



The challenges of educated young women in the labour market:

**A review of perceptions and experiences of young
women graduates in accessing formal employment in
private sector.**

A Research Paper presented by:

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(Uganda)

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for obtaining the degree of
MASTERS OF ARTS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Specialization:

Children and Youth Studies

(CYS)

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The Hague, The Netherlands
December 2012

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This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the Institute of Social Studies. The views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

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Dedication

I dedicate this research paper to my precious family especially my lovely children Ernest Mary and Vianney Mary Angelo who endured my absence for fifteen good months without motherly love and care.

To my sister, and indeed a friend – Annette and husband whose efforts made it possible for me to concentrate knowing someone is taking care of my family in my absence.

I dedicate this paper to my beloved good father who gave me the foundation and has always encouraged his daughters in terms of education. I do appreciate all your interventions.

Finally, my paper is dedicated to all young fresh graduates in Uganda, the government of Uganda, formal private sector, parents and higher institutions of learning who were the major stakeholders identified in my research.

Acknowledgment

Being my first time to undertake research, the process has been a learning experience though with challenges. Various people have contributed to this learning process by strengthening and encouraging me while writing this paper.

My pleasure and gratefulness goes to my supervisor Dr. Cameron John whose professional supervision through the research process has shaped the development of this paper. I am deeply thankful to my Convenor and second reader as well Dr. Kristen Cheney for your impulse, contributions, significant comments and support right from the research proposal and design to the absolute completion of this paper. I also thank all my respondents for accepting my appointments and providing me with all the information I wanted use in writing my paper.

My honest appreciation goes to the Dutch Government through NUFFIC for granting me an opportunity of strengthening my capabilities from an internationally recognized institution, without your financial support, I would not have managed to attain these masters. I also extend my heartfelt thanks to my employer (Namagunga Primary Boarding School) for granting me a study leave to build my career path in children and youth issues.

Thanks to ILIAD, ISS Housing and Facilities whose quick response to my requests made it easy for me to adapt quickly in the new multi-cultural environment and cope up easily with new pedagogical methods of learning.

My humble appreciation goes to the general staff of ISS/Erasmus University who equipped me with knowledge and analytical skills since day one in class that has enabled me to produce this research project. I am thankful to all my classmates (2011-2012 CYS Class), fellow students from other specializations and professors who shared a lot of material knowledge and experiences with me.

I am indebted to extend appreciation to my colleagues from Uganda at ISS especially my batch and outside ISS who have loved, cared and supported me in all ways. May the Almighty God bless you and reward you abundantly.

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List of Acronyms

GOU	Government of Uganda
HR	Human Resource
HRM	Human Resource Management
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISS	Institute of Social Studies
IYF	International Youth Foundation
LFPR	Labour Force Participation Rate
MGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
NEP	United Nations Development Programme
NSSF	National Social Security Fund
NYC	National Youth Council
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programs
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UN	United Nations
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USE	Universal Secondary Education
WB	World Bank
YMGs	Young Men Graduates
YWG	Young Women Graduates

Abstract

Young people are often depicted as people with full potential for increasing productivity but with less opportunities of accessing the labor market. This paper explores the employment experiences of YWGs, with particular focus on formal employment in the large scale private sector in Uganda. YWGs are significant in this paper because they find themselves in a difficult situation after university where society has expectations from them as women and they also have their own aspirations that are to a certain extent reinforced by the changing development processes and contradictory to the society. Young people have hopes in employment as the only avenue to satisfy their consumption tendencies and short of that, they will have to adjust their expectations. But being the “pillars of tomorrow’s Uganda”, it matters for YWGs to be offered job opportunities at an early stage before engaging into the reproductive activities in order to realize their contribution to the country’s development. However, it is alleged by some employers and scholars that some YWGs have low levels of confidence that delay their access to the labor market. Therefore, the research has examined the different hiring experiences among the human resource managers and their implications to the opportunities and actions of YWGs looking for formal employment using mainly semi-structured interviews. I have argued that the reasons for not accessing formal private sector employment are profoundly embedded in the nature and environment of many large scale private organizations, and thus simplistic solutions may not yield any result. The paper has adopted the comparative theoretical approach in examining the complexities in the subject matter. Many aspects of graduate unemployment experiences, formal and informal gender discriminations at organizational levels have been discovered. The way employers select recruiting methods has significant conjectural and realistic insinuations for understanding labor markets and disparity.

Relevance to Development Studies

This research is relevant to Development Studies, as unemployment among young women graduates is a forgotten field of study in children and youth studies. From a children and youth perspective, young women matter because the age at which most of them leave universities are still energetic and not assumed the domestic care responsibilities that are said to be problematic in the employment process. It is important to engage young women while still fresh from university in order to strengthen their capabilities and live a life they have reason to value. Cheney observed that young people in Uganda are intensely dedicated to national development; however, their dedication is hindered by lack of power (Cheney 2007: 3). This implies that if they are empowered for instance, through an enabling environment to acquire decent employment, chances of bargaining their places in the society become high and participate fully in the nation’s development.

Due to the reality that many educated young people are failing to access formal job markets, education has been labeled a risk investment. However, some scholars argue that the negotiation power of individual job seekers plays

a bigger role in determining their destiny in the job market. Many aspects of the impact of unemployment and formal gender discriminations at company levels are to be studied. There is inadequate disaggregated data in this field in many developing countries. I find it significant to use this study to raise the need for more data in order to improve our knowledge about formal large scale private sector and its capacity in employing the ever increasing number of graduates produced by the mushrooming universities.

Keywords

Young Women Graduates, Formal Employment, Private Sector, Gender Discrimination, Human Resource Management

Chapter 1 Introduction

Two recent studies on young people (ILO 2010, WB 2007) imply that there are a large number of youth affected by negative changes in the labor market. In employment literature, youth are often depicted as a group of people with full potential for increasing productivity but with less opportunities of accessing the labor market. Among the reasons advanced for not being able to access the labor market are inadequate education, lack of skills, and mismatch of skills and poor attitude towards work. Educated young people unemployment has received little attention in employment literature and youth studies. In various writings on young people and employment (Ansell 2005, ILO 2010, WB 2007), there is acknowledgement of young graduates becoming unemployed. But little is done to assist the young graduates out of this dilemma and the situation is exacerbated by the now global economic crisis.

This paper explores the employment experiences of Young Women Graduates (YWGs), particularly those graduates accessing the labor market for the first time. It examines how YWGs are conceptualized in employment literature and how they (YWGs) perceive themselves in terms of employment. It subsequently suggests alternative perspectives on YWGs and employment. In particular, this paper explores the perceptions of YWGs on accessing formal employment in the large scale private sector in Uganda given that the formal economy is largely dominated by the private sector. Emphasis is placed on their job search methods, aspirations for work, the decision-making processes at all levels and the role of human resource management in the private sector.

1.1 Problem analysis

There are various constraints and challenges for young people especially women in trying to have their choices through their preferred actions. These challenges range from individual to structure though they are much pronounced through the structures that guide and impose various norms and values to young people thus, creating inequalities in society. According to socio-constructivist feminist theory, gender inequality springs from '*a system of gendered power relations that permeate the whole economy and underpin norms of male and female roles and responsibilities. Individuals themselves absorb these norms, which constrain their choices and structure the ways in which they define themselves*' (Elson et al. 2007b: 1). Policies become gendered as they are being shaped in a gendered power system (*Ibid*).

As suggested by (Denu et al. 2005: 1), 'while the labor force grows with an increasing proportion of youth, employment growth is inadequate to absorb labor market entrants'. In the context of Uganda, there are over 480,000 people who enter the job market each year but only 80,000 are absorbed in the formal employment, leaving the rest either unemployed or joining the informal sector (UBOS 2011). Within poor countries, youth unemployment is concentrated among those who are educated and from high-income families. Other dimensions in the labour market must be examined to assess the ease or the difficulty for educated young people to integrate themselves in the labour market (WB 2007: 99).

While there are various returns attached to being formerly employed, young people have not gotten the chance to access such employment equally. The empirical data suggests that it has been to the disadvantage of young women graduates to find employment especially in the large scale private sector. Reasons advanced include but not limited to inadequate skills, mismatch in the labor market and insufficient effort in job searching (Müller and Gangl 2003) (Muller and Gang 2003, Kogan and Unt 2002, Lassibille et al 2001, World Bank 2007).

However, there are complexities in searching for work especially from a privately owned company. This entails having human resource managers with different experiences in hiring that may sometimes involve gender biasness (Beattie and Johnson 2012). On the side of the YWGs, it may entail having job seekers who have high expectations and whose choices are partly influenced by the changes in the development processes. Mortimer et al contend that 'while adolescents often maintain high educational and occupational aspirations, the transition from school is characterized by few institutional supports...' (Mortimer et al. 2002: 439). As such, the whole system of job searching, recruitment and selection becomes constrained thus producing gender inequalities among the job seekers.

There are numerous nexuses connecting gender discrimination and job market – nexuses connected to the gendered education levels, gendered job search and self-presentation, such as qualifications, confidence as well as strategies for job searching, but also linked to the wider socioeconomic contexts, and to power relations in the whole system of finding formal employment for young graduates. However, as the linkages between formal employment, gender inequalities and young people seem to be very complex and most probably structural, one should desist from being simplistic to just insufficient skills or mismatch. Both formal employment issues and gender relations are diverse, thus impacts will be paradoxical and perspective dependent.

Formal employment is a valuable entry point in examining the experiences of YWGs accessing the large scale private sector. Defined as work where people work to receive a regular wage and are assured of certain rights, for example, paid holidays, maternity leave, sickness leave and so forth (WB 2007: 98), young graduates¹ especially women find it easy to join such employment and get saved from the precarious work in the informal sector. In most cases, formal employment involves formal job search methods though sometimes it may also involve informal job search methods.

1.2 Theorizing Young people

The term youth is highly contested in different societies. It is social construct term that can mean a different category of people depending on the location, belief, norms and existing legal framework (O'Higgins 2005). For ex-

¹ YWGs –The paper adopts only graduates who have completed university for the first time and they have never worked in life before and are looking for formal employment from the private sector. On average, a student is expected to complete university education at the age of 23.

ample, a standard definition of UN is that youth is a group of people aged from 15-24 years inclusive (O'Higgins 2001). In Italy the term is used to describe policies for people aged between 14-29 (in the north) and 14-32 (in the south). Though there are international standards for conceptualizing youth, in practice, it will depend on the country's culture and institutional factors to define who youth are and what their needs are (O'Higgins 2001). As youth philosophy has come to control international markets, age has become less significant than consumption models (Herrera 2006: 1426). In other words, someone's age is greatly well-defined by what he or she consumes but when it comes to development programs, governments consider age in relation to young people's programs thus, age being so significant. This implies that if youth do not get access to the long awaited formal employment which employment is said to keep the consumption levels, to a certain extent their identifications are greatly affected thus, lacking belongingness among the peers.

Although young people are significant in the context of national development, many nationalists have viewed them to be the leaders of tomorrow (Cheney 2007: 10) citing Ennew and Milne. In fact, Cheney writes that in Uganda, international organizations and a national constitution recognize the vital roles that young people will play in the country's future and it's even captured in the national youth anthem "the pillars of tomorrow's Uganda". From this line of argument, it matters for young people to be offered job opportunities in order to realize their contribution to the country's development. Young people are very sensitive to changes in the economy as their actions, hopes, and aspirations become disrupted and relayed (Durham 2000: 114). There is need to start viewing young people in the present in order to reduce on the social problems such as unemployment affecting the country.

As such, Uganda defines a youth to be a person between the age of 18-30 years though sometimes youth programs are implemented according to the international definition of youth (15-24 years). The economic activity rate sometimes referred to as LFPR² of young people in Uganda according to UBOS is 70 per cent being slightly more for males (74%) than females (67%). The statistics provide an indication of the relative size of the supply of labour available for production of goods and services in the country. It was noted that the LFPR rises with an increase in age for both males and females and that rural areas have slightly higher participation rates (71%), compared to urban areas (68%) (UBOS 2012: 17-18).

1.3 Why private sector

Uganda has undergone remarkable socioeconomic recovery and progress over the previous two decades with GDP growth averaging 6 per cent per annum (Bbaale and Mpuga 2011: 29). This growth as suggests by (Ssewanyana et al. 2011: 51) is partly due to sustained macroeconomic stabilization and implementation of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). It is under these

² This rate was defined as the Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) which measures the proportion of the country's youth population that engages actively in economic activities, either by working (employed) or when looking for work (unemployed) – UBOS 2012.

policies that private sector came into existence and the public sector started down-sizing paving way to private sector. Macroeconomic policies meant to improve on employment opportunities as the private sector translates into the key player in economic development and labor markets that are deregulated. Many development partners have spread out how private sector could heal many economic problems that had persisted under the public sector and this “gospel” created a feeling of hope among many local people especially the young graduates. However, economic expansion has remained by and large slow, even the existing job opportunities have not been shared equally among the prospects. The public sector has considerably down-sized, and in some instances, discontinued recruitment in total (Al-Samarrai and Bennell 2003: 2). Kivinen and Ahola contend that the development of the people-centered state provided employment for huge numbers of professional employees in the public sector (Kivinen and Ahola 1999: 192).

