



Aligning TVET Assessment with Industry Standards: Insights from a Graduate Tracer Study in Zambia

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Presentation Outline

- Background
- Problem Statement
- Objectives
- Methodology
- Findings
- Discussion
- Recommendations

Background

- TEVETA was established by an act of parliament in 1998 with a mandate to regulate and coordinate training in technical and vocational skills;
- It is a vehicle to provide the needed human resource to achieve national development;
- Zambia expresses her ambitions through the vision 2030 and national development plans.

VISION 2030

*'A prosperous Middle-income Nation
By 2030'*

8NDP (2022-2026)

Agriculture

Mining

Tourism

Manufacturing

Background Continues

- **Mwila (2016)** found that although TEVET curricula are theoretically aligned with industry needs, implementation is hindered by outdated training infrastructure, limited industry placements, and weak institutional capacity.
- **Tembo (2023)** observed that collaboration between TEVET institutions and industry is often informal, unstructured, and poorly incentivised, resulting in minimal employer involvement in curriculum development or graduate mentoring.

Problem Statement

With over 25 years of existence little is known about the employability of TEVET graduates in Zambia

Studies and public sentiments indicate mismatch of graduate skills and labour market needs. Also shows lack of critical competences required in industry

Need to investigate employability of TEVET graduates

Theoretically, acquisition of skills leads to high employability and enhanced opportunities

Objectives

- To assess the employability of TEVET graduates who studied General Agriculture in Zambia from 2021 to 2023.
- To evaluate the relevance of TEVET training programs to the labour market.
- To provide feedback on curriculum development, assessment, and quality of training in TEVET institutions.
- To establish a framework for future, large-scale graduate tracer studies in Zambia.

Methodology

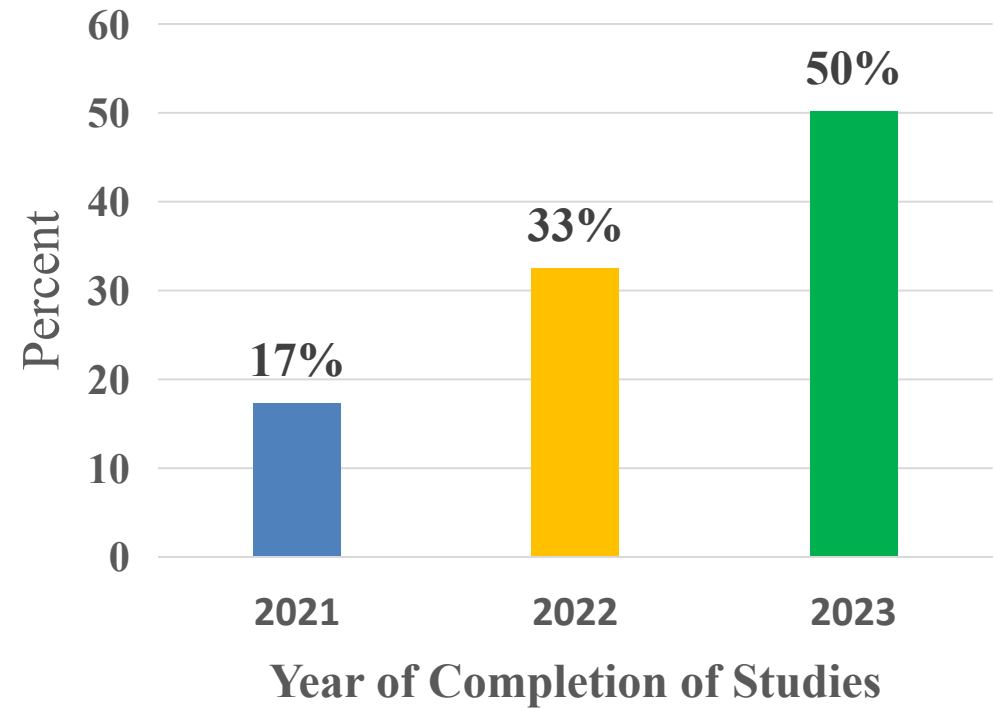
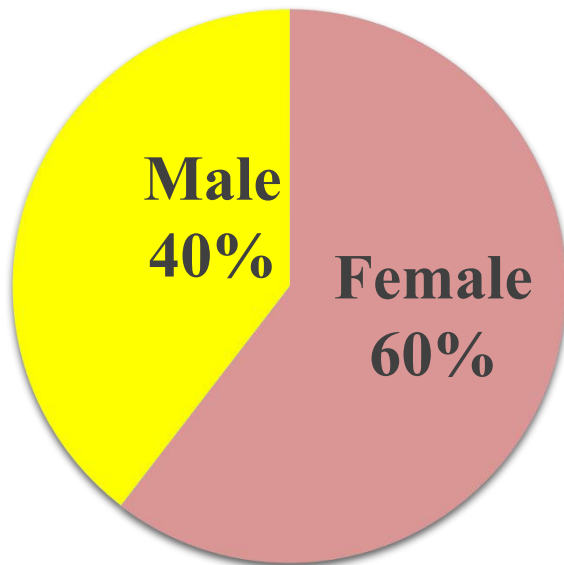
- **Research Design:** An embedded mixed methods approach, primarily utilizing a quantitative design supplemented by qualitative components
- **Population:** The population was graduates of General Agriculture in 2021, 2022, and 2023 at three TEVET institutions
- **Sample:** Online Cochran's formula used to calculate the sample, a margin error of 5%, confidence level of 95% and assumed proportion of 0.5 giving a sample size of 232. To cater for potential non respondents being a pilot study, the sample size was increased to 300.

