpatrick (2019). Additional measures such as prolonged engagement, persistent observation, comprehensive data gathering, and triangulation—were undertaken to strengthen credibility further. Referential adequacy was also examined as a means of verifying early findings and interpretations against the raw data (Ghafouri, 2018). Finally, member checking was conducted to test the findings and interpretations with participants, ensuring their accuracy and authenticity.

To guarantee trustworthiness, the researcher ensured that the research process was logical, traceable, and clearly documented (Ghafouri, 2018). In this study, trustworthiness was demonstrated by subjecting the research process to auditing, indicating that another researcher using the same data, perspective, and context could arrive at the same or similar—though not contradictory—conclusions. Preserved raw data, field notes, transcripts, and a reflective journal enabled the researcher to systematise, relate, and cross-reference data while providing a detailed description of the research process (Molani et al., 2021).

Furthermore, confirmability concerns demonstrating that the researcher's interpretations and findings are clearly derived from the data, necessitating transparency in how conclusions and interpretations were reached. According to Ghafouri (2018), when credibility, reliability, and confirmability are all achieved, confirmability is established. To address this, the researcher incorporated indicators such as justifications for theoretical, methodological, and analytical choices throughout the study, ensuring that readers could understand how and why judgements were made.

3.10 Data Analysis

The analysis of qualitative data involves a series of processes and methods through which the researcher transforms the collected data into explanations, understandings, or interpretations of the individuals and situations under investigation (Creswell, 2014a; Kabir, 2018). This study adhered to Creswell's (2014) prescribed methodology for conducting qualitative data analysis, which comprises several critical phases.

The qualitative data were analysed thematically, with a focus on identifying and interpreting patterns and themes (Saunders et al., 2017). The

first step involved transcribing audio data from interviews and focus group discussions, followed by a documentary review to familiarise the researcher with the rationale, objectives, learning outcomes, and methods of delivery within pre-service teacher training programmes, in order to determine the extent to which employability skills were integrated.

The second step entailed familiarisation with the data by reviewing transcripts and noting recurring words, ideas, or quotations across multiple sources. This was followed by the coding of participants' statements, using an inductive approach. In the fourth stage, patterns were developed from these coded statements, from which preliminary interpretations were drawn and potential themes identified. Finally, in the fifth step, these patterns were refined and interpreted into coherent themes, which were validated against the research questions to ensure the credibility of the findings.

3.11 Ethical considerations

In this context, ethical consideration refers to the moral principles guiding the investigation or intervention, particularly regarding the minimisation of harm, respect for participants, and the safeguarding of their safety, social, and psychological well-being, as well as adherence to the principles of consent, beneficence, and justice (Makerere University, 2011).

The researcher obtained clearance from the Faculty of Education's Higher Degrees Committee by presenting the proposal for review and receiving subsequent endorsement. In addition, written informed consent was obtained from all participants involved in the study. Confidentiality was maintained by omitting the names of individual participants from all study documents. The

names of participating faculties, schools, departments, and individuals were anonymised in all research outputs.

Furthermore, standard operating procedures such as social distancing, sanitising, and wearing masks were strictly observed during data collection to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and Ebola virus infections.

3.12 Chapter summary

This chapter outlined the methodology adopted to examine the integration of employability skills into pre-service teacher training programmes at Kyambogo University. The study employed a case study design, underpinned by the interpretivist paradigm. Data were collected through key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and documentary analysis. Rigour was ensured by addressing data quality through triangulation, member checking, and the maintenance of an audit trail. Ethical considerations including informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and adherence to public health protocols were strictly observed.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter comprises the findings of the study about the integration of employability skills in pre-service teacher training programmes in higher institutions of learning in Uganda. Participants' demographics (gender and age) were used instead of the actual names to protect both the institutions and participants' privacy. This chapter introduces the demographics of the study respondents, employability skills desired by employers from graduate teachers, how they are integrated in pre-service teacher training programmes, and how they can be enhanced to meet employers' skills demands.

4.1 Participants' Demographic Information

The participants included final year pre-service teachers, lecturers of foundational subjects, and employers from secondary schools located in Kampala Central District (Table 4.1 shows detailed demographic information).

Table 4. 1

Response rate

Category	Target	Actual	Response rate (%)
Key informants	18	16	88
Interviewees			
Focus Group Discussions interviewees	22	22	100
Total	40	38	95

Source: Field data Kampala Central district, 2023

The study targeted 18 participants for interviews out of which, 16 participated, giving a response rate of 88%. All the targeted 22 focus group participants took

part, resulting in a response rate of 100%. Overall, the total response rate for the study was 95%.

Table 4. 2
Respondents' background characteristics for lecturers

Item	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	5	62
	Female	3	38
Academic Rank	Assistant Lecturer	3	37
	Lecturer	3	37
	Senior Lecturer	2	25
Teaching Experience	3–4 Years	4	50
	5 Years and above	4	50
Highest Academic Qualification	Master's	4	50
	PhD	4	50
Age	31–40	0	0
	41–50	5	63
	51–60	3	37

Source: Field data Kampala central district, 2023

Most lecturers (62%) were male, while females accounted for 38%. Regarding academic rank, 37% were assistant lecturers, 37% lecturers, and 25% senior lecturers, ensuring representation across ranks. In terms of teaching experience, 50% had more than five years, and 50% had between three and four years, suggesting that participants had substantial teaching experience. With respect to qualifications, 50% held PhDs and 50% masters' degrees. The majority of respondents (63%) were aged between 41 and 50 years, while 37% were between 51 and 60 years.

Table 4. 3

Respondents' demographic Characteristics: Employers

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	3	37
Female	5	63
Work Experience		
3–4 Years	3	37
5 Years and Above	5	63
Highest Academic Qualification		
Master's	7	100
Age		
41–50	5	63
51–60	3	37
Type of School		
Private	3	37
Government	5	63

Source: Field data, Kampala Central District 2023

The majority of employers (63%) were female, while 37% were male. Most (63%) had over five years of administrative experience, while 37 % had three to four years of work experience. The results indicate significant professional expertise. All respondents (100%) held a master's degree. The age distribution shows that 63% were between 41 and 50 years, and 37% were between 51 and 60 years, reflecting mid- to late-career professionals. The results further revealed that government-aided schools comprising 63% of the sample and private schools accounting for the remaining 37%.

Table 4. 4

Background Characteristics for Students

Item	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	12	54
	Female	10	46
Year of study	Third Year	22	100
Course of study	B.A. Education	6	27
	B.Sc. Education	6	27
	B. Vocational Education	4	18
	B. Business Studies Education	6	27
Age	21–25	22	100

Source: Field data, Kampala Central District 2023

More than half of the teacher trainees (54%) were male, while females accounted for 46%. All were third-year students, making them well-placed to provide insights into employability skills integration in their training programmes. The course of study was distributed across Bachelor of Arts with Education (27%), Bachelor of Science with Education (27%), Bachelor of Vocational Education (18%), and Bachelor of Business Studies with Education (27%). All respondents were aged 21 to 25 years, consistent with the typical age range of undergraduate teacher trainees.

4.2 Employability skills desired by employers from pre-service teacher training graduates in Teacher Training Institutions in Uganda

Research question one of the study was “*what employability skills do employers’ desire from pre-service teacher training graduates from Teacher Training Institutions in Uganda*”. Results from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions revealed communication skills, collaboration skills, critical

thinking skills, creativity skills, leadership skills, problem solving, Adaptability, time management, emotional intelligence and self-sufficiency as the employability skills desired by employers of graduate teachers in Uganda.

4.2.1 Theme 1 employability skills

This theme emerged from ten sub-themes: communication skills, collaboration skills, critical thinking skills, creativity skills, leadership skills, problem solving, Adaptability, time management, emotional intelligence and self - sufficiency.

Communication skills

Communication skills were identified by respondents as key enablers for teachers to convey clear and effective information to students and other stakeholders within and outside the classroom, ensuring comprehension and engagement as explained by 45-year-old female employer:

Communication is very key when it comes to eloquence. You must be very eloquent as a teacher in class and elsewhere, because as a teacher we expect you to address learners for example like on assembly and you are to come and address them and yet they don't understand what you are addressing them because you are not communicating effectively

Similarly, pre-service teacher trainees reiterated: "When it comes to communication skills, if a teacher doesn't know how to communicate with students, it's detrimental to their learning. There is a strong connection between these skills and effective teaching." (FGD 1)

Excellent communication skills allow teachers to connect with everyone involved in the school community, including students, parents, colleagues, and

administrators. This helps build strong relationships and creates an atmosphere ideal for learning as highlighted by 51-year-old employer:

Now everyone is talking about the twenty-first-century skills such as communication skills. Before I go any further, communication skills that is one of the most important skills. A person graduating from university but cannot communicate. Look at a person who is going to become a teacher but cannot communicate. What kind of students is he or she going to train? Therefore, that is very crucial.

Another 45-year-old female employer pointed out the role of communication in collaborating with colleagues and administrators:

...but even communication is key when it comes to communicating with colleagues as you interact with other teachers who are at administrative level or if you are interacting with administrators. Basically, communication is so key. We do everything through communication.

A 45-year-old female lecturer also reiterated: “Employers should value communication skills in teachers, as they are crucial for establishing great relationships with students, parents, and colleagues, which in turn creates a positive learning environment and promotes professional development.”

Effective communication helps teachers create a positive classroom culture where rules and expectations are clear, fostering a structured and harmonious learning environment. This atmosphere is vital for academic success as 50-year-old employer explained: “The ability to communicate how you convey the rules and regulations to students and how they perceive you as a teacher—can greatly impact their learning experience and overall success.” A 58-year-old lecturer reiterated: “The ability to communicate—how you

communicate the rules and regulations to students and how they perceive you—is crucial.”

Communication skills are also vital for teachers to remain resilient and responsive to the evolving demands of the workplace. A 50-year-old employer observed: “Communication skills are vital in today’s fast-paced and interconnected world. We are seeking candidates who possess strong communication skills to adapt to the evolving demands of the workforce”

Strong communication skills are fundamental to delivering effective lessons, as they enable teachers to present content clearly, engagingly, and accessibly. These skills also encourage student interaction and engagement, fostering deeper understanding as 55-year-old employer emphasized:

When we talk about communication skills, especially for a teacher as an instructor, how can a teacher effectively instruct if they don’t know how to communicate? And we are not just talking about communication skills, but effective communication skills, where the end user can clearly understand what is being said. Therefore, communication becomes a critical aspect, not only in how language is used but also in ensuring that the audience comprehends the message. Communication is indeed a crucial element.

Similarly, 45-year-old lecturer supported this view: “For example, if the teacher is proficient in communication, they will be able to deliver content effectively to the learners” pre-service teachers also reiterated in FGD-2: “If the teacher is good at communication, then they will be able to deliver content very well to the learners.”

Employers seek teachers with strong oral and written communication skills, as these are essential for delivering instruction, managing classrooms, collaborating with colleagues, engaging parents, and fulfilling administrative responsibilities. One pre-service teacher trainee explained in FGD -2: “Employers value teachers with communication skills, including both oral and written abilities. These skills are essential for effectively conveying information to students, parents, and colleagues.”

In summary, communication skills were regarded as a core employability skill because they enable teachers to deliver clear and engaging instruction, manage classrooms effectively, and build strong relationships with students, parents, and colleagues. Respondents emphasized that effective communication is essential for conveying expectations, fostering a positive learning environment, and adapting to the dynamic demands of the teaching profession. Both employers and pre-service teacher trainees highlighted the importance of oral and written communication in promoting understanding, professional collaboration, and overall teaching effectiveness.

Collaboration skills

Employers seek teachers with collaboration skills because teamwork is essential for supporting various school activities. These activities include administering exams, monitoring student welfare (particularly in boarding schools), overseeing preparations, and maintaining discipline as a 55-year-old employer explained:

Internally, collaboration skills are essential for teachers to work together smoothly and support each other in various school activities. For example, we are currently administering exams, which require teamwork to ensure everything runs smoothly. Additionally, since this

is a boarding school, nothing would function properly without teamwork. We have around 130 teachers, but about 40 stay on campus to help manage school activities, such as overseeing preps, handling exams, and maintaining discipline. All of this requires effective teamwork.

Teachers with collaboration abilities cultivate positive relationships with colleagues, parents, and students, contributing to a harmonious school atmosphere. This collaboration supports the achievement of common goals within the educational context as was a 40-year-old employer emphasized:

Collaboration fosters community and shared responsibility as was explained by a 55-year-old employer:

Collaboration skills are very important because they help us to know what is beyond us and to leverage the strengths of others to achieve common goals. Working together also promotes a sense of community and shared responsibility in the educational setting.

Collaboration skills are crucial for continuous professional development, enabling senior and junior teachers to support each other by sharing ideas and strategies that enhance teaching and learning. This exchange fosters an appreciation for teamwork in achieving educational goals as was explained by 50-year-old male employer: “Collaboration skills, even here, when new teachers come, they approach the senior teachers for improvement in their teaching methods and strategies. This continuous learning and sharing of knowledge ultimately benefit both educators and students alike”

Another 40-year-old female employer reiterated: “Collaboration skills are important for student teachers to appreciate the value of working together to achieve common goals and to continuously improve their teaching practices through shared knowledge and experiences with senior educators.”

Employers value collaboration skills because they enable teachers to associate effectively with colleagues, students, parents, and the broader community, ensuring a supportive and productive learning environment as noted by 45-year-old female employer: “Collaboration skills are needed to easily associate with students, fellow teachers, and parents as well. You don’t have it all...you need one another”. Similarly, another 48-year-old employer added: “Teachers should also be able to collaborate with parents, the community, and all the stakeholders to produce quality teaching.”

Finally, pre-service teacher trainees emphasized the importance of collaboration in professional settings as explained by pre-service teacher trainees in FGD 1: “You cannot be in a staff room where you cannot associate with the teachers; bring out your views and the changes to be made”

In summary, collaboration skills were viewed as vital because they enable teachers to work effectively in teams, support various school operations, and foster positive relationships with colleagues, students, and parents. Respondents emphasized that collaboration promotes a shared sense of responsibility, enhances professional development through peer learning, and contributes to a supportive and productive school environment. Pre-service teacher trainees also recognized that the ability to collaborate meaningfully with staff and stakeholders is essential for achieving educational goals and improving teaching practices.

Critical thinking

Employers value critical thinking skills in teachers because they enable them to manage complex classroom situations, adapt to changing educational circumstances and provide meaningful learning experiences. These skills enable

teachers to help students apply theoretical knowledge, to encourage critical thinking and to assess learner progress, as one 55-year-old employer explained.

Then critical thinking; this one, even if you don't go any further, you can't have a teacher who doesn't have critical thinking skills. You need to be able to think on your feet, solve problems and adapt to different situations in the classroom.

Likewise, a 45-year-old employer underscored the need of using knowledge in practical situations: "The ability to relate classroom learning to a real-world situation is crucial to effective teaching. It shows that the candidate can apply theoretical knowledge to practical scenarios, making learning more meaningful for students".

Critical thinking skills enable teachers to adopt and adapt to changes in curricula, implementation and assessment methods, as pre-service teachers explained in FGD-2: "Adoption skills. For example, a new curriculum has been introduced, so teachers have to adopt it to teach the students better."

Teachers' ability to think critically in solving complex problems and arriving at solutions is a quality highly sought after by employers. A 45-year-old employer emphasised the importance of thinking outside the box: "A teacher needs to be able to think outside the box and use critical thinking to improvise." Similarly, student teachers in FGD-2 reiterated: "Quick thinking is required. You are expected to be able to come up with a solution to a problem very quickly".

