Kenya's Bachelor of Commerce Graduates' Employability Skills

and the Job Market Demands – 2009 to 2011

By

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A Thesis Proposal Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

of

Dedan Kimathi University of Technology

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

of

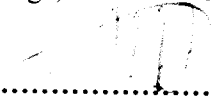**Doctor of Philosophy**

in

Business Administration and Management

2014

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to

any other college, institution or university for the award of a degree or any other award.

Signature: .... Date: ....

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We confirm that the work reported in this thesis was carried out by the researcher under

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my nuclear family members: My husband Titus Kalei, my two daughters: Deborah Mwikali Kalei and Tabitha Loko (Kadidi) Kalei and my one and only son: Timothy (Papa) Mumo Kalei.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the Almighty God for His faithfulness, providence and for gift of good health in this walk of academic writing. He and Him alone walked with me through this lonely journey of doctoral student. I feel humbled before the Lord, and to Him I give all the glory, honour and adoration.

There are many people who have contributed to this work in important ways. Special thanks to Prof. Ken Kamoche, my main supervisor for his advice, constructive criticisms and firm guidance at all stages of writing this work, for it to reflect academic rigor befitting such a document. Special appreciation to Prof. SimieMarwa Mwita, my second supervisor, who took keen interest in my work, read through the manuscript and gave positive criticisms to put this work on the right track.Special mention to Prof. Muruku Waiguchu for his fatherly advice, stimulating criticism and able guidance compelled me to think freely and write independently throughout my research work. I am indebted to Prof. Peter Lewa for taking time to read through my work, his assistance in clarification of concepts and for patiently nurturing my mind to appreciate the world of academia. I am grateful for the immense academic contributions by the team of able Professors from United Kingdom, USA, Ghana and Kenya. The author gratefully acknowledges all respondents for sparing their precious time to fill in the questionnaires, without which this study would not have been completed. I salute you all.

The support, encouragement and assistance of many individuals were absolutely critical in the completion of his study. These included my prayer group (Trianglenites) for their consistent prayer every 3rd Sunday of the month. Let me single out my sister Engineer Josephine Kasimu who would always sent me an encouraging message during our colloquium meeting defenses. My darling husband Titus Kalei for his unpreserved support in the course of my study. Our three children Debbie, who would call and ask what I was doing. I would tell her that I am on 'it'. Then she would say she is working on her paper too. Tabby, who would see me busy working and would inquisitively want to know when the paper was required. She knew Mummy worked better with deadlines. Timo would invite many of his friends to keep himself busy and allow Mom to work in peace. My life time friend Susan Lewa, who we would occasionally disagree in principle on issues concerning our thesis, and then dissolve our conflicts and reflect on God's faithfulness even under a tree. I salute you. My nephew Alex and his wife Ng'a Mucheru for their prayers and encouragements. Rev. Bill, Pastor Habakkuk who had declared me a Doc prematurely, I salute you all. Special remembrance of my Mama Elsie, (now rested in the Lord) for laying a strong academic foundation upon which I have walked this journey, and for the love she had for education although she could not read or write. Paper fail me to mention all of you, yes I mean 'you' by name, Kaleli, Celestine, Omagwa and Muli. You are special and should rest assured that your contributions toward this

study will the treasured forever. May the good Lord bless you thoroughly!!!

Abstract

The study found out that employability skills of graduates in Kenya are now considered to be the most important skills which the employers pay keen attention to. This study aimed at establishing whether there were skills mismatch between B. Com graduates and Job Market expectations. The study objectives were: (i) To establish what employability skills the B. Com graduates actually possess as they enter the job market. (ii) To establish the employability skills the employers expect from B. Com graduates to have when they enter the job market. (iii) To find out the nature of the skills gap (if any) between employers' expectations and what the B. Com graduates have. (iv) To determine methods of bridging the skills gap between employers' expectations. The study targeted 10,000 B. Com graduates from 37 charted Kenya's universities, and 2,500 employers registered with Federation of Kenya Employers [FKE]. Systematic research design and stratified research designs were used to sample 1000 B. Com graduates and 250 employers [HRM] respectively. Questionnaires, focus group interviews were data collection instruments. Statistical Package for Social Sciences [SPSS] version 18 was used to analyse data. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized. The descriptive statistics revealed that there were employability skills gap between employers expectations and what the B. Com graduates had. The study recommended the need of a joint venture among the industry players, university curriculum developers and other stakeholders, so as to bridge the skills gap.

Operational Definitions of Terms

The following defined terms were used for the purpose of the study

Education - refers to activities which aim at developing the knowledge, skills, moral values and understanding required in all aspects of life other than knowledge and skills related to limited field of activity**.**

Training - refers to a planned process to modify attitude, knowledge or skill behavior through learning experience to achieve effective performance in an activity or range of activities.

Learning - refers to a relatively permanent change in behavior that occurs as a result of practice or experience.

Employability – refers to 'work readiness' that is, possession of the skills, knowledge, attitudes and commercial understanding that will enable new graduates to make productive contributions to organizational objectives soon after they get absorbed in the job market.

Unemployment - refers to persons belonging to the labour force, seeking but not doing any work during a specified period.

The unemployed - consist of all persons of working age who are not working, are available for work, and are searching for work at prevailing wage rate.

Underemployment – refers to people who are working in a lower capacity than they are qualified for, including in a lower-paid job or for less hours than they would like to.

Human Capital - is all human abilities whether innate or acquired attributes, whose value could be augmented by appropriate development investments.

Skills - refer to certain personal abilities of an individual, which can be taken from one job role to another, used within any profession and at any stage of the graduate's career.

Employable Skills – these are conceptualized as those transferable skills that one might expect to be developed in an undergraduate programme but which have broad applicability in the workplace.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

UoN	-	University of Nairobi
KU	-	Kenyatta University
JKUAT	-	Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology
MKU	-	Mount Kenya University
USIU	-	United States International University
IT	-	Information Technology
FKE	-	Federation of Kenya Employers
MSK	-	Marketing Society of Kenya
KIPPRA	-	Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research Analysis
SPSS	-	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
HRM	-	Human Resource Management
UK	-	United Kingdom
BBC	-	British Broadcasting Corporation
CUE	-	Commission for University Education
HEMM	-	Higher Education Ministry of Malaysia
BBA	-	Bachelor of Business Administration
B. Com	-	Bachelor of Commerce
KCSE	-	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
ANOVA	-	Analysis of Variance

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0   Introduction

This chapter serves as an introductory base for the research, and it provides an outline of the thesis. The thesis is an investigation of Kenya's Bachelor of Commerce Graduates' Employability Skills and the Job Market Demands – 2009 to 2011. The chapter is organized into eight sections. Section one presents the background of the study. Section two provides the purpose and rationale of the study. Section three highlights the research problem. Section four states the objectives of the study. Section five highlights research questions. Section six states the hypothesis of the study. Section seven states the limitations and delimitations of the study. Finally, section eight presents the profile of the institutions/firms participating in the study.

1.1   Background of the Study

One of the main objectives of university education is the acquisition of relevant practical skills for gainful employment, and to identify and provide solutions to societal problems [Leon, 2002]. However, it is widely observed that the current university education and training system does not produce graduates to meet the needs of the labour market [Weligamage & Siengthai, 2003]. There are concerns worldwide that existing undergraduate programmes are not producing graduates with the kind of skills which they need in order to be successful in their professions [Harvey & Green, 1994]. The grum-

bles of employers globally about the inadequacy of employable skills have been longstanding [Hesketh, 2000].

It is worth noting that A degree alone is not enough to succeed in today's competitive job market. In a survey carried out by Azizan [2007] for British Broadcasting Corporation [BBC], showed that four out of 10 large employers in the United Kingdom [UK] struggled to fill graduate vacancies because of a shortage of applicants with the right skills. More than one-third of the graduates had very poor English skills. According to the study, all graduates tested had enough command of the language to cope with most situations but were still not capable of conducting a sophisticated discourse at a professional level.

The gap between employers' demand and fresh graduates is expanding [McHardy & Henderson, 1994]. It has become common cause for employers to express concern about the gap between the outcomes of higher education [in terms of quality, type and quantity of graduates], and the needs of economy [Yorke, 2006; Harvey, 2001]. The authors note that this gap has resulted in the graduates having difficulties in seeking employment. McHardy and Henderson argue that, there may be jobs in the market, but many graduates may not fit into the positions because they lack the necessary skills that their prospective employers are looking for. This may be as a result of institutions not preparing graduates for the creative workplace environments, that are becoming more com-

mon as organizations seek to develop creative competencies as one of their few sustainable competitive advantages in today's marketplace [Driver, 2001].

This trend of inadequacy of employability skills applies in the developing countries. In Kenya, the unemployment rate caused by lack of employability skills is a major concern that needs urgent attention [Amimo, 2000]. This phenomenon of employability skills, as expressed by Musembi [2011] is manifested in lack of such skills as oral communication, team working, problem solving etc. among B. Com graduates.

Muthee [as cited by McEnrue, 2011] puts the unemployment rate for youth 15-35 years old at 65%. According to [Nesoba, 2010; Mwirigi, 2011] new graduates struggle to find jobs because they still lack the necessary skills to meet the job market demands. According to [MOYA, 2006:3] only about 25% of youth are absorbed, leaving 75% to bear the burden of unemployment. Furthermore, some of those absorbed in the labour market have jobs that do not match their qualifications and personal development goals, MOYA notes.

Most of the studies that address the question of skills and employability were done in different environments from Kenya and thus the results cannot be generalized to Kenya.

The only studies available in Kenya that have close relation to this study are those done by Amimo [2002] on Tailoring Higher Education in Kenya to the Demands of the Post-industrial Work Place Gudo [2013] on University Expansion in Kenya and Issues of Quality Education: Challenges and opportunities Wanzala [2013] on the Level of Technical Skills and Management Competency. However, this study shifts focus from Amimo's on methodology and industry focus. Further, the study differs from Gudo's on focus. Lastly, the present study differs from Wanzala's on focus.

This, therefore, constitutes a gap that this study seeks to bridge. The study is, therefore, designed to investigate whether or not there are skills gap between employers' expectations and what Kenya's B. Com graduates, who obtained their degree between the years 2007 to 2009. The study is expected to shed some light on this problem with a view of determining its extent and offering possible solution(s). It would also make recommendations for stakeholders of the problem.

Academic qualifications alone no longer guarantee that an individual will get a job. Employers prefer workers who have generic competencies like interpersonal skills, leadership skills, teamwork, oral and written skills [Lee *et* al., 2001; cited in Quek, 2005]. A study conducted on graduate employment addressed generic competencies as skills, abilities and attributes that complement the field of specialization of employees for work performance [Day, 1988; Sandberg, 1991; Sohal, 1997; & Mitchell, 2003 cited

in Quek, 2005]. The study noted that, most academia in the world feel that the education system is only concerned with results, and that it does not measure what a person knows; it measures what one has to study and not what one can actually do.

In Africa, the quality of education remains under pressure at all levels, with overcrowded classrooms, insufficient numbers of qualified teaching staff, insufficient teaching aids and ill-equipped and dilapidated physical facilities [Eshiwani, 2009]. The author further affirms that our universities are forced to work under adverse conditions; poor salaries, lack of resources for non-salary academic expenditure, such as textbooks, journals, teaching and research equipment and maintenance of such equipment. Eshiwani asserts that the situation has resulted in a lowering of academic standards and of quality of graduates, who lack employment skills and hence become unfit for the market. Okwakol [2008] noted that computer is increasingly becoming the major notebook, textbook, dictionary and storage facility for information for students in quality institutions of higher learning. She noted that some universities fail to utilize the benefits of the digital age-computer assisted learning, web connectivity and networked learning. As a result they cannot equip their graduates with market expectations in form of skills, she concludes.

Unemployment is one of the greatest ills of society today, and it deserves the attention of university scholars in Kenya and elsewhere [Amimo, 2013]. Unemployment scenario

of the graduate level in Kenya has been a serious problem [Musyoka, 2008]. This statement is confirmed by a statement made by the Commission for University Education [CUE] Chief Executive, when he said that his agency has begun to tackle standard reforms after receiving complaints from employers about graduates they hired who were not adequately equipped with employable skills. However, the prevalent dilemma of lack of employment among graduates is caused by imbalances due to expected skills/qualifications by the ultimate employers and what the graduates actually possess [Nafula, 2005].

According to Wandiga *et* al. [2007] the Kenyan job industry prefers to employ a member of staff who is fully trained in the area of their specialization, who is creative, innovative, independent thinker through tasks and goal oriented, to employing somebody they have to closely supervise and retrain. These are among the qualities employers are missing in today's fresh graduates, the authors affirm. It is also increasingly getting difficulty to find job candidates who can relate what they have learnt in university to the job market situations, they conclude. Hence, the researcher's desire to investigate whether there are skills gap between what Kenya's B. Com graduates possess and what the employer expects.

1.2 Universities in Kenya

There are 22 public universities, 15 chartered private universities, 13 universities with Letter of Interim Authority (LIA) , eight public university constituent colleges, six char-

tered private university colleges and two registered private universities preparing for the award of [LIA]. These Universities are established through institutional Acts of Parliament under the Universities Act, 2012 which provides for the development of university education, the establishment, accreditation and governance of universities [Wanzala, 2013].

1.2.0   Profile of University Education in Kenyathe Participating Institutions

1.2.1   University of Nairobi [UoN]]

The University of Nairobi [UoN] is the largest university in Kenya. Although its history as an educational institution goes back to 1956, it did not become an independent university until 1970 when the University of East Africa was split into three independent universities: Makerere University in Uganda, the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, and the University of Nairobi.

In 2002 the University had some 22,000 students, of whom 17,200 were undergraduates and 4,800 postgraduates. The university has launched several policy frameworks and introduced module II degrees to cope with the demand of higher education in Kenya.

The inception of the University of Nairobi is traced back to 1956, with the establishment of the Royal Technical College which admitted its first lot of A-level graduates for

technical courses in April the same year. The Royal Technical College was transformed into the second University College in East Africa on 25 June, 1961 under the name Royal College Nairobi. The college was entitled to a special relation with the University of London whereupon it started preparing students in the faculties of arts, science, and engineering for degrees awarded by the University of London [UoN, 2013].

1.2.2   Kenyatta University [KU]

Kenyatta University, located in Nairobi, Kenya is the second largest public university in the country [after University of Nairobi]. The University is located in Kahawa, about 20 kilometres from Nairobi's city centre, along the Thika super highway.

The University traces its history to a colonial military barracks known as the Templer Barracks. In 1965 Templer Barracks was converted into Kenyatta College, primarily a teacher training institution [majorly S1 graduates]. Kenyatta college was then elevated to a constituent college of the University of Nairobi in 1970. In 1985 the university college was incorporated by the then president, Daniel arap Moi and was renamed Kenyatta University. This was done through establishment of the Kenyatta University Act by the National Assembly of Kenya.

The School of Business offers business units to other schools especially that of Education to those students taking B.Ed. [Arts]. The core essence however is for students taking B. Com and MBA. Undergraduates [B. Com] students have six areas under the given three departments where they can major after finishing their 2nd year [KU, 2013].

1.2.3   Moi University – Eldoret

Moi University is a university in Eldoret, western Kenya. It is one of seven national higher education institutions in Kenya, the others being the University of Nairobi, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Maseno University, Egerton University, Kimathi University College of Technology and Kenyatta University. It was established in 1984 by the Moi University Act of Parliament after recommendations from the Mackay Commission. As of 2007 it had over 20,000 students of whom 17,086 were undergraduates, and operates 8 campuses and 2 constituent colleges. The current Vice-Chancellor of the university is Professor Richard K. Mibey [MU, 2013].

1.2.4   Egerton University - Njoro, Nakuru

Egerton University is a public university; the main campus is in Njoro, near the city of Nakuru, Kenya. The chancellor is Ambassador Bethwell Kiplagat and the vice chancellor is Professor J. K. Tuitoek.

The school was founded in 1939 and was originally named Egerton Farm School. It was established by a large land grant of 740 acres [3 km²] by Lord Maurice Egerton of Tatton. The school's original purpose was to prepare white European youth for careers in agriculture.

By 1955, the name had changed to Egerton Agricultural College. A one-year certificate course and a two-year diploma course in agriculture were offered. In 1958, Lord Egerton donated another 1,100 acres [4.5 km²] of land.

Soon afterward, the college opened its doors to people of all races from Kenya and other African countries. The first African principal, Dr. William Odongo Omamo, was appointed in 1966. In 1979, due to support from the Government of Kenya and USAID, the college expanded yet again. It became a part of the University of Nairobi system. In 1987, the College was finally recognized as a Chartered Public University [Egerton University, 2013].

1.2.5 Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology [JKUAT] - Juja, Thika

Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology [JKUAT] is a public university near Nairobi, Kenya. It is situated in Juja, 36 kilometres North East of Nairobi, along Nairobi-Thika.

The university was started in 1981 as Jomo Kenyatta College of Agriculture and Technology [JKCAT], a Middle Level College by the Government of Kenya with the assistance from the Japanese Government. Plans for the establishment of JKCAT started in 1977. In early 1978, the Kenyan president, Jomo Kenyatta, donated two hundred hectares of farmland for the establishment of the college. The first group of students were admitted on 4th May 1981. The new president Daniel Arap Moi formally opened JKCAT on 17th March 1982. The first graduation ceremony was held in April 1984 with Diploma Certificates presented to graduates in agricultural engineering, food technology and horticulture. On 1st September 1988, Daniel Arap Moi, declared JKCAT a constituent College of Kenyatta University through a legal Notice, under the Kenyatta University Act [CAP 210C]. The name of JKCAT officially changed to Jomo Kenyatta University College of Agriculture and Technology [JKUCAT].

It was finally established as a University through the JKUAT Act, 1994 and inaugurated on 7th December 1994.

The Kenyan Universities have expanded in the recent past and their number now exceeds thirty. There are seven public universities in Kenya, which are: University of Nairobi [UoN], Kenyatta University [KU], Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology [JKUAT], Maseno University, Egerton University, Moi University and Masinde Muliro University. There are also many private universities in Kenya. The most famous private universities include: Strathmore University, United States International University [USIU], Daystar University, Kabarak University, University of Eastern African Baraton, St. Pauls University, Mount Kenya University, Inoorero University and Africa Nazarene University.

There are many courses offered and you would need to visit the individual universities to find the course catalogue. Some universities also excel in some areas. For instance Kenyatta University is widely known for its teaching while JKUAT University is known for its engineering programs. Similarly, UoN is known for courses in medicine, business, engineering and law. Strathmore University is known for business and IT courses while USIU is known for business, international relations and the social sciences [Jkuat, 2013].

1.2.6 Strathmore University [SU]

Strathmore University is one of the leading private chartered universities in Kenya, and is a privately owned, not for profit institution. Originally established in 1961 as an Advanced-level Sixth Form College with inspiration and encouragement from Saint Josemaria Escriva, founder of Opus Dei. Strathmore University started offering degrees in 2002 before becoming fully chartered in 2008.

Strathmore University's mission statement is to provide all round quality education in an atmosphere of freedom and responsibility; excellence in teaching, research and scholarship; ethical and social development; and service to society [SU, 2013].

1.2.7 United States International University [USIU]

The vision of United States International University [USIU] is to propagate the growth of a quality student population on campus, through continuous enrolment of qualified students into the University. Its mission is to identify, recruit and admit qualified students to the university in accordance with the published standards determined by the university leadership and in keeping with the university mission as described in the university catalogue. United States International University [USIU] is located in the Kasarani area, off Thika super highway in the suburb of Kenya's capital city of Nairobi. The university is an independent, not-for-profit institution serving approximately 4,800 students, of whom 88% are domestic and 12% are international representing about 54 nationalities. It was founded in 1969 as the Africa campus of United States International

University in San Diego, California. The university was first accredited in 1981 by the accrediting commission for senior colleges and universities of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges [WASC] as part of USIU-San Diego. However, the university was mandated to become chartered in Kenya with the gazetement of the Universities Act in 1985. Regulations and procedures for the accreditation of private universities were published in 1989, and in 1999 USIU was awarded its charter as an independent institution through the Commission for University Education [CUE]. The United States International University's program offerings are career oriented with five undergraduate majors in the Chandaria School of Business, three in the School of Humanities and So-cial Sciences and two in the new School of Science and Technology [Usiu, 2013].