- **Data Collection Methods:** A structured questionnaire with objective questions and two open ended questions was administered to the sampled graduates. The questionnaire had three sections: (1) general information, (2) education and skills acquired, and (3) employment outcomes. The data was validated through the Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA) database of taxpayer.
- **Data Analysis:** Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics. Thematic analysis was used for qualitative data by identifying common themes and trends in the data, thereby providing insights into graduates' experiences and perceptions of their training.

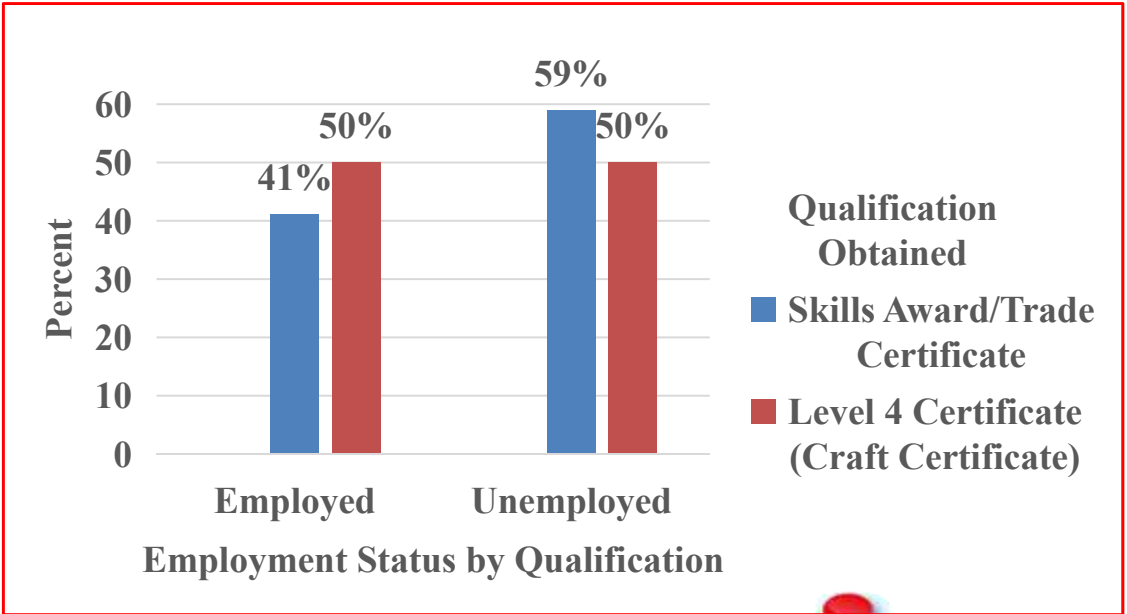
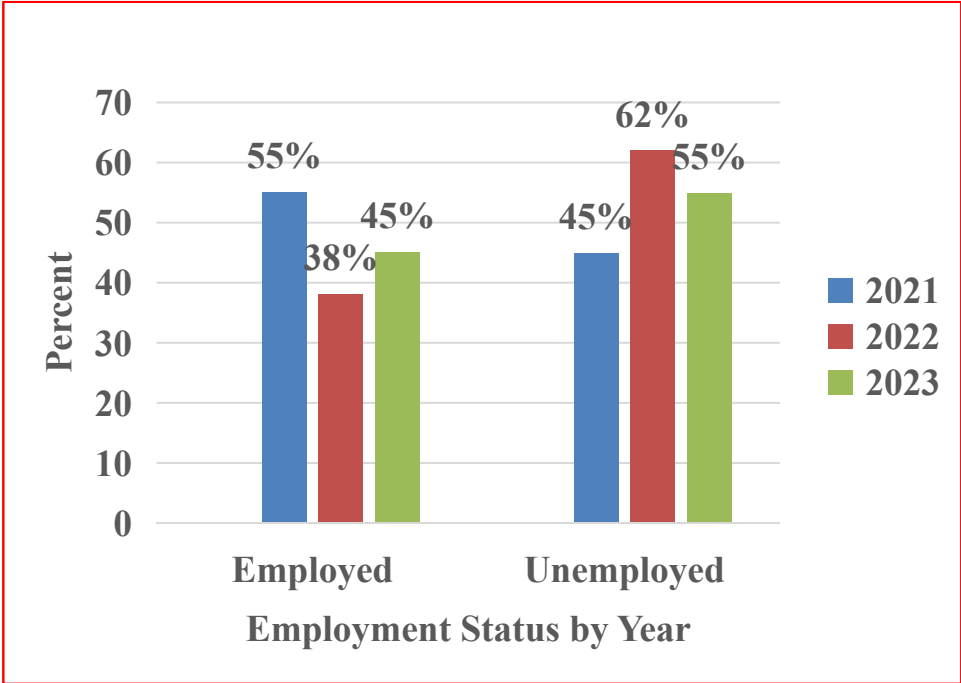
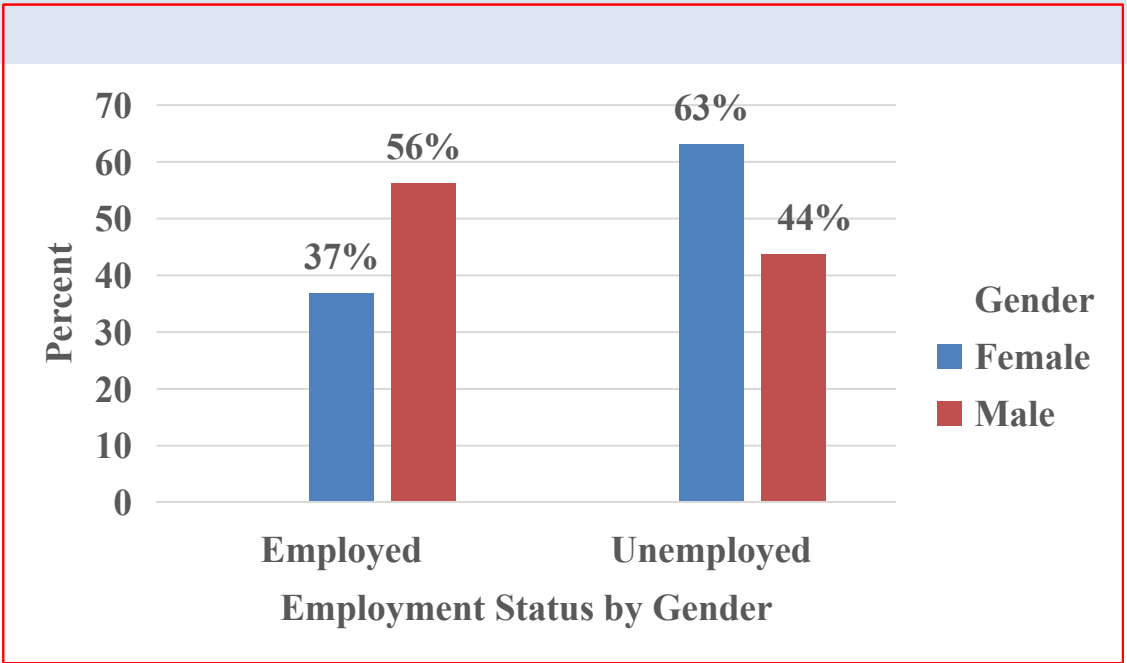
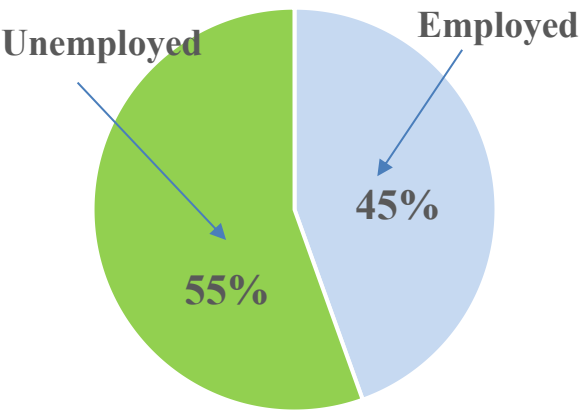
Findings