Employers value teachers who can work independently with minimal supervision and demonstrate strong critical thinking skills. As one 55-year-old employer explained, these skills are essential for dealing with complex questions posed by students during the teaching process:

For critical thinking, the students in the class believe in their teachers so much, and when they give you a question, they expect you to come up with the answer without looking in the book. So, you have to find a way to answer every question and challenge they give you.

Similarly, another 40-year-old female employer supported the above view: "Critical thinking is also very important because learners expect a lot from these teachers; if they are not critical thinkers, they will be challenged." A lecturer affirmed. "We need critical thinking because you know that employers want teachers who are independent and can work with minimum supervision" (58-year-old male lecturer).

Teachers are also expected to cultivate critical thinking skills in students by engaging them in different settings and helping them to develop the ability to analyse, evaluate and solve problems independently, as the 55-year-old employer explained:

So, at that level, when a student teacher is undergoing pre-service training, it is quite necessary that they are trained to become critical thinkers. So that at the end of the day they will be able to impart critical thinking skills to our learners.

Critical thinking is seen as a valuable tool for educators to provide quality education. It allows teachers to meticulously assess and modify their instructional strategies to guarantee that the material is pertinent and customised to the varied requirements of students. As one 50-year-old male employer shared: "A teacher with strong critical thinking skills can deliver high quality content by analysing, evaluating and refining their teaching strategies to better meet the needs of their students."

In summary, critical thinking skills were viewed as essential because they enable teachers to manage complex classroom situations, solve problems, and deliver meaningful and adaptable learning experiences. Respondents emphasized that these skills help teachers apply theoretical knowledge to real-world contexts, adjust to curriculum changes, and respond effectively to unexpected challenges during lessons. Employers highlighted that critical thinking fosters independence, innovation, and the ability to work with minimal supervision qualities they highly value in new teachers. Pre-service teacher trainees also recognized that quick thinking and problem-solving are necessary in the teaching profession. Furthermore, respondents agreed that teachers must not only demonstrate critical thinking themselves but also cultivate these skills in their learners to enhance analytical and independent learning.

Creativity skills

Employers value teachers' creativity skills as they enable educators to adapt to the different learning styles of their students. Creative teachers design engaging and flexible lesson plans that meet individual needs, making learning more accessible and effective for all students, as one employer highlighted: "Creativity is also another important skill we need in a teacher as it allows them to adapt to different learning styles and engage students in unique ways" (55-year-old employer).

Teachers who demonstrate creativity can identify and use alternative resources to enrich the learning experience, even in resource-constrained environments. This resourcefulness ensures that students receive a more engaging and comprehensive education, as one employer pointed out: "Creativity skills. Often in schools there are not enough resources, and a teacher

has to find ways to teach well with limited materials" (45-year-old female employer).

Similarly, another employer elaborated on how creative teachers can maximise the use of available resources:

A creative teacher is able to maximise the use of available resources, regardless of their limitations, to deliver a successful and effective lesson. By thinking outside the box and innovating with the tools at hand, they can create engaging, meaningful learning experiences that capture students' attention and enhance their understanding. (40-year-old employer).

In summary, creativity skills were regarded as important because they enable teachers to adapt to diverse learning styles, design engaging lessons, and make learning accessible for all students. Respondents noted that creative teachers are resourceful, able to work effectively even in under-resourced environments by innovatively using available materials. Employers emphasized that such creativity enhances learner engagement and promotes meaningful, flexible teaching practices.

Leadership Skills

Leadership was highlighted as an essential quality for teachers to have in order to gain the respect of colleagues, parents and pupils. Employers see strong leadership skills as critical for teachers to effectively lead and influence those around them, and to foster a positive and collaborative school environment. One respondent explained: "Leadership skills... you have to present yourself as a leader so that students will follow you by the way you behave towards other teachers, learners and parents" (50-year-old male employer).

Employers also value teachers with strong leadership skills because they act as change agents and role models, inspiring students to recognise the value of education. Respondents shared: "Leadership is crucial. You need to present yourself as a role model for the students to follow and demonstrate leadership through your behaviour and interactions with other teachers..." (55-year-old male employer). Similarly, another employer reiterated: "We expect them to inspire positive change, such as transforming a student with a negative attitude towards education into an engaged and motivated learner" (48-year-old female employer).

In summary, leadership skills were seen as vital because they enable teachers to command respect, serve as role models, and foster a positive, collaborative school environment. Respondents emphasized that teachers must demonstrate leadership through their conduct and interactions with learners, colleagues, and parents. Employers also valued teachers who could inspire change, influence student attitudes, and promote educational engagement through their leadership and example.

Emotional Intelligence

Employers value emotional intelligence in teachers because it enables them to regulate their own emotions while empathising with and supporting students in challenging situations. This ability fosters a nurturing learning environment. As one respondent explained:

Emotional intelligence... because they are dealing more with young people, they should know how to deal with them with care and sensitivity, especially in difficult situations. Teachers with emotional intelligence are better equipped to build strong relationships with their students and help them manage their emotions effectively (45-year-old female employer).

Another respondent reiterated: "Emotional intelligence is crucial because teachers often work with young people, requiring them to skilfully navigate and address their emotional needs" (45-year-old male lecturer).

Teachers with emotional intelligence also show genuine concern for students, provide meaningful guidance and create a supportive learning environment. One respondent remarked: "I expect them to build positive relationships with others, show genuine concern for students and be good at counselling. If they are given such responsibilities, they should be able to carry them out effectively with minimal supervision" (40-year-old female employer).

In summary, emotional intelligence was regarded as essential because it enables teachers to manage their emotions, empathize with students, and handle sensitive situations with care. Respondents emphasized that emotionally intelligent teachers build strong relationships, offer meaningful support, and create a nurturing learning environment. Employers also valued this trait for its role in student guidance, counselling, and promoting emotional well-being in the classroom.

Adaptability

Employers seek teachers who demonstrate adaptability, a quality essential for aligning with evolving educational trends and best practices to ensure high-quality teaching and enriching learning experiences. A 40-year-old female employer emphasized this point, stating, "The ability to apply what is learned in the classroom to a real-world situation. This adaptability also allows teachers to stay abreast of educational trends and best practices, ensuring that they are always providing quality instruction to their students."

Teachers' adaptability also includes teaching subjects beyond their area of expertise and adjusting to curriculum changes mandated by educational authorities. Pre-service teachers highlighted the importance of flexibility during a focus group discussion (FGD-1): "Employers expect you to be flexible. For example, if I am a history teacher in a school and it happens that the one for entrepreneurship is not there, I can be told to teach it. This requires flexibility." Similarly, participants in another discussion (FGD-2) reiterated this sentiment, noting, "Adaptability is crucial. For example, when a new curriculum is introduced by the Ministry of Education and Sports, teachers have to adapt quickly in order to teach effectively and support their students' learning."

Overall, the findings underscore that adaptability involves more than responsiveness to logistical changes; it reflects a broader professional disposition marked by flexibility, innovation, and a proactive approach to continuous learning. Employers and pre-service teachers alike recognize that this skill is vital for navigating the dynamic educational landscape and fulfilling the complex demands of the teaching profession.

Problem-Solving Skills

Employers emphasize the importance of graduate teachers possessing strong problem-solving skills to effectively address challenges in the classroom. Such skills are crucial for making informed and timely decisions to support student learning. A 45-year-old female employer highlighted this need, stating,

"Problem-solving goes hand in hand with critical thinking. Teachers need to think outside the box and come up with creative solutions to challenges that may arise in the classroom. Being able to troubleshoot and find effective solutions quickly is a valuable skill for educators to have."

Similarly, pre-service teachers echoed the value of quick decision-making during a focus group discussion (FGD-1):

Quick thinking... You should be able to think of the solution to something very quickly and adapt to changes in the classroom environment on the spot. Employers value teachers who can think quickly and make decisions efficiently to best serve their students.

Beyond the classroom, problem-solving skills demonstrate a teacher's versatility and leadership. This was reiterated by the same employer, who noted, "Problem-solving skills are essential for pre-service teachers as they enable them to effectively deal with challenges that may arise in the school environment and come up with practical solutions."

Another respondent, a 40-year-old female employer, stressed the importance of these skills in managing large classrooms while fostering problem-solving abilities in learners: "Problem-solving skills are particularly important in environments with many young learners. Students also need to develop these skills, and they often learn them by observing their teachers."

In summary, problem-solving skills were considered critical for teachers to effectively manage classroom challenges, make quick and informed decisions, and support student learning. Respondents emphasized the value of thinking outside the box and adapting to dynamic situations. Employers and pre-service teachers agreed that problem-solving enhances teaching versatility, fosters leadership, and enables teachers to model and cultivate these skills in learners, particularly in large or complex classroom settings.

Time Management Skills

Employers prioritize time management skills as a critical attribute for teachers, emphasizing their importance in balancing workloads and meeting

deadlines while maintaining high-quality performance. A 45-year-old female employer underscored this point, stating, "Time management skills are essential for teachers to effectively balance their workload and meet deadlines, ultimately leading to a successful career in education."

This perspective was further echoed by a 58-year-old male lecturer, who highlighted the distinct expectations placed on educators: "Unlike other employees, mine are specific; they are teachers. I expect them to be good time managers." Similarly, pre-service teachers discussed the necessity of this skill during a focus group discussion (FGD-1), emphasizing, "Ability to handle time well. This includes establishing a deadline for tasks and the precise time at which you should complete the activity."

In summary, time management skills were seen as essential for teachers to effectively balance their responsibilities, meet deadlines, and maintain professional standards. Respondents emphasized that teachers are expected to plan and execute tasks efficiently, ensuring timely delivery of lessons and administrative duties. Both employers and pre-service trainees highlighted that strong time management contributes to career success and supports effective teaching and learning.

Self-Sufficiency

Employers place high value on teachers who exhibit self-sufficiency, emphasizing the ability to perform duties with minimal supervision and without reliance on financial incentives. This quality reflects professionalism, maturity, and a strong commitment to the teaching profession. A 45-year-old female employer highlighted this expectation, stating,

Readiness to engage in tasks, particularly when they lack financial incentives, is a key quality that we look for in potential hires. Teachers

who demonstrate self-sufficiency are more likely to adapt to challenging situations and find creative solutions without always needing guidance. Similarly, a 58-year-old male lecturer reinforced the importance of independence in teaching roles, noting, "If given such a duty, he or she would execute it with minimum supervision." This sentiment was also reflected in the views of pre-service teachers during a focus group discussion (FGD-1): "Working without supervision. If you are given work, they expect you to finish it even if they are not present."

In summary, self-sufficiency was highly valued as it reflects a teacher's ability to work independently, take initiative, and fulfil responsibilities without constant supervision or reliance on financial incentives. Respondents emphasized that self-sufficient teachers demonstrate professionalism, adaptability, and commitment. Both employers and pre-service teachers highlighted that the ability to complete tasks independently is a critical expectation in the teaching profession.

Overall, the core employability skills essential for pre-service teachers include communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, leadership, problem-solving, adaptability, time management, emotional intelligence, and self-sufficiency. Communication skills are crucial for effectively conveying information, managing classrooms, and building relationships, while collaboration fosters teamwork and continuous professional growth. Critical thinking and problem-solving are needed to handle complex situations, adapt to changes, and foster students' analytical abilities. Creativity allows teachers to engage diverse learners, and leadership inspires positive change. Emotional intelligence helps teachers empathize with students, creating a supportive learning environment. Adaptability and time management ensure efficient

teaching and responsiveness to changes, while self-sufficiency demonstrates professionalism and independence, all of which are highly valued by employers.

4.3 Integration of employability skills in the pre-service teacher training programmes in Uganda

The research question two was: *How are employability skills are integrated into the pre-service teacher training programmes in Teacher Training Institutions in Uganda?* The results from in-depth interview, focus group discussions and documentary review revealed that the design of pre-service teacher training programme does not explicitly integrate employability skills, teaching and learning methods rarely encourage integration of employability skills, lecture methods are predominant, and methods of assessment vary from lecturer to lecturer during the course of training which do influence integration of employability skills.

4.3.1 Theme 1: Design of pre-service teacher training programme

The review of pre-service teacher training programme objectives revealed a significant gap in the explicit integration of employability skills. Objectives do not directly address the development of employability skills such as communication, critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration. While the curriculum emphasizes pedagogical knowledge and instructional techniques, it lacks a clear focus on these essential competencies, which are crucial for preparing pre-service teachers to meet the evolving demands of modern educational environments. This omission represents a missed opportunity to fully equip graduate teachers with the skills most valued by employers in the teaching profession.

Lecturers expressed concerns about the lack of emphasis on employability skills in the programme, which they noted is heavily focused on theory and content rather than preparing students for workforce realities. A 48-year-old male lecturer noted: "If I examine a specific course outline from our programme document, I notice it is heavily focused on teacher-centred instructional strategies. This approach lacks key elements necessary for nurturing employability skills in graduates."

The review of the programme's rationale section revealed no explicit mention of imparting employability skills to pre-service teacher trainees. Instead, the rationale focuses on producing "competent, knowledgeable, and skilled teachers" capable of teaching in diverse educational settings. It also highlights the goal of preparing graduates for professional careers, paid employment, and self-employment. However, while the rationale alludes to preparing graduates for successful careers, it does not explicitly address the integration of employability skills.

Despite this, some lecturers indicated that employability skills are embedded within certain course modules. A 50-year-old male lecturer remarked, "The nature of the curriculum does not directly cater to employability skills but they are embedded within the course design."

The review of course units supported this assertion, with examples such as EPS 2101: Communication Skills for Educators, which covers written communication, and EPS 3101: Educational Psychology and Guidance and Counselling, which addresses interpersonal communication skills. Additionally, EPS 2102: Introduction to Computer Applications in Education introduces computer skills, often considered vital for employability.

Lecturers further emphasised that some foundational course units explicitly teach and assess employability skills. For example, a 45-year-old female lecturer noted: "...with communication skills, it is a course unit, and it is theoretical. Students are usually given coursework, a test, and later exams, so communication skills are examined in the paper." A 55-year-old male lecturer added, "We have them in the course outline; for example, we have communication skills as one of the professional studies being taught."

Furthermore, some course units such as General Methods, Educational Technology, and Education Administration incorporate employability skills, particularly creativity. A 35-year-old female lecturer explained, "There is this course unit called General Methods and Educational Technology where we expect students to come up with the instructional materials; they have to be creative in developing the instructional materials."

While the learning outcomes of the pre-service teacher training programme do not comprehensively list specific employability skills, the course descriptions suggest that certain skills are integrated across various courses. For instance, EPS 2101: Communication Skills for Educators includes elements of creative thinking and problem-solving, and EPS 3101: Educational Psychology and Guidance and Counselling focuses on reflective thinking and self-awareness. Additionally, EPS 3102: Life Skills and Job Ethics covers adaptability and resilience, while EPS 4101: Entrepreneurship Education emphasizes creativity and innovation. Courses such as EPS 2102.2: Entrepreneurship Skills Development appear to promote hands-on learning experiences that foster creativity and adaptability.

While the programme includes elements of employability skills, these are distributed across various courses rather than being explicitly addressed within specific modules. This approach suggests an implicit, rather than intentional, integration of employability skills, leaving room for a more deliberate and systematic incorporation to better prepare graduates for the teaching profession.

Overall, the pre-service teacher training programme inadequately emphasises the integration of employability skills, essential for equipping graduates to fulfil the requirements of contemporary education. Although some course modules promote the cultivation of skills like communication and computer applications, the curriculum mostly stays theoretical and fails to sufficiently equip students for the practicalities of the job. The rationale of the pre-service teacher training programmes does not directly address employability skills, although it aims to produce competent graduates for diverse educational settings. It was observed that while some skills are embedded within certain course modules, there are no specific courses dedicated solely to developing employability skills. The learning outcomes of the programmes also do not provide a comprehensive list of employability skills, suggesting that these skills are indirectly developed across different courses rather than being systematically integrated into the curriculum.