1.2.8   Federation of Kenya Employers [the voice of employers]

The Federation of Kenya Employers [FKE] was officially started in 1959. The Federa-tion of Kenya Employers is the national umbrella organization for employers in Kenya and its key mandate is to promote the interests of employers. FKE is the largest and most representative employer organisation in the country. It has members in all sectors of the Kenyan economy. This includes company members and associations; which all together amount to 2,500 members. Its members comprise of companies with at least 5 employees and above and out of these it has the Small Medium Enterprises [SMEs] forming the majority of FKE's membership.

The Federation continues to offer its members services in the Industrial relations field by responding to their needs. It has honed its skills in this core area of its business that mainly formulates our objectives. Its expertise in Industrial relations, Collective Bargaining Agreements [CBA], Conflict resolutions and legal advice and representation has set us apart from the rest and has been our strength and we want to build upon this for the future [FKE, 2013].

1.3   Purpose and Rationale of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine whether or not there is incompatibility between the skills obtained by Kenya' B. Com graduates [2009 - 2011] and what the employers are looking for. The study period [2009 to 2011] was based on the assumption that the researcher would complete the study within this time frame. The study span period of three years, was considered to be long enough for graduates to gain work experience which would enable them to understand and advise on what skills their jobs required, and whether the skills they acquired from the university were put in practice. It should be noted that, the demand for specialized skills can shift quickly, so picking a career today that has good prospects does not mean it will be that way three or five years to come [LA hart & Casselman, 2011].

The rationale for targeting B. Com graduates and not any other graduates in other fields is, first, the degree is offered in nearly all public universities, private universities and leading colleges in Kenya, hence, producing majority of graduates. Relative to other

degree programmes in Kenya, B. Com degrees holders seemed to have the highest [65%] cases of unemployment probably because of mass production [Musyoka, 2008]. Further, B. Com degree has a business profit motive, which provides an integral understanding of the business aspects [focus group interviews, 2013].

There are other types of skills that B. Com graduates acquire from universities. For example, academic skills Academic Skills. Unlike employable skills, which are transferable to carry out any job, academic skills are all about helping students become more effective learners at University level. They include: like writing skills, listening skills, speaking skills, preparation for assignment skills etc. However, this study targeted B. Com graduates employability skills, which may be categorised into the following three classifications: self-reliance skills, people skills and general employment skills.

There are many causes of unemployment apart from skills mismatch in Kenya. These include: rapid population growth, poor dissemination of job market information, structural reforms, slow or declining economic growth, and high costs of labour [KIPPRA, 2009]. However, for the purpose of this study, the researcher targeted employability skills for B. Com graduates. The reason for this is that, employability skills are the skills almost everyone needs to do almost any job [Yorke, 2006]. They are the 'key', 'core', 'transferable' and/or 'generic' skills needed in many types of high-level employment [Lambert, 2006]. Graduate employability skills have recently attracted some interest within business literature [Cranmer, 2006; Douc & Metzger, 2007] though most re-

searches in this area have been undertaken within a Western rather than African context. The circumstances facing developing countries, especially Kenya have been ignored. Since no research in this context appears to exist, a position study of this nature would be timely and would add value to the literature on employability skills by identifying issues that arise from within African contexts, particularly Kenyan context. Right from Independence, the new government of Kenya identified unemployment , diseases and ignorance among other issues, as some of the key challenges that needed urgent attention. The working age population in Kenya is estimated at 19.9 million persons out of which 14.6 million are economically active; 12.7 million persons are employed and 1.9 are openly unemployed.

In most developing world, increased demand for university education include the perception that university education guarantees lifelong employment [Gudo, 2013]. In Kenya for example, the demand for university education continues to increase and has outpaced supply, Gudo affirms. This is evidenced by the expanding number of KCSE candidates that obtain the required grade [C+ above] for admission to a university, he concludes. It is also believed that, if one desires to advance in current employment or compete favourably in the job market, then should be willing to further the university education and training. It is also common trends when managerial jobs are advertised, the employer will look for someone with a university degree. Further, universities are critical players in achieving Kenya Vision 2030 where one of the Government's object tives is create 500,000 jobs, which to perform one would require employability skills.

A study undertaken by the Wilton [2008], showed that people go to university simply to prepare themselves for the job market. It is a fact that young people expect to find suitable careers upon graduation, but there are host of other factors that enhance effectiveness at work. Some of these factors are: employee's personal values, attitude towards work, background and cultural beliefs, religion, self-motivation, leadership skills/styles and work environment. However, for the purpose of this study, the concentration will be on university graduates and employability.

1.3   Statement of the Problem

There are many graduates who have not secured any job after graduating from university. The question that one may ask is why the situation is so and whether the universities are doing their work well? The primary goal of universities is to provide broad intellectual and personal development that enables graduates to thrive in a constantly changing world of work [Leon, 2002]. However, it is the responsibility of the employers to provide graduates with specific job training to build on the broad educational foundation developed through the university experience, Leon affirms.

According to Weligamage & Siengthai [2003] the job industry expects graduates to have strong foundation of knowledge and basic skills: to be able to communicate clearly and effectively, to be innovative, to be able to make ethical and sound decisions, to be able to solve problems, to think critically and to tolerate differences of opinions. However, it is widely observed that the current university education system does not produce graduates to meet the needs of the labour market, the authors observe. There are con-

cerns worldwide that existing undergraduate programmes are not producing graduates with the kind of skills which they need in order to be successful in their professions [Yorke, 2006; Harvey, 2001]. The grumbles of employers globally about the inadequacy of employable skills have been longstanding [Hesketh, 2000]. The question which needs to be asked and addressed is whether this inadequacy of employable skills applies in the developing countries.

In Kenya, the unemployment rate caused by lack of employability skills, especially for B. Com graduates is a major concern that needs urgent attention [Amimo, 2000]. Existing literature [Cheboi, 2006; Okwakol, 2008] focus groups interviews, show that there exists inadequacy of functionality of workplace skills, which has resulted to many Kenya's B.Com graduates either to be unemployed, under-employed or work in an area unrelated to their specialisation. This lack of functionality is due to what the researcher would describe as incompatibility between the skills obtained by B. Com graduates in Kenya and what the employers are looking for. The study is, therefore, designed to investigate whether or not there are skills gap between employers' expectations and what Kenya's B. Com graduates, who obtained their degree between the years 2009 to 2011. The study is expected to shed some light on this problem with a view of determining its extent and offering possible solution(s). It would also make recommendations for stakeholders of the problem.

1.4   Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study was to investigate whether there was employability skills gap between what the Bachelor of Commerce Graduates have Employability Skills on the Job Market Demands – 2009 to 2011. To examine this phenomenon, the following specific objectives which guided the study:

(i)   To establish what employability skills the B. Com graduates actually possess as they enter the job market.

(ii)   To establish the employability skills the employers expect from B. Com graduates to have when they enter the job market.

(iii)   To find out the nature of the skills gap between employers' expectations and what the B. Com graduates have.

(iv)   To determine methods of bridging the skills gap between employers' expectations and what the B. Com graduates have.

There following variables within each one of these objectives, were examined. These included the employability skills [which were ranked highest in terms of preference during focus group interview]. They were from the following categories: [i] Self-reliance skills – proactively, networking, and planning action. [ii] People skills - team working, interpersonal skills, oral communication, and leadership. [iii] General employment skills - problem solving, IT/computer literacy, numeracy.

According to Newman [1999] three types of variables emerge: independent variable which is the cause variable that identifies forces or conditions that act on something; the dependent variable that is the effect or the result or outcome of another variable and the intervening variable that has to happen when the independent variable "acts" before the dependent variable happens or results occur.

1.6   Research Hypotheses

According to Chandran [2004] a hypotheses in the research context is a statement which, on the basis of scientific testing, is subject to acceptance or rejection. Chandran observes that the statement is about the condition of a situation, event, activity or community based on careful observation. In hypotheses testing, two hypotheses may be formulated. One is the null hypothesis, which would be rejected only if the sample data provide the substantial contradictory evidence. It is represented by Ho. The second hypothesis represented by Ha is deemed to be true, if the null hypothesis is rejected [Groebner *et* al., 2005]. With a view of fulfilling the objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated and consequently tested in the study:

Ho1: B. Com graduates do not have the employability skills which employers expect of them when they enter the workplace.

Ha1: B. Com graduates have the employability skills which employers expect of them

when they enter the workplace.

Ho2: Employers do not expect B. Com graduates to possess employability skill when they enter the job market.

Ha2: Employers expect B. Com graduates to possess employability skills when they enter the job market..

Ho3: There are no employability skills gap between employers' expectations and what the graduates possess.

Ha3: There are employability skills gap between employers' expectations and what the graduates possess.

1.7 Assumptions of the Study

The following were the assumptions of the study:

1.7.1 The respondents would be cooperative and would give honest responses to the questions.

1.7.2 The instruments used to investigate whether there were skills gap between what the employers expected and what the B. Com graduates actually possessed would be valid and reliable.

1.7.3 The concerned parties: government, universities and the industry would act on the findings and recommendations of this study to improve the quality of university education and rate of graduates' employability.

1.7.4 People go to university simply to prepare themselves for the job market.

1.8   Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

The researcher encountered the following limitations:

1.8.1   Report Focus

This report was focused on B. Com graduates 2009 – 2011 and their employers only, whilst some of the findings of this project would have application of other faculties, for example, engineering, medicine, and so on. There are many B. Com graduates who seek employment outside Kenya, but were not interviewed. The researcher did not consult with, or seek the opinions of universities who are the main educators. However, the percentage of the B. Com graduates interviewed was high enough to allow generalisation.

1.8.2   Confidentiality

Some respondents were unwilling to give information as they perceived the information to be confidential in nature. The researcher assured them that the information would strictly be used for the purpose of the study, and requested the respondents to contact their alumni offices to confirm the validity of the data requested from them.

1.8.3   Intimidation

Some respondents would not give honest opinion of the issues at hand as they feared intimidation and retaliation from their superiors. The researcher re-assured them that the information would not be used against them, and they were asked not to write their names in the questionnaires.

1.8.4   Personal Bias

Some respondents had preconceived ideas about the study topic, hence not give honest opinion. The researcher urged them to divorce their feelings and attitudes from the study in order to allow the study to have the effect it was supposed to have.

1.8.5   Time Factor

Due to busy schedule of the respondents, the researcher anticipated that some respondents would take long to respond to emailed questionnaires. To overcome this, the researcher allocated more time to the respondents to allow them flexibility in their availability.

CHAPTER TW0

2.0   Literature Review

According to Dellinger [2005] a literature review is an account of what has been pub-lished on a topic by accredited scholars and researchers. The main objective of the re-searcher when reviewing literature is to convey to your reader what knowledge and ide-as have been established on a topic, and what their strengths and weaknesses are [Green, 2006]. A literature review is a text written by someone to consider the critical points of current knowledge including substantive findings, as well as theoretical and methodo-logical contributions to a particular topic [Dellinger *et* al., 2007]. The authors affirm that literature reviews are secondary sources.

2.1   Introduction

The chapter aims at reviewing literature on Kenya's Bachelor of Commerce Graduates' Employability Skills and the Job Market Demands. Further, prevailing and pertinent theoretical knowledge applicable to this topic was been examined. The chapter begins by discussing the various theories relevant to this area of study, which include the Job Matching Theory and Human Capital Theory. The chapter examined the pertinent inde-pendent variables that would be expected to influence employability of B. Com gradu-ates.

The chapter is organized as follows: theoretical review of theories on employment and employability skills, review of literature on employable skills of B. Com graduates and job market demands. The chapter concludes with the summary and critique of the literature reviewed, indicating the gaps which this study sought to fill.

2.2   Theoretical Framework

According to Swanson [2005] a theoretical framework is a collection of interrelated concepts, like a theory but not necessarily so well worked-out. Further, the author affirms that theoretical framework guides the research, determining what things should be measured, and what statistical relationship the researcher would look for. He observes that theoretical framework is obviously critical in deductive, theory-testing sorts of studies. In those kinds of studies, the theoretical framework must be very specific and well-thought out, he concludes.

Sekaran [2000] defines a theoretical framework as a conceptual model of how one theorizes or makes logical sense of the relationships among several factors that have been identified as important to the problem. He observes that framework for research provides guidance for the researcher as study questions are fine-tuned, methods for measuring variables are selected and analyses are planned. Further, he notes that once data are collected and analysed, the framework is used as a base of comparison. Did the findings

coincide with the framework? If there were discrepancies, is there a way to explain them using the framework?

According to Robson [2002] a theory is an explanation of what is going on in the situation, phenomenon or what is being investigated. Further, Robson affirms that a theory is based on empirical evidence found through scientific research that was rigorously controlled to avoid bias.

There are several theories which can be used in the analysis of this study, such as classical and Keynesian theories of employment, Job Competition Theory, etc. Whereas many of these theories may be relevant and enhance the understanding of employability skills and job market demands, some of them may lack the conclusiveness required in developing a theoretical framework of this study. The study fell within the context of two theories: Job Matching Theory and Human Capital Theory, which were found useful in underpinning the investigations in this study. The theories helped to explain the research problem which was to investigate B. Com graduates' employable skills and job market demands in Kenya, bridge the gaps and provide an analytical framework of the study in the Kenyan context.

Further, the researcher believes that Job Matching Theory is most suitable to be applied in this study because when you compare the above definition of Job Matching Theory with the first two objectives of the study: [i] To establish the employability skills the

employers expect from B. Com graduates to have when they enter the job market, and [ii] To establish what employability skills the B. Com graduates actually possess as they enter the job market, you find that they complement each other because they are addressing the degree of fit between what the employer requires and what the graduate actually possesses.

2.2.1   Job Matching Theory [Sattinger, 1993].

This theory states that the quality of a job match, that is, the degree of fit between required and acquired skills, determines the productivity level and earnings in a job [Sattinger, 1993]. This is an ideal situation when applied in developed countries scenario. However, when the theory is applied to the research question, which is an investigation of Kenya's B. Com graduates' employability skills and the labour market demands, the researcher disapproves Sattinger's theory. According to Wanjohi [2011] there exists inadequacy of functionality of workplace skills. This lack of functionality is due to what the researcher would describe as incompatibility between the skills obtained by B. Com graduates in Kenya and what the employers are looking for. Unfortunately, in most developing countries, and particularly in Kenya, graduates may have taken 'any' job that they are offered due to financial pressures, and the need to help their marginalised families [Manda & Sen, 2004]. Further, the authors observe that most graduates incur debts through their studies. In this situation, Job Matching Theory does not apply since the

graduate is ready to take any offer, and so the question of required and acquired skills does not apply.

Professor Egara Kabaji, Director of Public Communication and Publishing at the Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology said the huge number of graduates entering the market with inadequate practical skills, highlights the inadequacy of the current education system. This, he said, contributes to the high number of unemployed and underemployed graduates in Kenya today. The prevalence of joblessness among the educated youths has been on the rise fuelling their frustration, hence the Government's promise to create jobs for the youth [Nesoba, 2010]. According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, the unemployment rate stands at 40%, with the highest percentage among the youth between the ages of 18 and 34. This literature confirms the gap between the required and the acquired employment skills. This means that the job matching theory cannot apply because the graduates lack the required employability skills.

The main objective of education and training is to prepare graduates for the tasks they are going to perform on their jobs [Barnard *et* al., 2001; Holton & Trott, 1996]. According to the job matching theory, a mismatch between the required skills and the skills a graduate actually possesses has important consequences for productivity, wages and probability to get a job [Beardwell *at* al., 2004]. The authors affirm that the competency level [qualification] required by employers must be equivalent with competency level of

the graduates. The match between graduates' field of academic specialization and the field of specialization which is required for the job, is also relevant [Green *et* al., 2002]. Job match also can be identified by the degree to which graduates are able to utilize the knowledge, skills and attitudes to the work context [Barnard *et* al., 2001].

According to [Sattinger, 1993] if an employee works in a non-matching job, his acquired skills are underutilized. As a result his labour productivity is reduced and hence attracts lower wages. In matching theory, unemployment or underutilisation of graduate-level skills in employment – reflects mismatches between graduates and employers that may emerge for a number of reasons [Mason *et* al., 2009]. Mason *et* al. [2009] highlighted that matching theory, together with the literature on B. Com graduate's employable skills and the job market pointed to several reasons why equipping B. Com graduates with employability skills might be expected to contribute to superior labour market outcomes for graduates in possession of those skills. Work or employability skills are conceptualised as those transferable skills that one might expect to be developed in an undergraduate programme but which have broad applicability in the workplace [Wilton, 2008]. This refers to the work skills transferable from university education into job market. The employability skills highlighted by Wilton [2008] refer to problem-solving skills, written and spoken communication, foreign language skills, numeracy, basic computer literacy, advanced IT or software skills, research skills, creativity and ability to work in teams. Employability skills are aimed at enhancing graduates to increase their attractiveness to potential employers. 'Success' in the graduate labour market is

typically defined as graduates securing employment in jobs which make appropriate use of the skills and knowledge developed in the course of their university studies [Green *et al.*, 2002].

In job matching theory, labour market 'failure' on the part of individual graduates – unemployment or underutilisation of graduate-level skills in employment reflects mismatches between graduates and employers which may come about for a number of reasons. For example, Coles & Smith [1998] emphasise that in a random matching model mismatches between job-seekers and employers may arise because of imperfect information, resulting in time and search costs for prospective partners to obtain information about better matches. They also propose an alternative 'stock-flow matching' model in which, after an initial round of match-making, agents may simply wait for appropriate partners to enter the market in a later time period. Other strands of matching theory emphasise the role of institutional and labour market rigidities in contributing to mismatches between job-seekers and employers, for example, the higher incidence of underutilisation of skills among female graduates who combine part-time employment with care of young children [Green *et al.*, 2002].

Allen and van der Velden [2001] carried an investigation of job market mismatches in the Netherlands, and they found that individuals who hold jobs for which their formal qualifications are higher or lower than required, do not correspond closely with 'skill-job mismatches'. One possible explanation for this is that, within given educational

qualification categories such as degree-holders, there may be unmeasured differences in skills between individuals, and individuals deemed by employers to be relatively low-skilled may be less likely than others in their qualification group to be offered jobs which require their level of formal qualification.

Another proposition advanced by Allen and van der Velden is that the selection criteria used by employers when screening job applicants may include factors such as work experience, gender and social background which are distributed unevenly within educational qualification categories. This is another potential line of explanation why individuals with similar levels of formal certification may encounter varying degrees of success in securing employment in jobs which make use of their graduate-level skills and knowledge [Green & McIntosh, 2002]. Job Matching Theory is a combination of Human Capital Theory (discussed below) and the Job Competition Theory [Thurow, 1975] which suggests that wages are determined primarily by job characteristics and not by individual productivity. Employers seek to employ the best available candidates for their vacancies, at the lowest training costs. They use educational qualifications as indicators for trainability [Spence, 1974].

2.2.2   Human Capital Theory [Becker, 1964]

The concept of "human capital" has gained tremendous attention in today`s study [Bontis, 1999]. Bontis defines human capital as representing the human factor in an organisation; the combined intelligence, skills and expertise that gives the organisation its dis-

tinctive character. Human capital is also defined as all human abilities whether innate or acquired attributes, whose value could be augmented by appropriate development investments [Armstrong, 2006]. Davenport [1999] observed that human capital consists of intangible skills that workers provide for their employers. Human capital can further be defined as knowledge, skills, aptitudes and other acquired traits contributing to production [Bassanini & Scarpetta, 2001].

The researcher believes that Human capital theory would contribute a great deal to the research topic which is on Kenya's B. Com employability skills and the labour market demands. Ishikawa & Ryan [2002] suggest that it is the stock of human capital that predominantly determines the earnings of individuals. This should be the ideal situation especially in the developed world, however, in the developing world, particularly in the Kenyan job market, this is not the case. The reason for this is that in most cases securing a job in Kenya may not necessarily depend on how well the candidate is equipped with skills but may depend on 'who knows who' in the particular organization. Further, individual's earnings may be determined by an employee's ethnicity and not necessarily by the stock of human capital.