A. DEMOGRAPHICS

283 responded to the questionnaire, resulting in a high response rate of 94.3%

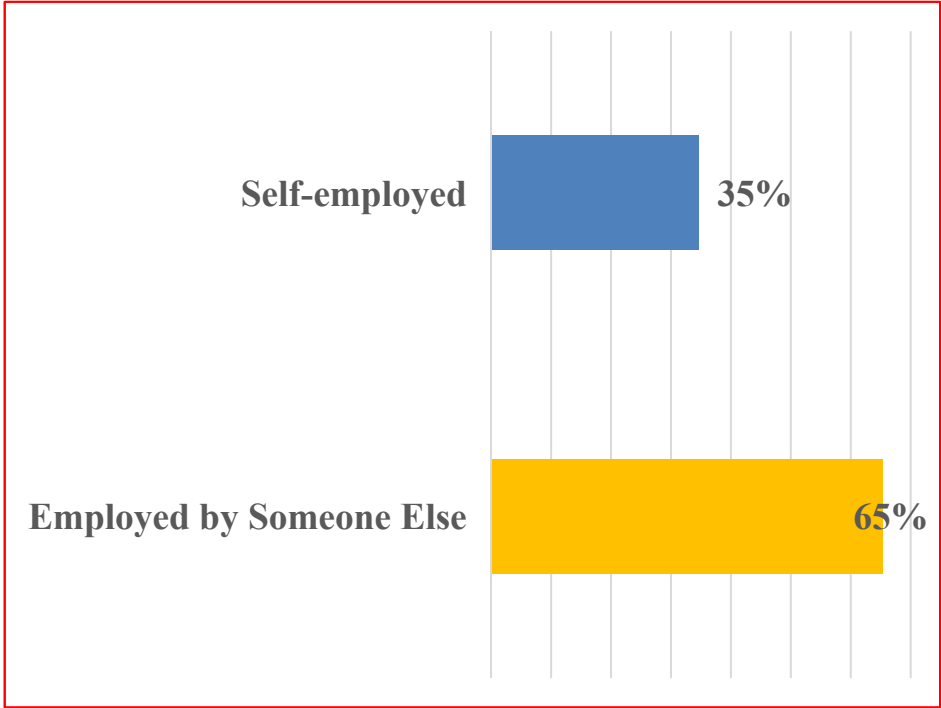


B. EMPLOYMENT STATUS

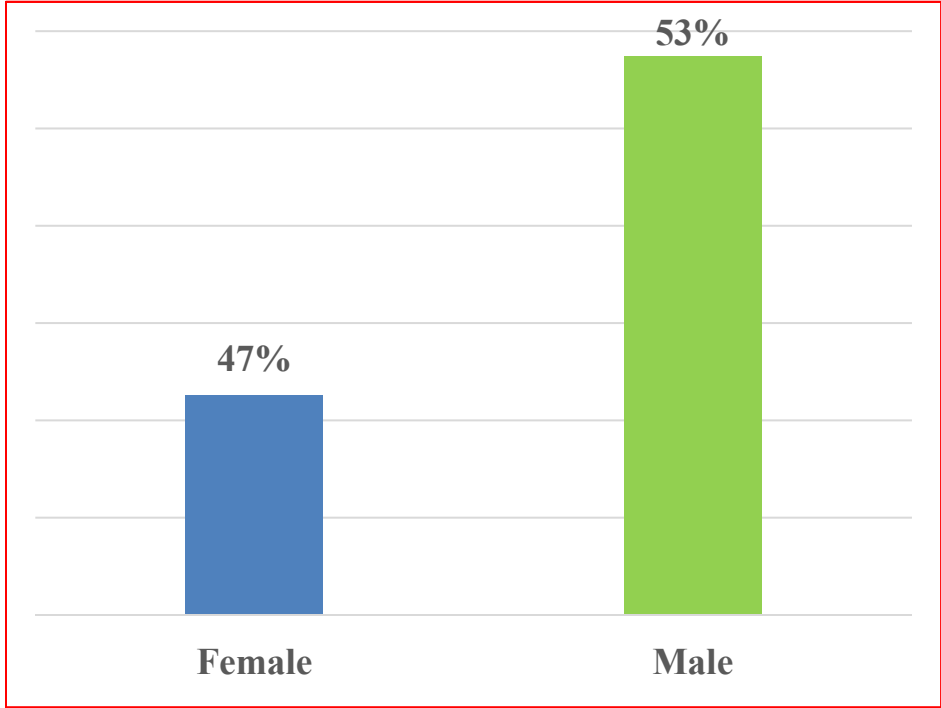


C. SELF EMPLOYMENT

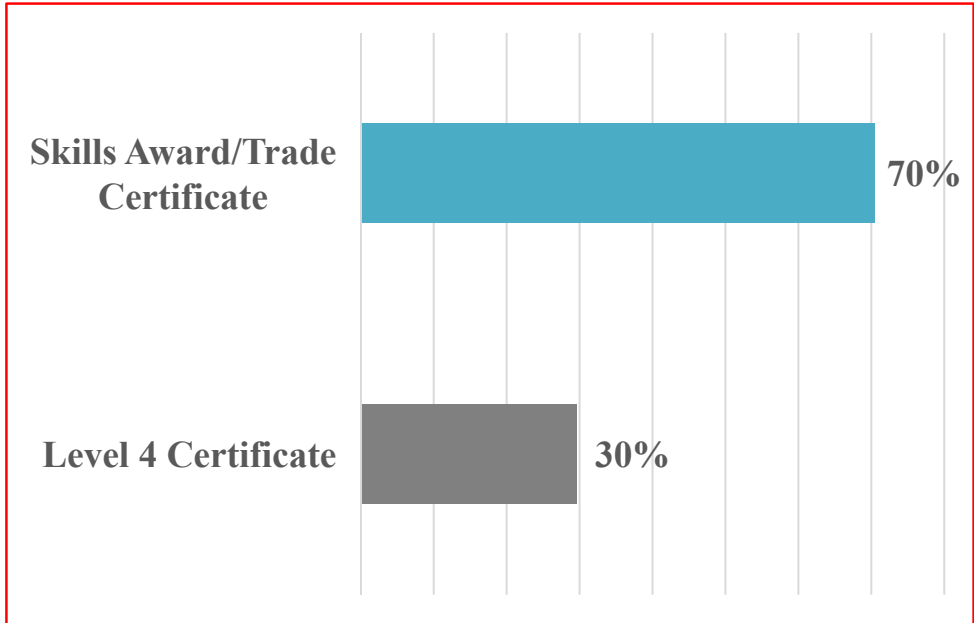
Employment Status by Self Employment



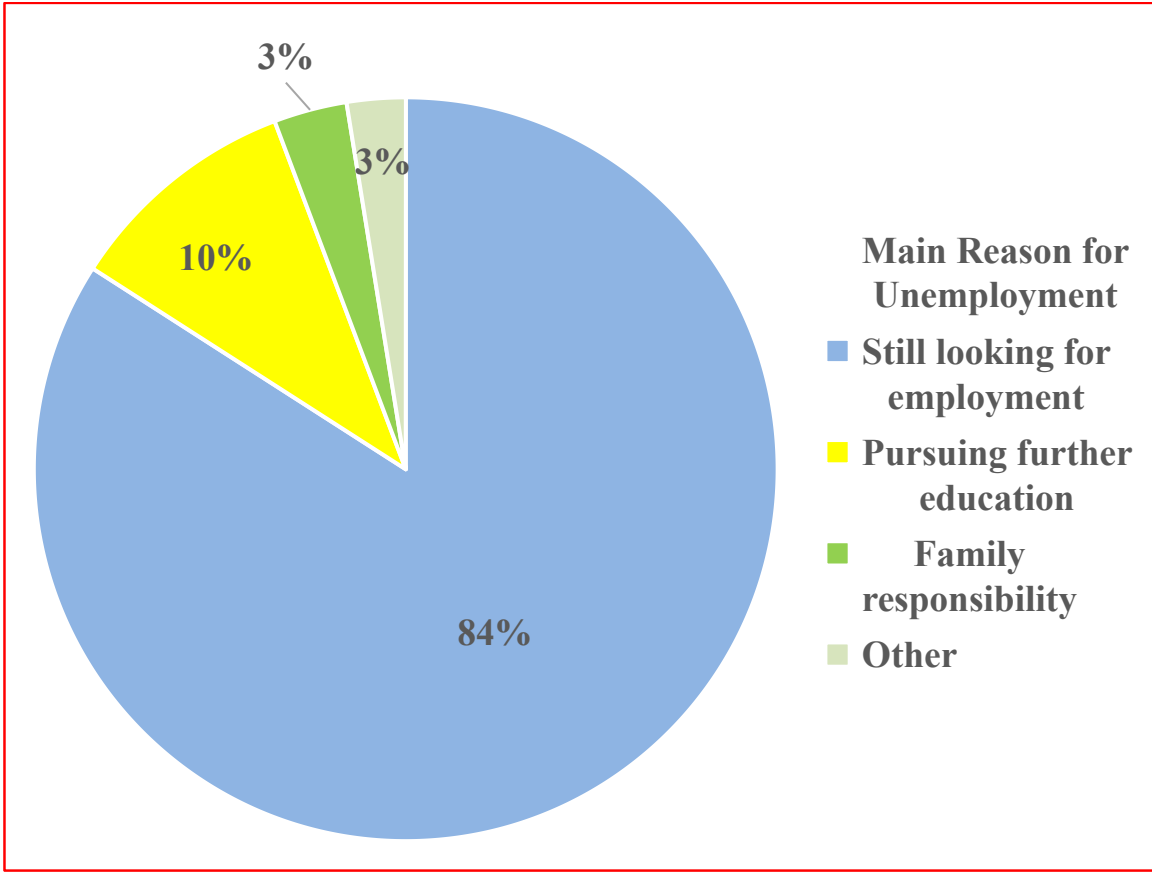
Self Employment by Gender



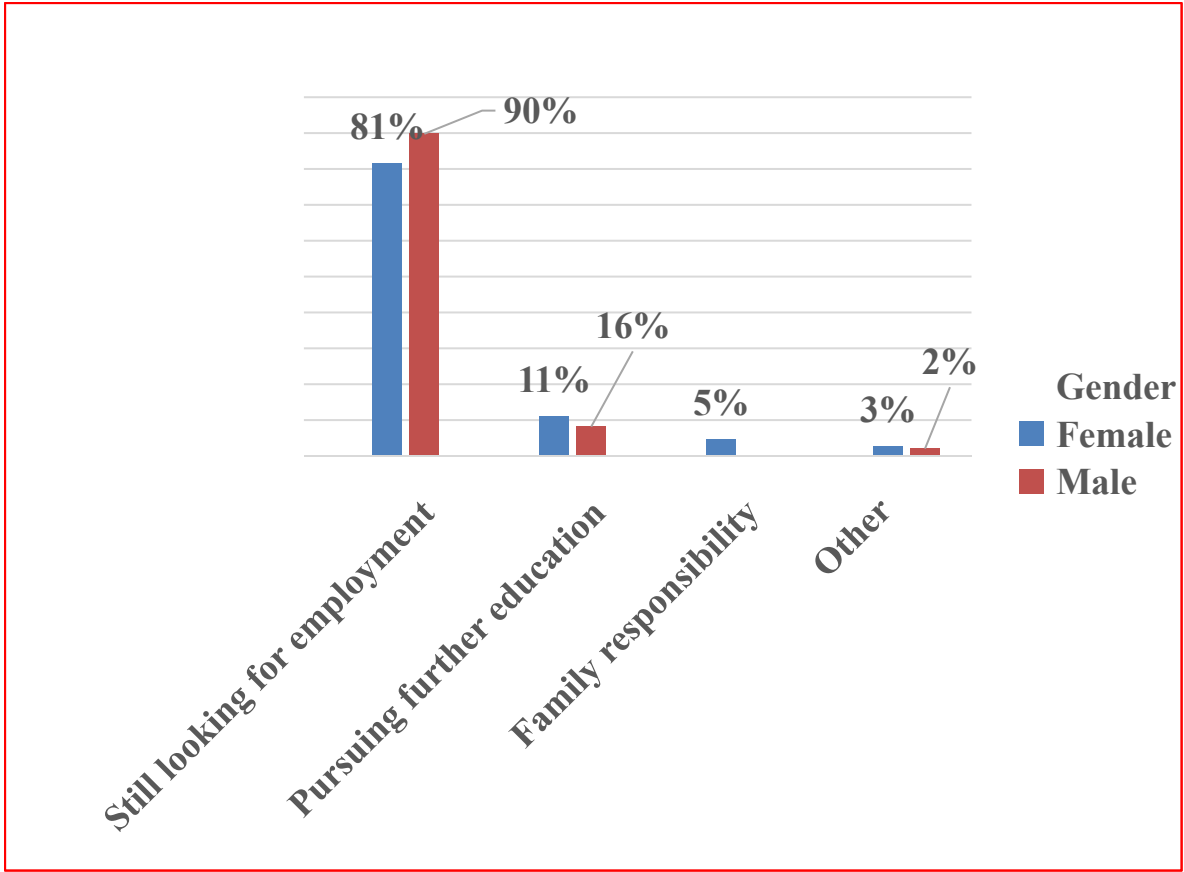
Self Employment by Qualification



D. MAIN REASON FOR UNEMPLOYMENT

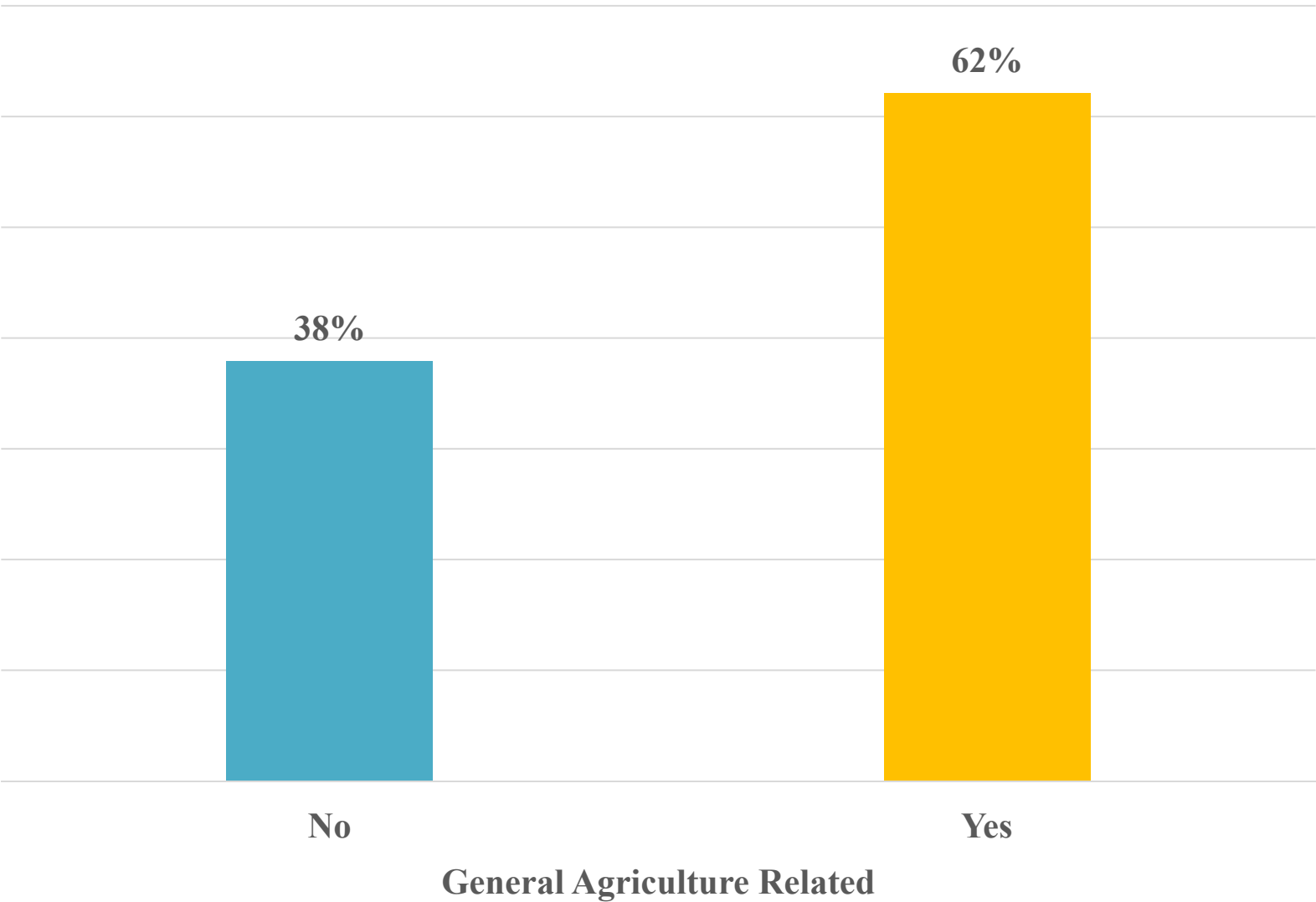


Main Reason for Unemployment



Main Reason for Unemployment by Gender

E. RELEVANCE OF TRAINING & ASSESSMENT



F. QUALITATIVE INSIGHTS