The World Bank (2005) as cited in Ssewanyana et al., suggests that the opportunities and incentives for firms to invest productively, create jobs and expand are largely dependent on how governments shape the investment climate (Ssewanyana et al. 2011: 51). The implementation of a wide range of economic and institutional reforms in Uganda meant to create a more conducive investment environment for both local and foreign investors, and promote increased participation of the private sector in the economy. It is argued that *‘on the demand side of the labor market, the high levels of investment and overall economic activity that result from such reforms should, holding other things equal, increase the demand for labor and result in favorable labor market outcomes’* (MFPED 2009: 4). However, the supply of labor especially the highly educated in Uganda is growing rapidly thus raising concerns with regard to the implication for the rate of employment growth in the country. It from such background that I developed a need to conduct a qualitative research on formal large scale private sector and YWGs who look for employment from that sector.

1.4 Structure of the paper

The paper is organized as follows: Chapter one consists of the introductory section where the relevance of this study and problem analysis have been discussed. Chapter two discusses the methodology used and the research questions. It provides the research techniques applied and how they were applied, how the sample was selected and the limitations to the study. Chapter three attempts to situate YWGs in the gendered job search literature and argue for capability approach and respect for local values in understanding the experiences of YWGs in accessing formal employment in the large scale private sector. It is within this chapter that the conceptual and analytical frameworks are described and discussed. Chapter four reviews the YWGs’ expectations after university, explores the job search experiences of YWGs, alternating stories of YWGs with findings and theories on adjusted expectations, frustrated withdrawal, and path dependence on existing networks. Chapter five explains the private sector recruitment focusing on what is regarded as an attractive recruit. It also discusses the formal and informal positions on gender discrimination, and finally explores the respondents’ views on sexual harassment. Chapter six provides the general reflections and conclusions based on the findings presented throughout the paper. It answers the research question and proposed im-

provement on employment accessibility and the implications for the global debate.

Chapter 2 Research Questions, Methodology, and Ethical Issues

This paper aims at investigating the employment experiences of YWGs, with particular focus on formal employment in the large scale private sector in Uganda. I specifically explore the opportunities available to this group, actions taken and the challenges they face while realizing their goals. Through this, I hope to have an explicit understanding of how different formal private organizations recruit and how their hiring experiences affect YWGs' opportunities. I am particularly examining the gender biases that are limiting to human resource in employing YWGs and the measures that can be put in place to improve employability of YWGs in the large scale private sector.

2.2 Qualitative research method

Qualitative method of research was the approach adopted for this study. Qualitative exploration is regularly portrayed as an approach whose accent on a pretty open-ended methodology to the research procedure often generates surprises, variations in course and novel perceptions (Bryman 2006: 111). This method will help in providing an explanation of YWGs' unemployment in Uganda. The idea behind the qualitative approach is that it confers the investigator with the chance of exploiting numerous methods of data collection such as observation, interviews and texts as well as different strategies of investigation such as case study, oral life histories and so on (Creswell 2009:175). Creswell elucidated that by adopting qualitative research, the emphasis is on learning the connotation that the respondents have towards a given phenomenon and focus is directed to a particular phenomenon. In this case, it was applicable in this study because my focus was on learning the experiences of YWGs when they are job searching.

O'Leary posits that 'qualitative research calls on inductive as well as deductive logic, appreciates subjectivities, accepts multiple perspectives and realities, recognizes the power of research on both participants and researchers...' (O'Leary 2010: 113). She also notes that qualitative approach highly calls for the value of intensity over magnitude and deals with issues that are multifaceted in order to discover and realize the connections, methods, lived ways, and conviction that are part of people and their institutions (ibid: 113-114). Creswell as well notes that if you need to understand a problem well, there is need to bring individual values into the research and identify the context of the participants (Creswell 2009: 12).

2.1 Research Objectives and Questions

Research Objective:

To investigate the opportunities, actions and constraints faced by young women graduates in accessing formal employment in the large scale private sector in Uganda

Main Research Question:

Why do educated young women in Uganda find it difficult to get formal employment in the large scale private sector?

Sub Questions:

1. How do the differences in human resource hiring experiences affect YWGs formal employment opportunities in the private sector?
2. What gender biases are limiting to human resource in employing YWGs in the large scale formal private sector?

Qualitative data would be required because the research problem (formal employment-exclusion from the large scale private sector) is not actually a factual situation. It is a problem that is socially constructed and calls for understanding people's perceptions over it and it should not be forgotten that perceptions are not a concrete entity. The problem at hand is subjective in nature because it is looking at views of YWGs on their exclusion from the formal employment sector thus, a need for qualitative data. Qualitative research was also adopted because there was need to face the participants in their natural setting and hear it from the horse's mouth.

2.3 Method of data collection

This part captures information on the techniques applied in getting the empirical data. Qualitative research uses more than one modes of data collection and these may include interviews (unstructured or semi structure), existing texts, and observation (Creswell 2009: 175). Semi-structured interviews and texts are the main sources of data for this study. Why these methods of data collection? The reason behind selecting semi-structured interviews and existing texts as the main sources of data collection was made based on the objective of the study. Interviewing is defined by (O'Leary 2010: 194) as '*a method of data collection that involves researchers seeking open-ended answers related to a number of questions, topic areas, or themes*'. The study adopted the semi-structured interviews in order to obtain the intended data but also come up with stimulating and sudden data that emerges. A face-to-face approach was adopted for the researcher to manage the process and the respondents to have the freedom to articulate their opinions. We agreed that in seeking informed consent, the interviewee would be informed of the general objectives of the study, and that she or he could withdraw her participation at any point.

The interviews with YWGs were conducted from different places ranging from homes to restaurants, and interviews with key informants were mainly conducted from their offices or board rooms. Before beginning a session, the respondent was informed about interview arrangements (e.g. place and time of interview, when to start and stop the interview, who would be present). In the end, twelve interviews were conducted with the YWGs, and ten with key informants at different timing. The interviews were not audio-recorded.

2.3.1 Pros and cons

The advantages of utilizing semi-structured interviews as the major source of data are varied. O'Leary explained that interviews allow a researcher to build connection and trust amongst participants (O'Leary 2010: 196). This tool may be advantageous because it brings out issues that are not familiar to the researcher. In other words, the researcher gets to hear it from the 'horses' mouth. For example, it was not clear to me whether the private sector is not obliged to advertise the existing job openings. But I got surprised when the YWGs told me that private sector do advertise but after recruiting their own. However, when I proceeded to the employers, the claims were refuted as indicated below:

Baseless claims. Any profit making organization cannot incur the costs of advertisement after recruitment; in that case they would not be aiming at achieving their motive of maximizing profits (Org 2)

Private recruitment is none of some one's business provided that the recruited workers are competent. But this happens more in the public sector (Org 4).

Those are excuses given by job seekers who have given up with their lives (Org 6).

I was enlightened by the employer of organization 4 when she stated that private sector recruitment was none of anyone's business, thus, a need to appreciate qualitative research. It also helps to remove the element of goading in a way of having a broader understanding of the context. The researcher was enriched with plenty and detailed qualitative data; and the tool is elastic enough in allowing you to investigate tangents. There is also provision for observing the non-verbal and verbal data. For instance, I observed the "I don't care" attitude amongst some YWGs who really seemed not to be bothered about their situation.

On contrary, this tool is subjective in nature in way that anonymity and confidentiality are not always protected. In the process, interviewees especially the key informants are not likely to be free with their responses. For instance, it was hard for me to secure appointments with employers and government officials due to the fear of anonymity and confidentiality. Instead, they preferred to fill a questionnaire but this tool was not my intention so I had to apply my network in order to get access to these key informants.

This tool yielded information on the different experiences of human resource managers in hiring, how they deal with the gender biases in the recruitment process and also strategies for improving on the opportunities of young educated women in Uganda who find it difficult to have their first entry into the formal private sector. Semi-structured interviews were the best for this research because it provided me with the 'art of asking' and 'art of listening' which are both vital in the interview process (O'Leary 2010: 194). However, it was important for me not to lose direction through investigating interesting tangents and to keep time.

2.4 Existing texts

Existing texts are treated as a primary data in text analysis (O'Leary 2010: 223) therefore, there is need to attentively consider the issue of subjectivity and it also involves examination of the content within the document. According to O'Leary (ibid: 218), '*texts can refer to almost any human / social artefact and cover a huge array of data types that might be derived from an organization, an individual, or perhaps a family*'. Creswell (2009) elucidated the usage of texts as the major method of data collection, to incorporate a dissection between public documents (newspapers, national surveys, ministry reports, international data conducted by international organizations, and so on) and private documents (personal journals, letters and e-mails, educational records among others). Creswell acknowledged text sources to include government records, such as political speeches, ministerial reports, and administrative governmental reports. In addition, it also represents contents of the mass media, novels, books, maps and so forth (creswell 2009, O'Leary 2010). All these above-mentioned sources are

grouped as public documents, which constitute the main form of texts used in this study.

Each existing text analysed was treated as a respondent who can give me data that was relevant to my topic (O'Leary 2010: 224). The existing texts were my entry point on issues that necessitated people's opinions which has enabled me to have a contextual framework to the understanding of the peculiar problem of the YWGs in Uganda. It helped in enriching the researcher in order to have an explicit background of the issue at hand before going to the field. If I did not make thorough reading about the issue in question which happens to be non-factual, the respondents would have been misled by my prejudices. More so, the existing texts expose the researcher to different approaches, procedures, terms and concepts. However, this method of data collection is usually a point of view; it may not necessarily be a true depiction of realism in context. There is also a possibility of reviewing famous literature due to inadequacies in accessibility.

The information in this study was got from books, articles, newspapers, official reports (both national and international), that have directly or indirectly addressed the problem under study. The official reports used in this study are basically policy documents issued by the government of Uganda under the umbrellas of her ministries and the UN agencies. The reports that are applied in this paper have frequently been written from a public policy angle within the period of 2006 to 2012 - in order to have recent information on the subject matter. Newspapers were used in order to have data that consist of public opinions.

Utilizing policy documents is also problematic because it may not mirror the actual situation on ground. In most cases they are written based on the interests of government and what they intend to do for a given society. But left with no other option, I used the available reports and it was also an opportunity to point to the need of relevant data on issues bothering people.

2.5 Data selection techniques

The empirical data that was utilized in the analysis of this study was both primary and secondary data. The secondary data was not obtained from one specific report because I was unable to come across any document that has solely addressed the issue under investigation in Uganda. More specifically, empirical data on large scale private sector and its capacity or terms of employing newly university graduates were largely scarce. The empirical data used was drawn from multiple reports that have tried to tackle youth unemployment in general terms. The data used in the analysis section were chosen based on the availability, relevance to the subject matter and credibility of the existing texts.

2.5.1 Availability

O'Leary suggests that locating data is very crucial in any research process (O'Leary 2010: 227). This involves knowing what has been already produced and its accessibility. An internet search was utilized with the guide of my supervisor. The ISS Library was also significant in enabling me to have access to the required data and with all the available possibilities; a wealth of options was revealed.

2.5.2 Relevance

It is important to note that the accessing data may not certainly transmute into addressing the core concerns of this study. This entails questioning the data's original purpose, when it was collected, targeted population and how relevant the data is to a particular problem. Thus, there was need to consciously think through such issues; hence, having data that have particularly focused on outlining the trends associated with young people's employment issues in Uganda.

2.5.3 Credibility:

This entailed the researcher to examine the qualifications of the initial researchers. I searched for thorough clarification of the methods applied and the challenges other scholars encountered in order to have a clear picture. Questions on who has used the data and how were coming up so as to ascertain the consistence of the data in relation to data from other sources. Also knowing whether the data has been used in any reliable published research like UN reports enabled me to assess the authenticity of the existing texts (O'Leary 2010: 227). For instance, texts got from the on-line were assessed on viewing credible universities like Erasmus University that had downloaded them with full accessibility. All these factors were considered in the data selection process.

While I recognise that the interviews of twelve YWGs are not representative of the formal employment experiences of the general population of educated young women, there is a lot to learn from their responses. The paper also benefited from informal conversations I had with YWGs before and after the interviews, with employed young women, lecturers from some universities and colleagues, whom I happened to meet and discuss on social issues such as this one under study.

2.6 Limitation of study:

It was unbelievable that statistics on private sector and its capacity to offer formal employment to new market entrants is scanty and scarce. Too much is written on its capacity in informal sector but seemingly nothing is said about formal sector. Even the little existing data is not disaggregated thus making it difficult for a researcher to have clear trends of the problem.

