

**T.C.
SAKARYA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**

**AN INVESTIGATION OF CAREER
EXPERIENCES OF UGANDAN ALUMNI
FROM TURKEY**

MASTER'S THESIS

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Katende Nuha Mukiibi tarafından hazırlanan “An Investigation of Career Experiences of Ugandan Alumni from Turkey Örneđi başlıklı bu tez, 19/01/2021 tarihinde Sakarya Üniversitesi Lisansüstü Eğitim ve Öğretim Yönetmeliđi'nin ilgili maddeleri uyarınca yapılan Tez Savunma Sınavı sonucunda başarılı bulunarak, jürimiz tarafından Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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ABBREVIATIONS

DTDA	: Danish Trade Union Development Agency
ICEF	: International Consultants for Education and Fairs
NCHE	: National Council for Higher Education
OECD	: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
RUFORUM	: The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture
UNDP	: The United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	: The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UBOS	: Uganda Bureau of Statistics
YÖK	: Turkish Council of Higher Education

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Title of Thesis: An Investigation of Career Experiences of Ugandan Alumni from Turkey	
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<p>The career experiences of returnee graduates play a significant role in the economy of a country. This work aims to explore the career experiences of Ugandan students who graduated from higher education institutions in Turkey. This research aim is operationalized into dimensions namely; past experiences of students in Turkey and their career development experiences in Uganda. For this purpose, the study deployed a qualitative research methodology. Seven semi-structured interviews were conducted with Ugandan returnees' alumni; who had benefited from a scholarship program and graduated at least two years ago and also belong to different demographic, economic, and educational statuses. Participants for this current study were recruited using purposeful sampling strategies. It is found out that social-cultural factors represent significant impediments to excellent learning experiences while in Turkey. Also, the higher the level of education the better the career development experience of Ugandans returning from Turkey; since the Ph.D. returnees are easily absorbed into the academic cluster. Therefore, it is recommended that more academic windows should be open for more Ugandan post-graduate students in Turkey.</p> <p>Results also show that the majority of the respondents are working in private organizations including Universities. Further, it is suggested that bachelor's and master's degree prospective Ugandan students need to have prior working experience to be more competitive in the labor market of Uganda. For an effective educational experience, the Turkish government is recommended to consider incorporating international Turkish alumni from different countries as staff in Turkish universities. This will assist in transferring new ideas for international African graduates into the system. Also, to improve the language skills of foreign students, university administrators should consider designing Turkish language training in line with the academic needs of foreign students.</p>	
Keywords: Career Development, Tukey, International Students, Uganda, Returnee Graduates	