In summary, the design of the pre-service teacher training programme was found to inadequately emphasize the explicit integration of employability skills. While the curriculum focuses on pedagogical knowledge and theoretical content, it lacks a clear framework for developing core skills such as communication, critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration. Lecturers

expressed concern over this gap, noting that while some course units touch on employability skills, their inclusion is implicit rather than systematic. Although modules like *Communication Skills for Educators*, *Educational Psychology*, and *Entrepreneurship Education* embed relevant competencies, there are no dedicated courses or comprehensive learning outcomes addressing employability skills directly. As a result, the programme offers fragmented exposure to these essential skills, missing the opportunity to fully prepare graduates for the demands of the teaching profession.

4.3.2 Theme 2: Teaching and learning methods

The evaluation of the pre-service teacher training programme's teaching and learning methodologies indicated the use of several instructional strategies. These included lectures, where material is conveyed in a conventional style; group discussions, which facilitate collaborative learning; presentations, providing opportunity for learners to exhibit their work; and peer tutoring, which cultivates a friendly and cooperative learning atmosphere.

The findings highlighted that group activities are particularly effective in fostering employability skills such as communication, creativity, problem-solving, and collaboration. Through group assignments, students contribute by sharing ideas, delegating tasks, and working towards a common goal. This process not only enhances academic performance but also prepares students for teamwork in professional settings. A 50-year-old male lecturer explained:

We usually assign them teams. They work as teams and groups. That's why some of the coursework we give is group work and sometimes it's individual. Where possible, group work is given so that members team up, carry out research, and come up with their presentations. We make everybody participate so that they can work together as a team. The aim is to encourage collaboration among students.

Pre-service teachers echoed this view, with one participant from FGD-1 stating:

"Here at campus, we are told to present in groups. We share the responsibilities one types the work, another one prints, and we all discuss together. These groups are interchanged for different course units, which encourages collaboration amongst us."

Despite the benefits, the integration of employability skills into teaching and learning processes often depends on individual lecturers and is hindered by several challenges. Large class sizes, limited space, and insufficient time impede skill development. A lecturer noted:

"One of the biggest problems is to do with the number of students; there are very many. So, you find yourself handling a class of 800 students, 700... If students are more than 10 in a group, then it becomes difficult for all of them to be active, and that's why most of them become onlookers; they are not actively involved."

Other lecturers emphasized additional constraints: "I think we are not doing well when it comes to innovation and creativity because given the nature of what we teach, we have not gone deeply into activities that allow learners to create and innovate" (45-year-old male lecturer).

"The working environment, space some people have nowhere to sit" (58-year-old lecturer).

Communication skills are integrated into the teaching and learning process through activities like class presentations, which require all group members to participate. This approach provides students with opportunities to practice and refine their communication abilities. A 50-year-old lecturer explained: "As they present, we hope their communication skills will improve because we provide ongoing guidance on what should be included, what should

remain, and what should be eliminated. This is how we develop their communication skills." Another lecturer elaborated: "Sometimes we assign them topics and give them time to discuss. After that, they present their findings" (48-year-old female lecturer).

Pre-service teachers confirmed this, with one student from FGD-1 stating: "Through presentations, each student is required to share their perspective on the assignment. This method encourages us to participate, fosters critical thinking, and allows us to practice articulating our ideas, but this depends on individual lecturers."

Despite their value, group presentations face several limitations, including time constraints that often result in only one group member presenting. Lecturers may also focus on providing notes rather than facilitating interactive sessions. Pre-service teachers from FGD-2 noted: "Several students in the group are given the opportunity to present, but most of the time, group leaders are instructed to take the lead in presenting." "Some lecturers just dictate notes, and they don't give students a chance to contribute. They just give handouts." Similarly, pre-service from FGD -1 remarked "The lectures are only given one hour to teach, so they might not give every student a chance to participate."

Critical thinking and problem-solving skills are developed through assignments that require higher-order thinking and activities addressing real-world problems. A 50-year-old lecturer explained: "We give them assignments mainly coming from the content we have not taught, so we expect them to critically think and do further research about this kind of content. "Another

lecturer added: "Some of the activities we assign to them require higher-order thinking and cannot simply be copied and pasted" (45-year-old male lecturer).

Challenges to fostering employability skills include poor student attitudes, lack of interest in completing assignments, and minimal lecture attendance. Some students prioritize their subject-specific training over professional skills development. A 50-year-old male lecturer observed: "One of the challenges is the issue of attitude from the learners; this is because the majority of our learners we are teaching want to do things the way they have been doing." Similarly, a 35-year-old female lecturer stated: "We teach professionals, and students have their own teaching areas. So, they put less emphasis on the professional skills." A 58-year-old lecturer added:

We also have students who are not serious; they don't attend lectures; they only appear when it's time for exams..., physically, they are here, but mentally, they are not with you. So even if you talk about those employability skills, they are not bothered.

Overall, lecture methods are predominantly used, followed by group discussion and student's presentations. Integration of employability skills is hindered by large classes, limited class space, lecturers' inability to integrate employability skills during teaching and learning process, a lack of student participation in group assignments, limited lecture time and a tendency for lecturers to provide notes instead of interactive sessions.

In summary, while the pre-service teacher training programme employs various teaching methods such as lectures, group discussions, presentations, and peer tutoring, these approaches offer mixed results in developing employability skills. Group work and class presentations were found to promote

communication, collaboration, creativity, and problem-solving; however, their effectiveness often depends on individual lecturers. Challenges such as large class sizes, limited time and space, passive student participation, and a preference for theoretical content delivery limit the integration of employability skills. Additionally, negative student attitudes and low lecture attendance further hinder efforts to promote critical thinking and professional skill development through active learning strategies.

4.3.3 Theme 3: Assessment methods

The review of pre-service teacher training programmes revealed the use of various assessment methods designed to evaluate employability skills essential for the workplace. However, the primary focus of these assessments such as coursework, tests, and final examinations—remains on knowledge acquisition. Employability skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving are evaluated through assignments and projects that require analysis and solution development. Communication skills are assessed through group discussions and presentations, while teamwork and collaboration are fostered via group projects and peer tutoring. Additionally, time management is indirectly cultivated as students work to meet deadlines for assignments and prepare for tests, a skill that is vital in professional settings.

Findings indicated that employability skills are considered during the assessment of pre-service teachers, often integrated into the evaluation of cognitive domains through coursework, tests, and exams. Respondents shared their perspectives on this approach:

"We set questions with scenarios that require students to critically think and solve the problem therein. By the way, in comparative education and sociology

of education, we put emphasis on communication skills" (53-year-old male lecturer).

"Yes, these employability skills are considered in the assessment, and they sometimes contribute between 10% to 20%, depending on the context" (35-year-old female lecturer).

"The design of exams demonstrates critical thinking skills. For example, a lecturer may question the practicality of a topic you have learned" (25-year-old female pre-service teacher trainee).

Despite efforts to integrate employability skills into assessments, several challenges hinder their effective evaluation in the pre-service teacher training programmes. One significant issue is the inconsistency in assessment styles among lecturers, which leads to variability in how employability skills are addressed. Additionally, the lack of feedback to students limits their ability to improve these skills. A 58-year-old male lecturer remarked: "It's unfortunate that we do not get back to students with their examination to comment and give feedback about their performance."

Another challenge is the limited familiarity of some lecturers with employability skills, which results in a stronger focus on content rather than skill development. A 48-year-old male lecturer observed:

From my experience, employability skills are not directly assessed because we focus more on the content taught—that is what we assess. But in one way, when you are setting an exam item that requires a student to put pieces together until he/she arrives at the would-be solution, it requires some bit of critical thinking.

Large class sizes further exacerbate these challenges, making it difficult for lecturers to effectively assess employability skills. A 40-year-old female lecturer explained:

"The large number of students we handle affects our ability to effectively assess employability skills. When there are too many students, the quality of assessment is compromised."

While assessment methods in pre-service teacher training programmes include scenario-based questions and tasks designed to evaluate employability skills such as critical thinking, the primary focus remains on knowledge acquisition. Employability skills are often graded as part of assessments, contributing between 10% and 20%, depending on the context. However, challenges such as inconsistent assessment styles, insufficient feedback to students, a focus on content over skills, and large class sizes hinder the effective assessment of these essential competencies. Addressing these challenges is critical to ensuring that pre-service teachers graduate with the employability skills necessary for success in modern educational settings.

In summary, assessment methods in the pre-service teacher training programme include coursework, tests, presentations, and projects, with some integration of employability skills such as critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and time management. While scenario-based questions and group tasks help evaluate these competencies, the primary focus of assessments remains on content knowledge. Respondents noted that employability skills typically account for 10–20% of assessment weight. However, inconsistencies in assessment practices, limited feedback, large class sizes, and some lecturers' limited familiarity with employability skills hinder their effective evaluation.

These challenges highlight the need for more deliberate, skill-focused assessment strategies to better prepare pre-service teachers for the demands of the profession.

Overall, the study revealed that while the pre-service teacher training programme aims to produce competent graduates, it lacks explicit integration of employability skills such as communication, critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity. These skills are only implicitly embedded in some course units and are not systematically addressed in programme objectives, learning outcomes, or assessment methods. Teaching strategies like group discussions and presentations support skill development but are hindered by large class sizes, limited resources, and inconsistent lecturer practices. Assessment methods focus primarily on knowledge acquisition, with limited and inconsistent evaluation of employability skills. Overall, the findings highlight the need for a more deliberate and structured approach to embedding employability skills across the curriculum.

4.4 How employability skills can be enhanced in the pre-service teacher training programmes in Teacher Training Institutions in Uganda

Research question three was *“In what ways can employability skills be enhanced in the pre-service teacher training programmes in Teacher Training Institutions in Uganda?”* The results from in-depth interview and focus group discussion revealed that; Explicit integration of employability skills in a pre-service teacher training programme, Linkage of higher education institution with employing institutions, provision of guidance and counselling on employability skills, staff capacity building on employability skills, holistic

assessment for pre-service teachers, policy implementation on employability skills integration, and higher education institution management support.

4.4.1 Theme 1: Explicit integration of employability skills in a pre-service teacher training programme

The results indicated that employability skills explicitly integrated into pre-service teacher training programmes may ensure trainees are equipped with the competencies necessary for success both in the classroom and beyond. Respondents emphasized the importance of this integration: "Incorporating employability skills training into the curriculum ensures that teacher trainees are equipped with the necessary skills for success in the workforce upon graduation" (45-year-old female employer). "I suggest that these employability skills are taught to help us understand what we are supposed to do in the field instead of coming and wasting time" (FGD-1).

The integration of employability skills into pre-service teacher training may provide opportunities for trainees to engage in real-life situations during the teaching and learning process. This approach bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, better preparing trainees for the challenges they will face as professional teachers. Respondents highlighted this practical aspect: "Employability skills provide more hands-on activities during the training sessions to ensure that teacher trainees are better prepared for the demands of the job market" (45-year-old female employer).

We should make it part of our culture that whatever we facilitate strongly reflects the extent to which it promotes the employability skills sought by employers for our learners. This should be clearly evidenced in the teaching methods within the course units" (48-year-old male lecturer).

"Teacher Training Institutions should foster employability skills through comprehensive training, ensuring graduates are well-prepared to meet the demands of the job market. This training may encompass not only communication skills but also problem-solving, teamwork, and adaptability" (55-year-old male employer).

"More demonstration classes at campus are needed in employability skills. This hands-on experience helps teacher trainees develop employability skills desired in the workplace" (50-year-old male employer).

Providing pre-service teacher trainees with opportunities to engage in workplace activities, may help them understand the importance of developing employability skills. A 48-year-old female employer explained: "Teacher Training Institutions should create additional time outside the academic schedule for teacher trainees to interact with others and learn from one another. This will provide opportunities for them to engage in workplace activities that enhance employability skills."

Pre-service teacher trainees may develop communication skills through activities like discussions and debates. These interactive exercises foster active participation and effective communication, which are critical in the teaching profession. One pre-service teacher trainee from FGD-1 noted: "Teaching and learning strategies that encourage students to participate in discussions and debates help them develop effective communication skills."

Pre-service teacher trainees should be encouraged to conduct independent research assignments, fostering independence, critical thinking, and a deeper understanding of subject matter. This approach not only enhances

their academic performance but also prepares them for professional success. A participant from FGD-2 noted:

Students should be encouraged to conduct research independently in order to develop critical thinking skills and gain a deeper understanding of their chosen subject matter. This can also help students become more self-sufficient and confident in their abilities to solve problems on their own, ultimately leading to greater success in their academic and professional endeavours.

In summary, the integration of employability skills into pre-service teacher training programmes is essential for preparing trainees to meet the demands of the modern workforce. Key skills, including communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and adaptability, should be embedded into the curriculum through hands-on activities and real-life applications. Opportunities for trainees to engage in discussions, debates, workplace activities, and independent research further enhance their readiness for professional challenges. By equipping pre-service teachers with these competencies, training programmes can better prepare them for success in both academic and professional settings.

4.4.2 Theme 2: Linkage of teacher training institutions with employing institutions

Collaboration between Teacher Training Institutions and graduate teacher employers is essential to ensure that the skills and knowledge imparted to trainees align with the needs of the job market. This synergy promotes the integration of employability skills critical for workplace success. Respondents underscored the importance of this collaboration: "Teacher Training Institutions should collaborate with us so that the pre-service teacher training curriculum

adjusts and aligns with employer needs, ultimately benefiting both students and employers" (45-year-old female employer). Additionally, a 48-year-old male lecturer remarked:

Can we constantly find ways how institutions can listen to what employers want so that we are not doing different things altogether? We need to seem responding to what the employer is expecting from this candidate who will come from us after three years. That industry and institution synergy is important.

Further, another lecturer noted: "We also need to know what the employers need from the pre-service teacher training programmes because we assume we know their needs, but without direct input from employers, we may be missing key elements that could better prepare our students for their future careers" (50-year-old male lecturer).

To bridge the employability skills gap, Teacher Training Institutions must engage employers in regular surveys, workshops, and assessments. This collaboration provides valuable insights into evolving employer expectations and helps institutions design curricula that reflect the demands of the job market.

Respondents supported this approach:

We need to go back and conduct research on the root cause. Once we understand the reasons behind the lack of appreciation for our students, we can re-engage and involve employers. It is essential to understand what employability skills are desired by employers and to share current job market trends. Therefore, we must involve employers in workshops to facilitate dialogue. (35-year-old female lecturer).

In summary, the collaboration between Teacher Training Institutions and employers is crucial to ensure that the skills and knowledge imparted to graduates align with job market demands. Regular dialogue between these

stakeholders can lead to improved outcomes for students, employers, and society. Teacher Training Institutions should conduct regular surveys and assessments with employers to comprehend their changing needs and expectations, thereby enabling the design of curricula that address the employability skills gap and prepare graduates with the skills required in the industry.

4.4.3 Theme 3: Career Guidance and Counselling on Employability Skills

Pre-service teacher trainees should receive guidance and counselling focused on employability skills desired by employers, alongside support to help them appreciate the teaching profession. Providing opportunities for trainees to share the challenges they encounter during their studies can better prepare them for their future careers. Respondents emphasised the need for such initiatives:

"Provide teacher trainees with counselling sessions about employability skills that are highly sought after in the job market" (45-year-old female employer).

"By creating more time for students...give them guidance and counselling sessions. Student teachers should be taught to appreciate their profession" (48-year-old female employer).