2.7 Steps in obtaining primary data

The research was conducted from Kampala and Wakiso districts all located in the central region of Uganda. While the choice of Kampala was basically prompted by the existence of headquarters of private sector organizations that house the human resource departments, the government ministries and other related agencies; Wakiso was the suggested district to carry out the research from but organizations in Wakiso kept on referring me to their headquarters for authorized information and speak to the concerned parties. Wakiso District is one of the newly created districts in Uganda that came into existence after partitioning Mpigi District in 2001. The district surrounds Kampala Capital

City and it has areas with markedly different areas of socioeconomic development, ranging from semi-urban neighbourhoods to typically rural areas.

The district is heterogeneous with a population of varied ethnicity. Its population was estimated at 1.3 million people in 2010 (UBOS 2007). I selected Wakiso for two good reasons: first its location attracts many migrants who are largely young people who finish university education and want to stay around in search for job opportunities. This is because the housing facilities are affordable and it's not very far from the city centre of Kampala. Second, I thought it would be easy for me to deal with a semi-urban district than a pure urban Kampala in order to reduce on the levels of bureaucracies because in practice, they operate differently. I thought it would be easy to identify respondents using the local leaders but only to have a disappointment.

I resorted to visiting the major University (Makerere University) in Uganda to find out the number of graduates that were produced since 2007 – 2011 and also to inquire about the contact information for the female graduates within a predetermined age range (22-24) but all efforts were fruitless. Therefore, I applied social network strategy where a colleague identified a niece who had graduated in 2010 but all her job searches were not yet successful. This was my starting point though my network had three contacts. In the process I applied snow ball sampling in accessing the respondents (YWG) who were aged between 22-24. I considered this age cohort because an average student is expected to finish university at 23 years (Bbaale and Mpuga 2011: 11); and is expected to be looking out for employment. Snow ball sampling technique was also used to identify the government officials after failing on various occasions to secure appointments with the concerned authorities. However, on the part of private sector employers, purposive sampling technique was applied because I considered the frequently mentioned organizations in the interviews with YWG. These organizations were basically service providers with differing services and they were eight organizations from three different sectors.

The research data was edited and summarized before leaving the respondents to confirm their responses. Accurateness, reliability, regularity, consistency and clarity were checked. Data was sorted into themes and it has been integrated in the text within the existing chapters in the paper. Due to anonymity of all respondents, we agreed not to mention their names in the paper. I have therefore named YWG as respondents from 1-12, employers as Organization from 1-8 and government officials as official 1 -2.

Chapter 3 Situating YWGs and Formal Employment

In this section, I concisely review novelty in the job search literature that I find particularly useful for understanding the employment experiences of YWGs. I then examine how YWGs have been conceptualized in the gendered job search literature. In the final section, I argue for a capability approach for understanding the complexities and subjectivities or perceptions in the employment experiences of educated young women.

3.1 Developments in Job Search Literature

There exists a vast amount of empirical research and a growing body of theoretical and conceptual reflections on employment. Two interconnected areas of examination yield significant insights about the employment search processes that are particularly useful in understanding the employment experiences of educated young women. These two areas are; job search behavior significantly and positively being related to finding employment, and gender system being central to analyzing employment situations. The pursuit of new employment is conceptualized as the product of self-regulatory process by which people recognize, instigate and act aiming at attaining a new job or re-employment (Kanfer et al. 2001: 849). While not underestimating the impact of macro-structural conditions on job search processes, it is at the family level that decisions to undertake a certain job search get influenced.

3.1.1 Core Self-Evaluation

In recent research on job searching, there has been development of terms such as core self-evaluation that are said to be so significant for job seekers. This was defined by Judge, Erez and Bono (1998) as cited in Wanberg et al as ‘a broad, latent personality construct reflecting the fundamental, basic beliefs that people hold about themselves’ (Wanberg et al. 2005: 412). The authors further note that, a person’s “core self-evaluation” consists of four extremely interrelated individual varying variables, including self-worth, comprehensive self-ability, locus of control), and well-adjusted. Wanberg et al posit that people with higher levels of “positive self-concept” exhibit higher levels of job search persistence over the period of their joblessness (*ibid*). However, if you critically analyze the approach of core self-evaluation with all its packages you may find that it fits well in the developed countries.

But in the developing country like Uganda where most children and young people have never gotten any chance of evaluating themselves, it becomes hard to speak of core self-evaluation to secure employment. This can be attributed to a general belief that schools are meant to do it all for young people, parents’ role is only to look for school requirements and the schooling system is basi-

cally a “banking concept”³ as illustrated by Freire (1970) where students can not question teachers. Core self-evaluation involves elements of being confident, building self-esteem, comprehensive self-efficacy, locus of control; and if students are expected to acquire such elements from school then confidence cannot be built without questioning, how do we expect young people to be successful in life? The unemployed are being held responsible for improving their employability, which also includes duties to participate in various labour market programmes, such as job-search.

However, in the context of young people it should be noted that their needs, actions and decisions are guided by social structures (families, schools and churches), informed by unequal power relations along gender and generational lines, influenced by information and support from employed and experienced people. Looking at it from this perspective, motivations and reasons for unemployment particularly among YWGs become complex, and can best be understood not merely in a self-regulatory process.

3.1.2 Gender and Job Search

Gender system has been considered by some scholars as being central to analyzing employment situations. Miles’ research in Jordan showed that gender system plays an important role in shaping labor market behaviors and outcomes for both women and men. Male unemployment is considered a problem of public policy in Jordan while female unemployment is not (Miles 2002: 425). This has an implication to the development discourse where in the contemporary world gender inequalities are still manifesting thus, a challenge to policy making.

Several studies have reported that gender and age are related to job search behavior. Wanberg et al. (1996) cited an investigation of gender by Leana and Feldman in which women were found to exhibit less job search behavior than men; (Wanberg et al. 1996: 83) found, however, that more women in U.S.A intended to look for a job in the future than did men. This suggests that men are always in a hurry to get jobs in order to assume the role of bread winner. For example; Mile’s research in Jordan revealed that Jordanian society understands the situation of joblessness as being more of a shame for men than women because of “sex-linked gender” responsibilities (Miles 2002: 422). She says that the consequences for communities of having big numbers of males failing to attain the culture of manhood in a given society can be unyielding. Crutchfield, 1989 and Messerschmidt 1993 as cited in Miles’ study argue that resource deficiency such as inadequate wage employment with which men could demonstrate their masculinity may result into having marginalized youth who are more likely to engage into street violence (ibid: 416).

According to socio-constructivist feminist theory, gender inequality comes from “*a system of gendered power relations that permeate the whole economy and underpin norms of male and female roles and responsibilities. Individuals themselves absorb these norms, which constrain their choices and structure the ways in which they define themselves*”

³ Banking concept of education in which the scope of action allowed to students extends only as far as receiving, filing and storing the deposits. Paulo Freire

(Elson et al. 2007b: 1). This suggests that society itself constructs people's behavior in relation to age and gender towards a given social phenomenon thus, in regard to my paper, the job search intensity or intentions for both young men and women will differ. The World Bank (WB) also notes that demarcated tasks and duties incline to restrict girls' chances and decision-making abilities but widen those of boys (World Bank 2007: 65).

In this case, the Gender Schema Concept (Bem 1981) which is the '*development of sex-linked categories for processing information*' (Catanzaro et al. 2010: 651) may play a big part in this study. It suggests that information processing of men and women may lead to differences in the job search intentions and value they have towards different organizations based on their beliefs that are socially constructed. The difference between man and woman serves as a prime organizing standard for every human society. Not only do girls and boys acquire gender-specific skills but they are also likely to have gender-specific self-concepts and personality attributes, to be masculine or feminine. Schema is a '*cognitive structure, a network of associations that organizes and guides an individual's perception*' (Bem 1981: 355). Schematic dispensation is so highly discerning and enables the individual to force structure and connotation onto the enormous collection of incoming incentives (*ibid*). Kulik posit that society classifies suitable qualities and manners for women and men, that are implanted using a socialization model; and always these definitions depict women to be care-takers and men bread winners (Kulik 2001: 155). This suggests that gender approaches that are socially constructed and explicitly embedded in the existing structures of Uganda can induce the employment practice and generate disparity among both educated and uneducated young people.

From a human capability perspective, the gender-related job search would be of greater importance if it contributes to the substantive freedoms of people to choose lifestyles they have reason to value. According to Sen (1999) as cited in Cameron and Eyeson, the possessions of people that are significant to their lives are greatly influenced by the norms and morals of their society Cameron and Eyeson (2009: 180). Following this line of argument is logically understood that there will be possible influence on job search strategies for YWGs due to the conception of the existing societal norms on employment. But this may not necessarily entail inequalities in gender employment especially among university graduates because people are living in a changing world where societal norms and values are subject to modification. Employers should not be blind-folded with the traditional beliefs on women because they can perform well as men more so even better. Muller noted that some elite women in Eritrea were able to make it through education and acquired good jobs in the revolutionary government because they were encouraged by the community in which they lived (schools and family) (Müller 2005: 123). The main idea in Sen's approach is agency and freedom, that is, human beings transform their lives into what they value.

3.2 Gender unemployment differentials

Almost all young people in low income countries are expected to have left schooling by the age of 24 thus, indulging in other activities such as paid work, domestic responsibilities and others forming households to raise their own families or a combination of all (WB 2007: 96). Individualists argue that human

beings should not attribute their joblessness to social class and gender notions, but instead on their individual failure. An analysis of gender differences in youth unemployment can be understood from World Bank Report of 2007. The report notes that in the recent past, there has been an increase in the female labour force participation which can be attributed to the increase in female educational attainment in all regions. But it also noted that the increasing levels of education never increased the LFPRs for young women. The reasons advanced varied however, for the educated women in Egypt, it was partly attributed to their preference to staying close to their households thus limiting their employment mobility. Lower levels of education were advanced for pushing the less educated young women either to the domestic labour or to subsistence agriculture (World Bank 2007: 106).

This evidence reveals the influence education has on employment opportunities. Studies conducted by UBOS on youth unemployment in Uganda in 2012, revealed that there are differences in unemployment experiences between young men and women in Uganda. According to UBOS (2012: 35), the general national unemployment rate stood at 5 percent during the period of the survey (2011/2012) with variations in locations, that is, urban areas having higher unemployment rate (13 percent) compared to rural areas. The youth unemployment rate increased from 4 percent in 2002/03 to 6 percent in 2011/12 though it reduced greatly in the urban areas from 17 percent in 2002/03 to 13 percent in 2011/12 compared to those in rural areas which showed no change over the same period (ibid: 37). The youth unemployment rate in Uganda according to the survey has big variations by age, with youth aged 20-24 having the highest rate (7 percent). These rates were generally higher for females (9 percent) than males (5 percent) for most of the socioeconomic characteristics (ibid: 35).

Similarly, it was noted in the survey that the unemployment rates²⁴ were higher for youth with above secondary education. Though there was lack of specification in the levels of education above secondary, the data clearly indicated that young educated women were more affected by the unemployment problem compared to their men counterparts with 17 percent and 9 percent unemployment rates respectively (UBOS 2012: 36). This is a clear indication that gender is central in analyzing employment situations in Uganda.

The WB posits that there is a likelihood of the less educated young people to experience problems in getting paid work compared to their more skilled counterparts (World Bank 2007: 99). But, in some poor countries like Uganda, educated young people are experiencing higher unemployment rates. Although the World Bank attributes young women's high unemployment rates partly to low education attainment, but the rates for educated young women in Uganda according to UBOS were high compared to the rates of the uneducated. With the introduction of equal opportunity and affirmative action in the education system particularly in Uganda, many young and old women have tried their best to acquire higher levels of education. However, the discourse of excess supply of educated people and rapid economic transformation in the contemporary world is what problematizes the social status of the qualifications issued by tertiary institutions. Kivinen and Ahola suggest that university credentials

⁴ The unemployment rate in this paper is the proportion of the unemployed expressed as a percentage of the comparable labor force – UBOS 2012.

are now becoming insurance policies that cannot earn a graduate a paid job but minimizes the likelihood of joblessness (Kivinen and Ahola 1999: 196). Can this be regarded as an unintended form of social exclusion?

3.3 Conceptual Framework Applied in this Research

Ira-Malmberg et al (2005: 231) noted that individualism and structuralism approaches are commonly applied in expounding on the employment opportunities of youth. It is important to explore the complexities and subjectivities of YWGs' unemployment using the two lenses. This will enlighten on how young people perceive their job search experiences in the changing environments they encounter and how the society reacts back to such circumstances. The individual concept is examined in relation to social exclusion that measures the extent of disconnection from labour and schooling probabilistically at the individual level (Raau et al. 2009: 173). And the structural approach is discussed in relation to interactions between development processes such as modernization, economic policies and so forth. The claims constructed in this section, represent the problem analysis in this study. The essence of applying such a theoretical framework is to help explain how each approach can assist in understanding the research problem and the nuances involved in the complexities of the unemployment experiences of the new generation. The human capital concept is to be applied as well. The foundation of this segment is to offer empirical evidence on the approaches as well as the main claims they developed that would be significant in analysing the problem of YWGs' unemployment.