Although Kenya is a reading nation, you may find some organizations which treat their employees like costs and not like assets [Mayo, 2001]. If employees do not treat workers as assets, then this would be against the human capital theory. Kearns [2005] believes that employees are value adders, not over headers, hence they should be treated as

significant. Fombrun *et* al. [1984] quite explicitly presents workers as a key resource that managers use to achieve competitive advantage for their companies.

According to Fraisse-D'Olimpio [2009] human capital determines various areas of daily life of individuals which indicates that this notion is now at the heart of public policies in developed countries and increasingly in developing countries. The public choice in particular are moving towards improving the education and training of populations throughout the life cycle but also the degree of social integration of societies, with emphasis on the role of qualifications in improving growth, the author adds.

The human capital theory, since its first version with [Schultz, 1960; Becker,1964] to the most recent developments, reinforces the idea that employment rates increase with the level of training. This is mainly due to the fact that more educated individuals who have invested more in human capital seek to enhance their investment [Becker, 1964]. Becker refers human capital to the investment undertaken by individuals in the form of education and training in skills. He affirms that employers value labour productivity by offering the highest wages to those individuals who have obtained the highest human capital. He notes that Human capital theory suggests that `general training' (useful to many employers) should be financed exclusively by employees, who have just the right incentives to invest in training since they are able to recoup their investment when it raises their productivity and hence their wages. Further, he observes that the costs of `specific training' (useful only to a specific employer) should be shared by employers

and employees, so that employees internalize the cost to their employers of quitting and employers in turn internalize the cost of dismissing to their trained employees. In either case, he argues, employers and employees are compensated for the training and there are no market failures. In practice, when training is part general and part specific, the market must also provide the right incentives for training, he concludes.

Human capital theory rests upon the assumption that education raises the marginal physical product of workers [Mincer, 1974]. Mincer argues that, according to human capital theory, human capital contributes to output just like other factors of production and also through technological change by driving both innovation and imitation. He further affirms that human capital analysis has undoubtedly had a strong influence on UK training policy since the early 1980s. Mincer observes that the Thatcher government, for example, abolished the Industrial Training Boards, which imposed training levies on firms and provided grants to firms providing adequate training. More recently, however, the government appears to be moving towards more recognition of market failures in training, as is implicit in the introduction of tax relief on vocational training costs in April 1992, he notes. In the rest of Europe and the US, governments are torn between a desire to subsidize training and the need to cut budget deficits, he concludes.

Balsan [2000] points out that the human capital theory was developed in a period of full employment, where individuals make their choices without uncertainty about the possibility to hold employment after training. Today, in economies experiencing high rates of

unemployment among graduates of higher education, the assumption of the absence of the influence of unemployment on the choice of investment in education is difficult to sustain, Balsan adds.

The strategy requires investment in training, taking into account the risk of unemployment [Guillon, 2010]. Thus, as stated by Giret [2000] investment in human capital depends not only on the expected wage, but also the risk of unemployment. The extension studies can then be explained by lower opportunity costs, he concludes. In this sense Kodde [1989] shows that the prospect of unemployment risk leads the individual to invest more in education, in order to improve employability, and reduce the risk of unemployment.

Lepage [1999] points out that the relationship between human capital and unemployment remains complex, on the one hand, the underemployment encourages the unemployed to invest more in human capital, Lepage observes. On the other hand, rising unemployment destroyed part of human capital, following its degradation, he notes. Human capital may depreciate if the skills are not maintained in good condition through regular use, he affirms. From this point of view, the long-term unemployment and youth unemployment can lead to deterioration of knowledge and skills [Fraisse-D'Olimpio, 2009].

2.3.1   The Concept of Employability

To many people, employability is simply about getting a job [Foster, 2006]. However, the author observes that there is so much more to employability than gaining employment. He argues that statistics do not take into account the fact that some graduates may have taken lower level jobs in order to deal with financial pressures, particularly after incurring debts through their studies.

Yorke & Knight [2004] define employability as a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy. Further, Yorke and Knight define employability more comprehensively as the capability to move self-sufficiently within the labour market to realise potential through sustainable employment. In simple terms, employability is the capability of securing and retaining fulfilling job, they conclude.

Hinchcliffe [2001] defines employability as having a set of skills, knowledge, understanding and personal attributes that make a person more likely to choose and secure occupations in which they can be satisfied and successful. According to Moon [2004] employability is a lifelong issue and nobody is ever perfectly employable. This means that there will always be aspects of a person's employability that would benefit from improvement, the author concludes. According to Lee [2002] employment and employability are different. He distinguishes the two terms as follows: Being employed means

having a job, being employable means having the qualities needed to maintain employ-ment and progress in the workplace. Employability is about learning – learning how to learn – and employability is not a product, but a process [Harvey, 2001].

According to Moreau & Leathwood [2006] employability refers to a set of achieve-ments related to skills, understanding and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen careers, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community as well as the country's economy. Employa-bility has been used as a performance indicator for university education [Smith *et* al., 2000]. Employability has also been defined from two perspectives: individual and insti-tutional perspectives [Harvey, 2001]. He defines individual employability as graduates being able to demonstrate the attributes to obtain jobs, while institutional employability relates to the employment rates of the university graduates. Mason & Cranmer [2009] pointed out that 'employability' refers to 'work readiness' that is, possession of the skills, knowledge, attitudes and commercial understanding that will enable new gradu-ates to make productive contributions to organisational objectives soon after they get absorbed in the job market. Employability is having a set of skills, knowledge, under-standing and personal attributes that make a person more likely to choose and secure occupations in which they can be satisfied and successful [Moon, 2004].

From the employer's perspective, 'employability' refers to 'work-readiness', which means possessing the attitude, skills, knowledge (ASK), that would enable new gradu-

ates to positively contribute to firm's goals when they starting working [Treleavan & Voola, 2008]. Employers want graduates with relevant subject specific skills, knowledge and understanding, but in addition to this are looking for well-developed generic skills in a number of areas [Harvey *et* al., 1997]. Harvey and Howard [1999] cited that graduates' success in their jobs depends more on graduates attributes than on narrow discipline specific degree. Further, they say that graduate employability is an important aspect of higher education industry, because it evaluates the success and ability of the particular institution in producing work ready graduates. Further, it has become common cause for employers to express concern about the gap between the outcomes of higher education (in terms of quality, type and quantity of graduates), and the needs of economy [Yorke, 2006; Harvey, 2001].

2.3.2   An Overview of University Education in Kenya

Many universities nowadays, have adopted an outward-looking approach, and work closely with industries and employers. The Australia-based universities (Griffith University, University of Canberra, University of South Australia, and Curtin University of Technology) and the UK based such as, University of Leeds, University of Leicester and in the United States, for example, University of Texas and University of Pittsburgh have identified specific generic competencies that graduates should develop to enhance their employability. The Kellogg Graduate School of Management (North-western University) treated students as "partners". The university worked closely with the industries

and has introduced 50 new courses since 1995 to keep pace with the changes in the business world. Similarly, National University of Singapore's Business School is also providing a rigorous, relevant and rewarding business education that develops leaders for the global marketplace.

The background presented earlier, showed that the issue of the graduates' employability has long been discussed and the debate still continues. With the world of employment moving rapidly, traditional career path is no longer the best choice. The entire industries are looking for 'excellent' worker who are able to compete with the ever challenging environment. With the demand of better-qualified workforce, Higher Education (HE) experts need to give more emphasis in developing skills compatible to the industry demand. One of the tools used to develop the skills would be the academic curriculum, which is a vehicle through which attributes can be transferred during the classroom learning that would prepare graduates when they enter the workforce [Fallows *et* al., 2000].

Employability has been used as a performance indicator for higher education institutions [Smith *et* al., 2000]. It represents a form of work specific (pro) active adaptability that consists of three dimensions: career identity, personal adaptability and social and human capital [Fugate *et* al., 2004].

Nevertheless, in Clarke's [1997] study based on 40 chief executives or managing directors from manufacturing and services industries under the Industry and Parliament Trust's Study Group on Employability, United Kingdom, concluded that employers are actually looking for the graduates who possess attributes of long life learning, flexibility and adaptability to changes as well as some generic skills of communication, teamwork, initiative, problem solving and decision making.

After Clarke's findings, Crosling & Ward [2002] carried out an extensive survey of employers of Monash University business graduates confirmed that the significant role of oral communication in the workplace. They further pointed that emphasis in university primarily on formal presentation is not an adequate preparation for workplace oral communication. The most often used forms of oral communication are informal work-related discussions, listening and following instructions and informal conversations. In recent years, many tasks are becoming more interdependent and employers are beginning to seek graduate who displays a blend of technical and human relations skills [Zargari, 1997]. Based on comprehensive previous evidence Cotton [1999] suggested that employers prefer graduates who possess basic, higher-order and affective skills. In another study Leon & Borchers [2002] discovered that employers require graduates with more intrinsically humanistic skills rather than academic or technical skills. 'Success' in the graduate labour market is typically defined as graduates securing employment in jobs that make appropriate use of the skills and knowledge developed in the course of their university studies. A key element of the government rationale for higher education expansion is the economic and organizational restructuring associated with the

'knowledge-intensive economy' and the perceived necessity of increasing the supply of high-skilled labour to ensure national competitiveness [Wilton, 2008].

On the other hand, Leon & Borchers [2002] regrouped the work skills into nine skill categories namely; reading, writing and math; communication; critical thinking; group interactions; personal development; computer skills; technical systems; leadership; and team work. The following skills were mentioned most frequently; knowing how to learn; competence in reading, writing and calculation; effective listening and oral communication skills; adaptability through creative thinking and problem solving; personal management with strong self-esteem and initiative; interpersonal skills; the ability to work in teams or groups; effective leadership; and basic technology skills [Imel, 1990]. However, Cotton [1999] segregated the work skills into three clusters: basic skills, higher order thinking skills; and affective skills; and traits. Further, Kilpatrick & Allen [2001] concluded that work skills with high demand are skills for knowledge work (ideas, design, innovation, marketing, monitoring and management), soft skills (conflict resolution, leadership, team-building and workplace communications), literacy, and numeracy skills. Baker & Henson [2010] identified only three areas of work skills namely generic skills, career management skills and career sector knowledge. In addition, Le Deist & Winterson [2005] associated employee's competency with cognitive, functional and social competence.

Al-Dosary *et* al. [2006] stated that a majority of employers reported quality shortcomings among job applicants for graduate employment. The major problems of national human resources development fall into two broad categories: [a] those related to lack of 'high-level' manpower with key skills and competency and [b] those related to redundant or under-utilized manpower, the authors affirm. Thus human resource development is basically concerned with the two-fold objective of building knowledge and skills and providing employment and broader opportunities for unutilized or under-utilized manpower, they conclude. Moreau & Leathwood [2006] pointed out that in a context of considerable changes in the labour market and higher education, a discourse of employability has become increasingly dominant. Universities are urged to ensure that they produce 'employable' graduates, and graduates themselves are exhorted to continually develop their personal skills, qualities and experiences in order to compete in the graduate labour market. For the individual, employability depends on the knowledge, skills and aptitudes they possess, the way they use those assets and present them to employers and the context (e.g. personal circumstances and labour market environment) within which they seek work.

A local study by Azmi [1988] revealed that employers rated items such as arrive on time, demonstrate a sense of responsibility, cooperate with supervisor and possess a positive attitude toward work, as the major desirable employee traits. Mustapha & Greenan [2002] identified the employers' perceptions of work skills, and found that besides the basic work skills (such as technical skills, communication skills, social and

interpersonal skills, self-motivation, critical thinking and problem solving skills), entre-preneurial skills and positive attitude toward work are components needed by the k-economy. Recent studies indicated that private university graduates exhibited slightly higher level of mismatch between employers' needs and undergraduates' skills namely in criteria such as critical analysis, planning, problem solving, oral communication, decision making and negotiating skills [Wye & Lim, 2009]. The Malaysian employers prefer to recruit graduates with high ICT skills, ability to work as a team, interpersonal skills and proficient in English [Singh & Singh, 2008]. According to them interpersonal and communication skills, academic qualifications and work experience are key selection criteria used by employers when recruiting new graduates. A research done by Wilton [2008] highlighted knowledge gained by graduates, combined with transferable skills and widely recognised, highly valued, certificated degrees may give graduates and their employers critical advantages in the local and global market.

Research has shown that education is a prerequisite for achieving several development objectives, and that it is positively associated with a wide variety of human welfare issues that are seen as development goals [Tilak, 2002]. Tilak further affirms that university education seeks not only to generate, transmit, store and retrieve knowledge but also to form persons of virtue and integrity. According to [Al-Dosary *et* al. 2006] university education should train leaders who are critical, creative and innovative. Such leaders are offered the challenge of actualizing their potential and transforming the society [Moreau & Leathwood, 2006]. The university, therefore, assists students in developing

skills that help them learn lessons from the past, examine the present and plan for the future.

High quality university education transforms individuals and societies in ways that reduce poverty and increase the global competitiveness of nations [Noe *et* al., 2003]. The authors affirm that recent studies confirm that university education produces both public and private benefits. The private benefits include better employment prospects, higher salaries, ability to understand complex social and political issues, the authors conclude. Most African countries attained independence with a huge deficit in skilled human resources [Kamoche *et* al., 2004]. Accordingly, the authors argue that this deficit can be linked to missionary sponsored formal education under colonialism, which aimed at equipping local people with rudimentary skills that enabled them to serve as clerks and teachers. According to Digolo [2006] the greatest gift and working tool a nation can offer her people is education, which in return nurtures a healthy society. Digolo notes that this is achieved through the provision of quality education that is accessible and relevant.

According to Oluoch [2002] education is defined, as the process of acquiring and developing desired knowledge, skills and attitude. Aluoch adds that the word process brings in the idea that education is a continuous activity that never ends. Further, he says that the word develops also shows that acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes is not once

but the acquisition of more and more knowledge, skills and attitudes is necessary so as to deepen and widen what has already been acquired.

The history of university education in Kenya dates back to the colonial period when Makerere College in Kampala, Uganda was established to cater for Eastern Africa Countries [Ntarangwi, 2003]. Ntarangwi adds that at independence, the three East Africa (EA) countries established the University of EA. He observes that the Royal Technical College in Nairobi became a constituent college of the University of EA. He adds that in 1970 University of Nairobi (UoN) was established as a fully-fledged national university.

The original intention of university education was to train administrators and white collar workers to be employed in government offices in Kenya, Consequently, admission into the university was elitist and very much associated with the development of communities and schools in geographical areas and the degree of evangelization by the missionaries. However, the "A" level system where schools admitted the best students from across the country led to some regional parity.

In recent years, high levels of poverty, lack of infrastructure and equipment in some schools have been a major impediment to access to university education. Despite the effort that the students and graduates have quite realistic perceptions about the employment prospects, they continue to aspire for certain kinds of jobs [white collar, and par-

ticularly, in the public sector]. They look at these jobs primarily as a vehicle for achieving social prestige and upward mobility in a class differentiated society. This leads them to crowd the educational institutions possibly with a hope that they will ultimately succeed in getting such a job. But the result actually is a mass production of graduates a large number of whom are not wanted by the labour market. Constraints. In spite of these constraints, there is a steady increase in the number of students qualifying for university admission that has not been matched with similar expansion of university facilities. This problem was compounded by the change in education system from the 7:4:2:3 to 8:4:4 which gave rise to a double university intake in 1990/91. In order to meet the increased demand, the Government embarked on an ambitious programme to expand facilities in universities but this intervention was not sustained and some of the infrastructure remains incomplete.

"We are questioning the quality of education offered in our universities," said Federation of Kenya Employers Executive Director Jacqueline Mugo. "Most graduates we hire do not have the skills in their areas of study to help them compete in the workplace. They have nice [degrees] that they cannot defend in the field." Mugo told Sabahi that some university administrators are compromising the quality of education by accepting students without improving campuses' capacities to absorb them, and only considering financial gains when expanding and varying education programmes. "We used to see universities specialise in a given field, say medicine or education, but currently all the universities are offering degrees in every field, so they can cash in on as many students

as possible. With such trends, you cannot guarantee quality training for learners," Mugo said, adding that employers are often forced to pay to train workers in order to fill the skill gap.

School administrators are simply responding to emerging trends in real time, said Universities Academic Staff Union Secretary-General Muga K'Olale, adding that providing more programmes that are flexible and shorter helps make education more accessible. "The market demand that [a person] can only secure a good job when he or she has a degree is what is driving many [job-seekers] to lecture halls. To meet these demands, universities are forced to set up campuses to cater for the increase [in enrolment]," K'Olale told Sabahi.

In most developing countries, and particularly in Kenya, the examination system makes schools competitive, [focus group interviews and the researcher's experience and participation]. In Kenya, some secondary schools set targets for the number of A's the school should obtain in a particular exam. The teachers are motivated through monitory rewards or sponsored for a trip to South Africa, Dubai or China. The effect of this motivation may make the teachers cover what is likely to be tested in the examinations. This trend of just getting interested in only the examination results continues in universities.

2.3.3   Kenyan Graduate Employability Skills and Job Market Demands

Creating one universally relevant definition of employability skills is, for practical purposes, impossible, because the skills needed for employability can depend on many different factors such as job type, industry sector and career stage. However, the following definition will be used for the purpose of this study. Harvey & Morey [2003] defined employability skills as skills required not only to gain employment, but also to progress within an enterprise so as to achieve one's potential and contribute successfully to enterprise strategic directions. The author affirms that employability skills are more important than academic knowledge gained from the graduate's degree. According to [Moreau & Leathwood, 2006] for the majority of employers, it's not what you have studied that makes you an attractive proposition; it's what else you can bring to the organisation: skills, attitude, energy, insight, potential for development. They also highlighted that some employers place very high importance on generic skills [such as communication skills and team-working] and personal attributes [such as resilience and commitment]. They also strongly held the view that the acquisition of employability skills should be seen as a continuum of learning that supports job progression, not just entry into the job market. Skills are the building blocks of one's career. Skills refer to certain personal abilities of an individual, which can be taken from one job role to another, used within any profession and at any stage of the graduate's career. The need to have skilled worker and not just knowledge is a factor that is highly demanded for any job requirement. As reported by the Australian industry Group report [2006] the demand for higher levels of skills, frequent updating of skills and excellent 'soft skills' as well as technical

skills is rising. The survey showed that over 90 per cent of the employers look for people who are flexible and adaptive, willing to learn on the job, team players, technically competent and committed to excellence [Thompson *et* al., 2008]. A skilled and adaptable workforce would enable employers to respond to the industry changes.

Leon & Borchers [2002] regrouped the work skills into nine skill categories namely; reading, writing and math; communication; critical thinking; group interactions; personal development; computer skills; technical systems; leadership; and team work. The following skills were mentioned most frequently; knowing how to learn; competence in reading, writing and calculation; effective listening and oral communication skills; adaptability through creative thinking and problem solving; personal management with strong self-esteem and initiative; interpersonal skills; the ability to work in teams or groups; effective leadership; and basic technology skills [Imel, 1990]. However, Cotton [1999] segregated the work skills into three clusters: basic skills, higher order thinking skills; and affective skills; and traits. Further, Kilpatrick & Allen [2001] concluded that work skills with high demand are skills for knowledge work (ideas, design, innovation, marketing, monitoring and management), soft skills (conflict resolution, leadership, team-building and workplace communications), literacy, and numeracy skills.

Baker & Henson [2010] identified only three areas of work skills namely generic skills, career management skills and career sector knowledge. In addition, Le Deist & Winter-

son [2005] associated employee's competency with cognitive, functional and social competence.

2.4   Conceptual Framework

There are many variables within each one of these objectives, which can be examined, such as willingness to learn, self-promotion, customer orientation, foreign language, flexibility, commitment, and so on. However, for the purpose of this study, the researcher plans to examine only the following employment skills (which were ranked highest in terms of preference during pilot study) from the following categories:

2.4.1   Interpretation of Variables

2.4.1.1   Self-reliance - self-management, readiness to accept responsibility, flexibility, resilience, time management; proactively, networking, and planning action. According to Gavin [2002] self-reliance skills entails to attributes such as self-management, readiness to accept responsibility, flexibility, resilience, time management.