"We should have physical meetings with our lecturers often because they only meet with the class coordinators. We should meet them to tell them what is hurting us and get bonded with them" (FGD-1).

Lecturers play a crucial role in modelling employability skills for pre-service teacher trainees. By demonstrating professionalism, effective communication, and problem-solving abilities, lecturers can inspire trainees to adopt these skills and strive for excellence in their careers. Respondents underscored the importance of lecturers serving as role models:

"Let's look at ourselves as lecturers; let's be exemplary and leading models; otherwise, there is no way we should look at students and exclude ourselves" (52-year-old male lecturer).

Lecturers should act as role models, demonstrating employability skills through their behaviour and interactions. They should embody professionalism, communication, and problem-solving skills, helping students navigate the challenges of the working world. This hands-on approach helps students understand the practical application of these skills in a real-world setting. (FGD-1).

In summary, pre-service teacher trainees require structured guidance and counselling to develop the employability skills sought by employers and to appreciate the value of the teaching profession. Creating spaces for students to share the challenges they face during their studies enhances their preparedness for future careers. Furthermore, lecturers should act as exemplary role models, demonstrating employability skills such as professionalism, communication, and problem-solving, to inspire trainees and help them succeed in the workforce. This dual approach, guidance from counselling and modelling by lecturers, ensures that trainees are better equipped to meet the demands of the job market.

4.4.4 Theme 4: Staff capacity building on employability skills

There is a pressing need for capacity building among lecturers to adopt contemporary instructional methods that effectively integrate employability skills into the teaching and learning process. The lecturers emphasised the significance of addressing their mindsets and pedagogical approaches as follows:

"The mindset of the facilitators needs to be attended to; there is a continued belief that for us lecturers, we are lecturers, but sometimes we don't understand what lecturing entails" (55-year-old male lecturer).

"Those who don't have pedagogical skills need to be re-oriented to modern ways of teaching, especially those in the content areas" (45-year-old male lecturer).

"Lecturers should use a learner-centred approach to teaching. This will make it easy to integrate employability skills" (35-year-old female lecturer).

Lecturers, particularly those teaching foundational education, should attend conferences and seminars focused on employability skills. These professional development opportunities can enhance lecturers' exposure to industry trends and employer expectations, equipping them with the knowledge necessary to prepare pre-service teachers for the competitive job market. Respondents emphasized the benefits of such initiatives:

There should be a deliberate effort to expose the lecturers to some of these things, and that's why you find that you attend these conferences. Sometimes those plenary sessions have some of those skills and values, so if you attend them, your perspective of your life will change. (55-year-old male lecturer).

Alongside formal curricula, we would have seminar series particularly to discuss how to integrate employability skills and also talk about the skills desired by employers from our graduates in order to inform improvements in our pre-service training programme. (58-year-old male lecturer).

In summary, capacity building for lecturers is crucial to incorporate employability skills into modern instructional methods and highlight their importance in the teaching and learning process. Professional development

through conferences and seminars on employability skills will empower lecturers to stay current with industry trends and employer expectations. This alignment not only improves the quality of pre-service teacher training but also enhances graduates' preparedness for the job market, leading to increased employability and career success.

4.4.5 Theme 5: Holistic assessment for pre-service teachers

A holistic approach to assessment encompasses not only academic knowledge but also employability skills, providing a comprehensive understanding of students' readiness for the workforce. This approach evaluates individuals in a well-rounded manner, considering both their academic achievements and the practical skills essential in today's competitive job market. Respondents emphasized the importance of this comprehensive evaluation:

“Assess the students in all aspects of life to ensure they are well-rounded and prepared for the workforce. This includes not only academic knowledge but also employability skills and practical experience.” (55-year-old employer)

“As institutions come to assess their learners, they need to assess things that fall outside classwork. This helps the skills to be covered as well.” (48-year-old female employer)

“The way we assess them should reflect the growth of employability skills being sought by employers.” (45-year-old male lecturer)

Employing schools should participate in the assessment of student teachers during classroom practice. This collaboration provides an additional perspective and feedback mechanism, ensuring that student teachers meet both professional and practical standards. Respondents highlighted the value of such partnerships:

School administrators during school practice should also be given responsibility to assess student teachers and give feedback to help them improve their teaching skills. This collaboration between administrators and student teachers can lead to a more effective and supportive learning environment for everyone involved. (48-year-old female employer)

In summary, data underscores holistic assessment approach, which evaluates both academic knowledge and employability skills, was praised by educators for providing a more comprehensive understanding of students' readiness for the workforce. This method ensures a well-rounded evaluation, considering both academic achievements and essential practical skills. Additionally, schools should participate in assessing student teachers during their classroom practice, offering an additional perspective and feedback mechanism to ensure that both professional and practical standards are being met.

4.4.6 Theme 6: Policy implementation on employability skills integration

A policy mandating the integration of employability skills into pre-service teacher training programmes, particularly within the teaching and learning process, can ensure that graduates are equipped with the necessary skills for workforce success. Incorporating real-world experiences and practical training into every course unit allows pre-service teachers to build a strong foundation for their future careers. Respondents emphasized the importance of such a policy: “The policy does not emphasize the integration of employability skills in pre-service teacher training programmes, which can hinder the development of well-rounded educators.” (50-year-old male lecturer). Likewise, a 55-year-old male lecturer remarked: “First of all, I think at the faculty level and at the university level, we must ensure that on every course

unit we have content for employability skills.” pre-service teachers also remarked

These employability skills should be included in the subject content so that lecturers can teach them to students directly, rather than expecting us to acquire them on our own. This will ensure that we are well-prepared for the demands of the workforce upon graduation. (FGD -1)

In summary, the integration of employability skills into pre-service teacher training programmes through policy is essential to ensure graduates are well-prepared for the workforce. Such a policy should mandate the inclusion of real-world experiences and practical training within each course unit, providing a strong foundation for future careers. Currently, the lack of emphasis on employability skills in the pre-service teacher training programmes is seen as a barrier to developing well-rounded educators.

4.4.7 Theme 7: Teacher training institution management support

The university administration must address the challenges faced by lecturers in instructing pre-service teachers, including large class sizes, inadequate classroom space, and low lecturer motivation. These factors negatively impact the quality of teaching, learning, and assessment. Furthermore, involving parents in supporting students to take their studies more seriously can enhance their academic commitment. Respondents emphasised these concerns:

"The administration should consider the workload, the space, the motivation. The parents should be brought on board and find ways how we can support our learners" (58-year-old male lecturer). A 45-year-old male lecturer remarked:

I think one of them is the large number of students we sometimes need to handle, such that if students are too many students, the quality of

assessment is sometimes compromised. You ask yourself, when will I handle this? Let me just give this and move on. This compromises the quality of the product.

Pre-service teachers reiterated: "Increasing the number of classes and lecturers to achieve the student-lecturer ratio" (FGD-2). "Limited rooms for all the courses, we study in shifts, which makes it difficult. Therefore, more lecture rooms should be built" (FGD-1).

The university administration should also prioritise providing pre-service teachers with adequate scholastic materials and resources to enhance their learning experience. Access to updated textbooks, reliable internet services, and financial support for internships can significantly improve the quality of education and better prepare students for future careers in teaching. Pre-service teachers suggested: "Universities should provide some materials for learners to use in assignments like manilas. They should also give money for internships" (FGD-1). "Provision of internet access. They should give Wi-Fi to learners and make it accessible" (FGD-2).

In summary, the university administration plays a critical role in addressing the challenges faced by lecturers, such as large class sizes, inadequate classroom space, and poor motivation, which hinder the quality of teaching and learning. Additionally, involving parents to encourage students to take their studies seriously is essential for fostering greater academic commitment. To further support pre-service teachers, the administration should provide essential scholastic resources, including updated textbooks, reliable internet access, and financial support for internships. These measures will enhance the overall learning experience and better prepare students for

successful careers in education, equipping them with the necessary employability skills.

This chapter presented and interpreted the study's findings on the integration of employability skills within pre-service teacher training programs. The results identified a core set of employability skills considered essential for pre-service teachers. These include communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, leadership, problem-solving, adaptability, time management, emotional intelligence, and self-sufficiency. Such skills are integral to effective classroom instruction, professional conduct, and the capacity to respond to the dynamic demands of the teaching profession. Employers consistently value these competencies as they contribute to teacher effectiveness, student engagement, and broader educational outcomes.

Despite the recognised importance of these skills, the findings revealed that their integration within the current training programme remains largely implicit and inconsistent. While some instructional methods, such as group discussions and student presentations, offer opportunities to foster these skills, their implementation is hindered by structural challenges, including large class sizes, limited instructional resources, and a predominant focus on theoretical knowledge acquisition. Notably, employability skills are not systematically embedded within programme objectives, course learning outcomes, or assessment practices.

Additionally, the study highlighted the pivotal role of university administration in addressing institutional barriers to skill development. Challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, inadequate facilities, and insufficient lecturer motivation negatively affect the quality of teaching and

learning. Enhancing the provision of scholastic resources such as updated textbooks, internet connectivity, and financial support for internships was identified as a priority. Furthermore, engaging parents to reinforce students' academic responsibility emerged as a complementary strategy to improve learner commitment. Overall, the findings underscore the need for a more deliberate, structured, and systemic approach to embedding employability skills within pre-service teacher education, thereby improving graduate readiness for the professional teaching environment.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive discussion of the study findings, draws conclusions, and offers recommendations on the enhancement of employability skills within pre-service teacher training programmes in Uganda. The discussion is structured around three central research questions. The first concerns the employability skills desired by employers of graduates from pre-service teacher training programmes. The second examines how these skills are currently integrated into teacher training curricula. The third explores ways in which the integration of employability skills can be strengthened within pre-service teacher training. In addition, the chapter highlights the study's limitations, outlines its contributions to the body of knowledge, and identifies directions for future research.

5.1 Discussion of Findings

Discussions are presented basing on the research questions of the current study, which are as follows: What employability skills do employers require from graduates of pre-service teacher education programmes in Teacher Training Institutions in Uganda; How are employability skills integrated into pre-service teacher education programmes in Teacher Training Institutions in Uganda; and How can employability skills be enhanced in pre-service teacher training programmes in Teacher Training Institutions in Uganda.

5.1.1 Employability skills desired by employers from pre-service teacher training graduates

Research Question One sought to establish: “*What employability skills do employers desire from pre-service teacher training graduates from Teacher Training Institutions in Uganda?*” Findings from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions revealed that employers value a wide range of competencies, including communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creative thinking, leadership, problem-solving, adaptability, time management, emotional intelligence, and self-efficacy. These results suggest that graduate teachers are expected to demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively, collaborate productively, think critically and creatively, exercise leadership, solve problems, adapt to changing circumstances, manage time efficiently, and apply emotional intelligence and self-efficacy in order to navigate the school environment successfully.

Effective communication emerged as a core competency for teachers, enabling them to transmit accurate and meaningful information to students and stakeholders within and beyond the classroom. Strong communication fosters comprehension, engagement, and collaboration. These findings align with Caingcoy (2021), who identified communication as a pivotal employability skill for teacher training graduates in the Philippines, and with Hoque et al. (2023), who highlighted its significance in Bangladesh. The consistency across contexts underscores the universal value of communication in the teaching profession. This resonates with human capital theory, which emphasises the role of education and skills in enhancing productivity and economic potential (Debrah

et al., 2018). Accordingly, pre-service teacher training programmes must prioritise the systematic development of communication skills.

Excellent communication skills enable teachers to engage effectively with students, parents, colleagues, and school administrators, thereby fostering strong relationships and creating a conducive learning environment. This finding is consistent with Coffelt et al. (2016), who underscored the importance of interpersonal and oral communication skills for workplace success. These results also affirm that teachers must cultivate solid connections in the classroom. Güleç and Lylek (2018) further observed that teachers' communication abilities vary depending on their educational background, highlighting the critical role of teacher training in developing these skills. As a core component of human capital, communication enhances teachers' effectiveness and value within the educational system. Thus, investing in communication training within pre-service teacher education programmes can strengthen teacher employability and productivity while contributing to a positive school environment.

Effective communication also supports classroom management by helping teachers establish a positive culture where rules and expectations are clear and respected. This contributes to an orderly and harmonious environment, allowing both students and teachers to focus on learning without constant behavioural disruptions. This result echoes Coffelt et al. (2016), who highlighted oral communication as a skill highly valued by employers, aligning with the present study's emphasis on the necessity of clear communication in upholding discipline. From the perspective of human capital theory, improving teachers' communication abilities enhances their capacity to manage classrooms

effectively, which in turn promotes students' academic and personal development and strengthens the broader educational system.

Beyond classroom management and relationship-building, communication skills are vital for teachers to adapt to changing workplace expectations and deliver effective instruction. In today's dynamic educational landscape, teachers must respond to frequent changes in curricula, technology, and student needs. To do so successfully, they require proficiency in both oral and written communication to articulate new concepts, instructions, and expectations with clarity. This finding aligns with Herlina (2022), who emphasised that effective oral and in written communication becomes increasingly important as the teaching and learning process integrates digital technologies. The digital age has introduced new modes of interaction, including email, online platforms, and digital collaboration tools, all of which demand strong written as well as verbal communication. These findings reinforce the argument that comprehensive communication skills are indispensable for teachers to meet the contemporary educational demands and adapt to emerging pedagogical methods and tools.

Furthermore, effective communication underpins the delivery of engaging, clear, and accessible lessons. It enables teachers to foster student inquiry, interaction, and sustained engagement with learning materials, thereby deepening understanding of subject matter. Franklin and Harrington (2019) similarly argued that teachers' role extends beyond transmitting curriculum content to equipping students with skills for social and academic success. The finding, therefore, highlights the significance of communication not only for academic achievement but also for cultivating rapport and supportive teacher-

student relationships, which are essential for fostering meaningful and lasting learning experiences.

Employers value teachers with strong oral and written communication skills because such abilities are fundamental to fulfilling multiple professional responsibilities. These include delivering instruction, managing classrooms, collaborating with colleagues, engaging parents and meeting administrative demands. Aharul (2019) observed that leadership roles in schools, such as mentoring, motivating, coaching, inspiring, and teaching, are effectively exercised through oral communication. Similarly, Day et al. (2020) highlighted how competent communicators inspire teamwork and collaboration, thereby promoting institutional growth and success. Oral and social skills have also been linked to increased school productivity, demonstrating how communication enhances efficiency, authority, and relationship-building within educational contexts. Thus, communication presents a vital form of human capital that reinforces teachers' effectiveness and centrality in the education system.

Employers also seek teachers with strong collaboration skills, as teamwork is critical for supporting a wide range of school activities, including administering examinations, monitoring student welfare, overseeing self-directed learning, and maintaining discipline. Patrick (2022) found that teachers who engage in high-specificity, high-commitment collaborations reported greater participation and perceived benefits. Schools that cultivate collaborative cultures often establish leadership teams, organise teacher forums, and conduct peer-to-peer observations (Valera, 2023). Such practices foster collective responsibility by involving teachers, leaders, parents, and the community. From

the perspective of human capital theory, collaboration enhances both individual and collective productivity, thereby advancing institutional success.

Collaboration also strengthens professional relationships, which are essential for achieving shared goals and sustaining effective teamwork. Teachers who collaborate effectively can work jointly on curriculum development, student assessments, and classroom management, leading to cohesive educational practices (Harris & Jones, 2019). Positive teacher-parent relationships similarly build trust and encourage parental involvement, which improves student outcomes (Epstein, 2018). Moreover, collaborative teachers are better positioned to address diverse learner needs and foster inclusive environments where all students feel supported (Baker-Doyle, 2021). Accordingly, collaboration aligns with human capital theory by enhancing relationships, improving institutional practices, and fostering a positive school culture.