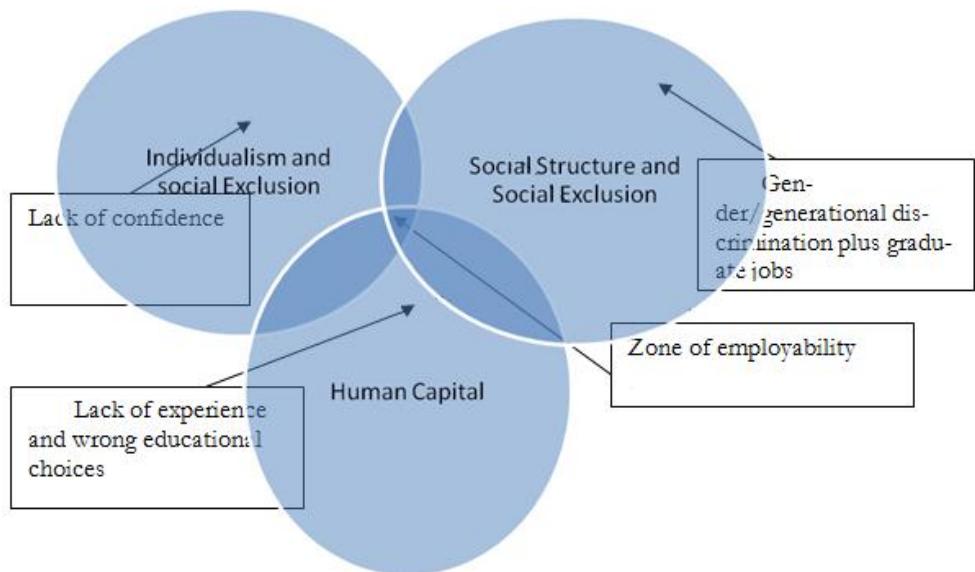
On one extreme, individualism theory suggests that people cannot blame anyone for their unfortunate state but take charge of their life situation and thus they are accountable for their own life. Joblessness can be shifted as an encumbrance on the shoulders of persons (Ulrich and Gernsheim 2002:24). Based on the claims advanced by proponents of the theory, it can be said that the theory perceives the occurrence of social puzzles to come from individual incapability thus, leading to discouragement, skills decline and stigma which further exacerbates the level of detachment from labour and education, hence, creating an individual form of social exclusion. Advocates of a forward-looking approach on social exclusion also argue that, the operating subject matter of social exclusion should not be based on an existing particular regrettable condition *per se*, but on the individual's ability to avoid such circumstances (Raau et al. 2009: 173). This implies that exclusion is a result of someone's failure to escape unemployment in the context of this paper; though, individualization has stern critics.

At the other extreme, structuralism perceives joblessness to be due to institutional weaknesses but not to individual inability as illustrated in the individualisation theory. Structural problems are crucial in establishing the destiny of unemployed young people in the existing labour market (Alvaro and Luque 2005: 8). This opposes the approaches that emphasize the lack of motivation and ability among young people to be the main reason for not accessing employment. This theory upholds that most of social issues are derived from the society but not from the individual; and if the problem is structural, then institutions have to take charge of solving such social problems.

For example, with the introduction and implementation of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) in Uganda, many events have happened including the change in labour markets. However, though there has been change in the labour market, education institutions in the context of Uganda have not upgraded to the level of new markets thus, a mismatch in skills. Therefore, can failure to acquire employment in the changing labour market be blamed on the individuals? It is therefore important to note that in order to understand the complexities in the unemployment problem among YWGs in Uganda, there is need to review the labour market changes and how these changes can assist a young graduate in accessing employment. This would entail an assessment of the link that exists between the human resource different hiring experiences and the job search methods used by YWGs plus skills acquired in universities. All these issues cannot be handled at the individual level though it necessitates the individual input.

Bynner and Parsons argue that due to the changing contexts, different generations of young people have varying experiences on their effects (Bynner and Parsons 2002: 290). For instance, before opening up for private sector in Uganda, schooling up to the level of university was a direct ticket to public service (formal employment). But with all the new changes that are both natural and unnatural, chances are less to have a direct and transparent transition from school to work thus, increasing the complexities encountered while job searching especially for YWGs. This implies that there at times when social problems go beyond the level of an individual; that is, when an individual cannot do anything constructive to help himself or herself get out of the disturbing situation. *'In what has been described as the "risk society" (Beck, 1986) there is increasing uncertainty about the choices to make and increasing probability that the wrong ones will lead to inferior life chances'* (ibid). In other words, they suggest that doubt is highly inbuilt in the choices made by people due to the hazardous society they are living. In the long run the likelihood of wrong choices leading to substandard life becomes high.

Figure 3.1
Research Analytical Framework



Source: Researcher's own construction (See Annex 1).

Chapter 4 Theory and Practice of YWG Experiences

Unemployment has turned into a reality for an increasing number of young people about to enter the labor market who are coming fresh from universities. Under this chapter, the study reviews the YWGs' expectations after university, their employment preferences, how they seek work, challenges they face and the responses to frustration. This chapter aims at discussing experiences of YWGs while looking for employment with the existing theories of individualism, human capital and structuralism and how the three interrelate to "disable" or enable the young people from exercising their agency thus, excluding them from the main agenda of development. This section will largely use the primary data from the field in order to have a real picture for the YWGs who were interviewed between July and August and to understand their perceptions and experiences in job searching. These women have been named as respondent 1 to 12.

4.1 Coming from education

I felt relieved of the university stress (course works, tests and exams) and the very early morning lectures (7:00am). I started searching for employment especially in banks, telecom companies NGOs' (Respondent 2).

All young people's next step after university education is to start looking for work. There are high expectations attached on degrees among university young graduates. They tend to think that education is a direct ticket to formal employment and the thinking is highly reinforced by the existing structures especially their families and the schools they attend. According to NEP (2011: 5), education is regarded to be a major element of human capital excellence that is vital for employability, greater incomes and justifiable economic development. However, the research revealed that despite having made various application letters to different organizations, most of the YWGs interviewed were not even given a chance of being shortlisted on grounds of mismatch of skills and other related reasons. This made me to have a brief review of the education provided to young people.

4.2 Conceptualization of the education offered to young people in Uganda

In Uganda, formal education is highly respected and the GOU has made access to education one of its key priorities through programs such as UPE, USE and the opening up for private investors into higher education (IYF 2011: 5). According to the World Bank (1999) in Ansell, education is regarded as an instrument of narrowing down the 'knowledge gap' between the rich and poor countries, (Ansell 2005: 145). In order to be successful in the labour market, individuals have to be with some resources of which education is among (Kogan and Unt 2005: 2).

Formal education is perceived to have expectations among the youth especially when it comes to accessing the white-collar jobs after the completion of schooling. Muller and Gangl argue that '*education and training is a key individual resource on entry into working life*' (Müller and Gangl 2003: 3). This means that qualifications have got a role to play in shaping the transition processes as formal qualifications are one of the prerequisites for most formal jobs advertised. But Mains asserts that '*the gap between unemployment and youth aspirations has been exacerbated by the spread of formal education...*' (Mains 2011: 4). This can be attributed to the fact that education has managed to contribute to the shaping of young people's identities who actually see themselves different (Ansell 2005: 156) or 'modern' to the level of choosing to remain unemployed rather than taking up 'low quality' or poor paying jobs in the absence of white collar or good paying jobs. This can be evidenced in the interviews conducted with the YWGs where one respondent said that:

'I cannot count the applications so far done. However, I was able to get two responses i.e. one from National Social Security Fund (NSSF) calling me for interviews and I passed very well but they were giving less salary compared to the work-load' (Respondent 3).

This indicates that sometimes young people may get access to formal employment but due to their new formed identities through education, they tend to put down some opportunities. The World Bank (2007) posit that in most cases graduate unemployment affects young people mostly from rich families who have many options at their disposal – even if they are unemployed they can survive. However, in the interviews conducted, such cases were minimal implying that there is a problem that needs attention though somehow complex. Due to its complexity, it entails all stakeholders to get involved in solving it because the issue is about social structures influencing young people's understanding.

4.3 Seeking Work

Research findings revealed that young people apply various methods of job search that include getting ads from newspapers, walk-in applications, go to employment agencies (such as Exquisite, NUFTI, and Detoilette), browse in the web and mobilize their local networks of friends and relatives. Although underestimated by the bulk of the search and matching literature, personal contacts often play a prominent role in matching job-seekers with vacancies. However, Tanova in his study in Cyprus contends that such informal methods of recruitment are mainly used in small organizations (Tanova 2003: 112). Huffman & Torres (2001) as cited in Tziner et al posit that job search techniques, have attracted augmented attention in recent years, most probably because of the rise in joblessness (Tziner et al. 2004). Mau and Kopischke have categorized these techniques by sources of information. The first category is "structured information," where occupations are formally announced in newspaper want ads and by employment agencies. The second category is "hidden information," where information on available jobs is attained through informal contacts with colleagues, friends, or family members, and approach is made directly to the employer (Mau and Kopischke 2001). It is against these two categories of job search strategies that YWGs deploy in their search for formal employment in Uganda. Studies comparing these two sources of information

have found the informal method of networking to be the most common strategy in seeking a new job (Mau and Kopischke 2001: 146).

4.4 Social Networking

My study observed that fresh graduates from universities resort to social networking after failing to secure employment using formal methods. The research revealed that immediately after graduation, the YWGs have got the chance to look for employment through walk-in applications and sometimes reading the newspaper want ads. The walk-in applications are directed to specific organizations such as financial institutions and telecommunication companies because they rarely advertise for newly entrant positions (Informal Discussion with some of the respondents). They also use informal techniques in job searching after running out of the resources such as money to purchase newspapers where they hope to find job adverts. Out of the twelve interviewed YWGs, none objected the use of formal methods though the extent and how they applied them really varied. Below are some of the formal job search methods used by the YWGs interviewed.

Only four applications done because I started relying now on the networks (Respondent 2), I listed 6 schools that I expected that I might be offered the chance, then wrote 6 application letters and delivered them in person. Were you reacting to any advertisement? No but some friends had told me while at university that schools do not advertise (Respondent 1), Cannot count the applications so far done. However, I was able to get two responses (Respondent 3), Have tried to look for employment from both public and private sector (hotels, banks and ministries) using adverts from newspapers, radios and walk-ins (Respondent 4).

Though the young graduates under study tried their best immediately after university to look for formal employment, their experience with the potential employers suggested that jobs are no longer given out through such mechanisms that is why most of them were referring the private sector to be discriminative because their recruitment is based on “technical know-who”. In their own understanding, they believed that you have to know someone in a given organization in order to get formal employment. They were not familiar with social network as tool of recruitment but as a tool of “fixing” you in a job opening.

Networking is defined as ‘*direct activities on the part of the individual to contact the immediate family, friends, acquaintances, colleagues, relatives, neighbors, and so on*’ (Tziner et al. 2004: 333). According to Wanberg et al, such activities assist the job searchers in accessing information that will help in finding work (Wanberg et al. 1999). Networking offers contact to a huge number of varied groups of individuals in a wide range of social and professional positions. It is commonly observed that job seekers use their friends and relatives to find a job. The experiential evidence shows that about half of all jobs are filled through individual contacts (Wahba and Zenou 2005: 443) and this can be attributed to the effectiveness and efficiency of the method. More so, it is also an opportunity to employers to have workers whose features are already identified by other people which seem to ease the whole process of selection.

However, the acquisition and transmission of job information by job seekers through their acquaintances matters, that is, the size and quality of social networks also has its own impact on the possibility to find a job. You can either get a job or fail to get it depending on the population density of your social network and this networking is allegedly noted to be working most for the uneducated than the educated (Wahba and Zenou 2005: 469). For instance, it was observed in the current research on YWGs in Uganda that almost all the interviewed respondents used social networking as their second priority in job searching. But in view of high productivity from the thirty universities in Uganda, vocational and technical colleges; I become pessimistic to assume that social network will greatly assist the YWGs achieve formal employment. And indeed Wahba and Zenou note that the possibility of finding a job through acquaintances reduces with “local unemployment rate” (ibid). In other words, in the presence of soaring unemployment rate especially among the highly qualified young people who are capable of using any available opportunity; it becomes hard for social networking to yield positive results because the size of job seekers exceeds the size of the networks. In this case there is an emergence situation of human capital exceeding social capital. Such a situation needs more of structural input than individual input in order have a balance development goal.