 The study focuses on initiative/proactive i.e. the ability of an individual to spot opportunities and potential problems, and take action to get the best outcome as well as working without constant supervision; commercial awareness/networking i.e. understanding the key factors that contribute to an organization's success e.g. providing a quality product; good customer service; well -trained, motivated staff; controlling costs and

planning /organized/self-directed i.e. the ability to plan and carry out a workload efficiently and effectively.

2.4.1.2   People Skills - teamwork, communication skills, listening and questioning, respecting others, contributing to discussions. According to Nelson & Simmons [2003] these entails attributes such as teamwork, communication skills, listening and questioning, respecting others and contributing to discussions. The study focuses on team working, that is, working effectively with other people, interpersonal skills, that is, the ability to work for, with and alongside others, oral communication, that is, ensuring one is understood by writing or speaking in a clear and articulate manner and leadership, that is, the ability to take responsibility for others.

2.4.1.3   General Employment Skills - problem solving, literacy, application of numeracy. According to Kilpatrick & Allen [2001] the above mentioned skills are often referred to as "transferable". This means that they are not only applicable to employment but also across a range of other academic disciplines. The author further emphasizes that in addition to a graduate having all these attributes, the key foundation, must be a positive attitude: a 'can-do' approach, a readiness to take part and contribute, openness to new ideas and a drive to make these happen.

This researcher strongly feels there is dire need for universities to equip their graduates with skills that the industry requires. This is because graduates with the abilities, skills

and knowledge [ASK] of a certain discipline, usually create a cohort of lifelong learners who can easily adjust to dynamic changes which may face job market. These graduates make themselves automatically employable, since they can demonstrate expertise which can be adapted widely in the job market.

2.4.2 University B. Com Curriculum

Curriculum development is both a technical and social process [KIE, 2006]. In order for the process to proceed effectively and efficiently, the context in which it is carried out must be considered [Shiundu & Omulando, 1992]. Curriculum development may be generically conceived as an amalgamation of various processes employed in the pursuit of certain set goals in a school system [KIE, 2006]. According to Hopkins [2001] curriculum development models appropriate for one situation may be impractical in another. This is because the curriculum is a social construct and diverse societies do not hold universal views, he adds. It is therefore important to consider context when developing curriculum [KIE, 2006].

According to Bermama [2000] University curriculum must be compatible and relevant to the industrial sector's requirements. Rogow [1993] mentioned that curricular must balance theoretical with industrial knowledge. Universities must work closely with the industrial sector, including in co-curriculum development, to ensure their graduates are relevant to market demand. "Many graduates come from universities unprepared to hit the job market running because there is a disconnect between the education curriculum and the workforce demanded by the current economic environment," said David Owaro,

an economist at the Nairobi-based Institute of Economic Affairs. University curricula should focus on fields where job growth is expected, such as manufacturing, entrepreneurship, agribusiness and the service sector, he said. The study found out that employers are dissatisfied with the preparedness of school graduates for the world of work. Further, the employers indicated a strong willingness for participating in curriculum development, but they have not been involved [Nyandusi, 2001]. The University curriculum must be compatible and relevant to the industrial sector's requirements [Rogow, 1993]. Further, Rogow argues that curricular must balance theoretical with industrial knowledge, and he emphasizes that universities must work closely with the industrial sector, in co-curriculum development to ensure their graduates are relevant to market demand. In the early 1990's, tertiary education in some countries typically contained curricular materials that were far less accustomed to the interests of employers in the workplace. The curriculum put strong emphasis on scholastic outcomes in the academic achievement of graduates [Mason, 1992; Chew *et* al., 1995, Lee, 2000 cited in Quek, 2005]. This view is supported by the Higher Education Ministry of Malaysia (HEMM), that unemployment among graduates is due to the lack of generic competencies in undergraduates program.

2.4.3   Quality of University Education and B. Com graduates in Kenya

Quality in a product or service shows itself in the satisfaction of the client. Quality education demonstrates its due accountability to the public when it is relevant to the needs of the leaners and of the community. This is why every nation, in principle seeks to

have universities of quality, which produce graduates of substance and distinctive character,,, with productive, innovative and creative abilities, as well as excellent leadership abilities for service to the community [Mugo, 2001].

2.4.2.1   Ingredients of Quality University Education

The following are the ingredients of quality in university education:

[i]   **The students admitted –** students are the focus of the university's academic programmes. They may be viewed as the 'raw materials' of the university enterprise. Quality of students may be characterised by the following indicators: the interest shown in the institution; prior testing or assessment; basis of selection or admission, systems of allocation course of study; job placement; impact and contribution of alumni [GOK, 2007].

[ii]   **The curriculum or programmes –** postgraduate programmes enhance research, scholarship, and serve to develop the intellectual capacity of talented and gifted students in their areas of interest. A wholesome programme enables a student to gain depth in both theoretical and practical areas. Most masters' programmes in Kenya are mainly done through coursework and a small project component, which makes the students incompetent in research especially when exposed to PhD programme. There is need, therefore to balance the coursework and the thesis component to ensure that the students are well prepared. In addition, courses on proposal writing and writing of research reports should be integral parts of graduate studies to eventually enable these upcoming

scholars to access external grants. Professional writing is critical re of need that would enable students to participate in the world of publishing and dissemination of ideas [UNESCO, 2006].

[iv]   Academic staff – Regardless of the level of education under consideration, it has been argued that the teacher resource is one of the most important inputs into the education system. Dedicated, inspiring and competent lecturers are key to quality instruction and the overall development of the students. They are looked upon as role models. Regrettably, Kenya's university score is rather low compared to other African countries with regard to how many faculty members are qualified to the PhD level. This is mainly due to the brain drain phenomenon and other factors [GOK, 2007]. The quality of education would be improved if academic staff would be given incentives to write and publish; and if the terms of service for some lecturers is a revised. The level of quality in these critical categories is in turn, dependent on supportive key pillars, which include the overall environment, the prevailing leadership, and the necessary funding and the equipment.

Kabaji [2013] director of public communication and publishing at the Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology said the huge number of graduates entering the market with inadequate practical skills highlights the inadequacy of the current education system. This, he said, contributes to the high number of unemployed and underemployed graduates in Kenya today. According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics

(KNBS), the unemployment rate stands at 40%, with the highest percentage among the youth between the ages of 18 and 34. Kabaji said the government, in consultation with the private sector and academia, should help align education programs with the short and long-term economic needs of the country.

Mania [2013] managing director of the marketing research firm Consumer Insight, said the quality of graduates Kenyan universities produce has been decreasing over the last 15 years. "This is rather disappointing to me as an employer, and that is why we started a system at Consumer Insight where we never hire graduates straight from the university," he told Sabahi. "We recruit them as trainees based on their attitude and intelligence, take them through a rigorous training and hire those that pass the test after six months." "Universities need to make it mandatory that graduates go for internships to acquire necessary on-the-job training," he said. In addition, he said curricula should be changed with input from employers to make sure the latest information, technology and practices are used when preparing students [Ramah, 2013].

The reason for the above situation may have been caused by the fact that Kenya inherited an ill designed education system in 1963, from missionaries and colonial powers [Orebro, 2010]. Further Orebro notes that education system was racially segregated structure, characterized by gross imbalances in the corresponding pattern of expenditure. He affirms that education system was actually designed to serve colonial and minority interests. Its curriculum was infused with British content, practice and ethos ad-

ministered and indeed taught largely by expatriates [Wanjohi, 2011]. Wanjohi argues that the curricular materials were far less accustomed to the interests of employers in the workplace. The materials did not facilitate application of classroom learning in the tertiary education to the workplace performance [Eshiwani, 2009; Mutiny, 2010].

A local study by Azmi [1988] revealed that employers rated items such as arrive on time, demonstrate a sense of responsibility, cooperate with supervisor and possess a positive attitude toward work, as the major desirable employee traits. Mustapha & Greenan [2002] identified the employers' perceptions of work skills, and found that besides the basic work skills [such as technical skills, communication skills, social and interpersonal skills, self-motivation, critical thinking and problem solving skills], entrepreneurial skills and positive attitude toward work are components needed by the economy. Recent studies indicated that private university graduates exhibited slightly higher level of mismatch between employers' needs and undergraduates' skills namely in criteria such as critical analysis, planning, problem solving, oral communication, decision making and negotiating skills [Wye & Lim, 2009]. The Malaysian employers prefer to recruit graduates with high ICT skills, ability to work as a team, interpersonal skills and proficient in English [Singh & Singh, 2008]. According to them interpersonal and communication skills, academic qualifications and work experience are key selection criteria used by employers when recruiting new graduates. A research done by Wilton [2008] highlighted knowledge gained by graduates, combined with transferable skills

and widely recognised, highly valued, certificated degrees may give graduates and their employers critical advantages in the local and global market.

Wong & Hamelin [2006] examined the main issues on graduate employment in Malaysia using empirical evidence obtained from annual reports published by various government ministries as well as a tracer study conducted in 2002 on Diploma in Banking graduates from MARA University Technology, Sarawak. The tracer study intended to assess the performance of a group of young working graduates by obtaining their feedback regarding the relevancy of subjects offered by the programs in university. The findings showed that there was a discrepancy between graduate's skills and the requirements of job market. Though the graduates were trained to take up mid-level management positions, and more than 40% of the respondents were in junior administrators or lower position. A study by McLeish [2002] stated that work skills for small and medium enterprises consist of five core abilities, i.e. personal values, interpersonal skills, initiative and enterprise skills, learning and workplace skills. Poole & Zahn [1993] categorized work skills required by employers as personal values, problem solving and decision making, relation with other people; task related skills, communication skills, maturity, health and safety as well as job commitment. The core component of work skills consists of communication, team work, problem solving, initiative and enterprise skills, planning and organizing, self-management, learning skills and technology that contribute productive employee [ACCI 2002].

Kenya's quality of education remains under pressure at all levels, with overcrowded classrooms, insufficient numbers of qualified teaching staff, insufficient teaching aids and ill-equipped and physical facilities [Wanjohi, 2011]. Further, you will discover that most candidates who join the Kenyan universities will have gone through the 8-4-4 system of education, which highly promotes cramming of material, as opposed to imparting skills [Obura, 1996]. It is no wonder that some students plead with their lecturers to be told the areas which the examination will cover. According to Odebero [2010] the examination system favours the students with a high capacity to reproduce the theoretical information. Odebero observes that students are interested in just passing their examination irrespective of whether they have or not acquired relevant practical skills for gainful employment in a particular trade.

The gap between employers' demand and fresh graduates is expanding [Weligamage & Siengthai, 2003]. From the researcher's point of view, the expansion of the gap is evidenced by newspapers' job advertisements, where employers specify the work experience of their job candidates which may be one year and above. Such an advertisement eliminates the possibility of fresh graduates to get jobs [Amimo, 2000]. Most employers target fresh graduates for management trainees and sales jobs which requires little skills. From the above information, one may assume that there are qualities/skills employers are missing in today's fresh graduates.

Kenyan industry prefers to employ a member of staff who is fully trained in the area of their specialization, who is creative, innovative, independent thinker through tasks and goal oriented, to employing somebody they have to closely supervise and retrain [Kinyanjui, 2007; Kipkebut, 2010; & Mogambi, 2013]. Further, it is also increasingly getting difficulty to find job candidates who can relate what they have learnt in university to the job market situations [Kinyanjui, 2007]. Hence, the researcher's desire to investigate the possibility of employment skills gap of B. Com graduates.

According to Gudo & Olel [2011] there is higher prevalence in examination cheating in universities than those in secondary schools. The authors attribute this scenario to lack of adequate control measures taken against examination cheating and remote chances of detection. The frequency of students cheating in universities lowers the quality of graduates [Musembi, 2011]. As a result, the employer is reluctant to absorb the graduates in the job market, Musembi affirms. He notes that some university students use money and sex to influence some lecturers and fellow students to get undeserved grades. He affirms that the use of sex to obtain undeserved grades is a more popular tool in the hands of students than money. As a result of this, the quality of the graduates is definitely compromised [Amimo, 2013]. This trend would definitely widen the skills gap between employers' expectations and what the graduate possesses.

2.4.4   Training and Employability

Substantial training and development opportunities are broadly recognised as an important feature in attracting and retaining new graduate recruits [Association of Graduate Recruiters, 1999; Sturges & Guest, 1999; Hogarth *et* al., 2007]. From the organisational perspective, a graduate training programme can provide a skilled talent pool based on shared, organisational wide competencies and technical capabilities meeting immediate staffing and future leadership needs [Jenner, 2008]. Ball [1988] & Nelson [1991] highlighted the Information Communication Technology (ICT) professionals who possess sufficient human relations and management training enabling them to communicate effectively, remain a scarce and vital resource for the development of viable economies. Under education and training, Kenya will provide globally competitive quality education, training and research to hers citizens for development and enhanced individual well-being.

The overall goal for 2012 is to reduce illiteracy by increasing access to education, and raising the quality and relevance of education. Other goals will include increasing the transition rates to technical institutions and universities from 3% to 8% by 2012. Public and private universities will be encouraged to expand enrolment, with an emphasis on science and technology courses and revise curricular of university and technical institutes by including more science and technology subjects Government of Republic of Kenya [2007] Kenya Vision 2030.

A careful use of training methods can be a very cost-effective investment in the sense of using the appropriate method for the needs of a person or a group. However, many commentators have mentioned that organizations often use inappropriate methods which can be both costly and time wasting and bring very little improvement in the performance of the employee [Beardwell *et* al., 2004].

In East Africa, [Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania] demand for post graduate training to provide the country with competitive edge in the knowledge economy is evident. There is need for the Government to provide quality training that develops the country' potential for creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship to the full. The Government should ensure the development of quality training that is relevant, sustainable, inclusive, community centred and truly world class. According to Wandiga *et* al. [2007] Kenya intends to create a globally competitive and adaptive human resource base to meet the requirements of a rapidly industrialising economy. The authors say that this will be done through life-long training and education. The argue that as a priority, a human resource database will be established to facilitate beater planning of human resources requirements in the country. Furthermore, steps will be taken to raise labour productivity to international levels. Other steps will include the establishment of new technical training institutions, as well as the enhancement of closer collaboration between industry and training institutions, they confirm.

As Walton [1999] writes, "In today's complex and dynamic environment, it is no longer necessary to debate whether training and development (T&D) activities are luxuries in which only organizations can indulge in prosperous times." Most organizations - large and small - have come to realize that developing an effective work force is no more a luxury than having a sales or accounting department. It is an accepted fact that training and development are necessary for spirit, survival, and performance of an organization - it must develop those who will manage the organization in the years to come. According to [Beardwell *et al.* [2004] HRD is seen as having a significant part to play in achieving and maintaining the survival and success of an organization. They continue to say that managers have not only desire to acquire appropriate people to resource it, they also need to train and develop them.

2.4.5 Demands and Supply in the Labour Force and Employability

Employability is a notion that captures the economic and political times in which we live. It is argued that national governments can no longer guarantee employment in a competitive global environment. As the developed economies come to rely on knowledge-driven business, employability is seen as a source of competitive advantage as national prosperity depends on upgrading the knowledge, skills and entrepreneurial zeal of the workforce [Brown & Lauder, 2001]. In this new economic competition the role of government is limited to providing the opportunity for all to enhance their employability, which has led to the rapid growth in higher education. Employability is also seen to reflect the shift away from the bureaucratic career structures of the past that of-

fered stable career progression to significant numbers of white-collar works [Collin & Young, 2000]. The large corporations have become leaner, flatter and prone to rapid restructuring making them incompatible with the expectation of a bureaucratic career. This led companies to highlight the need for employees to not only remain employable with their current jobs but in the external labour market, if they should find themselves in the category of 'surplus' employees [Sennett, 1998]. A feature of work reorganisation in the twenty years has been the democratisation of insecurity. Redundancy is no longer restricted to semiskilled and unskilled workers. Technicians, engineers manages and professionals, have all discovered that the long tenure career bargain is dead [Cappelli, 1999; Peiperl *et* al., 2000].

People are the greatest potential asset to any organization. The development of people and creation of organizational conditions for full utilization of their development talents should be of the highest priority and concern to the governing body and the top management of any organization [Byer, 1970]. People are the only truly sustainable resource providing long-term competitive and consumer advantage [Walton, 1999]. Walton continues to argue that any organization can quickly access the elements of new technology, reverse-engineer products; what is scarcer are the distinctive skills or competences which individuals brings to, and acquire during their stay within a given enterprise. [Waterman, 1994; Garfield, 1992] are just two of a stream of influential American authors who argue that competences can best be generated in the context of collaborative partnerships and team working.

In its broadest sense, HRD is about development and change through learning; about how, what and where individuals learn and about what Lyon [1996] describes as encouraging people to develop and grow from dependency to independency to interdependency. The HRD practitioners are often uncomfortable about seeing people just as a work force; viewing them as such appears to limit the aim of learning to maximizing resource potential. 'Workforce' implies something 'impersonal,' large co-ordinated and compliant [Walton, 1991]. Walton contends that HRD is much more individualistic in conception. It can recognize and encourage individual aspirations in its purest form; in its neutral as to where skills abilities are demonstrated so long as learning has taken place. If its goal is learning and personal growth, then its customers 'need not be tied to an individual employer'.

Gilley & Eggland [1989] consider that HRD in an organization context has no meaning unless the connection is made to performance. They go even further and state that its basic purpose is to contribute directly to the organization's goal through improved performance. They read this position by concluding that the dependent variable of HRD is 'the measurable increase in performance which is the direct result of organizational development and/or personal training and development' and not some other factors such as individual learning or participant satisfaction intervention.

Walton [1991] has observed that in the past, it was assumed that a high percentage of people would stay with a given employer - there would be a career for some, job security for others. Commitment was associated with life-long loyalty to the firm. The legacy of the organizational down-sizing of recent years is that the old psychological employment contract based on 'trust' is breaking down and the new 'knowledge workers' whose skills are at a premium will want guarantees of future employability wherever that might be. In a competitive market place for scarce intellectual resources commitment may still be the goal - but it has been reconfigured. The new challenge is to generate commitment for the duration of an individual's stay by offering the opportunity to acquire transferable skills.

It is apparent from Walton's views above, much of the learning takes place within or for organizations. But, as a result of global competitive pressures, Information Technology (IT) and heightened customer expectations, the organization landscape and architecture of today are not the same as those of twenty years ago. We have moved into what some term 'the post-industrial era' and what others describe as the 'Information Age'. In the developed world, large labour-intensive corporations with a high concentration of semi-skilled operatives are becoming a thing of the past. Technological developments have made possible the realization of the location-independent virtual organization. Pressures go well beyond resolving the efficiency, quality and customer concerns, which dominated the 1980's. What is significant today is not only the impact of IT on organizational forms and boundaries, but also the importance of an ecological awareness, new

perspective on business ethics - perhaps a move away from unbridled competition if re-sources are to be sustained (Rauch *et* al., 2005].

Human Resource Development can be seen purely in functional terms, as the provision of a set of activities that are undertaken to achieve desired individual and organizational outcomes. It can also be seen as a discipline with a philosophical or theoretical base on which to ground practice. Weinberger [1998] makes the point that HRD now encom-passes a vast spectrum of theory and practice. Blake [1995] contends further that the field keeps on growing. Human resource development is concerned with the develop-ment of strategies for the provision of learning, development and training opportunities in order to improve individual, team and organizational performance [Armstrong, 2005]. Armstrong, quoting Harrison [1997] defines human resource development as development that arises from a clear vision about people's abilities and potential and operates within the overall strategic framework of the business. He continues to say that human capital development takes a broad and long-term view about how human capital development policies and practices can support the achievement of business strategies. He is of the belief that a firm's human resources are a major source of com-petitive advantage. It is, therefore, about developing the intellectual capital required by the organization as well as ensuring that the right quality of people are available to meet present and future needs.

2.5   Types of Unemployment

There are various types of unemployment as discussed below:

2.5.1   Structural Unemployment: It is also known as Marxian unemployment or long-term unemployment. It is due to slower growth of capital stock in the country. The entire labour force cannot be absorbed in productive employment, because there are not enough instruments of production to employ them. This type of unemployment applies very well in the study problem. This is because Kenya's economy has a slower growth of capital stock which may cause the B. Com graduates not to be employed [focus group interview, 2013].