Employers further emphasise critical thinking as a desirable competency. Teachers are expected to employ critical thinking to manage complex classroom situations, adapt to changing learning environments, design meaningful learning experiences, and assess learner progress. Palavan (2020) underscored critical thinking as essential for fostering productive learning environments and equipping teachers to respond to the unpredictable nature of classrooms. In line with human capital theory, critical thinking, problem-solving, and adaptability are recognised as key competencies for graduate instructors. As shown by the growth and use of critical thinking, these competencies enhance teachers' effectiveness and institutional success.

Critical thinking also enables teachers to adapt to educational reforms, including curriculum changes, new instructional approaches, and revised assessment methods. Manca and Delfino (2021) demonstrated that teachers skilled in adapting to innovative methods and technologies were instrumental in sustaining student engagement during remote learning, particularly in crisis contexts. Their study highlights adaptability as a crucial element in human capital that supports both immediate challenges and long-term educational goals.

The capacity to solve complex problems and arrive at practical solutions is another highly valued attribute. Ndrašienė et al. (2021) and Kyllonen (2018) found that employers consistently prioritise critical thinking because it enhances decision-making and fosters innovation, improving both outcomes and institutional competitiveness. Investment in these skills, therefore, strengthens teachers' performance and the institution's capacity to innovate, aligning with the principles of human capital theory.

Employers seek teachers who can work independently, with minimal supervision, while exercising sound critical judgment. Such skills are indispensable for addressing challenging questions from students and guiding learners in developing higher-order thinking skills. Franklin and Harrington (2019) stressed the significance of developing critical analysis in the digital age, where vast amounts of information require careful evaluation. Consequently, the demand for graduate teacher proficiency in problem-solving and critical thinking reflects their central role in ensuring institutional effectiveness and competitiveness. Equipping teachers with these skills not only improves individual performance but also bolsters institutional resilience and innovation.

Critical thinking is a valuable competency that enables educators to provide high-quality education by thoughtfully assessing and adapting their teaching methods. This ensures that instruction remains meaningful, engaging, and responsive to diverse learner needs. Amerstorfer and Münster-Kistner (2021) found that in problem-based learning (PBL) contexts, students engage in intensive interaction and cooperation when guided by realistic problem scenarios. Teachers with strong critical thinking abilities adapt their pedagogical approaches to cultivate such environments and transfer these competencies to students. By facilitating students' critical thinking and sustained engagement with content, teachers enhance students' human capital and prepare them for future challenges. In line with human capital theory, investment in teachers' critical thinking abilities produces broad educational and societal benefits.

Employers also place a high value on creativity, as it allows teachers to design engaging lessons tailored to diverse learning styles and needs. Creative teachers employ varied instructional strategies and materials, making content more accessible and memorable. Khikmah (2019) observed that creative teachers not only design relevant lessons but also continually seek innovative methods to improve their effectiveness. Creativity, therefore, contributes to a dynamic and responsive educational system. From the perspective of human capital theory, creativity enhances instructional quality, optimises student learning outcomes, and strengthens the institutional value of schools.

In addition, creativity equips teachers to compensate for limited resources by identifying and integrating alternative materials, technologies, and community inputs. Such ingenuity enriches learning even in resource-

constrained environments. Employers' value these abilities because they foster an engaging classroom, stimulate student creativity, and help teachers adapt to educational challenges. Emine (2024) and Fredagsvik (2021) similarly noted that creative teachers who adopt innovative strategies effectively address resource limitations while enhancing student learning experiences. Creativity thus supports resilience, inclusivity, and long-term institutional success, in line with human capital theory.

Leadership skills are equally essential, as they enable teachers to earn respect, guide others, and foster collaborative school cultures. Shah (2019) highlighted personal traits such as reliability, honesty, empathy, confidence, friendliness, and professionalism as crucial for teacher leadership. Teachers who model these qualities inspire trust among students, colleagues, and parents, creating environments where students feel supported to achieve their potential. Human capital theory suggests that investments in leadership development enhance both individual teacher effectiveness and collective institutional growth.

Teachers with strong leadership skills also serve as change agents and role models. They inspire students to value education and foster personal growth beyond the classroom. Huat and Shunmugam (2021) emphasised that changemaker teachers are committed to self-development, transformation, and positively influencing others. By imparting values and nurturing resilience, such educators prepare students to thrive in an ever-changing world. Consistent with human capital theory, leadership development equips teachers to cultivate innovative, socially responsible individuals and institutions.

Emotional intelligence is another critical attribute. It allows teachers to manage their own emotions while empathising with students, thereby fostering supportive, nurturing environments. Kovalchuk et al. (2022) highlighted the importance of cultivating emotional intelligence in pre-service teachers, as it enhances classroom effectiveness and strengthens teacher-student relationships. Developing this competency benefits both students' well-being and institutional culture, while also generating social advantages, consistent with human capital theory.

Teachers with high emotional intelligence provide meaningful guidance, handle responsibilities with empathy, and create an emotionally positive classroom that boosts students' academic and social outcomes. Ahmed et al. (2020) found that such environments enhance students' confidence, friendliness, and participation. Emotional intelligence thus supports both academic and socio-emotional development, preparing students for broader life success. By adopting holistic approaches that integrate emotional and academic growth, teachers foster well-rounded students, reinforcing the relevance of emotional intelligence as human capital.

Adaptability skills are also highly valued, as they enable teachers to integrate new educational trends, technologies, and best practices. Adaptable educators enrich learning, sustain student engagement, and improve academic outcomes. Collie and Martin (2019) demonstrated that adaptability helps teachers navigate complex professional roles, foster learning environments, and support their own career development. Adaptability also equips teachers to address diverse learner needs, thereby fostering inclusive classrooms. Within

the human capital theory, adaptability represents an investment that yields returns in improved outcomes, institutional resilience, and social success.

Employers especially value teachers who can manage multiple responsibilities, adjust to curriculum changes, and teach outside their areas of expertise when necessary. Torres (2023) found that flexibility is essential for addressing students' unique needs, particularly in multicultural contexts. Adaptable teachers foster participation, inclusivity, and intercultural learning, thereby creating welcoming and effective classrooms. By aligning teaching methods with student diversity and evolving demands, adaptable educators enhance participation, equity, and success further validating human capital theory's emphasis on adaptability as a key professional asset.

Employers place a high value on teachers who can readily adapt to curriculum changes mandated by the Ministry of Education. This flexibility ensures compliance with updated standards, supports effective teaching, and contributes to improved learning outcomes. Nurzen (2022) similarly observed that teachers who are responsive to curriculum modifications better address students' diverse needs and create dynamic learning environments. Such adaptability enhances professional worth and aligns with human capital theory, which emphasises that teacher flexibility improves educational quality and benefits students, schools, and society.

Employers also seek teachers with strong problem-solving abilities to effectively manage classroom challenges. Such teachers are expected to make prompt, well-informed decisions that foster student development and maintain a positive learning atmosphere. Hoque et al. (2023b) emphasised that employers prioritise graduates with analytical skills, critical thinking abilities, and the

capacity to propose and implement practical solutions. Teachers with strong problem-solving abilities not only improve their own classroom efficacy but also serve as role models for students by demonstrating the real-world value of these skills. From a human capital perspective, problem-solving strengthens classroom management, raises educational achievements, and equips students with transferable competencies.

Problem-solving is also valued beyond the classroom, where teachers face broader challenges, such as managing relationships with students, parents, and colleagues or addressing administrative demands. Güleç (2020) found that employers expect teachers to navigate such complexities effectively. Teachers with these skills enhance school cohesion, ensure student support, and demonstrate leadership in varied contexts. Consistent with human capital theory, strengthening teachers' problem-solving and leadership skills improves institutional performance and community outcomes.

Effective problem-solving also enables teachers to manage large student populations while imparting these skills to learners. However, Mushaandja-Mufeti and Molosiwa (2021) cautioned that large class sizes can hinder active learning, assessment, and feedback, emphasising the need for systemic solutions, such as adequate resourcing and continuous professional development. This highlights that while individual problem-solving abilities are essential, institutional support is equally necessary to optimise teacher effectiveness. Consistent with human capital theory, a dual investment in teacher skills and organisational infrastructure enhances learning environments and outcomes.

Time management is another highly valued competency. Employers prefer teachers who can efficiently organise their workload while meeting instructional objectives. Sahito et al. (2016) found that effective time management among teachers is significantly associated with improved student performance, as it allows for thorough lesson preparation, timely feedback, and meaningful learner support. By managing time effectively, teachers increase their productivity and positively influence student learning and accomplishment. In line with human capital theory, time management enhances resource optimisation and educational quality, producing long-term benefits for students, institutions, and society.

Employers also emphasise teachers' commitment, valuing educators who demonstrate dedication beyond financial incentives. Such commitments reflect professionalism, resilience, and intrinsic motivation. Rahmatullah et al. (2024) linked teacher commitment to perseverance and enthusiasm, which foster positive classroom environments. Similarly, Pendola et al. (2023) revealed that many teachers remain dedicated to their profession despite challenges, prioritising student success over external rewards. This dedication drives continuous instructional improvement and student engagement. Consistent with human capital theory, investing in committed teachers improves educational quality and supports sustained social advancement.

In conclusion, employers seek to employ pre-service teacher training graduates from teacher training institutions who demonstrate a wide range of employability skills, including communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, leadership, emotional intelligence, adaptability, problem-solving, time management, and commitment. Together, these competencies foster

productive and supportive learning environments, enhance teacher effectiveness, and promote student success.

5.1.2 Integration of employability skills in pre-service teacher training programmes in Teacher training institutions

The second research question examined: *“How are employability skills integrated into the pre-service teacher training programmes in teacher training institutions in Uganda?”* Findings from in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and documentary reviews indicated that employability skills are not explicitly embedded within the curriculum. Teaching approaches remain predominantly lecture-based, providing limited opportunities for experiential or skills-based learning, while assessment practices vary considerably across lecturers, thereby constraining systematic integration. These findings suggest that the absence of explicit curricular emphasis, the continued reliance on traditional pedagogies, and inconsistencies in assessment practices collectively hinder the effective development of employability skills within pre-service teacher training programmes.

The findings indicate a significant deficiency in integrating skills such as communication, critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration. Although the programmes emphasise pedagogical knowledge and instructional techniques, they are heavily theory-driven and insufficiently oriented towards the practical demands of the workforce. This absence of deliberate attention to employability skills may hinder graduates' ability to thrive in diverse educational environments. Hill et al. (2020) similarly recommended a shift towards a more skills-oriented approach in teacher education, where communication, critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration are integrated alongside pedagogical

theory. By explicitly integrating these skills into the curricula and assessments, pre-service teacher training programmes can move beyond knowledgeable acquisition to ensure graduates are equipped with the essential competencies needed to succeed in diverse and dynamic educational environments.

While certain course units encourage the development of employability skills, the lack of structured and consistent integration remains problematic. Yorke and Knight (2018) stressed that employability skills are most effectively developed when deliberately embedded in both teaching content and assessment strategies. This research highlights that explicit integration increases students' awareness of these skills and their confidence in applying them in real-world contexts. Thus, although implicit exposure contributes to some skill development, a more deliberate and coherent approach would enhance both clarity and consistency.

The stated rationale of pre-service teacher training programmes is to prepare graduates for professional careers, paid employment, and self-employment. Although this implies the need for employability skills, the absence of explicit reference in programme objectives limits their systematic development. Abdullah et al. (2022) argue that clearly articulating employability skills in programme outcomes is essential to guide curriculum design, teaching, and assessment. Explicitly embedding these skills in learning objectives would strengthen graduates' job readiness and improve their competitiveness in the education sector.

Currently, the programmes lack dedicated modules for employability skills. However, some course units, such as EPS 2101: Communication Skills for Educators, EPS 3101: Educational Psychology and Guidance and

Counselling, and EPS 2102: Introduction to Computer Applications in Education, offer partial opportunities for skill development. Yet, as Jackson (2019) observed, when employability skills are only implicitly embedded, students often fail to grasp their significance. A deliberate, structured incorporation of employability across the curriculum is necessary to ensure systematic development and enhanced workforce preparedness.

The integration of employability skills, particularly creativity, into course units such as general methods, educational technology, and education administration indicates that these skills are addressed, though often implicitly. Embedding creativity in general methods encourages pre-service teachers to innovate in content delivery, classroom management, and student assessment. Khikmah (2019) highlighted that creativity is critical in teacher education, particularly in general methods courses. Teachers exposed to diverse instructional strategies are more likely to engage students, accommodate varied learning styles, and develop innovative classroom practices that improve learning outcomes.

Despite this, the learning outcomes of the pre-service teacher training programmes do not explicitly articulate a comprehensive list of employability skills. Instead, course descriptions imply their inclusion across different units rather than through designated modules. This lack of an explicit framework is a notable gap. Jackson (2019) argued that employability skills should be clearly defined in course outcomes to ensure students recognise their relevance and develop them systematically. While the current implicit approach contributes to some skill development, it represents a missed opportunity to prepare students fully for the workforce.

Teaching and learning methods such as group activities support the development of communication, creativity, problem-solving, and collaboration skills. Group work requires students to share ideas, delegate tasks, and pursue a common goal, enhancing both academic achievement and preparation for professional teamwork. Mailool et al. (2020) highlighted that interactive and experiential learning is essential for developing soft skills in teacher education. By incorporating methods that foster collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity, pre-service programmes strengthen students' human capital and employability.

However, the integration of employability skills is often dependent on the lecturers' initiative. Large class sizes, limited institutional support, and uneven student participation undermine the effectiveness of interactive approaches. Maina et al. (2022) found that lecturers play a pivotal role in cultivating employability skills, particularly when they actively engage students in problem-solving and group activities. Yet, as Mushaandja-Mufeti and Molosiwa (2021) observed, overcrowded classrooms limit the feasibility of these strategies, impeding the development of skills such as collaboration and communication. This underscores the necessity for supportive environments that enable lecturers to adapt interactive pedagogies.

Another approach to integrating employability skills is through class presentations, where groups present assignments collectively. Presentations allow students to practise organising ideas, delivering information confidently, and responding to questions competencies essential in both teaching and broader professional contexts. Jackson (2019) noted that students who regularly

engage in such activities feel more prepared for teamwork and effective communication in the workplace.

Nonetheless, limited lecture time and passive teaching methods often restrict these opportunities. In many cases, only one group member presents, while others remain passive, resulting in unequal skill development. Shi (2020) argued that this practice diminishes the intended benefits of collaborative learning, as other group members miss opportunities to practise communication and teamwork. Thus, time constraints and traditional lecture methods weaken the potential of group presentations as a tool for employability skills development.

Critical thinking and problem-solving are essential skills fostered through authentic classroom activities. Engaging pre-service teachers in solving real challenges equips them to navigate the complexities of teaching and adapt to unexpected changes. Mihail (2022) emphasised that teachers who cultivate critical thinking and problem-solving competencies are better prepared to meet the ever-changing demands of their profession. Collaborative approaches between lecturers and students further build confidence and creativity in addressing classroom challenges.

Despite these opportunities, several obstacles hinder the development of employability skills. These include students' lack of interest in assignments, negative attitudes towards learning, and irregular attendance, with many attending solely for examinations. Such practices narrow students' focus to exam success while neglecting broader professional competencies. Jackson (2019) stressed that interactive activities are essential for preparing students for workplace realities, yet discouragement undermines their impact. Suleman

(2018) recommended adopting interactive teaching methodologies to counter negative attitudes and foster constructive learning environments. Mushaandja-Mufeti and Molosiwa (2021) similarly observed that irregular attendance prevents students from benefiting from continuous skill development. Collectively, disinterest, absenteeism, and exam-oriented learning significantly hinder the preparation of well-rounded professionals

Coursework, internships, and examinations are among the methods used in pre-service teacher training programmes to assess students' abilities to transfer classroom learning to real-world situations. This multifaceted approach enables trainees to demonstrate competencies across theoretical analysis, practical application, and problem-solving. Choi-Lundberg et al. (2024) stressed the importance of employing diverse assessment methodologies to ensure comprehensive development of employability skills. Such approaches allow students to cultivate and demonstrate critical skills for professional success, including effective communication, collaboration, creative problem-solving, and critical thinking.