In Uganda, it is a rare case to find advertised jobs for fresh graduates from universities. For example, I monitored one of the leading newspaper in Uganda – New Vision for the month of July, 2012 and I found that out of the interviewed organizations, only one had advertised jobs at least for new university graduates and the organization did not mind about the working experience because it believed in training (New Vision 2012: 38). But in general instances, it is hard to find an advert that really puts into consideration the situation of young people who leave universities without practical experience. From the interviews conducted with private organizations, it was revealed that though many human resource managers talked about advertising both internally and externally, the external part really necessitated a serious need to fill a senior post as stated:

We advertise externally through newspapers, radios but after failing internally or while looking for people to fill senior posts (Org 3). Adverts: Focus is on internal staff because the nature of the business calls for experienced individuals, advertise externally after failing internally and also this is done to some extent through networking (Org 2).

Advertise managerial posts, provide internships to people doing hotel management and eventually employ them after their internship period. It is rare to advertise junior posts because we always liaise with institutional coordinators to allocate interns. Sometimes, internship seekers also walk-in and their applications are considered (Org 4).

The internal advertising actually also differed between the organizations interviewed; some referred to internal adverts as verbally informing the existing staff about the available job openings such that they can inform friends or relatives and other organizations targeted internal staff themselves to fill the vacant positions as narrated below:

We employ graduates on full time and relevant experience in accounting, banking etc is required depending on the vacancy available. We use 3 different avenues to fill the vacant position, i.e. internal adverts to members

of staff only... (Org 5), focus is on internal people first (Org 2), two types of recruitment i.e. internal advert – verbal communication to staff to tell friends and relatives... (Org 3).

Although I agree with Mau and Kopischke that the most common hiring practice is to request written applications for employment openings advertised in most professional organizations and that curriculum vitae are the most attractive venue for obtaining a professional job; but they do not specify which type of job seekers the method favors most. For instance, considering the group under study (YWG) which does not have any working experience and the chances of having networks are so minimal and whose confidence levels are said to be low; it becomes hard to secure formal employment in private sector using formal methods. These formal techniques are like a package or procedure of activities including job placement offices in universities that can lead to a successful recruitment process. However, with the lack of such offices in the Uganda universities and changes in the needs of the existing labor market, it becomes hard to speak of formal methods alone in securing formal employment especially in the large scale private sector. In the long-run, YWG tend to withdraw from job searching which again exacerbates the situation. Their withdraw is sometimes linked to not being in hurry to have jobs as compared to young men who are expected to assume the masculinity roles of bread winners.

4.4 Employment Preferences

There are perceptions held by college students both males and females on the organizational culture. According to Catanzaro et al., *'it was proposed that for all the three measures of organizational attractiveness (job pursuit intentions, organizational preference, and organizational choice) there would be a significant interaction between organizational culture...'* (Catanzaro et al. 2010: 656). It is alleged that men would choose a competitive organizational culture whereas women would choose a supportive organizational culture (*ibid*). In the process, such preference has to affect the job searches based on gender. For example, having a preference for supportive organizational culture would lead to some young women foregoing opportunities in the competitive organizations because it is perceived by them that supportive organizations have a preference between work and family life. In the context of Uganda however, the interviewed YWG's interests were contrary to the quoted literature. Most of them had interest in competitive organizations though they could not handle the circumstances of job locations. For instance one employer from organization 7, stated that though YWG would like to work *'posting them to our upcountry branches becomes a challenge because they fear to leave their young families; others just don't like to leave Kampala'*. To a certain extent I agree with the individualists that under such circumstances, the unemployed young people are choosing to remain jobless due to their conservativeness of not wanting to change their attitude towards a given situation.

4.6 Challenges and responses to frustrations

YWG face various constraints in trying to look for employment immediately after university and these challenges can lead to young people's adjusted expectations, perpetuate the dependence path and finally increase the levels of

social exclusion from the main agenda of global development. Some of these challenges were found to be individual and others were institution. These challenges can be summarized below in table 4.1 and further explained in the next paragraphs showing how they determine YWGs employability in a given organization and how YWGs respond to the frustrations.

Table 4.1
Summary of challenges faced by YWGs while job searching in the private sector

Respondent	Course Undertaken	Challenges
1	B.A Education	Experience, sexual harassment, societal expectations, regarded weak and lazy, technical know-who
2	Business Statistics	Advanced technology, experience, lack of trust in fresh graduates
3	Business Administration	Experience, sexual harassment and inadequate education
4	Business Administration	Need 4 high grades, Limited openings due to advanced technology, jobs based on know-who
5	Business Administration	Demand for experience, taken not to be well qualified
6	B.A Social Sciences	Private companies recruiting their own
7	Information Systems Management	Know-who, girls regarded as less productive, boys considered fast thinkers
8	B.A Development Studies	Experience, factors e.g. smartness and politeness not considered
9	B.A Social Sciences	Experience, know-who, and exploitation
10	B.A Social Sciences	Experience and nature of being a woman
11	Telecom Engineering	Employment not based on merit
12	Economics and Statistics	Experience, lack of adequate training

Source: Primary data

It was observed that YWGs face various challenges however, demand for experience, employment based on technical ‘know-who’, sexual harassment, advertising after recruiting and advanced technology appear to be the most obstacles for YWGs in accessing first entrance employment in the labor market.

Calvès and Schoumaker argue that the economic reforms have remarkably disadvantaged the contemporary generation of job searchers (Calvès and Schoumaker 2004: 1343). They suggest that these disadvantages are manifested in the high unemployment rates reported among youth in several Anglophone countries such as Nigeria, Kenya, and Uganda and so on where the state is no more the major employer in this changing world. However, the effect of the economic reforms on female labor force participation in urban Africa seems to vary (*ibid*: 1344) and I posit that the difference may rotate around the human resource hiring styles. The way employers select recruiting methods has significant conjectural and realistic insinuations for understanding labor markets and disparity (Mencken and Winfield 1998: 136). That is why some YWGs were referring to private sector to be discriminative in nature by employing only people known to them. The element of discrimination was captured in some of their statements below:

Employment is based so much on technical know-who (Respondent 1), they mind profits so they start reducing costs of training and induction by looking for experienced workers’ (Respondent 9), ‘being private, in most cases

employment is not based on merit, limit employees by recruiting small numbers in order to reduce costs' (Respondent 11).

Miles argues that the private sector's preference for men over women employees has been recognized in Jordan and issues like children and domestic roles were mentioned as the key restraints to hiring more women (Miles 2002: 415). In regard to this paper, some employers noted that *young women graduates are sometimes not settled i.e. they are job hoppers, they are career obsessed – work for 1 or 2 years and go for further studies. Any profit making organization cannot entertain such tendencies* (Org 2). This backs the issue which was raised by Kellow et al (2010: 13) that private sector was not meant for solving social problems instead its major motive was to maximize profits. Though their motive is to maximize profits, private companies face many costs when the young recruited people turn out into being job hoppers.

Structural factors such as the education system, work experience from fresh graduates, technological advancement among others were largely mentioned as respondents reflected on their experience and prospects in the current labor market. These experiences varied to some extent by field of study, year of study and university attended. Comments made by some YWGs and supported by some private employers, suggest a mismatch between the training and high expectations of many young people and the jobs that are actually available. YWGs expressed the view that their training had been narrow and they felt frustrated by what they perceive as a skills mismatch (Miles 2002: 420). For instance one respondent said that '*employers request for working experience from fresh graduates but they forget that in the structure of teaching program at the university, there is nothing related on working experience. Employment is based so much on technical know-who*' (Respondent 9). This respondent went ahead to suggest that '*there is need for state intervention because it is the role of a state to care about its population but if the economy is left to private sector, there is too much room for exploitation and social exclusion*'. From this quote, there is a feeling that young women graduates are excluded from the general socioeconomic programs and their exclusion is rooted from the existing structures such as education.

Employers claim that the young job seekers only read to pass exams but never internalize the concept of education. They further say that universities are producing students who cannot put the knowledge they have acquired from the training institutions into practice thus a mismatch on the labor market. For example, when asked about why they request work experience from fresh graduates, the employer replied that:

Experience is important but it is not really considered for the new entrants. Opportunities are always there but some job seekers are under-achievers, they don't know what they want. For example, we have just finished the 3rd interview looking for an IT specialist and specifically a fresh young woman graduate but still we have failed to get the right candidate. This implies that universities are producing half-baked students that cannot compete favorably in the fast growing private sector. The building block for productivity is knowledge, understanding, motivation or self-driven and integrity: this is what HR looks for from a prospect. The target of recruitment is to have the best ability, personal traits in order to compete. Experience is a key indicator for someone's capacity and sometimes it is used to sieve out from the large pool of applications (Org 6).

The research revealed that organization-level factors were cited frequently as each YWG discussed the challenges they face in accessing formal employment from the private sector. Various respondents said that employers are reluctant to hire them because '*Young women are considered to be lazy and not being able to achieve higher productivity*' (Respondent 1). Asked why she hasn't been able to secure formal employment? Respondent 1 answered that:

'... being a girl may be employers look at me as someone who is lazy, who cannot handle the busy schedules of boarding schools e.g waking up very early in the morning to supervise the morning preps, leaving late like past 10:00 pm etc. It is perceived that it is boys who can handle such situations. Students also under-look female teachers compared to male teachers. Also employers consider the reality that society expects a woman to get married immediately after school. (Respondent 1).

When asked about the challenges they face after recruiting YWGs, most employers' responses showed interest in employing young women but due to women's biological nature, it implied that some employers 'sexualize' job seekers. For example, out of the eight interviewed organizations, seven managed to give their views on YWGs' employability as below:

Generally, I have a feeling that girls fairly compete only that employers may limit the recruitment of girls to avoid the biological and conflict issues within the organization (Org 1), Giving birth all the time – the organization incur a lot of costs in paying for benefits (Org 2), Work for one year then request for maternity leave, being sick all the time, children falling sick, extension of maternity leaves, gain little from them after conceiving because they try to divide the love for work and love for fun (Org 3), All young women conceiving at the same time – this affects the normal operation (Org 4), Maternity leave before exhausting their probation period. This breaks up the flow of the work which affects the branch performance (Org 5), becoming pregnant before completion of the probation period; it inconveniences the institutional plans, young women are not cooperative with workmates (Org 6), yearly maternity leaves may be because of the fertility age (Org 7).

Employers' responses were to a certain extent supported by a government official who actually noted that employing YWGs can be risk to companies. In his own words he said that *'I agree there are instances where the labor market especially the private sector is not friendly to the new and young entrants but also employing more young women can turn out to be a risk to the organization's performance because of their home responsibilities'* (Govt. Official 1). This suggests a gendered stereotyping that affects the job search of YWGs because even when your personal traits are highly stimulated, the existing structures already have defined your destiny and they do not expect you perform beyond that. The demeaning and sexualizing of YWGs would frustrate these young people and get pushed into the 'discouraged' group. In this case, the human capital acquired by the YWGs becomes a risk investment because it has failed to translate the qualifications gained from schooling into a main source of employability based on gender issues. Kivinen and Ahola argue that in the epoch of increasing provision of advanced education and fast economic transformation, the social position of qualifications offered by tertiary institutions has progressively become more challenging (Kivinen and Ahola 1999: 196) especially among YWGs because their capabilities are still undermined by some individuals due to the fact that they are women.

However, one respondent had a different view on employers being reluctant in hiring them. She said that '*the more need for profits makes the organization to recruit more young women because they are regarded as the "flowers" of the organizations. They are the center of attraction to various clients*' (Respondent 3). She actually cited examples of telecom companies and banking institutions that their customer care desks are mainly occupied by beautiful YWGs. Though she was not hesitant in citing out the higher levels of absenteeism amongst YWGs, she was well convinced that the nature of these women (beauty and soft talk) put them on a high demand in the formal private sector. Indeed, even some employers also noted on the benefits of employing YWGs that they are flexible, easy to manage, are not money hungry among others; implying that there is still room for employing YWGs. Consequently, the respondent's argument was based on the reality that the nature of YWGs makes them employable in the formal private sector.

The competition in the private sector especially in the service industry is all about excellent customer service. And being that they are naturally caretakers, YWGs exhibit more chances of getting formal employment in the private sector. But how many positions for customer service in an organization? What about the YWGs who cannot handle customer service or who are not interested? All the above discussions illustrate the complexities and subjectivities in issues regarding employment and young people thus a need for redress.

Some findings suggest that there was a tendency among a small proportion of women who literally reject job offerings. For example, respondent 3 was proud while saying that '*...I was able to get two responses i.e. one from NSSF (National Social Security Fund) calling me for interviews and I passed very well but they were giving less salary compared to the work-load*'. This indicates that as youth of the "dot com" generation, she exercised her agency by knowing what is worth for her and equivalent to her qualifications and skills; but she acted ignorantly of the labor market situation though she had hope in herself and the confidence was high. The hopes fashioned by the many trails of education are not uniform with actual openings. For greater success to occur, young graduates must continuously be mindful on how to evade the "dead-end" educational web and the deceptions of credentials whose meaning is deteriorating (Kulik 2001: 156). In the Ugandan context, in most cases jobs are rejected on the grounds of distance, job postings in up country (Org 7) where people do not want to leave their home areas. The rejection can be attributed to the dependence path that is perpetuated by the parents and guardians; that make these YWGs not feel so devastated by the situation.