- Unemployment among TEVET graduates is primarily attributed to a mismatch between training and labour market demands, lack of industry exposure, and absence of institutional support post-graduation. Two graduates indicated that “Students are not exposed to machinery which becomes a major challenge” and “There is need to promote more attachments for students, which will help them to market [themselves].” Another student observed that, “The syllabus is more focused on theories... students should be exposed to the real agricultural practice.”
- The assessment system also came under criticism for its rigidity, as it focuses primarily on final examinations while neglecting continuous and practical assessments. Graduates pointed out that the high pass mark of 50 percent poses a barrier to progression and completion. Two graduates commented, “Proper exam materials and teaching consistency are needed,” while another noted, “The passing percentage is too high, hence most of the students fail to graduate.” There was also a call for improved evaluation of practical skills, with one remarking, “Improve practicals during training.”

Recommendations

- **Enhancing Career Transition Support:** Forge partnerships with employers for industrial attachments, internships, and apprenticeships to enhance practical skills.
- **Curriculum and Assessment Reform:**
 - Regularly update curricula to align with labor market needs, emphasizing digital agriculture and entrepreneurship.
 - Shift assessment methods to practical, project-based evaluations in line with Competence-Based Education and Training (CBET) principles.
- **Supporting Entrepreneurship:** Provide practical entrepreneurship training, enterprise incubation hubs, access to micro-financing, and structured mentorship programs.
- **Gender-Sensitive Interventions:** Implement gender-sensitive strategies to address specific challenges faced by female graduates in labor market integration.

Future Research Directions

- **Longitudinal Studies:** Track graduates over time to understand career trajectories, income progression, and skills utilization.
- **Comparative Studies:** Conduct comparative studies across regions, institutions, and program areas to identify contextual factors influencing graduate outcomes.
- **Entrepreneurship Training Evaluation:** Evaluate the effectiveness of current entrepreneurship training models within TEVET programs.
- **Industry Partnerships Assessment:** Assess the impact of partnerships between TEVET institutions and industry on skill development and job placement.
- **Gender Dynamics Research:** Investigate gender dynamics in TEVET education and labor market integration to address disparities in employment outcomes.
- **CBET Implementation Evaluation:** Evaluate the implementation and outcomes of CBET approaches in TEVET curricula to enhance competence and employability.