However, several challenges limit the effective assessment of employability skills. These include inconsistent assessment methods, insufficient feedback, limited understanding of employers' expectations, an overemphasis on content rather than skills, and overcrowded classrooms. These challenges undermine the adoption of consistent and holistic strategies for developing and evaluating employability skills. Cotronei-Baird (2020) highlighted the necessity of implementing standardised frameworks to strengthen assessment consistency in higher education. Providing regular, constructive feedback has been shown to facilitate skill acquisition (Sangeeta &

Patkar, 2023), while professional development opportunities for lecturers are critical for equipping them to assess employability effectively (Sarkar et al., 2020). Mushaandja-Mufeti and Molosiwa (2021) further recommended peer evaluations and smaller group assessments as strategies to ease lecturers' workload. Additionally, Choi-Lundberg et al. (2024) advocated for designing authentic assessments based on real-world challenges to strengthen students' preparedness for professional demands. Collectively, these studies underscore the need for balanced assessment systems, lecturer training, standardised evaluation frameworks, and improved feedback quality to address existing gaps.

Overall, pre-service teacher training programmes demonstrate limited explicit integration of employability skills such as communication, critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration, with primary emphasis placed on pedagogical theory. While some courses implicitly promote these skills, the lack of explicit frameworks raises concerns about consistency and depth. To enhance graduates' readiness for diverse educational environments, programmes should shift towards a skills-oriented approach, embedding employability competencies into both curricula and assessments. Persistent challenges, including large class sizes, negative student attitudes, and inconsistent assessment methods, further hinder skill development. Addressing these issues through a comprehensive framework for integrating and assessing employability skills is essential for preparing graduates for workforce demands.

5.1.3 Ways employability skills integration can be enhanced in the pre-service teacher training programmes in Teacher training institutions

Research question three asked: “*In what ways can employability skills be enhanced in the pre-service teacher training programmes in Teacher training institutions in Uganda?*” Findings from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions indicated the following strategies: explicit integration of employability skills in curricula, stronger linkages between higher education institutions and employers, provision of guidance and counselling on employability skills, staff capacity building, holistic assessment approaches, supportive policy implementation, and institutional management support. Collectively, these strategies suggest that deliberate integration, institutional linkages, guidance, staff training, holistic assessment, policy enforcement, and administrative commitment are essential for strengthening employability skills among pre-service teacher trainees.

Employability skills, including communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and adaptability, must be incorporated into pre-service teacher training to prepare educators for professional success. This aligns with studies by Othman et al. (2018), Roberts et al. (2021), and Rees (2021), which highlighted the need for comprehensive curriculum design and cultural change. These studies emphasised that incorporating employability skills into the core curriculum, reinforced by innovative teaching strategies, can significantly enhance teacher readiness for the demands of the education sector.

Opportunities for experiential learning should be prioritised, allowing trainees to apply theoretical knowledge in practical settings. Such experiences improve preparedness for the classroom challenges and broader professional

responsibilities. Fede et al. (2018) demonstrated that experiential learning promotes transferable skills such as social skills, communication, and accountability. Through participation in real-world tasks, pre-service teachers build competence and confidence in translating theory into practice, thereby strengthening their employability.

Teacher training institutions should also facilitate workplace engagement through internships, industry placements, and problem-based learning. Choi-Lundberg et al. (2024) advocated for student-centred experiential models, including work-integrated learning, reflection, and industry exposure, as effective strategies for enhancing employability. These opportunities provide students with hands-on experience, enabling them to apply classroom knowledge in authentic contexts and improve their job readiness.

Interactive activities such as discussions and debates can further develop communication abilities, which are critical for the teaching profession. Wu et al. (2023) found that employers value strong communication abilities, which directly contribute to employability. In teacher training, such activities enable pre-service teachers to articulate ideas clearly, defend arguments, and engage with diverse perspectives. Similarly, Fede et al. (2018) emphasised that teamwork and communication-focused exercises significantly enhance employability outcomes.

Encouraging independent research also supports employability skill development. Verawati et al. (2019) and Kelly et al. (2022) highlighted the role of inquiry-based learning, problem-based tasks, and open-book assessments in fostering critical thinking, independence, and problem-solving skills. Assigning

research projects encourages pre-service teachers to engage deeply with content, analyse information critically and develop practical solutions to real-world problems, thereby strengthening professional competencies.

Lecturers play a pivotal role in integrating employability skills into pre-service teacher education. Professional development workshops can strengthen their pedagogical practices, classroom management, and assessment strategies, thereby ensuring that employability competencies are embedded meaningfully across learning experiences. Verawati et al. (2019) stressed the value of inquiry-based learning for cultivating critical thinking—a core employability skill—while Dewali (2022) and Maina et al. (2022) identified micro-credentialing and experiential learning as effective innovations for aligning teacher preparation with real-world expectations. Positioning lecturers to access such training is not a peripheral activity but a strategic investment in educational quality. By equipping lecturers with contemporary instructional methods and assessment tools, universities bridge the gap between traditional teaching practices and the innovative approaches demanded by today's labour market. This, in turn, reinforces curriculum relevance, fosters adaptive expertise among pre-service teachers, and strengthens the overall credibility of teacher education programmes.

Teacher training institutions and employers must engage in dialogue to ensure that the competencies imparted align with the labour market demands. Such collaboration benefits students, employers, and society. Cacho et al. (2022) found that partnerships between educational institutions and industry stakeholders are crucial for understanding employer expectations and tailoring curricula accordingly. In pre-service teacher training, this collaboration ensures

that essential employability skills, such as communication, adaptability, problem-solving, and teamwork, are systematically integrated. Hahn and Gangeness (2019) further emphasised the importance of involving employers in curriculum design, noting that mechanisms such as practicums and internships bridge theoretical knowledge with practical application, thereby enhancing job readiness.

Higher education institutions should also conduct regular surveys and assessments with employers to remain responsive to changing workforce needs. Hahn and Gangeness (2019) and Cacho et al. (2022) emphasised that such continuous engagement enables institutions to align curricula with industry requirements, ensuring graduates are adequately prepared for evolving professional contexts. This practice represents a deliberate strategy for sustaining curriculum relevance rather than a routine administrative task. Employer feedback acts as a critical data source, allowing institutions to triangulate labour-market signals with pedagogical priorities and to identify emerging competencies before skill gaps widen. By embedding this iterative process into formal quality-assurance and curriculum-review cycles, teacher education programmes can demonstrate reflexivity, accountability, and an evidence-based approach to reform. This perspective highlights the imperative for adaptive institutional policies that position employers as co-constructors of competencies, thereby strengthening graduate employability and reinforcing public confidence in higher education

Pre-service teachers should additionally receive targeted guidance and counselling on employability skills desired by employers, alongside structured support to nurture commitment to the teaching profession. Kovalchuk et al.

(2022) emphasised the role of emotional intelligence in effective classroom management and teacher–student relationships, underscoring its centrality to teacher effectiveness. Counselling can help trainees internalise the demands and rewards of teaching, thereby strengthening their resilience in the face of professional challenges. Rees (2021) further argued for embedding entrepreneurial spirit within teacher education to broaden trainees’ understanding of teaching as a socially transformative profession. These interventions are more than peripheral supports they are strategic levers for bridging the gap between academic preparation and the complex realities of professional practice. Providing platforms for trainees to share challenges not only builds adaptability and resilience both critical employability skills—but also cultivates collaborative problem-solving and peer mentorship. Framing such guidance within a structured institutional framework signals to trainees that their holistic development is valued, positioning teacher education programmes as proactive agents in shaping a dynamic and future-ready teaching workforce.

Lecturers play a pivotal role in modelling employability skills within pre-service teacher education. By consistently demonstrating professionalism, effective communication, problem-solving, and leadership, lecturers not only transmit knowledge but also embody the competencies expected in the teaching profession. Selamat et al. (2023) underscored leadership as a key employability skill, noting that when lecturers exhibit initiative, manage classroom dynamics effectively, and contribute meaningfully to institutional development, they inspire students to emulate these behaviours. This form of role modelling functions as an implicit curriculum, signalling to pre-service teachers that

employability is cultivated not solely through formal instruction but through observed practice. Such modelling reinforces a culture of excellence, encourages reflective learning, and motivates trainees to integrate these qualities into their emerging professional identities—ultimately advancing both personal growth and the broader standards of the teaching profession.

Capacity building for lecturers is essential to support the incorporation of employability skills through contemporary instructional methods. Dewali (2022) and Maina et al. (2022) recommended adopting learner-centred strategies and micro-credentialing to enhance student employability. Equipping lecturers with innovative approaches ensures that employability skills such as communication, problem-solving, and adaptability are embedded within teaching practices. Participation in conferences and seminars focused on employability skills further exposes lecturers to current labour market trends, enabling them to tailor instruction to meet employer expectations (Hahn & Gangeness, 2019; Roberts et al., 2023). Viewed analytically, these professional development initiatives are not additional activities but strategic investments in institutional capacity. By cultivating a community of educators attuned to shifting workforce demands, higher education institutions can maintain curriculum relevance, foster reflective teaching practices, and reinforce the credibility of their programmes in preparing future teachers for complex professional environments.

A holistic approach to assessment is also recommended, combining academic knowledge with practical. Kelly et al. (2022) and Choi-Lundberg et al. (2024) advocated for incorporating alternative assessments such as simulations, problem-based tasks, and open-book examinations. These methods

not only test subject mastery but also evaluate critical employability skills, including communication, problem-solving, and teamwork. Such approaches provide a comprehensive understanding of pre-service teachers' readiness for professional practice. Framing assessment in this way shifts evaluation from a narrow focus on content recall to a dynamic process that mirrors real-world professional challenges. Such approaches generate richer evidence of pre-service teachers' readiness for the workplace, promote reflective practice, and cultivate adaptive expertise, thereby aligning assessment practices with contemporary expectations of teacher competence and lifelong learning.

Schools should also engage in assessing student teachers during practicum placements, as this provides additional perspectives on professional readiness. Hahn and Gangeness (2019) emphasised that feedback from external stakeholders enriches the evaluation process by aligning training outcomes with professional realities. Similarly, Cacho et al. (2022) found that industry stakeholder feedback is crucial for ensuring programme relevance. Involving schools in assessment provides valuable insights into how student teachers adapt to real classroom environments. Involving schools in assessment does more than validate performance it embeds evaluation within authentic contexts where teaching and learning occur. Such engagement provides nuanced insights into how pre-service teachers navigate classroom dynamics, manage resources, and respond to the complexities of diverse learners. By triangulating institutional assessments with school-based evaluations, teacher education programmes can enhance accountability, close the gap between theory and practice, and strengthen the overall quality of teacher preparation.

Policy frameworks mandating the incorporation of employability skills into pre-service teacher training programmes are crucial for aligning education with labour market realities. Othman et al. (2018) and Maina et al. (2022) argued that skill development must be a central, non-negotiable element of curricula. Policies should explicitly require competencies such as communication, teamwork, adaptability, and creative problem-solving, ensuring they are systematically embedded across all courses and learning experiences. Beyond serving as compliance mechanisms, such frameworks function as strategic levers for driving institutional accountability and continuous improvement. By codifying employability skills within policy, government and accrediting bodies can reduce the risk of programmes overemphasising theory at the expense of hands-on experience. This approach guarantees that graduates are workforce-ready, promotes coherence across institutions, and signals to stakeholders' employers, educators, and communities that teacher education is responsive to societal and economic needs.

Teacher training institutions must address systemic challenges such as large class sizes, inadequate classroom space, and limited lecturer motivation, as these factors undermine the quality of teaching, learning, and assessment. Mushaandja-Mufeti and Molosiwa (2021) observed that large class sizes hinder interactive, student-centred teaching, reducing opportunities for hands-on learning and personalised feedback both essential for cultivating employability skills. Similarly, Loughland (2019) emphasised that lecturer motivation is critical for fostering active learning and sustained student engagement, while Ahmed et al. (2020) highlighted that parental involvement plays a significant

role in reinforcing student motivation and commitment. Collectively, these insights signal that improving pre-service teacher training requires a multi-dimensional approach: addressing structural constraints, investing in lecturer support and recognition, and strengthening home–institution partnerships. By proactively tackling these areas, teacher training institutional leadership can create an enabling environment that nurtures high-quality learning experiences and better prepares pre-service teachers for professional practice.

The administration should also ensure that pre-service teachers have access to essential academic resources including updated textbooks, high-speed internet, and professional development opportunities to enhance both learning and career readiness. Oben et al. (2023) and Syaniah and Fithriani (2023) emphasised the critical role of technology and reliable internet in developing employability skills such as problem-solving and adaptability, particularly within increasingly digital learning and teaching environments. Access to up-to-date textbooks is equally vital for aligning pre-service teachers with the latest curricula and pedagogical practices. The IIEP Learning Portal (2023) further reported that updated resources enable educators to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for modern classrooms. Viewed analytically, investing in these resources is not simply a logistical requirement but a strategic action that signals institutional commitment to quality teacher preparation. By prioritising resource provision, universities can cultivate technologically proficient, adaptable, and well-informed graduates capable of navigating dynamic educational contexts and contributing meaningfully to school improvement.

Overall, enhancing employability skills integration in teacher training institution's pre-service teacher training requires embedding competencies such

as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and adaptability into the core curriculum. This should be supported by innovative teaching strategies and real-world experiences. Student engagement through discussions, debates, and independent research fosters critical thinking and practical knowledge application. Collaboration with employers ensures alignment with labour market demands, while capacity building for lecturers in contemporary instructional methods remains crucial. Addressing structural challenges and ensuring access to essential resources will further improve training quality, thereby preparing graduates for successful teaching careers.

5.2 Conclusions

This section presents the study's conclusions in relation to the research questions.

Employers of graduate pre-service teachers value a broad set of employability skills, including communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creative thinking, leadership, problem-solving, adaptability, time management, emotional intelligence and self-efficacy. These skills provide employing institutions with a competitive advantage. Graduates who demonstrate creativity, innovation, effective communication, self-efficacy, and time management contribute to improved organisational performance and competitiveness.

The current design of pre-service teacher training programmes lacks explicit integration of employability skills. Teaching and learning methods are predominantly lecture-based, while assessment practices vary widely across lecturers. These limitations hinder systematic skill development. A more structured and unified approach to teaching, training, and assessment one that

prioritises employability skills would better prepare pre-service teachers for workforce demands and equip them with competencies essential for career success.

The integration of employability skills in teacher training can be promoted through several strategies: explicitly incorporating these skills into curricula, strengthening partnerships between training institutions and employers, offering guidance and counselling on employability, building staff capacity, implementing holistic assessment methods, developing institutional policies, and ensuring strong management support. By adopting these strategies, teacher training institutions can more effectively prepare graduates to meet labour market needs and contribute meaningfully to the education sector.

5.3 Contribution to the Body of Knowledge

This study advances the body of knowledge on teacher education and the integration of employability skills in Uganda's pre-service teacher training programmes through several key contributions.

Empirically, it generates evidence-based insights into the employability skills most valued by employers of graduate teachers in Uganda, thereby addressing a critical gap in a field that has largely concentrated on business graduates or in-service teachers in other contexts.