Chapter 5 The view from the large scale private sector organizations

This chapter aims at examining the responses of the employers from the large scale private sector on the view of YWG employment. The focus is mainly to explore what is considered an attractive recruit and determine whether it can be applicable to the graduates in question and the context of the education provided. The chapter also elucidates on the two existing forms of gender discrimination within institutions. The final section will discuss the issue of sexual harassment which was highly raised by the YWGs as one of the constraints in looking for jobs in the large scale private sector. This issue is discussed in this chapter because almost all employers agreed with the YWGs that it happens though they had a different take on it.

5.1 What makes an attractive recruit

Various factors were raised in the field in relation to what employers expect from job seekers. These elements included qualifications in terms of degrees and diplomas, working experience and personality traits. All these prerequisites varied from one organization to another. For instance, some employers posited that:

‘... posts like accountant a degree holder is mainly considered but if a diploma holder has experience he or she may also be considered. Graduates without experience face stiff competition in the labor market especially in this era of globalization. Their chances would be slim’ (Org 1). Qualifications vary for example, junior posts - Bachelor’s degrees, senior posts-masters degrees. Focus is usually on business courses and science courses especially Information Technology. Consider fresh graduates who have already been on our graduate training program and they are usually 15-20 young graduates (Org 2). Other requirements: experience, attitude are very crucial (Org 3), In terms of resources planning, we go in for a person with the right qualifications and experience. Class of degrees not considered. Letters of referees really matter (Org 5), consider graduates who passed math and English on ‘O’ Level and have got at least a second class lower degree. About the courses: Usually not so specific but business courses are generally preferred (Org 6).

From those responses, there is an indication that organizations differ in recruitment practices and those hiring differences in one way or the other affect the job search activities of the YWGs looking for formal employment. All employers aim at having the well qualified prospects into their organizations. However, in the contemporary world, it has been discovered that when all prospects happen to be well qualified, the employers resort to having the most suitable but not one with the best credentials. In this case, there is a shift from human capital to social capital.

5.1.1 Personality traits

Most employers especially in the changing labor market have adopted the mechanism of considering personality traits of job seekers especially in the private sector. Personality traits may involve issues concerning the level of confidence, self-esteem, attitudes and so on. Empirical studies have confirmed not only that proactive people are more thriving but also that they react more adaptively to their surroundings (Brown et al., 2006: 718). It was revealed in the study that personal attributes are highly considered during selection and recruitment procedures. For example, various employers that were interviewed in this study clearly indicated the significance of such qualities implying that if a candidate did not possess at least some of the prescribed qualities, the chances were high for not acquiring the job. For instance, one employer stated that, *'the building block for productivity is knowledge, understanding, motivation or self-driven and integrity: this is what HR looks for from a prospect. The target of recruitment is to have the best ability, personal traits in order to compete'* (Org 6).

However, most of young people are not aware of such requirements – what is built in their brains through schooling is to have the human capital in terms of acquiring high levels of education then employment will be automatic. Therefore, due to changing socioeconomic structures there is need for imparting and strengthening young people's personal traits in order to avoid their education attainments become human risk capital as suggested by Kivinen and Ahola (1999).

In theory, normative anticipations of high levels of confidence and positive self-worth are attached with a job endorsement. Individuals only pass on job information to those whom they are confident can do well in the positions. Barron and Bishop (1985) as cited in Mencken and Winfield argue that the excellence of applicants is also imperative since vetting applicants needs a considerable commitment of organizational resources (Mencken and Winfield 1998: 138). Consequently, a system that increases applicant's quality also decreases vetting costs. In this regard, the level of confidence, excellence and positive self-esteem in addition to qualifications determines an attractive recruitment especially in a large scale private sector regarded as competitive.

5.2 The formal position on gender discrimination

According to UBOS 2003 as cited in Semboja Uganda experienced a shared gender equalized population which implied an essential provision of job opportunities to all young people (Semboja 2007: 10). In contemporary Uganda, there are socially pleasing circumstances, where both sexes have equal right to education and cases of girls out performing boys are largely manifesting in different education levels. Irrespective of the differences in education, young women also face larger complexities than young men in entering job market, because of biased policies, institutional barriers and cultural influences (ibid: 18). Miles provide a good example of Jordan where women's conduct has conventionally been severely controlled, reducing their activities to the household sphere (Miles 2002: 413). Though for Jordan's case the incidence may be partly due to the Arab culture, and although in Uganda it is not so much pronounced, there occasions where you could predict the prevalence of gender bias in the

system at the national level. For instance, almost all statistical data on labour market show wider variations in female labour force participation.

There are a rising number of young women employed in the formal sector in Uganda (Semboja 2007: 18). But formal paid jobs are always dominated by men and offers fairly restricted employment to young women (ibid). Semboja further comments that '*the share of women employed in manufacturing, mining, communication and construction sectors is low*' (ibid). This is further illustrated by UBOS (2012: 27), where employment was divided into primary, manufacturing and service sectors. Young women dominated the primary sector (agriculture) with 62% and service sector with 19% compared to their young men counterpart who had 51% and 12% respectively in the two sectors. The service sector has greatly gained significance in recent years in Uganda and it is assumed that it is the major employer of highly educated persons, but it should be noted that it is highly dominated by many less skilled occupations. There is a clear indication that gender and generational factors do greatly influence people's accessibility to labor markets, thus, determining their employment status.

It has been noted that most large scale organizations use more formalized approach to recruitment (Woodhams and Lupton. 2006: 112). However, Woodhams et al argue that some of the formal methods like recruitment advertisements are discriminative in nature in way that organizations advertise in relation to what they feel can "get away with". The packaging of the advert may also create illicit discrimination in many countries, either openly – by showing a favourite for prospects of a specific gender, or indirectly – by categorizing conditions with which considerably less individuals of one gender can conform (Woodhams et al. 2009: 2088-2089).

5.3 The informal position on gender discrimination

'General criteria for employment: equal opportunity employer – don't segregate' (Org 2); this was a quote from the primary data where one Human Resource Manager (HRM) stated that their organization is an equal opportunity employer. Although other interviewed organizations kept on mentioning equal opportunities for all though in passing, it is organization 2 which attracted most of my attention due to the heavy emphasis on that notion. What is equal opportunity in the context of the subject matter? The employer answered that *'it is giving every prospect equal chances of being nominated or selected for any job openings – we do not segregate'*. However, by the end of our discussion concerning YWGs and fresh young graduates generally in accessing formal employment in Uganda, it was observed that there was a preference of a given gender over another and this will be discussed in the later stages of this section.

In her research in Britain, Cockburn conceptualized equal opportunity as an instrument of administration that has disinfected and contained the scuffle for fairness (Cockburn 2007: 213). From this definition, it can be understood that equal opportunity notion comes up in an environment which has growing inequalities among individuals in a given society. Therefore, in the process of agitating for equality, equal opportunities turn into a struggle for equal ground levels.

The interviewed organizations had different approaches towards the equal opportunity notion. But before indulging in their differences, it is important to

note that most of them were large scale private enterprises with competitive businesses focusing mainly in the service sector. These organizations included telecom companies, banking institutions, and hotels. There was a general belief in equal opportunities by employers among all applicants but efforts to confirming such beliefs were fruitless as some gender-based questions were not fully answered. However, this did not stop the discussion to proceed and I managed to obtain some data in relation to the subject matter..

It was observed that being private organizations, they face stiff competition that makes their work to be diverse. In doing so, some of these organizations find themselves in a challenging situation where the business has to continue operating at the same time putting into consideration the society's needs (employment). They try to look for employees that suit their standards and organizational structure in order to achieve the organizational goal. For instance, Org 3 highlighted on some of the questions asked that:

We recruit fresh young graduates and train them because experienced workers are not easy to be controlled. Asked about the demographic characteristics in terms of age and gender for the newly recruited young people – the answer was 'It depends on the department e.g. Foods and Beverages (20-26 ages) gender sensitive, house-keeping (20-32 ages). Women apply freely – provided that they have the best qualities. Young men apply more because they tend to insist, yet young women may try but they give up so easily in preference for marriage. Ladies have fewer applications but acquire the more jobs because they love their work and the organization is basically women oriented (Primary Data).

In reference to that primary data, I would suggest that it is rare to have equal grounds in accessing formal employment and when it comes to young women, the situation worsens as highlighted in the quote above. If I may take the same organization as my case study, why would some jobs be gender sensitive yet the educational skills provided were holistic? Why bother young people with too much to cover in a given field of study yet in actual sense the skills gained are inapplicable based on their gender and age? This is how I depart from the theory of individualism. From this point of view, though Woodhams and Lupton argue for the incompatibility of equal opportunity and managing diversity; none of the two approaches can explain the situation quoted (Woodhams and Lupton 2009: 204). Diversity systems accentuate the relevance of moving to a culture and environment that commends individuality and equal opportunity is perceived as an improvement of a disparity within the operations of the labor market (ibid).

There is a general preference for young women to apply for jobs but men do apply most and the reason put forward by the employer was the women's preference for marriage. I would argue that it is because of the unfair ground that pushes YWGs out of the labor market. From my own experience, young women in Uganda have been greatly linked to marriage issues especially after their education. However, society forgets that these YWGs are not homogeneous; while some may really want to get married, others may be pursuing other needs such as employment for life. But once they find unleveled platform for advancing their needs, as young people, they will always look for options thus, frustrated withdrawal from job searching and this, may also be reinforced by the dependence path on parents and guardians. If people studied the same program lets say Hotel Management, and they happen to apply when the com-

pany is looking for a chef, chances are high that for men to take the opportunity because of the sexualizing of the job openings – and this is what I termed as the informal gender discrimination.

Similarly, the theory of equal opportunities is actually approached differently among organizations and these different approaches may have diverse implications on the side of job seekers especially the group under study. For example, one employer noted that '*We don't segregate, provided that the applicant is capable*' (Org 5). *'Fair ground – it is up on the applicant to prove that he or she is worth the job'* (Org 6). These two quotes were answering two different questions but zeroed down to capabilities of job seekers. How can the capabilities be strengthened in an environment which is not equally leveled? If I may quote one YWG who said that:

'I agree that unemployment affects girls more than boys because in the context of the program I did at university, it is basically regarded to be boys' course and employers would prefer boys to girls because some work involves manual and girls are considered weak' (Respondent 11).

This respondent did telecom engineering from Makerere University but her experience in job searching has been, to be viewed as a weak person who undertook a course supposedly to be done by strong people (men). This may not necessarily be the reason for not obtaining a professional job but various responses from employers sometimes are packaged with terms that demean, stereotype and sexualize YWGs. For example, asked about the chances of YWGs in acquiring a job opening, the employer replied that *'It depends on the vacancy but this organization generally has a lot of manual work that involves masculinity. Therefore, young men tend to override'* (Org 4). From a reality point of view, the employer seemed to have an argument but the argument is based on someone being a man or woman and this will affect YWGs who try to look for employment in sectors such as hotel and tourism that are woman-friendly but having masculine jobs.

However, on the other hand, equal opportunity was also disregarded by some of the YWGs when asked about inequalities in unemployment among young people. Some of them said that:

I don't agree that unemployment affects YWGS more than YMGS because: Girls have more opportunities because they are attractive to male bosses, most of new organizations start businesses that are good for young girls like banking, tours and travels and so forth. Young girls are not yet married so it becomes easy for employers to recruit them. Depending on the organization, girls are more committed and patient, they can easily be manipulated and exploited. Therefore, the issue is about luck and who do you know (Respondent 9).

Disagree that unemployment affects girls more than boys because most organizations employ more girls because they are taken to be responsible (Respondent 10).

The above quotes indicate that there are various issues considered while recruiting and the playing ground is not leveled. Depending on the business being set-up, under this era of free market it is the employer to know exactly who can serve best in order to accrue the intended profits. Frequently within some organizations, minimum equality values are ignored.

5.4 Sexual Harassment

The current study revealed that there is fear of sexual harassment among YWGs which deter them from job searching in the formal private sector. Though none of YWGs could admit of being sexually harassed, some of them narrated how some employers would prefer to sleep with young women looking for employment before offering a job opportunity. For instance, asked on unemployment inequalities among young men and women, the respondent replied that; *'unemployment affects young women more compared to young men because; high expectations from male bosses discourage girls from job searching (Respondent 5)*, another respondent also said that; there is fear of sexual harassment among YWGs looking for employment and clarified that sexual harassment may occur at all levels of job search for example *'it may be a person on the desk receiving application, at the interview or at the selection level depending on the organization'* (Respondent 8). Though most of the interviewed employers agreed that sexual harassment does really occur in some organizations, most of them denied such acts to have happened in their organizations. And in fact some went ahead to attribute it to the YWGs who become so desperate for jobs and set their mind to seducing employers. However, another employer who was a woman said that as young women, they should also learn how to play their cards well and get to know their rights and how to exercise them. She greatly refuted the notion of mind-set suggesting that it is the men who advance for it (Organization 4).