2.5.2   Seasonal Unemployment: Seasonal unemployment arises because of the seasonal character of a particular productive activity so that people become unemployed during the slack season. Occupations relating to agriculture, sugar mills, rice mills, ice factories and tourism are seasonal. In relation to the study topic, there are seasonal unemployment in Kenya which affects B. Com graduates, for example, firms like Kenya National Examinations Council offer B. Com graduates job seasonally during pick periods [Focus group interview, 2013].

2.5.3   Frictional Unemployment: It arises when the labour force is temporarily out of work because of perfect mobility on the part of the labour. In a growing and dynamic economy, in which some industries are declining and others are rising and in which people are free to work wherever they wish, some volume of frictional unemployment is

bound to exist. This is so because it takes some time for the unemployed labour to learn new trades or to shift to new places, where there is a demand for labour. Thus, frictional unemployment exists when there is unsatisfied demand for labour, but the unemployed workers are either not fit for the jobs in question or not in the right place to meet this demand. The frictional unemployment affects the B. Com graduates occasionally when they have to leave one job to join a more lucrative one or when they are laid off due to lack of required skills [Focus group interview, 2013].

2.5.4   Cyclical Unemployment: It is also known as Keynesian unemployment. It is due to deficiency of aggregate effective demand. It occurs when business depression occurs. During the times of depression, business activity is at low ebb and unemployment increases. Some people are thrown out of employment altogether and others are only partially employed. This type of unemployment is due to the fact that the total effective demand of the community is not sufficient to absorb the entire productive of goods that can be produced with the available stock of capital. When the businessmen cannot sell their goods and services, their profit expectations are not fulfilled. So the entrepreneurs reduce their output and some factors of production become unemployed. Many B. Com graduates were retrenched in the year 2007 – 2008 after the post-election violence [Focus group interview, 2013].

2.5.5   Disguised Unemployment: Disguised unemployment is the most widespread type of unemployment in under-developed countries. In under-developed countries, the

stock of capital does not grow fast. The capital stock has not been growing at a rate fast enough to keep pace with the growth of population, the country's capacity to offer productive employment to the new entrants to the labour market has been severely limited.

In disguised unemployment, there is an existence of a very backward agricultural economy. People are engaged in production with an extremely low or zero marginal productivity. Since the employment opportunities in non-agricultural sector are not sufficient, therefore, most of the workers are bound to work in agricultural sector. This gives rise to the concept of 'disguised unemployment', in which people are unwillingly engaged in occupations, where their marginal productivity is very low. Kenya is an agricultural country. However, due to adverse climatical conditions the agricultural sector does not remunerate the employees adequately, hence disguised unemployment [Focus group interview, 2013].

2.6   Conclusion

Unemployment scenario of the graduate level in Kenya has been a serious problem [Tairo, 2006]. Further, the author affirms that B. Com graduates are frustrated with the burden of education, as there are concurrent occurrences of joblessness. The prevalent dilemma of employability appears as there are imbalances due to expected skill/qualifications by the ultimate employers and what the graduates actually possess.

2.3   CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Independent Variables	**Dependent Variables**
Employable Skills	**Job Market Demands**

Self-Reliance
- Proactively
- Networking
- Planning/Action

People skills
- Team working
- Interpersonal skills
- Oral communication
- Leadership

General employment skills

- Problem solving
- IT/computer literacy
- Numeracy

Challenges of education
- Economic conditions
- Lack of facilities
- Learner's entry behaviour
- Large classes
- Curriculum

Training and development

Demand and supply of labour force and em-

Quality of the education/graduates

Source: Author [2013]

CHAPTER THREE

3.0   Research Methodology

Kothari [2004] defines research methodology as a systematic way of carrying out a study or solving a research problem. It provides the various methods or procedures employed by a researcher in studying the research problem, the author adds.

3.1   Introduction

This chapter discusses the research design, justification of the method used and the techniques used to analyse data. The chapter consists of eight sections: Section one discusses the research design and justification for the choice used. The target population is described and justified in section two. Section three addresses the sampling design and sample size. Section four describes sampling frame. Section five discusses data collection instruments and justification of the same. Section six presents the research procedure. Part seven discusses the statistical techniques used to analyse data. Finally, section eight presents ethical issues.

3.2   Research Design

Research design involves developing a blue print for fulfilling objectives and answering questions for the study [Saunders *et* al., 2007; Sekaran, 2003; Welman and Kruger, 1999]. According to Bryan [2001] research design provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data. A research design can be regarded as an arrangement of condi-

tions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance with the research purpose [Kothari, 2004]. It is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted. It constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. Orodho [2003] defines research design as the scheme outline or plan that generates answers to research problem. The research design is the plan, structure of investigation so as to obtain answers to research questions and to control variance [Kerlinger, 1973]. It sets up a framework for adequate tests of the relations among variables. According to Kerlinger [1973], research designs are invented to enable answering the research questions as validly, objectively, accurately and as economically as possible. A research design encompasses the methodology and procedures employed to conduct research [Hand *et* al., 2008]. Further, the authors affirm that the design of a study defines the study type (descriptive, correlational, semi-experimental, experimental) and sub-type (e.g., descriptive-longitudinal case study), research question, hypotheses, independent and dependent variables, experimental design, and, if applicable, data collection methods and a statistical analysis plan.

3.2.1   Types of Research Design

There are various types of research designs which can be employed when carrying out a research. This study has discussed some of the research designs which ranked highest in their use from focus group discussions.

(i)   Observational Research Design

In this type of design, the researcher describes observations of situation or phenomena as they occur in a normal setting. The researcher observes and systematically records events as they unfold for the purpose of describing them and the key variables [Kothari, 2004].

(ii)   Survey Research Design

In this type of design, the researcher describes people's responses to questions about a situation with the aim of understanding the respondent's perception from which truism is constructed, Mugenda & Mugenda [2003]. This is based on the constructivist episte-mology which holds that reality is what respondents generally perceive it to be [Kothari, 2004]. Further, the author states that in survey research design, a survey is used to ob-tain a description of a particular perception about a situation and their views are used to represent those of the entire population. The author affirms that questionnaires and in-terviews are used extensively to collect data and are seen as efficient ways of gathering data from samples representing large population.

(iii)   Case Study Research Design

According to Yin [2009] case studies involve in-depth study and detailed description of a single entity, situation or phenomenon (or a very small group). The author adds that a case study may involve manipulation of the variables or the subjects and describing the

outcome. Further, he affirms that the description is typically prepared as a report usually containing a detailed description of observations during the entire data collection process. The information that is included in a case study can be obtained in a variety of ways such as interviews with the respondents, observation of the subjects, surveys and study of records [Denzin & Lincoln, 2005]. Further the authors say that the findings of this kind of studies are limited in application to the situation and environment in which the study was carried out. They affirm that case studies blunt efforts towards generalization but give important information pertinent to a situation for quick action.

Bell [1999] states "a case study approach is particularly appropriate for individual researchers because it gives an opportunity for one aspect of a problem to be studied in some depth within a limited time scale. This type of research is involved with a group, organization, culture, or community. Normally the researcher shares a lot of time with the group [Robson, 2002].

(iv)   Exploratory Research Design

Exploratory research designs are used in order to provide insights and understanding of a phenomenon [Patton, 2000]. The information needed is defined loosely since not much is known about the phenomena. The research process is flexible, non-structured and seeks to get tentative information about the phenomena. The sample is often small and non- representative and the primary data is analysed qualitatively [Tolman & Brydon-Miller, 2001].

This design seeks to generate a posteriori hypotheses by examining a data-set and looking for potential relations between variables [Patton, 2000]. It is also possible to have an idea about a relation between variables but to lack knowledge of the direction and strength of the relation. If the researcher does not have any specific hypotheses beforehand, the study is exploratory with respect to the variables in question (although it might be confirmatory for others). The advantage of exploratory research is that it is easier make new discoveries due to the less stringent methodological restrictions [Robson, 2002]. Here, the researcher does not want to miss a potentially interesting relation and therefore aims to minimize the probability of rejecting a real effect or relation, this probability is sometimes referred to as β and the associated error is of type II. In other words, if you want to see whether some of your measured variables could be related, you would want to increase your chances of finding a significant result by lowering the threshold of what you deem to be significant [Shadish & Campbell, 2002].

(v)   Experimental Design (e.g. true experimental design, double blind experimental design

 In an experimental design, the researcher actively tries to change the situation, circumstances, or experience of participants (manipulation), which may lead to a change in behaviour or outcomes for the participants of the study [Patton, 2000]. The researcher randomly assigns participants to different conditions, measures the variables of interest and tries to control for confounding variables. Therefore, experiments are often highly fixed even before the data collection starts [Schram, 2005].

According to Robson [2002] in a good experimental design, a few things are of great importance. First of all, it is necessary to think of the best way to operationalize the variables that will be measured. Therefore, it is important to consider how the variable(s) will be measured, as well as which methods would be most appropriate to answer the research question. In addition, the statistical analysis has to be taken into account. Thus, the researcher should consider what the expectations of the study are as well as how to analyse this outcome. Finally, in an experimental design the researcher must think of the practical limitations including the availability of participants as well as how representative the participants are to the target population. It is important to consider each of these factors before beginning the experiment.[2] Additionally, many researchers employ power analysis before they conduct an experiment, in order to determine how large the sample must be to find an effect of a given size with a given design at the desired probability of making a Type I or Type II error [Maxwell, 2005]. Further the author affirms that in an experimental design, the researcher actively tries to change the situation, circumstances, or experience of participants (manipulation), which may lead to a change in behaviour or outcomes for the participants of the study. The researcher randomly assigns participants to different conditions, measures the variables of interest and tries to control for confounding variables [Patton, 2000]. He concludes that experiments are often highly fixed even before the data collection starts.

(vi) Non-experimental Research Design

According to Schram [2005], this design does not involve a manipulation of the situation, circumstances, or experience of the participants. Non-experimental research designs can be broadly classified into three categories [Bogdan & Biklen, 2006]. First, relational designs, in which a range of variables is measured. These designs are also called correlational studies, because correlational data are most often used analysis. It is important to clarify here that correlation does not imply causation, and rather identifies dependence of one variable on another. Correlational designs are helpful in identifying the relation of one variable to another, and seeing the frequency of co-occurrence in two natural groups (See correlation and dependence). The second type is comparative research. These designs compare two or more groups on one or more variable, such as the effect of gender on grades. The third type of non-experimental research is a longitudinal design. A longitudinal design examines variables such as performance exhibited by a group or groups over time [Schindler, 2003].

(vii) Confirmatory Research Design

Confirmatory research tests a priori hypotheses—outcome predictions that are made before the measurement phase begins [Schindler, 2003]. Such a priori hypotheses are usually derived from a theory or the results of previous studies [Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003]. The authors add that the advantage of confirmatory research is that the result is more meaningful, in the sense that it is much harder to claim that a certain result is sta-

tistically significant. Further, they state reason for this is that in confirmatory research, one ideally strives to reduce the probability of falsely reporting a non-significant result as significant. This probability is known as α-level or a type I error [Schram, 2005]. Loosely speaking, if you know what you are looking for, he adds, you should be very confident when and where you will find it; accordingly, you only accept a result as significant if it is highly unlikely to have been observed by chance,

(viii)   Descriptive Design

In this type of design, the researcher describes or presents a picture of a phenomenon under investigation [Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003]. The possible approaches include participant's observation where the researcher interacts naturally with the respondents in a natural setting making and recording his or her observation without undue influence on the respondents [Saunders *et* al., 2007]. The authors say that this is followed by an independent study of records, data analysis and reporting descriptively what has been observed. The other approach is obtaining personal records relevant to the phenomena under study and carrying out an analysis followed by explanatory interactive reporting [Saunders *et* al., 2007].

For the purpose of this study, the research design adopted was descriptive survey. The reason why the researcher found descriptive research design appropriate for this study is that, it is able to describe and portray characteristics of an event, situation, a group of people, community or a population [Chadran, 2004]. The design enhanced interaction

between the researcher and the respondents via an emailed questionnaire which no other research design would have facilitated. Descriptive study describes phenomenon of how things are in the population [Saunders *et* al., 2007]. Descriptive research design is a method of investigation in which data is collected and analysed in order to describe the current conditions, terms or relationship concerning a problem [Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003; Bell, 2004]. This approach was most appropriate method for this study since a descriptive method attempts to show a document's current conditions or attitudes to describe what exists at the moment in a given context [Punch, 1998]. According to Cooper & Schindler [2003] a descriptive study is concerned with finding out the what, where and how of a phenomenon. To investigate whether there is incompatibility between the skills obtained by B. Com graduates in Kenya and what the employers are looking for, a descriptive survey was considered suitable. Essentially, quantitative with some input from the qualitative approaches were employed.

3.3   Target Population

According to Gschu [2004] a population is a well-defined set of people or services, elements, events, group of things or households that are being investigated. Population refers to the entire group of people, events or things of interest that the researcher wishes to investigate [Robson, 2002]. According to Sanders *et* al. [2007] target population is that population to which the researcher wants to generalize the results of the study. Mugenda & Mugenda [2003] describe the target population as the complete test of individuals, cases or objects that the researcher wants to generalize the results of the study.

The study targeted two sets of subjects namely: 10,000 B. Com graduates [2009 – 2011] on one hand, and 2,500 employers registered with FKE, on the other hand. The 10,000 B. Com graduates were from the 37 Kenyan Universities.

The rationale for targeting graduates from the seven out of a total of 37 chartered public and private universities, was based on the assumption that they produce quality graduates who should be readily absorbed in the job market. The graduates were a mixture of the employed and non-employed, who would provide unbiased information for the study. The researcher used the universities' alumni offices to obtain the contacts of the respondents.

It is important to note that there are many options offered in Bachelor of Commerce curriculum, for example Banking, Logistics, and Information Technology (IT) among others. However, for the purpose of this study, the researcher targeted only the graduates who majored in Human Resource Management (HRM), Marketing, Entrepreneur, Finance and Accounting. The options were considered major during focus group interview discussions.

The 2,500 respondents were the registered employers with the Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE). The study targeted specifically the Human Resource Managers (HRM) who have offered and are still offering employment opportunities to Kenya's graduates. The Human Resource Managers were targeted because of the role they play

in hiring, training and developing human resources. This role places them in a better position than other cadre of staff in providing information on the Bachelor of Commerce graduates' employable skills. They are among the most important stakeholders with regards to graduates' employability.

3.4   Sampling Frame

A sampling frame is a list of all units in the population, from which a sample is drawn [Kuul, 2004]. Kuul affirms that the sample frame can have one or more of lists of categories of units or individuals in the population and, possibly, the number of units under each category.. The sample frame of this study consisted of B. Com graduates (2009 to 2011) from seven universities which ranked top 100 in Africa according to the webometrics ranking of universities globally (January 2011 release) in Kenya, and employers (HR) Managers who are responsible for acquisition functions for their respective companies/corporate bodies.

3.5   Sampling Design and Sample Size

According to Kuul [2004] sampling is the process by which a relatively small number of individuals, objects or event is selected and analysed in order to find out something about the entire population from which it was selected. Sampling is the process of selecting a sufficing number of elements from the population, so that a study of the sample and an understanding of its properties would make it possible to generalize such properties [Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003]. It is done because the population may be too large for complete enumeration, and it saves time and money. It also allows more time to be spent on training research assistants, testing and checking the instruments [Bryan, 2001]. Sampling is the process of selecting units (e.g., people, organizations) from a population of interest so that by studying the sample we may fairly generalize our results back to the population from which they were chosen [Trochim, 2006]. A sample is a small proportion of targeted population selected using some systematic form [Kuul, 2004].

A sample size for a descriptive survey can be determined by taking 10% of the total population [Sanders *et* al., 2007]. According to Mugenda & Mugenda [2003] a 10% to 30% of the entire population depending on the size is most recommended. The study sampled 10% of a total population of 10,000 B. Com graduates – 2009 to 2011. The sample size was 1,000 respondents as follows: University of Nairobi [UoN] 3924, Strathmore University [SU] 200, United States International University [USIU] 150,

Kenyatta University [KU] 2900, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology [JKUAT] 257, Egerton University 239, and Moi University 2330.

The study employed systematic sampling design to select the sample. In a systematic sample, the elements of the population are put into a list and then every kth element in the list is chosen (systematically) for inclusion in the sample [Denzin & Lincoln, 2005]. For example, the population of this study contained 10,000 B. Com graduates and the researcher wanted a 10 per cent sample of the total population which is 1,000 graduates. The graduates were put into list form and then every 20th graduate would be selected for inclusion in the sample. To ensure against any possible human bias in this method, the researcher selected the first individual at random. An element of randomness is introduced into this kind of sampling by using random numbers to pick the nth item from which to start [Schram, 2005]. Thus in this sampling, only the first unit is selected randomly and the remaining units of the sample are selected at fixed intervals [Babbie, 2001].

Stratified random sampling design was used to sample 10% of the total 2,500 employers registered with KFA. From the World Bank report, Kenya's gross domestic product by sector is agriculture (22%), services (62%) and industry (16%). This suggests that most jobs are available in the service sector [World Bank, 2010]. The participating firms were classified into the above three categories, and a sample of 250 human resource managers was identified. They were consequently issued with questionnaires.

3.5.1 Types of Sampling Designs

When conducting research, it is hard to study the entire population that you are interested in, as it would be very expensive in terms of time and money [Chandran, 2004]. Hence, the reason for the researcher to use sampling designs to determine sample size. A sample is a subset of the population being studied, represents the larger population and it is used to draw inferences about that population [Chandran, 2004]. The following are some of sampling designs which may be employed in research.

(i) Probability Sampling Design

Probability sampling is a sampling technique where the samples are gathered in a process that gives all the individuals in the population equal chances of being selected [Kuul, 2004]. This is the best overall group of methods to use as you can subsequently use the most powerful statistical analyses on the results [Chandran, 2004].

(ii) Non-probability Sampling Design

Non-probability sampling is a sampling technique where the samples are gathered in a process that does not give all the individuals in the population equal chances of being selected [Chandran, 2004]. The common feature of getting a non-probability sampling is not based on the probability with which a unit can enter the sample but by other considerations such as common sense, experience, intuition and expertise [Kuul, 2004]. They have limitations of being biased, unconscious errors of judgement, personal likes

and dislikes, the attitude of the person sampling and so on. There is no objective way of assessing the magnitude of these errors [Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003].

(iii)   Convenience Sampling Design

Good sampling is time-consuming and expensive, hence not all experimenters have the time or funds to use more accurate methods [Trochim, 2006]. There is a price, of course, in the potential limited validity of results. Relying on available subjects, such as stopping people on a street corner as they pass by, is one method of sampling, although it is extremely risky and comes with many cautions [Denzin & Lincoln, 2005]. It is only justified if the researcher wants to study the characteristics of people passing by the street corner at a certain point in time or if other sampling methods are not possible. The researcher must also take caution to not use results from a convenience sample to generalize to a wider population. Since convenience sampling uses who is available, you cannot proactively seek out subjects [Trochim, 2006].

(iv)   Purposive or Judgmental Design

According to Ader *et* al. [2008], a purposive or judgmental sample, is one that is selected based on the knowledge of a population and the purpose of the study. For example, if a researcher is studying the nature of school spirit as exhibited at a school pep rally, he or she might interview people who did not appear to be caught up in the emotions of the crowd or students who did not attend the rally at all. In this case, the researcher is using

a purposive sample because those being interviewed fit a specific purpose or description, the authors conclude.

(v)   Snowball Sampling Design

A snowball sample is appropriate to use in research when the members of a population are difficult to locate, such as homeless individuals, migrant workers, or undocumented immigrants [Shadish *et* al., 2002]. A snowball sample is one in which the researcher collects data on the few members of the target population he or she can locate, then asks those individuals to provide information needed to locate other members of that population whom they know [Babbie, 2001]. This process continues until the researcher has all the interviews he or she needs or until all contacts have been exhausted. In snowball sampling the researcher selects a respondent known to him or her to possess the desired characteristics [Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003]. As noted by Ader *et* al. [2008] after obtaining the information required, the respondent leads the researcher to his next respondent with similar characteristics. This is repeated until the desired sample is at trained, they observe.