Contextually, it offers a localised perspective within a literature base dominated by studies from countries such as Turkey, Indonesia, and the United States, by demonstrating how Uganda's educational structures, policy environment, and institutional constraints shape the development of employability skills.

Conceptually, the study deepens understanding of how attributes such as adaptability, communication, creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, leadership, time management, emotional intelligence, and self-sufficiency are taught, assessed, and conceptualised, while distinguishing between implicit and explicit approaches and highlighting the absence of systematic integration strategies.

Theoretically, it applies Human Capital Theory to illustrate the link between investment in tertiary-level skill development, individual career success, and national workforce productivity a relationship often overlooked in Sub-Saharan African teacher education research.

Methodologically, the study underscores the value of a qualitative, triangulated approach that combines focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and documentary analysis, thereby providing a richer and more comprehensive understanding of employability skills integration than has typically been achieved through survey-based or predominantly quantitative studies.

5.4 Recommendations

Teacher training institutions should establish structured and sustained collaborations with secondary school employers to identify the specific employability skills required of graduates and ensure their integration into pre-service programmes. Such collaboration may include stakeholder workshops, feedback forums, curriculum reviews, internship partnerships, and employer-led seminars. Direct engagement with employers will enable institutions to align course content, teaching strategies, and assessment methods with workplace expectations, thereby bridging the gap between academic preparation and

professional demands, enhancing programme relevance, and improving graduate employability.

Teacher training institutions should explicitly integrate core employability skills communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creative thinking, leadership, problem-solving, adaptability, time management, emotional intelligence, and self-efficacy into programme design, implementation, and assessment. This integration should move beyond implicit inclusion reflected in defined learning outcomes, targeted instructional activities, and performance-based assessments. A systematic framework should embed these skills across pedagogical methods, field experiences, and professional studies, with regular monitoring and evaluation to ensure authentic demonstration and assessment.

The National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) should play a proactive role in ensuring systematic integration of employability skills across pre-service teacher training programmes. As the regulatory and quality assurance body, NCHE should establish and enforce guidelines requiring institutions to embed core employability skills into curriculum design, teaching practices, and assessment strategies. In addition, NCHE should mandate and support staff capacity building through regular professional development focused on teaching and modelling employability skills. Aligning programme standards with labour market demands will strengthen the relevance and quality of teacher education and enhance graduate readiness for the workforce.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

This study contributes to knowledge on employability skills integration in pre-service teacher training education institutions. However, it was limited to a

single institution, which restricts generalisability. Replication in multiple universities, both public and private, would provide broader insights. The qualitative design also limited the depth of statistical analysis. Furthermore, data was collected from a specific group: full-time academic staff teaching foundation courses at Kyambogo University's School of Education, employers of graduate secondary school teachers, and pre-service teachers. Caution should therefore be exercised when applying the findings across all institutions.

5.6 Delimitation of the Study

Several external factors influenced the study's implementation. Access to certain institutional documents, particularly programme structure for professional studies in the Bachelor of Science with Education, Bachelor of Arts with Education, Bachelor of Business Studies with Education, and Bachelor of Vocational Studies with Education, was limited by confidentiality protocols. Participant availability also posed a challenge, as lecturers, trainees, and employers had competing responsibilities, especially during examination, school practice, and peak administrative periods. Additionally, the alignment of data collection with the academic calendar created time constraints for scheduling interviews and focus groups. Ensuring balanced representation across programmes required coordination with class coordinators. These challenges were mitigated through early scheduling, flexible data collection methods (including virtual interviews), and triangulation of data sources to enhance validity and reliability.

5.7 Suggestions for Further Study

Future research could adopt a mixed-methods design to generate a more comprehensive understanding of employability skills integration by combining

qualitative and quantitative approaches across a wider range of institutions, including both public and private universities. Further studies may also investigate the incorporation of employability skills across diverse academic programmes beyond teacher education, examining disciplinary approaches to skills development and their alignment with industry requirements. In addition, research could explore the challenges and opportunities associated with integrating employability skills into higher education, with particular attention to policy implementation, curriculum design, institutional support, and stakeholder collaboration. Comparative studies across different regions or countries would be valuable in identifying best practices and lessons that could inform strategies in Uganda. Finally, longitudinal studies are recommended to track the long-term effects of employability skill integration on graduate outcomes, including career progression, job satisfaction, and workforce adaptability.

5.8 Study Contributions

This study contributes to the fields of teacher education, workforce preparation, and higher education by examining essential employability skills and their incorporation into pre-service teacher training programmes. It provides an in-depth analysis of the employability skills most valued by employers, namely, communication, teamwork, critical and creative thinking, leadership, problem-solving, adaptability, time management, emotional intelligence, and self-efficacy. By emphasising the centrality of these competencies to workforce readiness in the education sector, the study highlights their role in strengthening institutional effectiveness and enhancing the competitiveness of graduates in the labour market.

The research also identifies significant gaps in the design and implementation of teacher education programmes, including the absence of a clear structure, an overreliance on lecture-based pedagogies, and inconsistencies in assessment practices. These shortcomings underscore the need for reform through the systematic embedding of employability skills, thereby aligning teacher preparation more closely with the requirements of employment. To address these challenges, the study proposes strategies for enhancing integration, including explicit curricular incorporation, stronger partnerships between higher education institutions and employers, career guidance and counselling, staff capacity development, and comprehensive evaluation systems. This framework offers practical guidance to policymakers, educators, and institutions seeking to strengthen graduate employability.

In addition, the study underscores the importance of institutional policies and managerial support in developing systematic approaches for embedding employability skills into teacher training curricula, as such interventions improve both the quality and relevance of teacher preparation. It further highlights the collective responsibility of higher education institutions, employers, and policymakers in equipping pre-service teachers with the skills necessary for the workforce. This collaborative approach informs institutional practice, curriculum design, and educational policy, ultimately contributing to improved graduate outcomes and responsiveness to labour market demands.

Beyond Uganda, the study enriches global scholarship on employability skills and higher education reform by providing context-specific insights with cross-disciplinary and cross-national relevance. Finally, it contributes to the empowerment of future educators by demonstrating the value of equipping them

with versatile, innovative, and transferable skills. In so doing, it positions graduates not only as proficient teachers but also as adaptive professionals capable of thriving in diverse and dynamic educational environments.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Informed Consent Form

Title of Research: Integration of Employability Skills in Pre-Service Teacher Training Programmes in Teacher Training Institutions in Uganda: A Case Study of Kyambogo University

Principle Investigator: Kakooza Abdulaziz; Tel. contact +256-772120097

Affiliated to Kyambogo University, P.O. Box 1, Kyambogo, Uganda.

1. Introduction and Goals of the Study

Kakooza Abdulaziz, a PhD student at Kyambogo University, is conducting research on the integration of employability skills in pre-service teacher training programmes at Ugandan higher education institutions: a case study of Kyambogo University. The primary goal of this research is to investigate the integration of employability skills into pre-service teacher training curricula at Kyambogo University. We will keep the information you provide secret and use it exclusively for this research. Your identity will never be utilised throughout the report-writing process, so everything you tell us will stay anonymous. We will enquire about the availability and functioning of palliative care services at this healthcare institution. If you do not wish to reply to a certain question, just state so, and we will not insist.

2. Description of the Research

This qualitative study will explore participants' experiences, perceptions, and insights regarding the integration of employability skills in pre-service teacher training programs at Teacher Training Institutions in Uganda.

3. Subject Participation

The research population will include department heads, full-time teachers, third-year pre-service teacher trainees, and employers of pre-service teacher training graduates.

4. Potential risks and discomforts

This is a two-way survey in which the researcher and respondents discuss the integration of employability skills in pre-service teacher training courses at Ugandan higher education institutions. The danger is believed to be minimal.

5. Potential benefits

The results will give critical information on how to integrate employability skills, as well as methods and processes for improving them.

6. Confidentiality

We will keep the information you provide secret and use it exclusively for the purposes of this research. Your identity will never be utilised throughout the report-writing process, so everything you tell us will stay anonymous.

We will explore questions concerning the employability skills that graduate teachers want, how employability skills are incorporated into pre-service teacher training programs, and how this integration might be improved. If you do not wish to reply to a certain question, just state so, and we will not insist. Before participating in the research, each participant will be requested to sign a written study informed consent form, which will guarantee voluntarism and acceptance of participation.

7. Authorisation.

By completing this form, you authorise us to utilise the study findings, such

as for education and evidence-based interventions to enhance pre-service teacher preparation.

8. Participation.

Your choice to engage in this research is entirely optional. If you choose not to participate in this research, your work won't be unaffected.

9. Withdrawal from the Study or Withdrawal of Authorisation

As a participant in this research, you have the option to withdraw at any time.

10. Repayments

You will get reimbursement in the amount of 20,000/= (twenty thousand shillings).

11. Who to contact for ethical issues

This study was approved by the Uganda Christian University Research Ethics Committee (UCU-REC) and cleared by the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST). If you have any ethical concerns or questions, please contact the UCU-REC chairperson, Prof. Peter Waiswa, at 0772 405 357, pwaiswa@musph.ac.ug, or the UCU-REC Secretariat, Mr. Osborn Ahimbisibwe, at 0775737627 or oahimbisibwe@ucu.ac.ug.

I voluntarily agree to participate in this research programmes; to tick appropriately

Yes

No.

I understand that I will be given a copy of this signed Consent Form.

Name of Participant (Optional):

Signature:

Date:

Name of Researcher:

Signature:

Date:

**Appendix 2: Focused Group Discussion Guide for Final Year Students of
Pre-Service Teacher trainees From Kyambogo University**

Introduction:

This interview guide aimed to gather student perspectives on the incorporation of employability skills in the pre-service teacher training course.

Demographic Data Form

Characteristics of Respondents		
01	Name of Respondent:	
02	Gender	
03	Age	
04	Year of study	
05	Course of Study	

Section A:

1. What do you understand by integration of employability skills?
2. Are you aware of the employability skills employers expect from you? If yes, mention them. If no, explain why you do not know?
3. What shows that employability skills are integrated in the pre-service teacher training programmes?
4. From your experience are employability skills such as communication skills, critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration skills among others integrated alongside subject content in your training programmes? If yes, how? if no, why?
5. From your experience mention some of the challenges associated with integrating employability skills in pre-service teacher training programmes.
6. Suggest how integration of employability skills in the pre-service teacher training programmes can effectively be enhanced?

**Appendix 3: Interview Guide for key informants Lecturers from School
of Education at Kyambogo University**

Introduction

This interview guide aimed to gather Heads of Department & Lecturers perspectives on the incorporation of employability skills in the pre-service teacher training course.

Background:

Demographic Data Form

Characteristics of Respondents		
01	Name of Respondent:	
02	Gender	
03	Age	
04	Highest Academic Qualification	
05	Academic Rank	
06	Teaching experience	

Section A:

1. What do you understand by term integration of employability skills in pre-service teacher training programmes?
2. What employability skills do you think employers expect from your student teachers after graduation?
3. What shows that employability skills are integrated in the pre-service teacher training programmes?
4. From your experience, how are employability skills such as communication skills, problem-solving skills, innovative and creative skills, collaboration skills taught and assessed alongside subject content?
5. From your experience, can you mention some challenges associated with integrating employability skills in teacher training?
6. Suggest how integration of employability skills in the pre-service teacher training programmes can effectively be enhanced?

Appendix 4: Interview Guide for Employers

Introduction:

This interview guide was intended to elicit perspectives from employers of pre-service teacher training graduates on the integration of employability skills into the pre-service teacher training course.

Demographic Data Form

Characteristics of Respondents		
01	Name of Respondent:	
02	Gender	
03	Age	
05	Highest Education Qualification	
06	Work experience	

Introduction and Background

- a) What is the name of your school?
- b) Is it government owned or private owned?
- c) Is it rural or Urban?
- d) Does your organization give opportunities for student teachers to do school practice?
- e) Would you continue giving them an opportunity to do school practice in your school? If yes, give reasons. If not, give reasons why?

Section A: Employability Skills Perception

1. What do you understand by term integration of employability skills in pre-service teacher training programmes?
2. In your opinion, what specific employability skills do you believe are most crucial for pre-service teachers to possess upon graduation?
3. How do you think this employability skills contribute to the overall effectiveness of a teacher's role in school?
4. How do you tell if these employability skills have been effectively integrated throughout the pre-service teacher training programmes?
5. From your experience, can you mention some challenges associated with teachers without employability skills?
6. Suggest how integration of employability skills in the pre-service teacher training programmes can effectively be enhanced?

Appendix 5: Document check list

This review checklist tool was used to analyse the Integration of Employability Skills in Pre-Service Teacher Training Programmes of Kyambogo University.

SECTION A

Demographic Information

Type of document-----

Author-----

Year of Publication-----

SECTION B

ELEMENTS	YES	NO	Comments
Programmes Overview and Objectives			
The programme objectives specifically highlight the development of employability skills (e.g., communication skills, critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative abilities, among others.)			
The rationale provides the importance of employability skills within the pre-service teacher training programmes.			
Curriculum Design			
The curriculum indicates specific modules or courses dedicated to developing employability skills			
Course units align with the overall programme goals and teaching competencies			
There is a balance between subject-specific content and employability skills development			

Learning outcomes			
Clearly defines the specific employability skills to be integrated (e.g., communication, problem-solving, collaboration)			
Ensure that each learning outcome reflects how employability skills will be applied within the context of subject matter knowledge			
Teaching Methodology:			
Teaching methods that encourage active learning, critical thinking, and collaborative activities are included			
Real-world scenarios, case studies, and simulations that enhances employability skills			
Pedagogical approaches fostering creativity, adaptability, and reflective thinking are included			
Assessment Strategies:			
Assessment methods encourage acquisition and development of employability skills			
Assessments go beyond traditional tests to include practical applications and demonstrations that enhance the development of employability skills			

Appendix 6: Community Engagement Plan

Research study entitled;

Integration of Employability Skills in Pre-Service Teacher Training Programmes in Teacher Training Institutions in Uganda: A Case Study of Kyambogo University

Principle Investigator (PI): Kakooza Abdulaziz

Co-Investigators/Academic Supervisor: Sr. Dr. Kaahwa Maria Goretti (DST)

Goal and objectives

The goal of this plan is to give appropriate guidance to the researcher on how best he can involve research participants and the general Kyambogo University fraternity. I aim at ensuring that this research represents well what is on ground, that participants will not be imposed on ideas, concepts and information that does not belong to them as I embark on the phenomenological study of Integration of Employability Skills in Pre-Service Teacher Training Programmes in Teacher Training Institutions in Uganda: A Case Study of Kyambogo University.

Community Consultation

The university management were involved in the initial stages of this study and they gave permission to go on with the study. The teaching community, pre-service teachers and secondary school administrators will be engaged more at the commencement of field work.

Sensitization and Education

The researcher and his team will sensitize participants before they are recruited or engaged in any activities. This includes a broad-brush of the study, the aims,

approaches, and potential benefits, and most importantly the ethical and informed consenting processes.

Capacity strengthening

This study examines how integrating employable skills into Kyambogo University's pre-service teacher training programmes improves capacity in the education sector. It enables education policymakers and curriculum creators to make informed reforms, connecting training with job market demands. Pre-service teacher trainees benefit from an expanded curriculum that provides them with essential skills, boosting their career prospects and teaching effectiveness. Higher education institutions, particularly Kyambogo University, can use these data to re-evaluate and develop their curricula, ensuring that graduates are well-prepared for the labour market. Furthermore, the study adds real data and practical techniques to the academic body of knowledge, encouraging future educational research and innovation. This ongoing evolution promotes successful and sustainable educational institutions, ultimately resulting in a well-equipped, adaptive workforce ready to face modern problems.