From the discussion with both YWGs and employers, there is a clear indication that sexual harassment happens and factors for its manifestation can be individual and structural. From the individual point of view, YWGs are perceived to know their rights and how to exercise them towards such problems. Second, it is YWGs' desperation that forces them into such actions and they are told to have principles. Third, YWGs also facilitate the occurrence of sexual harassment through their mind-set. However, using the structural lens, it becomes hard for YWGs to prove that they were harassed. For instance, one government official from the National Youth Council said that:

...due to scarcity of jobs in Uganda, some employers are using it as an advantage to exploit all young job seekers for example, boys are asked for money before recruitment and for girls it is always sex requested. We have done a national study which is not yet published but it was revealed that 75% of all girls looking for jobs have faced that problem. But giving in works against your self-esteem which affects your productivity.[...] Although the government laws do not allow sexual harassment, sometimes it is hard to prove that you are sexually harassed that is why the vice is on the rise.

Therefore, how can a young graduate get herself out of desperation? How can she prove to courts of law or police that she was sexually harassed? These are some of the complexities and subjectivities in YWGs' unemployment and the solution is all about policy thinking and more research covering a wide range of variables.

Chapter 6 Conclusion and answers to research question

In this chapter, I made some serious reflections and conclusions based on the findings presented throughout the paper. This chapter aims at answering the main research question, followed by views on how to improve on the transition from university to employment. Finally, the paper explores on the implications for the global debates on YWG employment.

6.1 Why it is difficult for YWGs to enter formal employment in large scale private sector in Uganda

This study finds that social constraints to young women's employment in Uganda loom large in disabling this group from accessing formal employment especially from the private sector. For instance it was revealed that some of these young women education choices at the universities were influenced by their family members. For example, one young woman said that *'I wanted to do fashion and design but my parents regarded the course as wastage of resources and forced me to do business administration'* (Respondent 3). Another YWG preferred doing community psychology but ended up in education due to influence of the uncles. This has implications on how the YWGs look for formal employment that is; due to the fact that it was not their area of interest; these young women tend to put in less effort in searching for employment thus, a reduction in the job search intensity.

Many YWGs find it hard to access formal employment in the large scale private sector because of inadequate experience. Though it sounds unfair to the side of prospects, but the employers contend that experience is the basis of working with fast growing and competitive sectors like telecommunication, tourism and financing. Unless when YGWs try their best to have adequate and appropriate experience, their chances of being employed are so minimal. Due to frustrations faced by some young women in looking for formal employment in the private sector, their attitudes and self-efficacy have tended to change and reduce thereby prolonging the unemployment period.

Prospects also lack information on private sector operations. It was observed that there is an information wide gap between employers and prospects. Prospects are largely ignorant about the recruitment and selection procedures in the large scale private sector. Most of them who get a chance of studying human resource management as a course unit in their field of study are taught the traditional mode which works best in the public sector said to be shrinking. Therefore, it becomes hard for some prospects to compete in the changing labour market. The Uganda labor market is faced with notable mismatch between what education system offers and the labor market requirements. Information on the labor market both in public and private sectors, including, the large informal sector is severely constrained by lack of resources. The employment and labor services are not spread throughout the country. The country lacks effective reliable labor market information to inform policy development including education and training (NEP 2011: 2).

It was also observed that immediately after graduation, YWGs tend to exhibit high job search activities but due to fruitless efforts, they tend to withdraw gradually which affects their job intensity. These YWGs have not been thoroughly trained in the proactive ways of searching for jobs. Wanberg et al argues that this view of job search as a dynamic, self-regulatory process suggested that the job search of an individual is likely to change over the duration of his or her unemployment – an individual's level of job search may reduce, remain stable or increase over the span of his or her unemployment (Wanberg et al. 2005: 411). Kanfer et al further suggested that the level of job search behavior displayed by individuals at various times during their search results from a complex interplay of their personal tendencies, their current desire to obtain employment, and unique personal and social conditions (Kanfer et al. 2001). In other words, an individual might change his or her level of job search intensity over time for any of a number of reasons including among others, a personal tendency to get discouraged, a change in one's employment goals, uncertainty about what to do next in the job search, and even a lack of support for the job from significant others.

Social networks have been regarded as the best way of accessing the formal employment sector and that about half of all jobs are filled through individual contacts (Wahba and Zenou 2005: 443). However, this also depends on the size and quality of the network. You can either get a job or fail to get it depending on the population density of your social network and this networking is allegedly noted to be working most for the uneducated than the educated (ibid: 469) (Wahba and Zenou 2004: 469). In this case, YWGs' chances are reduced in finding formal employment especially in the large scale private sector where they have limited networks.

6.2 Improvement on YWGs' accessibility on formal employment

There are various suggestions put forward during the interviews with both YWGs and the key informants regarding the improvement in transition and almost all the views were rotating around the change of education system, establishment of career service centers in universities and building a relationship between employers and universities for the betterment of graduates. For instance, one government official suggested that:

Government should create voluntary scheme – students to volunteer at least for 1 or 2 years – let it be a government policy and employers should accept all students who have acquired that experience.

I think there is also need to reduce on the enrollment in universities by increasing the points at the entrance such that other students could go for vocational training and become job creators. But all this should be supported with well formulated government policy that should ensure that all parties are well equipped with the necessary requirements e.g. provision of various trainings and capital for young people to start up businesses.

The research found that though some students do actually volunteer, the volunteerism is contrary to the field of study which produces skills mismatch on the job market in terms of experience. Therefore, if the government can come up with a voluntary scheme which is directly linked to universities and

their students; this will reduce on the issue of working experience provided that it's a government policy and there is a political will to implement that policy over employers. Similarly, respondent 10 also suggested that, *'Every university student should have access to internship and interns should be paid in order to be motivated. Also universities should be in the best position to identify the right employers where students could conduct their internship'*. But the issue of paying interns may be inappropriate to the side of employers because internship is regarded as free training where you are having access to various skills. In this case, it becomes problematic to the side of employers.

Development of career guidance departments within universities also loomed large from all respondents. *'Career guidance is also lacking in the universities – if the authorities in universities can incorporate it in their curriculum, it would be better for the country'* (*Govt Official one*). This entails creating and improving the existing career guidance services in universities. According to Mau and Kopischke (2001: 146), there is a need to train young graduates how to write a winning curriculum vitae because they found that in many job markets the normal hiring procedure is to invite written applications. The training can be done through a career service that can equip prospects with such skills and strengthening on their personalities that are also vital in the recruitment and selection procedure.

From my own experience, young people are still under-going a traditional formal schooling that does not capture the needs of the large scale private sector. As indicated that *'young people read to pass exams and get qualifications...and also that there is a general lack of mentorship which affects individual growth...'* (*Org 6*). Addressing youth unemployment is complex and demands actions from all stakeholders – the government, international organizations, civil society and the private sector; there is need for all stakeholders to join efforts and assist the young people. This can be done through organizing job placement programs and short-term internship programs so that students can gain practical work experience, giving them better chances of getting the entry point (Kellow et., 2010: 15). The study revealed that YWGs are ignorant on issues that may be significant to accessing formal employment in the private sector. This can be attributed mostly to inadequate career services at the universities in Uganda. Though it would sound great for private employers and universities to work together and spread out to the students the requirements for the changing labor markets; the dual operate from two different worlds and this has an implication to the job search efforts for young people.

Therefore, from a structuralism perspective, human resource differences in hiring techniques do affect the chances of YWGs in accessing formal employment. It has been observed that structural changes greatly affect individual choices which later encourages or discourages the victims. Institutions need to collaborate and formulate appropriate programs that could be of greater significance in adhering to the young people's aspirations. They should always apply a youth-centered approach in policy formulation as it is perceived youth to be the 'breakers and makers' of society.

6.3 Implications for the global debates on YWG employment.

With reference to the views of respondents presented in this paper, the issues raised by YWGs and employers such as working experience, poor personal traits, inadequate education system, lack of career guidance, gender stereotyping among others all have significant implications on one's employability in a formal private sector. And given the complexity of YWGs' employment search experiences and their perceptions towards the recruiting process in the private sector, there is need for global attention on YWGs employment. This is because employment relates at least to industry, labor, economics, education and social protection policies. Therefore, in a globalized economy, it is essential to coordinate and work together through an interdisciplinary and multi-sectoral approach. Woodhams and Lupton, argue that *'the presence of an HR professional is associated with a greater level of take-up of formal equality policies, but not with the implementation of equality practices'* (Woodhams and Lupton. 2006: 91). Young people need to be informed of such developments and helped in forging their way forward.

As girl education became a global concern and actually declared a right at least to every child, from my own perspective, I suggest also first entry access to labor market be recognized as a global concern especially for young women through the introduction of affirmative action in the labor market. Though this idea was refuted by a government official who said that,

I don't think that we have a gender affirmative action in the labor market generally – what for? The policy is all gender or people having equal opportunities. The purpose of education is to enable someone live in harmony in society – education itself is a right. But employment is not a right; it is your skills and knowledge to enable you get the job. Once you are equipped with knowledge, why do you need affirmative action? I would support the non-discrimination policy rather than the affirmative action in the labor market.

To me, it seems that gender affirmative action is necessary as education alone has not translated into direct employment to the young people especially women. One of my colleagues enriched me with some information as we were discussing on this issue informally that countries like Rwanda have implemented this policy and it seems gender inequalities in labor markets have started reducing. Awareness and understanding of reverse effects of difficult labor participation of young women on the economic and social development needs to be shared among policy makers internationally. Education is a policy area priority, where a breakthrough can be found to promote a smoother and more diversified school to work transition with gender responsiveness.

As my data suggest, however, the issue of young women graduate employment cannot be taken for granted if Uganda is to move forward. I have argued that the reasons for not accessing formal private sector employment are profoundly embedded in the nature and environment of many large scale private organizations, and thus simplistic solutions may not yield any result, and it is in any case beyond the latitude of this paper to do so. Also the discovery of the informal gender discrimination in large scale organizations has implications to development processes.

There is need for future research regarding the role of formal private sector in creating decent jobs and recruiting young fresh women graduates. Quantitative and qualitative data on wider scale is needed to explore more on the issues regarding the differences in human resource hiring and the impacts of such differences to the opportunities of YWGs searching for jobs. This paper revealed that such data is limited especially in the Ugandan context.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Semi-structured interview schedule for YWGs

Areas of focus for the target group will include;

1. Social background and family's economic situation

2. University Experience

- Course or programme undertaken
- Class of degree obtained
- Part of any committee
- Participated in any internship or voluntary work
- Computer literacy
- Networking

3. Post-university Experience

- Job search process done so far
- Applications (how many submitted, responses)
- Additional skills acquired
- Survival skills during any unemployed period and for how long?
- Experiences during and after job interviews-perceptions of gender discrimination?

Interview guide for the government officials

1. How is the youth council at the national level helping young women graduates in accessing formal employment in a large scale private sector?
2. Do you have any interventions in assisting female graduates in accessing formal employment in private sector?
3. If yes, what are the impacts of such interventions on young women graduates?
4. Do you have the affirmative action in the formal private sector employment?

5. If yes, how does it operate?
6. How can the transition from university to work be improved?

Issues from young women graduates' interviews

- Fear of sexual harassment
- Need for experience
- Advertising after recruitment
- Jobs given to relatives and friends

Interview guide for the institutions

1. Brief description of the organization (e.g. Is your institution a profit making organization, motive, objective e.t.c).
2. Do you have an employment policy? If yes, is it possible to have a look at it?
3. What are the general criteria for employment?
4. What is the time lag between the time of advertising, call for interviews and the final recruitment?
5. Do all applicants get feedback after the submission of their applications?
6. Which kind of qualifications and other requirements are considered for a successful candidate?
7. Does your organization employ fresh and young graduates?
8. If yes, what are the demographic characteristics of those applicants, i.e. age and gender?
9. How many applications do you receive a year from young graduates?
10. How many females and males?
11. What were the chances of young women graduates acquiring jobs in your institution over their young men counterparts?
12. Which problems have this institution encountered during and after the process of recruiting young women graduates?
13. What benefits have your institution accrued from employing young women graduates?