(vi)   Quota Sampling Design

A quota sample is one in which units are selected into a sample on the basis of pre-specified characteristics so that the total sample has the same distribution of characteristics assumed to exist in the population being studied [Denzin & Lincoln, 2005]. For ex-

ample, if you a researcher conducting a national quota sample, you might need to know what proportion of the population is male and what proportion is female as well as what proportions of each gender fall into different age categories, race or ethnic categories, educational categories, etc. The researcher would then collect a sample with the same proportions as the national population. In quota sampling, samples of prefixed size are taken from each stratum using judgement sampling techniques [Schram, 2005]. Each enumerator fills his quota in each strata by taking advantage of any information that enables him to cover his or her quota quickly and cheaply [Babbie, 2001].

(vii)   Simple Random Sampling

The simple random sample is the basic sampling method assumed in statistical methods and computations. To collect a simple random sample, each unit of the target population is assigned a number [Schram, 2005]. A set of random numbers is then generated and the units having those numbers are included in the sample, [Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003]. For example, let's say you have a population of 2,000 people and you wish to choose a simple random sample of 100 people. First, each person is numbered 1 through 2,000. Then, you generate a list of 100 random numbers (typically with a computer program) and those individuals assigned those numbers are the ones you include in the sample.

Simple random sampling is the ideal, but researchers seldom have the luxury of time or money to access the whole population, so many compromises often have to be made [Babbie, 2001]. Further, the author adds that the respondents are chosen in such a way that each has an equal chance of being selected and each choice is independent of any other choice.

(viii)   Stratified Sampling Design

According to Babbie [2001] a stratified sample is a sampling technique in which the researcher divided the entire target population into different subgroups, or strata, and then randomly selects the final subjects proportionally from the different strata. This type of sampling is used when the researcher wants to highlight specific subgroups within the population [Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003]. For example, to obtain a stratified sample of university students, the researcher would first organize the population by college class and then select appropriate numbers of freshmen, juniors and seniors. This ensures that the researcher has adequate amounts of subjects from each class in the final sample. As noted by Denzin & Lincoln [2005] the population is divided into several sub groups – strata that are individually more homogenous than the total population and then items are selected from each stratum to constitute a sample.

(x)   Cluster Sampling Design

Cluster sampling may be used when it is either impossible or impractical to compile an exhaustive list of the elements that make up the target population [Denzin & Lincoln, 2005]. Usually, however, the population elements are already grouped into subpopulations and lists of those subpopulations already exist or can be created [Trochim, 2006]. For example, let's say the target population in a study was church members in Kenya. There is no list of all church members in the nation of Kenya. The researcher could, however, create a list of churches in Kenya, choose a sample of churches, and then obtain lists of members from those churches. If the total area of interest happens to be a big one, a convenient way in which a sample can be taken is to divide the area into a number of smaller non lapping areas, then to randomly select a number of these randomly selected areas usually called clusters with the ultimate sample consisting of all units in this smaller areas or clusters [Babbie, 2001].

3.6   Data Collection Instruments

There are various data collect instruments which a researcher can use. The following is a discussions of some of the instruments:

3.6.1   Interviews

An interview is a formal meeting or communication framework between two parties whose primary objective is the procurement of factual information [Babbie, 2001]. According to Mugenda & Mugenda [2003] the questionnaire may be used to help collect

required data in a standardized way, where desired questions should be listed in a given order. The researcher may decide to use record interview by note taking or tape recording. However, this should be done with the respondent's permission. The following methods may be employed: telephone interviews, group interviews, individual interviews and focus group discussions [Sanders *et* al., 2007].

The interview allows face to face contact between the researcher and respondent, which enables the respondent to seek clarification of a question not clear [Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003]. The researcher is able to evaluate sincerity and insight of the respondent, while stimulating response to a greater extent [Trochim, 2006]. Interview as data collection instrument has some limitations such as the following: unstructured interviews often yield data which is difficult to summarize or evaluate; it can be costly in terms of money and time; bias may creep in due to personal class difference between respondent and enumerator; it is vulnerable to personality conflicts and it requires trained personnel for effective results [Sanders *et* al., 2007]. The study did not employ this instrument because of the diversity of the respondents.

3.6.2   Focus Groups

According to Mugenda & Mugenda [2003], a focus group can be defined as a group of people who possess certain characteristics and provide information of a qualitative nature in a focused discussion. Focus group discussions are a popular method of obtaining information, opinions and they can provide insight into issues that cannot be covered

through surveys or interviews [Kothari, 2003]. Focus groups are a good method to get people involved in an assessment process by having them provide input on a topic [Sanders *et* al., 2007]. They are generally composed of six to twelve people. Size is conditioned by two factors: the group must be small enough for everyone to participate, yet large enough to provide diversity. As observed by Babbie [2001] the group is special in terms of purpose, size, composition, and procedures.

Participants are selected because they have certain characteristics in common that relate to the topic at hand [Creswell & Clark, 2007]. The authors add that typically, more than one focus group should be convened, since a group of seven to twelve people could be too typical to offer any general insights on the problem. A trained moderator probes for different perceptions and points of view, without pressure to reach consensus (Kothari, 2003). Focus groups have been found helpful in assessing needs, developing plans, testing new ideas, or improving existing programs [Krueger, 1988; Babbie, 2001]. Focus groups offer several advantages: their flexibility allows the moderator to probe for more in-depth analysis and ask participants to elaborate on their responses; they provide immediate feedback; they are less expensive compared to planning and conducting large surveys and personal interviews.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher with the help of two research assistances interviewed 12 Master of Business Administration (MBA) students of Daystar Universi-

ty through a research group discussion. The MBA students were targeted because of their long term work experience and interaction with the employers. It was assumed that they could offer valuable contributions towards the study since they understood exactly the employers' expectations in terms of graduate skills. They could also tell the relevance of the skills they obtained from the universities. The venue was Daystar University in DA15 at 6 pm.

The researcher prepared the discussion guide which contained a limited number of questions that were to be directed to participants during the focus group sessions. The discussion guide addressed the following questions: Who were to participate? What information was to be obtained? Where were the discussions to be held? Who was to conduct the sessions? The researcher considered two elements when drafting the guide. The second focus group interview comprised of six Human Resource Managers from various public and private sectors. However, three of the HRM sent representatives. The venue was Sagret Hotel in Kilimani area – Nairobi County.

The researcher reserved time and place to carry out the focus group discussion well in advance. The participants were notified in good time to allow them make necessary adjustments. Snacks and tea was provided.

3.6.3   Questionnaires

According to Mugenda & Mugenda [2003] there are two broad categories of questions that are used in questionnaires: [i] Structured and closed-ended – these typed of items refer to questions which are accompanied by a list of all possible alternatives from which respondents select the answer that best describes their situation. In many cases, it is impossible to exhaust all the categories since the researcher may not know all possible answers. In such cases, it is customary to include a category call "other" to take care of all those responses which may not fit in the given categories. [ii] Unstructured or open-ended – This refers to questions which give the respondent complete freedom of response. These free response questions permit an individual to respond in his or her own words. The amount of space provided is, however, a good indicator of whether a brief or lengthy answer is desired [Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003].

To facilitate this research endeavour, the researcher used questionnaires (since the sample was highly literate). The instrument, which comprised of 26 and 10 items respectively, was developed and administered to two sets of subjects namely: B. Com graduates (through email), on one hand, and the employer (HRM) on the other hand. Primary data was collected using structured or closed-ended emailed questionnaires, which presented the participants with a fixed set of choices, often called closed questions. In addition, a few items were unstructured and contained the open-ended questions that do not limit responses but provide a form of reference for participants' answers. The use of both structured and unstructured questions would allow the researcher to get both stand-

ardized and detailed responses that enhance the reliability of the data collected [Cooper & Schindler, 2001]. As noted by Sanders *et* al. [2007], close alternative format of a questionnaire may help to ensure that that the answers are given in a frame of reference that is relevant to the purpose of the inquiry and in a form that is useable in the analysis. In addition, fixed alternative questions are easy and quick to answer [Cooper & Schindler, 2001]. The secondary data was obtained from the reports at the Federation of Kenya Employees (FKE), and the Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research Analysis (KIPPRA).

3.7   Reliability and Validity of Data Collection Instruments

According to Ticehurst & Veal [2000] goodness of data is based on two principal measurements: reliability and validity. The authors affirm that, a measure is reliable when it is error free and consistent across time and across various items in the instrument. They add that reliability can be used to test for stability of measures and internal consistency of measures. Mugenda & Mugenda [2003] assert that the accuracy of data to be collected largely depend on the data collection instruments in terms of validity and reliability. Validity as noted by Robson [2002] is the degree to which result obtained from the analysis of the data actually presents the phenomenon under study. Reliability on the other hand refers to a measure of the degree to which research instruments yield consistent results [Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003].

The purpose of a pilot exercise is to get 'bugs' out of the instrument so that subjects in the main study do not experience any difficulty in completing it [Robson, 2003]. In fact, the purpose of the pilot exercise is to 'debug' the study instrument so that subjects in the main study do not experience any difficulty in completing it [Kyale, 2007]. The author affirms that pilot test is conducted to detect flaws and weaknesses in design and instrumentation and to provide data for selection of a probability sample.

As noted by [Creswell & Clark, 2007] piloting is to assess the relevance of the research objectives; test the respondents' understanding of the research questionnaires and any potential problems with unfamiliar terms used in the instrument; and lastly get an idea of how long it will take to complete the questionnaires so as to fit that element into the data collection phase timetable. This would help the researcher to carry out a preliminary analysis to establish whether the wording and format of questions would present any difficulties when the main data is analysed.

Cooper & Schindler [2008] add that a pilot test is conducted to detect weakness in design and instrumentation and to provide data for selection of a probability sample. The authors continue to affirm that the pilot group may range from 10 to 80 subjects depending on the method to be tested but the respondents do not have to be statistically selected. However, they warn that in very small populations, pilot testing runs the risk of exhausting the supply of respondents and sensitising them to the purpose of the study.

The researcher conducted a pilot study on 10 B. Com graduates and five employers (HR) managers who were randomly chosen. The results of the pilot study enabled the researcher to take corrective measures and arrest any situation that might have been a challenge to the respondents during the actual study. All those who were involved in the pilot study did not participate in the main study.

3.8   Data Collection Procedures

Prior to data collection, the researcher started by legitimising the study by getting a letter of introduction from Dedan Kimathi University of Technology [DKUT] Faculty of Postgraduate Studies. The next step was to request for B. Com graduates - 2009 to 2011 contacts from the participating universities' alumni offices. The researcher emailed a total of 1,000 questionnaires to B. Com graduates. Follow-up phone calls were conducted a week after the questionnaires were emailed. A total of 250 HR Managers were identified through strafified random sampling design and questionnaires were administered to them accordingly. For the secondary sources, different journal articles, research publications (from KIPPRA) were reviewed.

3.9   Data Analysis Techniques

The study results were presented in two sections, namely: descriptive analysis and test of hypotheses. The first stage involved reporting all the information related to each of the respondents' personal profile. This was followed by data analysis in relation to the

research objectives outlined in chapter one. Descriptive analysis was done to report on the respondents, and included the results of the measurement of variables. Next the reliability tests of measurement scales were presented and explained. This depicts the results of factor loading, the evaluation of the item-to-total correlation, cumulative explanation, and Cronbach's Alpha. Finally, the results of regression to test the relationships between constructs were reported in detail. A summary of this data was then used to test the hypotheses. This chapter concluded by highlighting the main findings obtained from the quantitative data.

The study integrated both qualitative and quantitative methods. In qualitative method, research does not produce discreet numerical data. The data are in the form of words rather than numbers grouped in categories. It aims at discovering the underlying motives and desires through open-ended questions. Quantitative method produces numerical or quantifiable data based on measurement of quantity or amount, that is, it is applicable to phenomena, which can be expressed in terms of quantity. Both methods supplement each other. Qualitative methods provide in-depth explanations while quantitative methods provide hard data needed to meet required objectives.

The researcher used Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 18.0 versions for windows software to analyse data collected. The data was first edited to identify and eliminate errors made by respondents. The concerns, views and opinions given by the respondent were then analysed by use of summary statistical tables and percentages.

Primary data collected from questionnaires was analysed by use of percentages. Secondary was analysed through the use of content analysis. The results of the analysis was then presented in tables, pie-charts and graphs. This software was used because it is reliable and is capable of sorting and providing relationships between variables. Statements from unstructured questions were categorized according to their dominant themes. The results were analysed by frequencies, bar graphs, pie charts and percentages to establish the significance of the responses and to establish whether there was a skills gap between employer's expectations and what the Kenya B. Com graduates possess.

Cronbach's alpha coefficients were used to assess the internal consistency of the measuring instruments. Descriptive statistics were performed. Standard multiple regression analyses were conducted to identify the independent variables that provide the best explanation for the proportion of the total variance in the scores of the dependent variables. Since a number of independent variables had to be considered, the value of adjusted R^2 was used to interpret the results. The F-test was used to test whether there was a significant regression between the independent and the dependent variables. In order to counter the probability of a type 1 error, the significance value was set at the 95% confidence interval level ($p \leq 0.05$). For the purposes of this study, R^2 values of ≤ 0.12 (small practical effect) and $\geq 0.13 \leq 0.25$ (medium practical effect) (Fp ≤ 0.05) [Cohen 1992] were also considered in the interpretation of the results.

It is expected that this paper would give rise to discussions amongst key stakeholders including employers and universities that would be of interest not only to a Kenyan audience, but to other countries within Africa, experiencing similar developments. The significance of this study cannot be over emphasized in view of the present technological and dynamic environmental changes. The study should come up with a call for progressive reviews of university curricula to constantly match job market demands; probably by standardization of both public and private university programmes. The study may help the Government to pass a university bill that would place universities under close observation by the Commission for University

Consequently, the findings from this study would be a significant help to the universities and industries at improving human capital capabilities. There would be improvement of the quality of the training programmes for the people who go to university simply to prepare themselves for the job market. Faculties of B. Com programmes at the university level. The study would sensitise the facilitators of training to embrace the need to equip students with employable skills in their areas of concentration and in collaboration with what the labour market demands.

3.10   Ethical Issues

According to Kerridge *et* al. [2005] ethics involves making a judgement about right and wrong behaviour. Ethics as noted by Minja [2009] is referred to, as norms governing human conduct which have a significant impact on human welfare. Indeed as observed by Devettere [2000] ethics is about choice between good and bad.

The researcher should observe ethical issues when conducting the study. Examples of ethical issues may include: any bias on the part of the researcher, reporting incorrect finding, etc. According to Kumar [2005] bias is a deliberate attempt to either hide what you have found in your study, or highlight something disproportionately to its true existence.

The researcher ensured utmost objectivity to avoid any biases. The researcher also practised a high degree of professionalism, confidentiality and integrity to ensure that the information given was only used for the intended purpose. In addition, permission to conduct the study was sought and granted by the University.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0   Data Analysis and Interpretations

4.1   Introduction

The main purpose of the study was to establish whether there are skills gap between employers' expectations from B. Com graduates and the employability skills that the graduates actually possess. Data was obtained by administering questionnaires to the employer (HRM) and the B. Com graduates in order to analyse the variables involved in the study. Secondary data was sought from some relevant organisations concerned with employment, such as: KIPPRA, Federation of Kenya Employee. The data obtained was analysed in line with the four research objectives. In the first two sections, data description and analysis was presented. The model estimation and the analysis of the results were then discussed. Finally, concluding remarks were made. Data description involved a discussion on the sources of data and definitions of the dependent and the independent variables.

4.2   Data Sources

The data used in the study was cross sectional data and was collected using two sets of questionnaires, one for B. Com graduates – 2009 to 2011 and the other targeted the employers (HRM) of B. Com graduates.

4.2   Response Rate

A total of 1000 questionnaires were emailed to B. Com graduates and 250 were issued to the employers (HRM). A total of 800 questionnaires from the B. Com graduates and 200 questionnaires from the employers were returned. This represented an overall return rate of 80% from each set of respondents.

Table 4.1   Response rate

	Questionnaire issued	Returned	Return rate
Employer	250	200	80%
B.com Graduates	1000	800	80%

Source: Researcher, 2013

According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) a 50% response rate is adequate, 60% good and above 70% is rated very good. This implies that basing on this assertion (Table 4.1) the response rate (80%) which was very good.

4.3   Reliability Analysis

Table 4.2 Reliability Analysis

Variable	Cronbach's alpha
Self-reliance skills	.9823
Personal skills	.9845
Adequate training	.9821
General employment skills	.9812

For reliability analysis Cronbach's alpha was calculated. The value of the alpha coefficient ranges from 0 to 1. A higher value shows more reliability of the instruments used in any study. Nunnaly [1978] has indicated 0.7 to be an acceptable reliability coefficient. Table 4.2 illustrates the results of the reliability analysis. Since the alpha coefficients were greater than 0.7 for the various items, a conclusion was drawn that the instruments had an acceptable reliability coefficient and were appropriate for the study.

4. 4   Descriptive Statistics
Table 4.3 Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	448	56
Male	352	44
Total	800	100

Table 4.3 shows the demographic characteristics of the B. Com Graduates. The results indicate that 56 per cent of the respondents were females while 44 per cent were males.

Area of Specialization

Table 4.4 Area of Specialization

Area of Specialization	Frequency	Percentage
Human Resource	191	23.9
Accounting and Finance	184	23.0
Finance and Banking	183	22.0
Marketing	135	16.9
Strategic Management	87	10.9
Business Administration	20	2.5
Total	100	100

The study sought to find the area of specialization that each B.Com graduate had undertaken. The results were represented in table 4.4. The results indicated that majority of the respondents had majored in human resource option (23.9%), Accounting and Finance Option was 23% and also in Finance and Banking at 22%. The number of respondents who were marketers was 16.9% while only 10.9% had majored in strategic management. Results also indicated that area of specialization with the least number of B. Com graduates was Business Administration (BA) of only 2.5%.

Motivation in pursuing area of specialization:

The study sought to investigate the motivation for pursuing different specializations and the results were presented in figure 4.1.
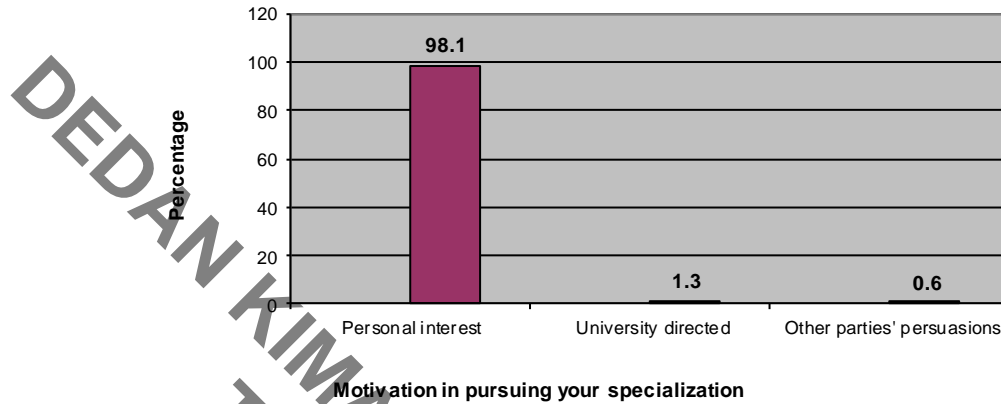
Figure 4.1: Motivation in pursuing area of specialization

Findings in figure 4.1 show that majority of the respondents (98.1%) pursued their degrees out of their personal interest, (1.3%) of the respondents were directed by the university to pursue their courses and a mere (0.6%) of the respondents were persuaded by other parties to pursue their courses.

Table 4.5: Number of B. Com graduates employed in different firms

B. Com Graduates	Frequency	Percentage
Between 1 to 20	103	51.5
Between 21 to 40	15	7.5
Between 41 to 60	27	13.5
61 and above	55	27.5
Total	200	100

The study sought to find out the number of graduates recruited in each organization. The results were shown in table 4.5. Results indicated that majority (51.5%) of the employers had recruited between one and twenty B. Com graduates, followed by 27.5% employers who had employed 61 and above B. Com graduates, a small per cent (13.5) of the employers had employed between 41 to 60 B. Com graduates while a mere (7.5%) of the employers had employed between 21 to 40 B. Com graduates.