Community participation and involvement

The study on Kyambogo University's pre-service teacher training programmes highlights the importance of community involvement in enhancing capacity. It helps policy makers and curriculum developers make informed improvements, aligning training with job market demands. Community stakeholders, including local schools and employers, collaborate to ensure curriculum meets real-world needs. This study enriches academic knowledge, supports research, and enhances the relevance and impact of educational initiatives.

Community empowerment

The study on integrating employability skills into Kyambogo University's pre-service teacher training programmes enhances community empowerment by providing insights for education policy makers and curriculum developers. It will help to align training with job market demands, producing graduates who can contribute to the local economy and society. The findings will be used to re-evaluate and strengthen programmes, ensuring graduates are well-prepared for the job market.

Research evaluation

After the study, participants will be asked to give their opinions. By emphasizing research evaluation, the study will ensure that educational initiatives are evidence-based and continuously improved, enhancing their impact and relevance

Ethical approval

This research will be reviewed and approved by the Uganda Christian University Research Ethics Committee (UCU-REC), which is overseen by the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST). If there are any ethical concerns, please contact UCU-REC Chairperson, Prof. Peter Waiswa, 0772405357, pwaiswa@ucu.ac.ug, or UCU-REC Manager, Mr. Osborn Ahimbisibwe, 0775737627, oahimbisibwe@ucu.ac.ug.

Appendix 7: Data Collection COVID-19 Risk Management Plan

Research Project Title:

Integration of Employability Skills in Pre-Service Teacher Training Programmes in Teacher Training Institutions in Uganda: A Case Study of Kyambogo University

In recognition that we remain in a global COVID-19 pandemic where the situation is still volatile and uncertain, data collection will proceed under strict COVID-19 risk management protocols as informed by the Uganda Ministry of Health, International Best Practice for Data Collection, and institutions' own data collection principles and standards. With respect to these sources of guidance, all data collection will be done under the supervision of trained personnel who will adhere to strict hygiene and safety measures to minimise the risk of virus transmission. Additionally, regular monitoring and evaluation of these protocols will be conducted to ensure compliance and effectiveness in safeguarding the health and well-being of all involved in the data collection process.

Uganda Ministry of Health (MOH)

The MOH has encouraged people to stay safe. MOH has provided numerous guidelines and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for Ugandans to follow as they go about the day-to-day activities in the current times to prevent Covid-19 infections. These guidelines cover a range of scenarios that are relevant to our context including workplace meetings, use of public transport, mass gathering, and use of masks. All research team members and data collectors will be required to read and adhere to the relevant MOH guidelines. These are available

at <https://www.health.go.ug/covid/project/guidelines/> and the most recent updates will be provided to all at data collector training sessions.

International Best Practice for Data Collection

The United Nations has established clear and comprehensive guidance on mitigating and managing the risk of COVID-19 transmission during field surveys, covering general principles, planning, field organization, fieldwork and post-field work. These categories of risk management form the framework for this research study risk management plan. Documentation is available at [https://unstats.un.org/iswghs/news/docs/COVID-](https://unstats.un.org/iswghs/news/docs/COVID-19_TechnicalGNote_final.pdf)

19_TechnicalGNote_final.pdf and the most recent updates will be provided to all team members and data collectors.

General Principles

- Do no harm- Within the context of this general research principle, we will do all that is necessary to prevent and/or limit the transmission of COVID-19 amongst team members, field staff and survey participants and their families.
- Minimize field data collection -we will only undertake field data collection that is necessary
- Clear Policies and Practices- we will ensure availability and training in high quality, timely and well-documented guidelines for safe data collection and minimize physical interaction through use of virtual platforms for interviews and FGDs.

Planning

- Interview Flexibility- careful consideration will be given to ensure that the planned Interview tools are done through telephone or email to avoid physical meetings.
- Assessing COVID-19 Situation- all planning will involve regular and timely assessment of the prevailing COVID-19 situation, at national and local levels (including intermediate places where travel through an area may be required to reach some participants and hold project team meetings). All relevant advice from government, Kyambogo University leadership and local actors will be sought and applied to develop a realistic and conservative picture of the COVID-19 risk.
- Decision-making-final decisions on whether to commence or halt data collection will be made collectively by a multi-disciplinary team comprising of Kyambogo University and UNCST leadership.
- Hiring data collectors- The Pi will manage this process carefully and whilst we desire all enumerators to be vaccinated against COVID-19. The Pi will default to local sensitivities and advice regarding vaccination. Enumerators will however be hired on their commitment to COVID-safe and overall evidence-based hygienic health practices.
- Budgeting-the study budget will be finalized based upon a COVID-19- safe data collection protocol.

Field organisations

- Study site Orientation- All interactions with participants are expected to be virtual. If physical interviews and FGD are conducted, participants at each site selected to participate in the study will be given a virtual orientation on

the requirements and SOPs for meeting have COVID-19-safe discussion at their site during data collection.

- Study site Management- coordination and management of surveys in COVID-19 safe conditions will follow the standard national and local government advice. Unless otherwise advised, this should include:
 - Avoiding overcrowding and body contact; all should keep at least 1.5 meters between each other.
 - Select appropriate interview locations that balance the need for privacy and COVID-19 safety. The ideal would be outdoors, but if indoors, adequate ventilation should be ensured.
 - All individuals participating should be temperature screened.
 - Anyone feeling generally unwell (fever, cough, etc.) should be excluded from participation.
 - All participants must be encouraged to wash and sanitize their hands on arrival for the meetings and as frequently as possible.
 - Meeting premises should be provided with adequate handwashing facilities with soap and water or alcohol-based gel (hand rub).
 - The interview areas should be kept clean and hygienic –clean all surfaces with disinfectant after each interview (soap and water or JIK) (e.g., chairs, desks and tables)
 - Ensure adequate waste management facilities (waste bins and bin-liners, cans)
 - Ensure availability of adequate personal protection equipment (eg masks).

Field Work

- Enumerators
 - If appropriate and practical, wear a mask throughout the interview to protect all concerned
 - Respect physical distancing by maintaining at least 1.5 meters between enumerator and interviewees at all times
 - Carry out your own assessment of COVID-19 risk at the site for yourself and the interviewees
 - Advise interviewees of the COVID-19 safe measures being taken and why
 - Avoid handshakes or any physical contact with study site staff and interviewees
 - Offer a mask to the interviewees
 - Wash and sanitize hands and interview site (chair, doors, electronic tablets etc) between each interview
 - Regularly monitor self for COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, fatigue, loss of taste and smell) and at least before and following site visits.
 - If symptoms of COVID-19 are experienced, the enumerator should be excluded from the site visit or interview and follow the country's health quarantine protocols.
 - If an interviewee displays symptoms of COVID-19 they should be excluded from interview and their parents advised through the study site leadership.

Interviewees

- Each interviewee should cover his/her mouth and nose with a tissue or a handkerchief when coughing and sneezing.
- Ensure used tissues or masks are disposed of in a waste bin or a designated area where it can be safely disposed of.

- Wash hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand rub immediately after using the tissue or handkerchief. Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth always.
- Avoid all physical contact including handshakes and hugging.

Post-field Work

- Maintain contact with enumerators and project site leadership for 2 weeks to monitor the health status of all involved in the study
- Ensure contact tracing of all who had close contact with any COVID-19 positive individual(s)
- Provide all necessary support to any who contracted COVID-19 as a result of participation in the study.

Appendix 8: Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Consent Form

S/n.	Statements	Initial or thumbprint
1	I have had enough time to decide whether or not to participate in this research.	
2	My participation in this study is entirely optional. I may opt out of the research study at any moment without incurring any fees or losing the benefits or treatment to which I am legally entitled.	
3	Without my permission, the research project might end at any moment.	
4	I have received a chance to ask enquiries about this research project.	
5	I am satisfied with the responses I have received so far to my enquiries.	
6	The duration of the research project has been communicated to me.	
7	The methods used in the research study have been explained to me.	
8	I have been informed of the potential risks and advantages of participating in this	
9	I may not benefit if I take part in this study.	
10	By signing this form, I do not relinquish my legal rights.	

I agree to take part in this focus group discussion

-----/-----/-----

Name of participant
thumb print

Date

Signature or

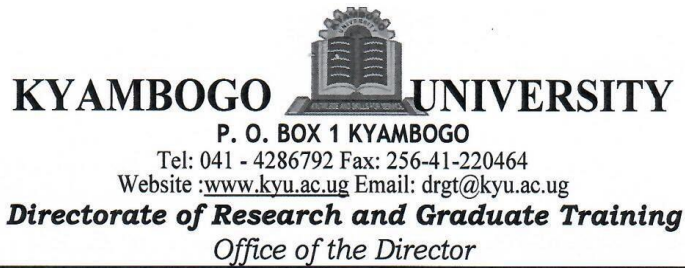
-----/-----/-----

Name of researcher
thumb print

Date

Signature or

Appendix 9: Administrative Clearance



Date: 11th/10/2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: KAKOOZA ABDULAZIZ

Dear Sir/Madam,

This is to introduce to you the above-named student Reg: No **18/U/GDED/19639/PE** pursuing PhD in Education, Department of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Education Media, Kyambogo University.

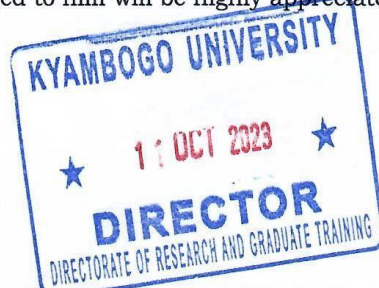
He intends to carry out research on **“Integration of Employability Skills in Pre - Service Teacher Training Programme in Higher Education Institutions in Uganda, A case study of Kyambogo University.”** in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the award of PhD of Philosophy in Education of Kyambogo University.

The purpose of this letter therefore is to request you to grant him permission to carry out his study in your institution.

Any assistance rendered to him will be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely


Prof. Bosco Bua
AG. DIRECTOR



Appendix 10: Research Ethics Committee Approval



**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
UNIVERSITY**

A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa

To: ABDULAZIZ KAKOOZA

+256772120097

Type: Initial Review

**Re: UCUREC-2024-874: INTEGRATION OF EMPLOYABILITY
SKILLS IN PRE-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMME IN
TEACHER TRAINING INSTITUTIONS IN UGANDA: A CASE STUDY
OF KYAMBOGO UNIVERSITY**

I am pleased to inform you that the Uganda Christian University REC, through expedited review held on **21/05/2024** approved the above referenced study.

Approval of the research is for the period of **24/05/2024** to **24/05/2025**.

As Principal Investigator of the research, you are responsible for fulfilling the following requirements of approval:

1. All co-investigators must be kept informed of the status of the research.
2. Changes, amendments, and addenda to the protocol or the consent form must be submitted to the REC for re-review and approval **prior** to the activation of the changes.
3. Reports of unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or any new information which could change the risk benefit: ratio must be submitted to the REC.

4. Only approved consent forms are to be used in the enrollment of participants. All consent forms signed by participants and/or witnesses should be retained on file. The REC may conduct audits of all study records, and consent documentation may be part of such audits.
5. Continuing review application must be submitted to the REC **eight weeks** prior to the expiration date of **24/05/2025** in order to continue the study beyond the approved period. Failure to submit a continuing review application in a timely fashion may result in suspension or termination of the study.
6. The REC application number assigned to the research should be cited in any correspondence with the REC of record.
7. You are required to register the research protocol with the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) for final clearance to undertake the study in Uganda. The following is the list of all documents approved in this application by Uganda Christian University REC:
24/05/2024

No.	Document Title	Language	Version Number	Version Date
1	Protocol	English	1	2024-05-05
2	Letter from Head of department	English	1	2023-10-11
3	Data collection tools	English	1	2024-05-05
4	Data collection tools	English	1	2024-05-05
5	Data collection tools	English	1	2024-05-05
6	Data collection tools	English	1	2024-05-05
7	Informed Consent forms	English	1	2024-05-05
8	Informed Consent forms	English	1	2024-05-05

Yours Sincerely

Prof. Peter Waiswa

For: Uganda Christian University REC



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Appendix 11: Uganda National Council for Science and Technology

Approval



Uganda National Council for Science and Technology

(Established by Act of Parliament of the Republic of Uganda)

Our Ref: SS2747ES

6 August 2024

ABDULAZIZ KAKOOZA Kyambogo University **Kampala**

Re: Research Approval:

**INTEGRATION OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS IN PRE-SERVICE
TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMME IN TEACHER TRAINING
INSTITUTIONS IN UGANDA: A CASE STUDY OF KYAMBOGO
UNIVERSITY**

I am pleased to inform you that on **06/08/2024**, the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) approved the above referenced research project. The Approval of the research project is for the period of **06/08/2024** to **06/08/2025**.

Your research registration number with the UNCST is **SS2747ES**. Please, cite this number in all your future correspondences with UNCST in respect of the above research project. As the Principal Investigator of the research project, you are responsible for fulfilling the following requirements of approval:

1. Keeping all co-investigators informed of the status of the research.
2. Submitting all changes, amendments, and addenda to the research protocol or the consent form (where applicable) to the designated Research Ethics Committee (REC) or Lead Agency for re-review and approval **prior** to the activation of the changes. UNCST must be notified of the approved changes within five working days.
3. For clinical trials, all serious adverse events must be reported promptly to the designated local REC for review with copies to the National Drug Authority and a notification to the UNCST.
4. Unanticipated problems involving risks to research participants or other must be reported promptly to the UNCST. New information that becomes

available which could change the risk/benefit ratio must be submitted promptly for UNCST notification after review by the REC.

5. Only approved study procedures are to be implemented. The UNCST may conduct impromptu audits of all study records.
6. An annual progress report and approval letter of continuation from the REC must be submitted electronically to UNCST. Failure to do so may result in termination of the research project.

Please note that this approval includes all study related tools submitted as part of the application as shown below:

No. Document Title

1. 1 FGD Consent form
2. 2 informed consent form
3. 3 Interview Guide for HoD & Lecturers
4. 4 Interview Guide for Employers of Graduate Teacher
5. 5 FGD for Pre-service teachers
6. 6 Project Proposal
7. 7 Approval Letter
8. 8 Administrative Clearance

Yours sincerely,



Hellen Opolot

For: Executive Secretary

**UGANDA NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY**

LOCATION/CORRESPONDENCE

*Plot 6 Kimera Road, Ntinda
P.O. Box 6884
KAMPALA, UGANDA*

COMMUNICATION

TEL: (256) 414 705500
FAX: (256) 414-234579
EMAIL: info@uncst.go.ug
WEBSITE: <http://www.uncst.go.ug>

Appendix 12: Similarity Index Results

ENHANCEMENT OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS IN PRE-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMMES IN TEACHER TRAINING INSTITUTIONS IN UGANDA: A CASE OF KYAMBOGO UNIVERSITY

ORIGINALITY REPORT

17%	12%	14%	%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	discovery.researcher.life Internet Source	1%
2	salford-repository.worktribe.com Internet Source	1%
3	ir.mu.ac.ke:8080 Internet Source	1%
4	www.jriiejournal.com Internet Source	1%
5	repository.up.ac.za Internet Source	<1%
6	Wan Abdullah, Wan Fadzilah Binti. "Integration of Employability Skills in TVET Trainer Training Programme: Trainer's Readiness in Teaching Employability Skills", Universiti Tun Hussein Onn (Malaysia), 2024 Publication	<1%
7	Nenji, Simon. "Epistemic (In)justice in Zimbabwe's Pre-service Teacher Education Programme in Selected Universities: A Critique", University of Johannesburg (South Africa), 2022 Publication	<1%
8	s.ladidn.com Internet Source	<1%