Appendix 2

Table 2 Interviewed YWGs and their employment related history

Respondents	Course Offered	Year of Graduation	Organization Contacted	Area of Interest	Number of Applications	Response	Follow-up	Challenges
1	B.A (Educ)	Jan 2011	Schools and Supermarkets	Teaching, Cashier, and Attendant	6	No	Tried	Experience, sexual harassment, societal expectations, regarded weak and lazy, technical know-who
2	Business Statistics	Jan 2011	MNCs, UBOS, JCRC	Internship, Research Assistant, Banking Officer	4	No to 3 and Yes to 1	Yes	Advanced technology, experience, lack of trust in fresh graduates
3	BBA	Jan 2010	MNCs, Banks and NSSF	New entrant posts	Countless	Yes (2)	No	Experience, sexual harassment and inadequate education
4	BBA	Jan 2011	Hotels, Telecom and Banks	Administrator	3	1-call for interview	Never	Need 4 high grades, Limited openings due to advanced technology, jobs based on know-who
5	BBA	Jan 2011	Hotels and Banks	Marketing and Human relations	10	1-call for interview	No	Demand for experience, taken not to be well qualified
6	B.A (SS)	Jan 2011	Many orgs e.g NGOs, Hotels, Telecom etc	Social Administrator	Countless	No	No	Private companies recruiting their own
7	Info Systems Management	Jan 2010	NEMA, Petroleum Cos, Telecom	Systems Administrator	Many	1-Interview	No	Know-who, girls regarded as less positive, boys considered fast thinkers
8	Development Studies	Jan 2011	KCCA, Hotels and Chamber Firms	Cashier and Administrator	3	1-Interview	No	Experience, factors e.g. smartness and politeness not considered
9	B.A (SS)	Jan 2012	Telecom, Banks, Hotels and NGOs	Social Administrator	Over 30	1-Interview	No	Experience, know-who, and exploitation
10	B.A (SS)	Jan 2011	NGOs	Social work	8	1-Interview	Tried though frustrating	Experience and nature of being a woman
11	Telecom Engineering	Jan 2012	Telecom Cos	Engineering	3	2-Interview	Tried and still waiting	Employment not based on merit
12	Economics and Statistics	Jan 2011	Private and Public	Research Ass, Data Analyst	3	No	Tried again no response	Experience, lack adequate training

Source: Primary Data

Appendix 3

Table 3 What is considered while recruiting specifically in private sector and perceptions on recruiting YWGs

	Org 1	Org 2	Org 3	Org 4	Org 5	Org 6	Org 7	Org 8
Criteria for recruiting young women graduates	Advertise using radios, shortlist, Interview and select	Equal opportunity, focus is on internal staff first, advertise internally and externally using website and news papers	Internal advert and external advert using radios and news papers	Only advertise senior posts. New entrants are provided with Internship then retained if it permits	Internal Adverts, external adverts through website and news papers	Advertising is applied where necessary, use recruiting agencies e.g. NFT and purely referrals	Depends on budget and available posts, Rare advertise for 1 st entry jobs due to walk-in applications	Advertise, shortlist, Interview, Issue contract
Qualifications and other requirements considered	Both diploma and degree holders but basically in accounting courses	Bachelor's degree for junior posts usually in business, science and IT related courses, Fresh young graduates also considered as interns and subjected to graduate training program	Certificate to master's degree provided that it is line the offerings, experience and attitude are also very crucial	Certificate to degree for new entrants, positive attitude and LC Letter	Degree in B.COM, BBA and IT; experience and letter of referees	Passed English and Math ('O' Level), degree in business courses	Each job has its own specifications	Basically for fresh young graduates, need to undergo trainee graduate program and be with 2 nd Class Upper Degree of related field

Source: Primary data

Appendix 4

Table 4 Responses from the employers on the challenges raised by YWGs

Organization	Demand for experience	Technical know-who	Sexual Harassment	Advertising after recruitment
Org 1	It's really stiff because no organization would like to incur training cost	They refer to use of informal methods of recruitment	-	Baseless claim
Org 2	Telecom is a fast growing industry which makes competition to be so stiff. Need for experienced people to increase productivity.	-Focus is on internal staff -Use more of networking	-Job seekers also harass employers -Recruitment is always a panel of technical people. Therefore, it is all about the mind-set of the job seeker	Never
Org 3	True it is a big challenge to fresh graduates. But it depends on how each org conceptualizes it	Always do internal adverts aimed at reducing costs	It happens but it depends on the channels used for application	Private companies would not waste resources , may public sector because they are obliged by law to advertise
Org 4	Orgs lose a lot of money in training because YWGs keep on leaving one job to another	Yes provided that the person is competent	It is true, but as a woman there is need to learn how to deal with such cases. How have others survived?	Private recruitment is none of any one's business, so such issues are not worth to count on. May public sector
Org 5	Not really needed for starters but it will entail exploitation	Not in a well-run organization	It happens but it depends on the organization and the level of desperation among the job seekers	Just a myth - value for money must be taken into account
Org 6	-It is important though not really considered for first entrants -Opportunities are always there but YWGs do not know what they want -Building block for productivity is knowledge, understanding, self-drive and integrity -Experience is a key indicator for someone's capability – sometimes used to sieve out the massive applications	-The target for recruitment is to have the best ability, and personal traits in order to compete -Need for excellent people -For proper match through contacting professional associations such as ACCA	-It is a reality but it depends on the organization because corporate orgs have well laid down structures -Would advise the victims to report such cases because it is clearly stipulated in the labor law not to segregate and harass employees -But also this is a weak argument for not looking out for employment	Excuses given by people who have given up with their lives
Org 7	No need at entry level	Baseless – we receive many walk-in applications	Sexual Harassment Policy in existence	Unrealistic for a profit making organization
Org 8	-	-	-	-

Source: Primary data

Annexes

Some useful information related to the study

Annex 1

1.1 Explanation for the analytical framework

The analytical framework indicates correlations between individualism, structuralism and human capital and how the three approaches work upon each to socially exclude young people from the zone of employability. Unemployed people face higher chances of social exclusion. Individualism suggests that due to insufficient confidence and self-presentation, chances of being unemployed are high thus excluding you. Whereas structuralism suggests that it is the institutional changes and the social structure that leaves out certain group of people from benefiting from the global development processes. And finally, human capital advocates for acquisition of training, work, and education for proper employability. Therefore, the study will apply this analytical framework in the next chapters in order to critically analyse the complexities and subjectivities in YWGs' failure to secure decent formal employment in the large scale private sector. This framework aims mainly at informing the policy that issues regarding graduate employment or unemployment may be so complex, hence, a need for proper policy formulation and minimize the implications and repercussions.

Annex 2

2.1 Role of Private Sector in a developing country context

Traditionally, social problems such as unemployment among young people were conceptualized to be the role of governments and civil society (Kellow et al 2010: 13). The private sector's main objective is making profit and, according to conventional thinking, involvement in social problems burdens a business. Authors such as Waddell (2002) as cited in Kellow and others work, they suggest that the involvement of the private sector in youth employment strategies is critical as the private sector has the resources, expertise and capacity to generate wealth and the capacity needed to create employment opportunities beyond all else (Kellow et al 2010: 13). However, since youth employment is not a primary motivator for businesses, even in ideal circumstances, youth employment outcomes will be indirect from the point of view of businesses. (Does it suggest business oriented approach than social problem solver?). (Kellow et al.,2010: 14). While I totally agree that addressing youth unemployment is complex and demands actions from all stakeholders – the government, international organizations, civil society and the private sector; this study particularly focuses on the role of the large scale private sector in enabling YWGs in finding formal employment.

There are various intervention areas where the private sector can play a role towards reducing youth unemployment; however, I will focus on only one. Approximately every organization needs work experience when recruiting workers for the available job openings. This becomes a constraint to graduates who have only theoretical knowledge and little or no work experience. The private sector can play a major role in facilitating a smooth for youth to enter the labor market. It can arrange job placement programs and short-term internship programs so that students

can gain practical work experience, giving them better chances of getting the entry point (ibid: 14).

2.2 Recruitment techniques used in the private sector

As Granovetter (1995: 155) points out, "*while people are finding jobs, employers are finding people to fill them, and their behaviors, strategies, and purposes play a central but often neglected role in the process of matching people to jobs.*" The way employers choose recruiting techniques has important notional and pragmatic implications for understanding formal employment and inequality. There are two forms of recruiting techniques according to Mencken and Winfield (1998: 136) that is; formal techniques that use bureaucratic procedures between the company and the prospective employee. These procedures may be an out-sourcing agency, an advertisement or a "help wanted" sign in front of the business (Marsden and Campbell 1990). Woodhams et al (2009) also argue that the recruitment stage has a substantial impact on occupation discrimination.

2.2.1 Formal Recruitment Techniques

Wei-Cheng Mau and Amie Kopischke (2001: 146) posit that in various professional markets, the common hiring practice is to request written applications for employment openings advertised in journals and periodicals, newspapers, or in the universities through job placement offices. Thus resumes have become the most common venue for securing a professional job. However, though this approach may seem to be working in some countries, in the Ugandan context it seems a different case.

Also this formal method of writing job applications to advertised jobs has varying dimensions. For example, under the column of advertised jobs and human resource in the New Vision newspaper, Mr. Kigundu Harrison (HRM) advised job seekers that 'it is best to send in one's application in the morning hours when people's minds are still fresh. Evenings are disadvantageous because people are tired' (New Vision 2012: 39). This implies that there is a possibility of not considering the application that comes either in the afternoon or in the evening. Besides, I cannot guarantee that young graduate job seekers are aware of such principles and culture because the general official working time for almost all organizations in Uganda is from 8:00am to 5:00pm. Therefore, this is among the gaps that bring complexities in the whole issue of young people accessing formal employment from the large scale sector.

2.3 Rhetoric of Equal Opportunity versus Gender Discrimination

Paradigm shift of managing diversity versus equal opportunities as a way of recruiting potential employees can best explain the rhetoric of equal opportunities. Managing diversity and equal opportunities notions were highlighted by Woodhams and Lupton (2009) in their research conducted among the SMEs in UK. They cited Cornelius, Gooch, and Todd, 2001 who suggested that diversity management is formulated on the business case claim for equal opportunities as opposed to the social justice-driven logic that fortifies conventional liberal fairness (Woodhams and Lupton 2009: 204). A business case for varying employees is made on the grounds that it helps to reduce labor turn over, increase confidence and expand market understanding. Bagshaw (2004) as cited in Woodhams and Lupton writes that in regard to female labor precisely, the claim is made on the justifications that women advance soft management skills and decision-making processes, and augment creativity and innovation (ibid).

Diversity practices are also embedded in economic understanding for competitive business performance. In contrast, equal opportunity is seen as the amendment of an inequality within the

functioning of the labor market (Thomas, 1990 as cited in Woodhams and Lupton (2009: 204). It is conveyed through debates of rights, relative treatment and ethics. While equal opportunity fosters a ‘uniformity’ approach to management custom, managing diversity exemplifies an option and optimistic angle on the value of individual profile ‘difference’. Diversity practices emphasize the need to move to a culture and climate that celebrates individuality. Therefore, can it be assumed that some of the interviewed organizations practice managing diversity instead of equal opportunities?

Although the research conducted on diversity management was in the context of United Kingdom (UK), it seems applicable also in Uganda especially in relation to the formal private sector. Recent research into gender equality in small-to medium-sized organizations (SMEs) in the UK demonstrates low engagement with a formal model of procedural equality.

Also Woodhams et al (2009: 2088) note that recruitment through advertisements play a significant role in forming recruiters’ wants and in outlining applicants’ anticipations for success. This implies that an advert will reflect the need for a certain category of people and leave out another category using the “barometer for health” of the broader job market in relation to gender parity.

Annex 3

3.1 Level of Education required for employment in Uganda

The labor market in Uganda consists of people with different levels of education ranging from primary to university. Even those without education can always engage in the labor market provided that they have goods and services to sell to the public. However, the focus of this study is on the highly university graduates that are trying to enter the labor market through the large scale private sector. Education has been the major determinant of accessing formal employment in private sector. For instance, in all the eight organizations interviewed during the field work, there was a general consensus among the human resource managers that they expect newly applicants to have at least a bachelor’s degree though with differing fields, in order for the application to be considered other things being constant.

3.2 Uganda’s Education Structure

The educational system in Uganda is divided into four different levels without considering the kindergarten. These four levels include the seven years of primary education, four years of ordinary secondary education, two years of advanced secondary education, and tertiary education. While UPE covers almost all government primary schools, USE does not cover all government secondary schools. The Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) is the overseer of all education programs in Uganda and it is the major implementer of all educational policies and programs. Universal education, high unemployment, and a large and growing youth population together are driving major shifts in Ugandan educational values and expectations. To meet these changing needs and expectations, the GOU and its partners have undertaken a range of initiatives — from curriculum redesign to new school construction (TYF 2011, Daily Monitor Oct.2012). While the GOU has opened new institutions and increased the number of available scholarships at the tertiary level, the majority of students either pays full tuition at public universities or attends private universities. In summary, the GOU has made significant progress in improving education accessibility.