4.5   B. Com Graduate Skills

The first objective of the study aimed at determining what employable skills the B. Com graduates possess as they enter the job market. Frequencies were tabulated and the results shown in table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Self-Reliance Skills

Self-Reliance Skills	Frequency	Percentage
Willingness to learn	300	37.5
Self-promotion	140	17.5
Planning action	127	15.9
Being proactive	118	14.8
Networking	115	14.4
Total	800	100

The study revealed that vast majority of the B. Com graduates (37.5%) had willingness to learn, (17.5%] had self-promotion skills, (15.9%) of the B. Com graduates had plan-

ning action. A (14.8%) of the graduates had being proactive skills, while the minority

(14.4%) of the B. Com graduates had networking skills.

Table 4.7 People Skills

People Skills	Frequency	Percentage
Oral Communication	251	31.4
Interpersonal Skills	206	25.8
Leadership	141	17.6
Team-work	128	16.0
Customer Orientation	56	7.0
Foreign Language	18	2.2
Total	800	100

The results in table 4.7 show the results on how the respondents rated the People Skills.

The vast majority of the respondents (31.4%) indicated that oral communication was the

most important skill that one should have, followed by interpersonal skills at (25.8%). A

17.6% of the respondents felt that leadership skills were important and 16% said that

team work was key. The results further indicated that only 7% felt that customer orienta-

tion was important and a mere 3% of the respondents felt that knowledge of foreign lan-

guage was an important skill.

Table 4.8: General Employment Skills

General Employment Skills	Frequency	Percentage
IT/Computer Literacy	261	32.6
Flexibility	215	26.9
Problem Solving	115	14.4
Numeracy	188	13.5
Commitment	101	12.6
Total	800	100

Table 4.8 discusses general employment skills. Majority of the B. Com graduates (32.6%) were of the idea that being computer literate and having IT skills was the most important employment skill that they should possess. A 26.9% of the total respondents felt that being flexible was a key employment skill while 14.4% of the respondents felt that being able to solve problems was most important. The least number of respondents (12.6%) felt that being committed to work was the most important general employment skill.

Further, the study sought to find out the level of agreement among B.Com graduates on the level of their training skills. Data was analysed using mean and standard deviation and presented in table 4.9 where strongly disagree [1] disagree [2] not sure [3] agree [4] and strongly agree [5] were indicated.

Table 4.9: B.Com graduates Training Skills

	Mean	Std. Deviation
The training you took matches your career ambitions and the industry needs	4.0	0.9
B.Com graduates are exposed to practical experiences before graduation	2.3	1.4
The instructors used adequate training methods to deliver their Contents	3.8	1.2
A number of private universities are relatively better equipped with resources than public ones	3.8	1.2
There was no shortage of lecturers in your course of study	3.6	1.2
Students face many challenges as they go through their studies	3.4	1.4
Would you agree to recommend a friend to join your university?	3.6	1.3

The study findings depicted that on average [mean =4.0] majority of the B.Com graduates agreed that the training they took matched their career ambitions and the industry needs. On the question as to whether B. Com graduates are exposed to practical experiences before graduation, majority of the respondents [mean 2.3] registered their disagreement that they were not exposed to practical experiences before graduation. Further, majority agreed that their instructors used adequate training methods to deliver their contents and a number of private universities were reported to have better resources than public universities both with a mean of 3.8. An overwhelming number of B. Com gradu-

ates [mean 3.6] agreed that they would agree to recommend their friends to join their former universities and majority, a mean of 3.6 agreed that there was no shortage of lecturers in the course of their studies. Majority of the graduates [mean 3.4] agreed that B. Com graduates face many challenges in the course of their studies.

4.6   Employers expectations of B. Com Graduate employability skills as they enter job market.

The second objective aimed at investigating what employability skills employers expected B. Com graduate to possess as they enter job market. The skills were categorized into self-reliance skills, people skills and general employability skills as summarized below.

Table 4.10   Employers' Rating on Self-reliance Skills

Self-reliance Skills	Frequency	Percentage
Proactively	20	10
Willingness to learn	76	38
Self-promotion	4	2
Networking	18	9
Planning action	82	41
Total	**200**	**100**

The study revealed that majority of the employers [41%] rated self–promotion skills number one. This was followed by willingness to learn skills which were rated by [38%]

of employers. Willingness to learn skills were rated third by [10%] of the total employ-

ers. Networking skills were rated fifth by [9%] of the employer. Planning action was rat-

ed last by a very small percentage [2%] of employers.

Table 4.11: Employers Rating on People Skills

People skills	Frequency	Percentage
Oral communication	63	31.5
Interpersonal skills	57	28.5
Team working	48	24
Leadership	21	10.5
Foreign language	6	3
Customer orientation	5	2.5
Total	**200**	**100**

The results in table 4.11 show the results on how the employers rated the people's skills

possessed by the B.com graduates. The vast majority of the employers [31.5%] indicated

that oral communication was the most important skills that B.com graduates should

have. This was followed by interpersonal skills rated by [28.5%] of the employers. Team

working was rated third by 24% of the respondents. A [10.5%] of the respondents rated

leadership skills fourth. The results further indicated that only 3% of the respondents

rated knowledge of foreign language orientation fifth. A mere 2.5% of the respondents rated customer orientation skills last.

Table 4.12: Employers Rating on General Employment Skills

General employment skills	Frequency	Percentage
Flexibility	67	33.5
IT/computer literacy	63	31.5
Problem solving	44	22
Numeracy	20	10
Commitment	6	3
Total	**200**	**100**

Table 4.12 discusses employers rating on general employment skills, where 31.5% of the employers were of the opinion that being computer literate and having IT skills was number one on the list of the general employment skills that B.com graduates should possess. This was followed by flexibility skill and was rated by 22% of the employers. The results further indicated that only 10% of the respondents felt that possession of numeracy skills was vital while a mere 3% of the respondents rated commitment to work as an important general employment skill.

4.7: Skills Gap

Table 4.13: Does University Curriculum equip B. Com graduates with relevant skills for job requirements?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
No	476	60
Yes	324	40
Total	800	100

The results in table 4.13 shows that the B. Com graduates responses on their opinion on whether the university curriculum equips the students with the relevant skills for the job requirements. The results showed that majority [60%] felt that the curriculum was not adequate in equipping the students with the relevant skills, while 40% of the respondents felt that the curriculum was adequate.

Table 4.14: Does the University Curriculum equip graduates for job requirements (Employer)

Response	Frequency	Percentage
No	165	82.5
Yes	35	17.5
Total	200	100

The study sought the opinion of the employers on the same question. The results are shown in table 4.14. The results indicated that the majority of the employers [82.5%]

were of the opinion that the curriculum was short of addressing the job requirements needs while a small percentage [17.5%] of the employers felt that the curriculum was adequate. The results from both the B. Com graduates and their employers clearly confirm that there is a gap that needs to be bridged.

Further the study sought to find out the level of involvement of employers in curriculum development. Data collected was analysed using mean and standard deviation where; strongly disagree [1] and strongly agree [5].

Table 4.15: Employers involvement in Curriculum Development

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Involve the industry when preparing B.Com. Curriculum	4.5	0.8
Use practical curriculum	4.2	1.1
Make industrial attachment compulsory	4.0	1.2
Make B.Com curriculum relevant to market need	4.1	1.3
Keep abreast of labour market changes	4.2	1.3
Standardize public and private universities B. Co programmes	3.8	1.3
Equip universities with necessary physical facilities	3.6	1.3

Results in Table 4.15 depicts that majority [mean 4.5] of the employers strongly agreed that they should be involved in curriculum development. A mean of 4.2 of the employers agreed that B.Com curriculum should be practical, while a mean of 4.0 suggested that

industrial attachment should be made compulsory. A mean of 4.1 felt that B. Com cur-

riculum should be made relevant to market needs, while a mean of 4.2 felt that universi-

ties should keep abreast of labour market changes. A mean of 3.8 of the respondents felt

that B. Com programmes should be standardized in public and private universities, while

a mean of 3.6 felt that equipping universities with necessary physical facilities was vital.

Figure 4.2: Quality of the B. Com Program

Does the quality of B. Com programme needs improvement?

Yes
No

26.00%

74.00%
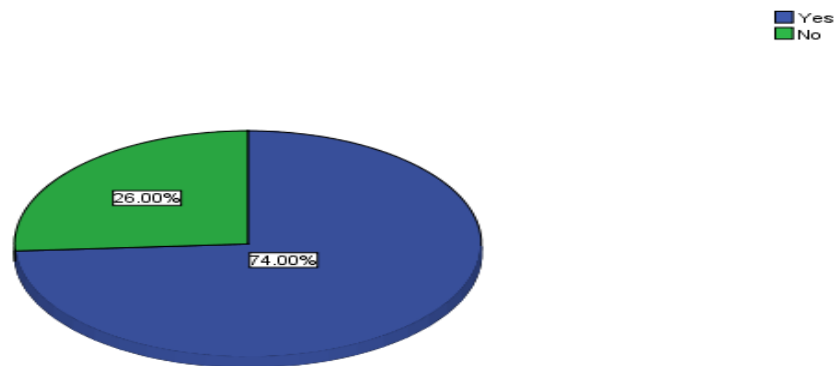
The study sought the opinion of the employers on whether they regarded it important to

improve the quality of the Bachelor of Commerce programme. The results were shown

in figure 4.1. The results indicated that majority [74%] of the employers felt that it was

necessary to improve the programme while the rest 26% of the employers were of

contrary opinion.

Figure 4.3: Need for Employers' Feedback to Universities
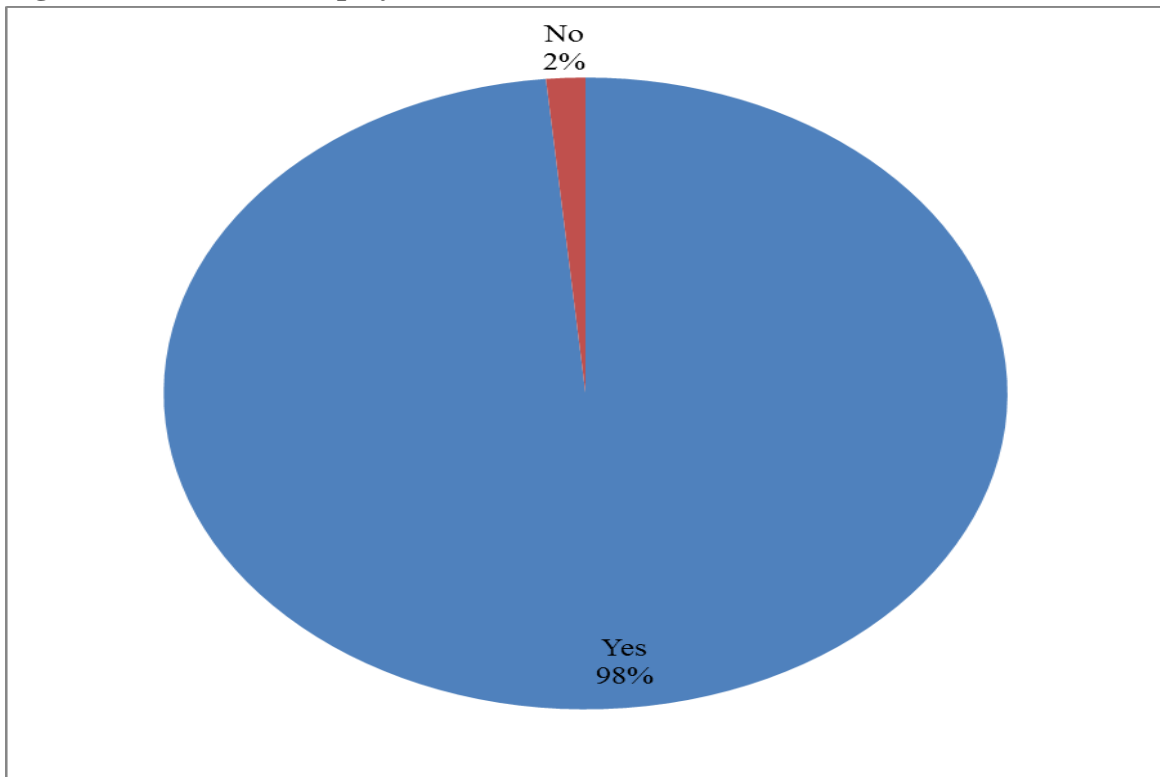
Majority of the respondents (98%) reported that there was need for employers' feedback to universities, while a neglegible (2%) of the respondents reported otherwise. These results show that there is dire need for continuous feedback with the relevant training institutions so as to bridge the skills gap between employers' expectations and what B. Com graduates actually possess.

Figure 4.4: Employers Necessity to Retrain B. Com Graduates
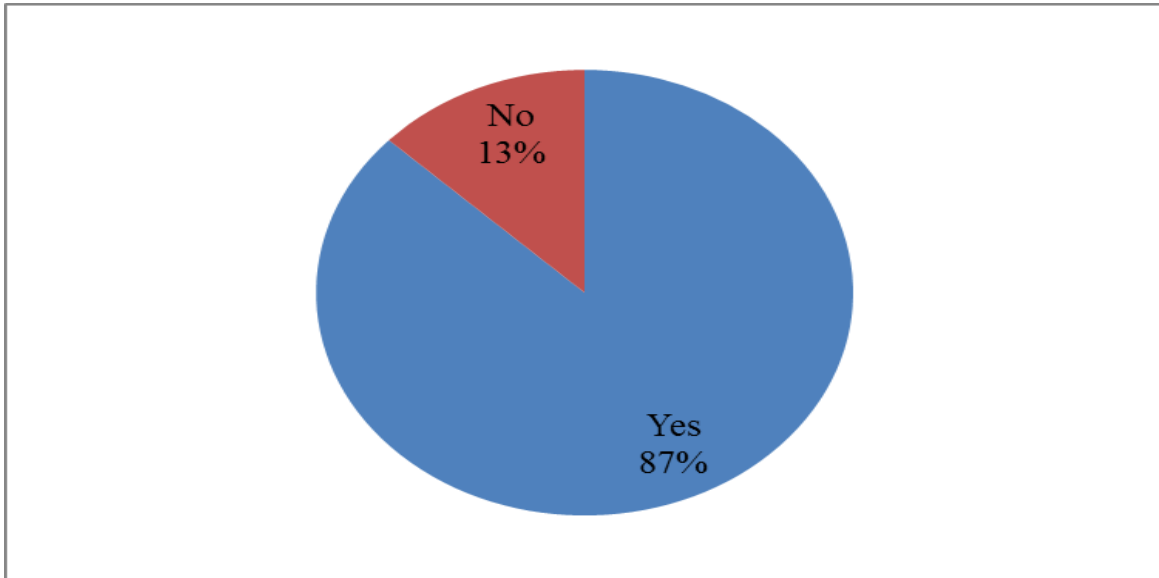
The pictorial presentation depicted that majority of the respondents (87%) felt that there was need of retraining B. Com graduates as soon as they join the job market while a very small percentage (13%) of the respondents had different opinion. This depicts there were some skills gap which the employers must fill before delegating responsibilities to the newly employed B. Com gradautes.

4.8 Factor Analysis

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.96
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	134.046
	df	6
	Sig.	.000

Source: Primary data 2013

The KMO measure of Sampling Adequacy measure varies between 0 and 1, and values closer to 1 are preferred. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) the allowable minimum is 0.6. The KMO value for this study was 0.96 which is above the suggested minimum. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was also performed to test the null hypothesis that the correlation matrix which formed the basis of factor analysis is an identity matrix. For an identity matrix all of the diagonal elements are 1 and all off diagonal elements are 0. Table 2 above shows an approximate Chi-Square value of 134.05 Sig =0.00. The Null Hypothesis that the Correlation matrix is an identity matrix was consequently rejected.

Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
Adequate training	1.000	.550
Employment skills	1.000	.876
People skills	1.000	.728
Self reliance skills	1.000	.791

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: Primary data 2013

The above Table explains the variation in a single variable with respect to all the other variables put together in the factor analysis. Those factors with higher extraction values means that their variation is explained to a greater extend by all other factors put together. All the variables as shown in the table above had their variability explained to a greater degree by all the others put together.

Table 4 Total Variance Explained

Com-ponent	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Vari-ance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Vari-ance	Cumulative %
1	1.945	48.618	48.618	1.945	48.618	48.618
2	1.000	25.001	73.619	1.000	25.001	73.619
3	.662	16.559	90.177			
4	.393	9.823	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: Primary data 2013

Table 4 shows that the factor model extracted two factors out of the total four used in the model. These two factors cumulatively, accounted for 74% of the total variance of the factor model.

Figure 4.1: A scree plot of Eigen Values and Component Number

Scree Plot
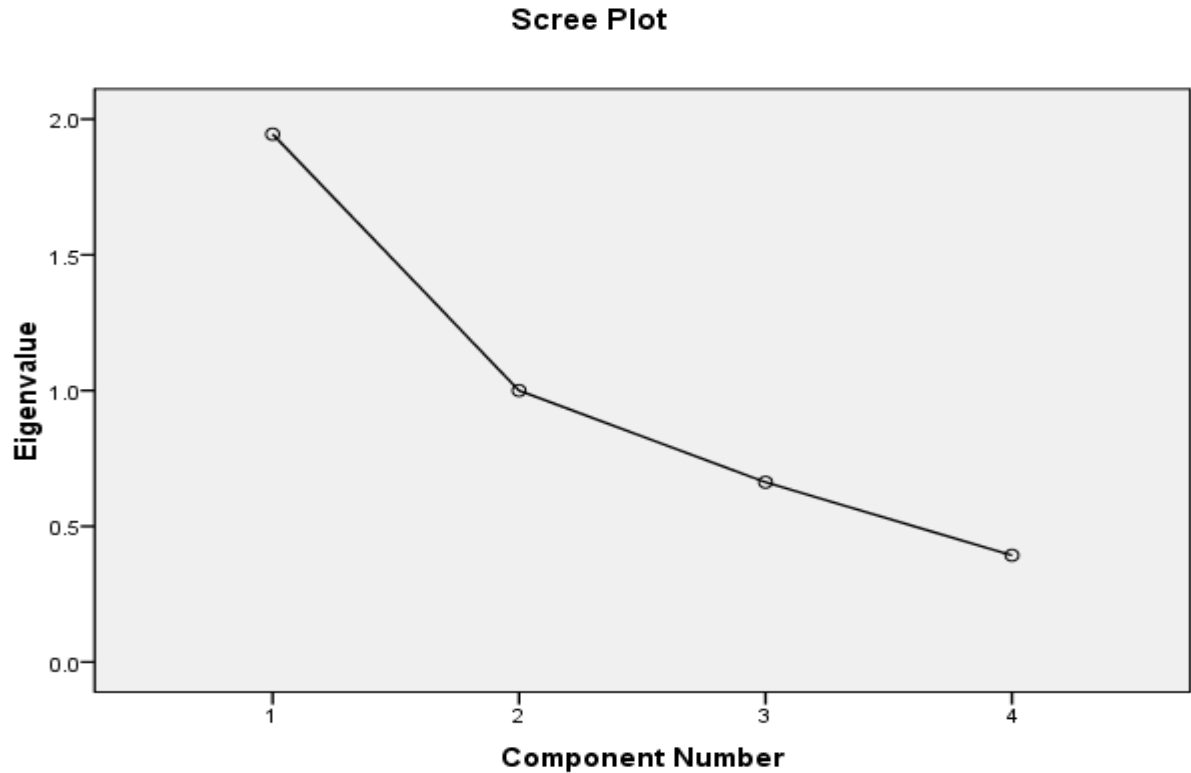
Source: Primary data 2013

Factor analysis helped in formulating the hypotheses for further testing using multiple linear regression analysis. Factor numbers with the highest Eigen values indicate their high extend in affecting the total variance in the model. All the four factors are contributing significantly to the overall variance in the model and were thus excluded in the multiple regression model for further testing of the hypotheses.

4.9   Regression Analysis

Model Summary

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0.95
R Square	0.85
Adjusted R Square	0.80
Standard Error	19.62
Observations	200

Source [Study Survey, 2013]

The Table above illustrates the model fitness of the regression equation that was used to illustrate the relationship between the Dependent variable and the independent variables. A total of 200 observations (n) were used in estimating the model. The overall model fitness was found to be 0.85 given by the R^2 value. This means that that 85% of the variation in Y (Demand for B. Com graduates) around Y bar which is its mean is explained by the regressors/independent variables jointly. The independent variables of the study are; Adequate training (X_1), Employment skills (X_2), People skills (X_3) and finally Self reliance skills (X_4). Eighty five (85%) is quite high and therefore X_1-X_4 variables are good predictors of demand for B. Com graduates.

Table 4.18: Test of joint regressors' significance- Analysis of Variance

	df	SS	MS	F	Significance F
Regression	4	25603.71	6400.93	16.63	0.00
Residual	195	75052.85	384.89		
Total	199	100656.56			

Source (Study Survey, 2013)

The general linear multiple regression model the study examined is given by;

$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4$

The column labeled F in the table above gives the overall F-test of the hypothesis that;

H_0: $\beta_1 = \beta_2 = \beta_3 = \beta_4 = 0$ versus;

H_a: at least one of $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$ does not equal to zero where $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$ are coefficients of $X_1, X_2, X_3,$ and X_4 .

The F statistic (16.63) has the associated P-value of 0.00. Since 0.00 is < 0.05, we reject H_0 at significance level 0.05 which means that at least none of the regressor coefficients are equal to zero and indeed all the independent variables jointly have a statistically significant impact on changes in the dependent variable.

4.8.3: Hypothesis Testing

Table 4.19: Regression Results

	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value	Lower 95%	Upper 95%	Lower 95.0%	Upper 95.0%
Intercept	29.56	14.64	2.02	0.04	0.69	58.43	0.69	58.43
X_1	8.93	1.61	5.56	0.00	5.76	12.10	5.76	12.10
X_2	-3.28	2.17	-1.51	0.13	-7.56	1.01	-7.56	1.01
X_3	-7.47	2.00	-3.73	0.00	-11.42	-3.52	-11.42	-3.52
X_4	3.70	1.32	2.81	0.01	1.10	6.29	1.10	6.29

Source (Study Survey, 2013)

From the Table 4.19 above, the fitted line for the regression model is as shown below;

$$Y= 29.56+9X_1- 3X_2-7X_3+4X_4$$

The coefficient of adequate training (X_1) has an estimated standard error of 1.61, t-statistic of 5.56 and an associated p-value of 0.00. The impact therefore of adequate training on graduate employability is statistically significant at significance level $\alpha=0.05$ since $p<0.0$. The H_0 is therefore rejected while H_a is accepted that there is a statistically significant relationship between adequacy of training of BCOM graduates and their employability.

The coefficient of Employment skills (X_2) has an estimated standard error of 2.17, t-statistic of --1.51 and associated p-value of 0.13.

The influence of Employment skills on BCOM graduates employability is statistically insignificant at significance level $\alpha=0.05$ since p>0.05. The H_0 is therefore accepted while H_a is rejected that there is no statistically significant relationship between Employment skills and graduate employability.

The coefficient of People skills (X_3) has an estimated standard error of 2.00, t-statistic of -3.73 and p-value of 0.00. The effect of People skills on graduate employability is statistically significant at significance level $\alpha=0.05$ since p<0.05. This led to rejection of the Null hypothesis that there exists no relationship between People skills and graduate employability. The alternative hypothesis that there exists a statistically significant relationship between People skills and employability is accepted as it is supported by empirical evidence.

The coefficient of Self reliance (X_4) has an estimated standard error of 1.32, t-statistic of 2.81 and p-value of 0.01. That is, the effect of Self reliance on graduate employability was found to be statistically significant at the critical value $\alpha=0.05$ since the associated p<0.05. The Null hypothesis is therefore rejected while the alternative one accepted since there is a statistically significant relationship between Self reliance and graduate employability.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0   Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1   Introduction

This chapter summarizes the study and makes conclusions and recommendations based on the results from primary data that was analysed using quantitative analysis and presented in form of tables and charts in chapter four. The policy implications from the findings and areas for further research are also presented. This section presents the findings from the study in comparison with what other scholars have said about employability skills of graduates and the job market demands.

5.2   Summary of the Research Problem and Methodology

The main objective of this study was to establish whether the B. Com graduates' employability skills meet the job market demands. The focus was on B. Com graduates 2009 to 2011 and the employer (HRM) who offers the graduates jobs. The four objectives of the study were: (i) To establish what employability skills the B. Com graduates actually possess as they enter the job market; (ii) To establish the employability skills the employers expect from B. Com graduates to have when they enter the job market; (iii) To find out the nature of the skills gap (if any) between employers' expectations and what the B. Com graduates have, and (iv) To determine methods of bridging the skills gap between employers' expectations.

The literature review provided an overview of the issues surrounding employability skills and job market demands. Through the review of literature, the following areas related to employability skills and job market demands were examined: the concept of employability, university education and employability, employability skills and job market demands, B. Com curriculum, quality of university education and graduates, training and employability, challenges facing university education. The study fell within the context of Two theories: Job Matching Theory and Human Capital Theory, which were found useful in underpinning the investigations in this study were also discussed. The literature exposed the fact that the problem of lack of employability skills is global and that there is an outcry among employers about the quality of graduates universities produce.

To achieve the objectives of the study, primary data was collected through the use of questionnaires from two sets of subjects: 1,000 B. Com graduates [2009 to 2011] and 250 Human Resource Managers. Focus group interview was also carried out. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the findings. Systematic sampling design was used as sample design for the B. Com graduates while employers were selected using snow ball sampling techniques.

5.3   Summary of the Main Findings of the Study

Research hypothesis stated that B. Com graduates were not in possession of the general employment skills, from the study findings this was consistent since regression analysis that reported that B. Com graduates were not in possession of general employment skills ($\beta = 0.787$, $p < 0.061$). Thus this finding positively supports the argument that in Africa quality training is challenged because of several factors as explained by (Eshiwani, 2009). Hence, this fact explains how B. Com graduates are lacking the general employment skills.

Results from the study indicated that B. Com graduates had specialized in different areas with 23.9% for human resources management, 23% accounting and finance. The study findings were in consistent with Wandiga et al. [2007], whose study indicated that Kenyan industry prefers to hire specialized staff,   thus the B. Com graduates specialize in certain disciplines so as to secure jobs.

Further, the study hypothesized that there were skills gap between what employers expect B. Com graduates to have and what the graduates actually possessed. The study supported the hypothesis 60% of the B. Com graduates agreed that they lacked the desired skills and 82% of the employers supported lack of graduate skills. The study findings were in agreement with [Gudo, 2013] who asserted that our education system is so much focused on attaining good grades in the exam, which denies the student the chance to acquire the desired skills for the job market.

Further, the study hypothesized that there are no methods which could be used to bridge the skills gap among the B.com graduates. The study findings rejected the null hypothesis, because when the right mechanisms are put in place, the skills gap can be bridged. Some of these mechanisms are enhancing the need for joint involvement among the industry players and university policy makers in curriculum development. This idea was supported by 72% B. Com graduates and 68% of the employers who were of the opinion that the industry should participate in B. Com curriculum development. These results were in consistent with [Lahart & Casselman, 2011] who advocated the need for joint venture among all education stakeholders.

The study depicted an inverse relationship between adequate training and the skills possessed by the B. Com graduates accounted by (-0.853). In addition, the study showed that 79% of the B. Com skills can be explained by self-reliance skills, people skills, adequate training and general employment skills; the university should embrace adequate training since an increase in adequate training will have a decrease in skills gap among the B.com graduates. The results were in agreement with Yoke [2006] who recommended that adequate training of graduates will equip them with the required skills in the job market and consequently eliminate the need for retraining as the join the job market.

Results from the study, supports the argument by Moreau & Leath-wood [2006] who states that employability refers to a set of achievements related to skills, understanding

and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen careers, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community as well as the country's economy. The findings showed that B. Com graduates are not in possession of the general employable skills and therefore, increasing the skills gap and consequently making the graduates lack employment.

5.3   Conclusion

According to the results of the study, it can be concluded that there is a skills gap between what the B.Com graduates have and the employers' expectations. This is supported by over 80% of the employers indicating that many graduates lack basic employability skills at the time that they are entering the job market. Further, 60% of the B.Com graduates confirmed that they lacked some of the employability skills expected of them by the employers.

The difference in employer expectations and graduates perceived preparation over-lap in several of the skills. Issues relating to mismatch between graduate skills and employer needs have resulted to graduates' unemployment and social problems. This study creates an opportunity for further researches, education and training to address unemployment issues that are resulting in a mismatch between graduates and employers. The reasons for skills shortages are in part related to factors that contribute to these shortages, such as employers' job requirements, demands of the global market, demands of technical skills, and production methods. All of these factors could have serious implications for workforce preparation.

5.4   Contribution to the body of knowledge

Employability Skills B. Com Graduates Possess as they enter Job Market	Employability Skills Employers Expect from B. Com Graduates
Willingness to learn, Self-promotion, Oral Communication, Interpersonal Skills IT/Computer Literacy, Flexibility,	Networking, being proactive, foreign language, customer orientation, commitment, numeracy, IT/computer Literacy
To perform tasks to standard, Professional competence in area of specialization, Handle relations with customers, clients and colleagues, ability to analyse and solve problems, ability to communicate, skills to bridge the gaps between knowledge acquired in formal education and that learnt in work, continuously innovative and improve processes and products through application of technologies (digital), attitude of positive independence, critical and analytical thinking.	Analytical skills, numeracy/ ability to quantify. Planning/coordinating ability and leadership, time management/ work under pressure, imagination, adaptability/flexibility and team working, ethics and integrity, social concern and awareness, ability to forecast on long and short term basis, networking skill, proposal, professional and report writing, numeracy/ability to quantify.

ESM, Kalei, 2014

The researcher formulated the Employability Skills Model [ESM] as a measurement tool for both employers during recruitment, and the graduates can use this Model to evaluate their employability and identify their week areas for improvement. The researcher gathered from the study literature that the job market needs and the employers' expectations for employability skills from graduates vary from one employer to another and also from one country to another [Weligamage, 2013]. This study, therefore, has identify employability skills sets that would best serve the future labour market in Kenya, and align university programmes to meet those needs.

5.4   Recommendations

The researcher would like to make the following recommendations:

(i)   The government and other stakeholders should initiate job exporting strategy of employment - the government sources for job openings globally for the graduates, and facilitates the candidate's immigration and other expenses in form of a soft loan.

(ii)   Universities should establish partnerships with the industry and other stakeholder**s** - to align B. Com programmes with the needs of the job market and bring the practical element to the curricula.

(iii)   The stakeholders should establish web-based career guidance portals − this would keep the stakeholders abreast of emerging issues in the market, and al-

so be able to train the youth to be creative and innovative, and be able to realize the emerging new demands since the business world is dynamic and keeps on changing now and then.

(iv)   The universities should establish partnership with the Youth Enterprise Development Fund - its objective is to provide funds to micro-finance institutions for onward lending to youth enterprises. This move would ensure that innovative university graduates are financed to commercialize their innovations.

(v) New programmes of study designed according to what employers and potential students need – as well as internship and placement opportunities that provide real challenge for students, not to mention professional level career coaching and practical skills training to prepare them for the workplace.

(vi)Links between universities and business/industry can be enormously helpful in facilitating graduate employability, where opportunities for employment are limited, training students to become entrepreneurs can be very useful to the economy, especially as graduates then become job providers rather than job seekers.

Areas of Further Research

It is important to note that this research was confined to investigating whether B. Com graduates' employability skills meet the job market demands in Kenya. It would be interesting for future researchers to carry out similar studies in the following areas:

(i)   This study targeted the employer and the B. Com graduate, a further study should be conducted to target the universities and the government.

(ii)   A comparative study between public and private universities would be ideal to establish strategies on how to keep their graduates' employability intact.

(iii)   This study zeroed only on employability skills, other researches should be done to investigate other factors that affect employability of graduates, for example, rapid population growth, poor dissemination of job market information, structural reforms, slow or declining economic growth, and high costs of labour.

(iv)   This study concentrated on B. Com graduates Employability skills, a further study on other disciplines would be timely.

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APPENDIX I

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE HRM

To the Respondents, may I invite you to participate in my research study on Bachelor of

Commerce Employability Skills and the Job Market Demands. The study is a part of my

doctoral dissertation.

For the researcher to be able to examine this phenomenon you are, therefore, requested

to complete this anonymous questionnaire and the researcher assures you that the infor-

mation you give will be handled with highest confidentiality. Please indicate the correct

option by putting a tick (√) against the most appropriate response in your option.

1. How many B. Com graduates have you employed in your organization?

   None [ ]   1 – 20 [ ]   21 – 40 [ ]   41 – 60 [ ]   61 and above [ ]

2. What skills do you expect B.Com graduates to have? Please indicate the correct op-

tion by inserting a number [1, 2, or 3] against any **three** appropriate responses (in order

of preference) from the options given.

 (i) **Self-reliance skills**

[ ]   proactively [ ] willingness to learn [ ]   self-promotion [ ]   networking [ ]   plan-

ning action [ ]   any other………………………

(ii) **People skills**

[ ]   team working [ ]   interpersonal skills [ ]   oral communication [ ]   leadership

[ ]   customer orientation [ ]   foreign language [ ]   any other………………………

(iii) **General employment skills**

[ ]   problem solving   [ ]   flexibility [ ]   IT/computer literacy   [ ]   numeracy

[ ]   commitment [   ]   any other…………………………………….

3. What employment skills do most B.Com graduates have? Please indicate the correct options by putting a tick (√) against **all** the appropriate responses from the options given.

 (i) Self-reliance skills

[ ]   proactively [ ] willingness to learn [ ]   self-promotion [ ]   networking

[ ]   planning action [ ]   any other………………………. ....

 (ii) People skills

[ ] team working [ ]   interpersonal skills [ ]   oral communication [ ]   leadership

[ ]   customer orientation [ ] foreign language [ ]   none [ ] any other……………

(iii) General employment skills

[ ]   problem solving   [ ]   flexibility [ ] IT/computer literacy   [ ]   numeracy

[ ]   commitment [ ] none [ ]   any other………………………………….

4. Is there skills gap between employers' expectations and what Kenya's B.Com gradu-

   ates possess?

   Yes   [ ]   No [ ]

If your answer above is yes, kindly fill in the likert scale section. If your answer is no, skip this section. Please tick (√) one appropriate box for each statement in the Likert scale to indicate whether you strongly agree (5), agree (4), undecided (3), strongly disa-

gree (2) or disagree (1) to the following statements as regards your business training and

job performance.

5. Tick as appropriate on the likert scale, your take on the best actions that stakeholders should take to minimise or bridge the skills gap.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
	5	4	3	2	1
a. Involve the industry when preparing B. Com. Curriculum					
b. Use practical curriculum					
c. Make industrial attachment compulsory					
d. Make B. Com curriculum relevant to market need					
keep abreast of labour market changes					
f. Standardize public and private universities B. Com programmes					
g. Equip universities with necessaries physical facilities					

6. In terms of graduate skills, do you have preference for graduates from?

Private universities [ ]   Public universities [ ]   Both [ ]   Others ………………

7. Should universities involve the industry as they prepare their B. Com curriculum?

Yes   [ ]   No [ ]

Please give two reasons for your answer.

_____

8. Does the quality of B. Com programme needs improvement?

Yes   [ ]   No [ ]

9. Is there need for feedback between employers and universities?

Yes   [ ]   No [ ]

10. Do you find it necessary to retrain university business graduates after employment?

Yes   [ ]   No [ ]

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation, God bless you.

APPENDIX II

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE B. COM GRADUATES

2009 TO 2011

To the Respondents, may I invite you to participate in my research study on Employability Skills: An Assessment of Skills Gap between Employers' Expectations and what Kenya's B.Com Graduates possess. The study is a part of my doctoral dissertation.

For the researcher to be able to examine this phenomenon you are, therefore, requested to complete this anonymous questionnaire and the researcher assures you that the information you give will be handled with highest confidentiality. Please indicate the correct option by putting a tick (√) against the most appropriate response in your option. The questionnaire is divided into three sections.

SECTION A

GENERAL INFORMATION

1.   Gender

         Male   [ ]   Female   [ ]

2.   Age bracket

         25 – 30 [ ]   31 – 35 [ ]   36 – 40 [ ]   41 and above [ ]

3.   Highest level of formal education

         Undergraduate [ ]   Post graduate [ ]   PhD [ ]   Others …………………

4.   Year of graduation

[ ] 2006   [ ] 2007   [ ] 2008   [ ] 2009   [ ] 2010   [ ] Others ……………

5.   Your specialization

Finance & Banking [ ] Accounting & Finance [ ]   Marketing [ ] Others...............

6.   What motivated you to pursue your specialization?

Personal interest   [   ]   University directed [   ]   Other parties' persuasions [   ]

SECTION B

The following section contains (7-13) statements. Please tick ($\sqrt{}$) one appropriate box for each statement in the Likert scale to indicate whether you strongly agree (5), agree (4), undecided (3), strongly disagree (2) or disagree (1) to the following statements as regards your business training and job performance.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
	5	4	3	2	1
7. The training you took matches your career ambitions and the industry needs.					
8. B. Com graduates are exposed to practical experiences before graduation.					
9. The instructors used adequate training methods to deliver their contents.					
10. A number of private universities are relatively better equipped with resources than public ones.					
11. There was no shortage of lecturers in your course of study.					
12. Students face many challenges as they go through their studies.					
13. Would you agree to recommend a friend to join your university?					

SECTION C

CURRENT WORK INFORMATION

14. Which industry do you work with?

Banking Industry [ ] Education Industry [ ] Insurance Industry [ ] Manufacturing

Industry   [   ]   Other…………………………..

15. Work experience

0– 1 year [   ]   1 – 2 years [   ]   2 - 3 years [   ]   3 years and above [   ]

16. Period before getting first job after graduation

0– 6 months [   ] 6 – 12 months [ ] 12 – 18 months [   ] 18 months and above [   ]

17. What skills are required of you by your employer? Please indicate the correct options by inserting a number [1, 2, or 3] against any **three** appropriate responses (in order of preference) from the options given.

(i) Self-reliance skills

[ ]   proactively [ ] willingness to learn [ ]   self-promotion [ ] networking [ ]   planning action [ ]   any other………………………

(ii) People skills

[ ]   team working [ ]   interpersonal skills [ ]   oral communication [ ]   leadership

[ ]   customer orientation [ ]   foreign language [ ]   any other………………………

(iii) General employment skills

[ ]   problem solving   [ ]   flexibility [ ]   IT/computer literacy   [ ]   numeracy

[ ]   commitment [ ]   any other………………………………….

---

18. What employment skills did your B.Com programme equip you with? Please indicate the correct options by putting a tick (√) against **all** the appropriate responses from the options given.

 (i) Self-reliance skills

[ ]   proactively [ ] willingness to learn [ ]   self-promotion [ ]   networking

[ ]   planning action [ ]   any other………………………

 (ii) People skills

[ ] team working [ ]   interpersonal skills [ ]   oral communication [ ]   leadership

[ ]customer orientation [ ]   foreign language [ ]none [ ] any other………………………

(iii) General employment skills

 [ ]   problem solving   [ ]   flexibility [ ]   IT/computer literacy   [ ]   numeracy

 [ ]   commitment [ ] none [ ]   any other…………………………………….

19. Do you utilize the employment skills you have at your work place?

     Yes [ ]   No [ ]

20. In your own assessment, is there as a skills gap between employers' expectations and

    what Kenya's B.Com graduates possess?

     Yes [ ]   No [ ]

   (i) If your answer is yes, mention any four of the skills gap.

   _____

   (ii) Suggest ways of bridging the gap.

_____

21. Are there areas you consider to be important and are not included in the B. Com

   curriculum?

   Yes [   ]   No [   ]

   (i) If your answer is yes, please mention these areas.

   _____

22. Are there areas you consider not important and are included in the B. Com curricu-

   lum?

   Yes [   ]   No [   ]

   (i) If your answer is yes, please mention these areas.

   _____

23. Does your B. Com curriculum prepare graduates for self-employment?

   Yes   [   ]   No [   ]

24. Do you consider practical training important as part of the programme?

   Yes   [   ]   No [   ]

25. Did you face challenges in your course of study?

   Yes   [   ]   No [   ]

   (i) If your answer is yes, state some of these challenges.

_____

26. What advice would you give to your university to ensure the employability of its
graduates remains intact?

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation, God bless you.