Tezin Başlığı: Türkiye'deki Yükseköğretim Kurumlarından Mezun Olan Ugandalı Öğrencilerin Kariyer Deneyimlerinin İncelenmesi.	
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<p>Geri dönen mezunların kariyer deneyimleri, bir ülkenin ekonomisinde önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Bu çalışma, Türkiye'deki yükseköğretim kurumlarından mezun olan Ugandalı öğrencilerin kariyer deneyimlerini keşfetmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu araştırma amacı, şu boyutlara operasyonel hale getirilmiştir; Türkiye'de öğrenci olarak geçmiş deneyimleri ve Uganda'da kariyer geliştirme deneyimleri . Bu amaçla, çalışmada nitel araştırma yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Ugandalı geri dönenlerin mezunları ile yedi yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme yapılmıştır; Burs programından en az iki yıl önce mezun olmuş ve farklı demografik, ekonomik ve eğitim durumlarına ait olanlar. Bu çalışmada, katılımcılar amaçlı örnekleme stratejileri kullanılarak seçilmiştir. Çalışmanın öne çıkan bulguları şunlardır, Sosyal-kültürel faktörlerin Türkiye'deyken mükemmel öğrenme deneyimlerinin önünde önemli engeller oluşturduğu tespit edilmiştir. Ayrıca, eğitim seviyesi ne kadar yüksekse, Türkiye'den dönen Ugandalıların kariyer gelişim deneyimleri de o kadar iyi olur çünkü Doktora geri dönenler kolayca akademik çevrelerin içine çekilirler. Bu nedenle, Türkiye'de daha fazla Ugandalı lisansüstü öğrenciye daha fazla akademik pencerenin açılması önerilmektedir.</p> <p>Sonuçlar ayrıca, mülakat'a katılanların çoğunluğunun Üniversiteler de dahil olmak üzere özel kuruluşlarla çalıştığını göstermektedir. Ayrıca, lisans ve yüksek lisans derecesi adayları olan Ugandalı öğrencilerin Uganda'nın işgücü piyasasında daha rekabetçi olabilmeleri için önceden çalışma deneyimine sahip olmaları gerektiği önerilmektedir. Mükemmel bir eğitim deneyimi için, Türk hükümetinin Türk üniversitelerinde personel olarak farklı ülkelerden uluslararası Türk mezunları personel olarak dahil etmeyi düşünmesi tavsiye edilmektedir. Bu, uluslararası Afrikalı mezunlar için yeni fikirlerin sisteme aktarılmasına yardımcı olacaktır.</p> <p>Ayrıca yabancı uyruklu öğrencilerin dil becerilerini geliştirmek için üniversite yöneticileri, Türkçe dil eğitimini yabancı öğrencilerin akademik ihtiyaçları doğrultusunda tasarlamayı düşünmelidir.</p>	
Anahtar kelimeler: Kariyer Gelişimi, Türkiye, Uluslararası Öğrenci, Uganda, Geri Dönen Mezunlar	

INTRODUCTION

Evidence shows that since 2006 the number of Ugandans traveling abroad to pursue their academic award has been doubled in the past decade. Currently, statistics review that more than 5,626 Ugandans are currently on their academic journey abroad (UNESCO, 2021). In general, English-speaking countries farewell, the UK and U.S are equally preferable destinations followed by South Africa which is regarded as the third option for Ugandan sojourners. However, diverse countries such as Italy, Saudi Arabia, and Malaysia have also given great consideration among Ugandan students (ICEF, 2017). In recent years, Turkey has also gained ground among diverse countries which serve as an academic destination.

Statistics indicate that about 125,138 international mobile students were hosted in Turkey year 2017-2018 (YÖK, 2019:19-20). Similarly, current OECD statistics also indicate that the number has increased to 154,505 international students in 2019 of which 21,564 are Africans and only 293 Ugandans reported to have been hosted (OECD, 2021). OECD statistics also indicate that a total of 5,178 African graduates completed their studies 2013-2018 at all levels of education from Turkish universities. Among these, a total number of 120 Ugandans reported having been graduated from Turkish universities year 2014-2018. It is also indicated that the number has increased to 155 Ugandan graduates from Turkey in the year 2019 (OECD, 2021).

Similarly, much research had been carried out to shed more light on the career experiences of international alumni after returning home such as (Hao et al., 2016; Pham and Saito, 2020; International Graduate Outcomes report, 2019) to mention but few. However, most of the literature looked at the factors that influence the employability and experienced challenges of returnee students while back home (Hao, 2012; Fei, 2017; Kintu, Kitainge and Ferej, 2019; Musisi and Sessanga, 2019; Ssembatya and Robert 2019; Kiong et al., 2019; Pham and Saito 2020). Additionally, the vast majority of the available literature concentrates on Asian alumni from European universities, whereas little is known specifically about African alumni from European universities.

In the same context, it is necessary to note that the knowledge and skill acquired from foreign countries do not always guarantee the spontaneous success of returnees in their career. However, many other factors contrive the career development of returnees in their home countries. Pham and Saito (2020) noted that the foreign graduates could not provide an answer to whether the education outcomes were beneficial and applicable in their home country, rather it was found that returnee students utilized three main strategies to negotiate their employability including being navigator, being rebels, and being retreatist. Thieme (2014) found that "it is not just the education or cultural capital abroad that allows these students to make a successful return and position them-selves in the labor market, but also their network or place-based social capital". Further, according to Hao, Wen and Welch (2016) in their work titled "When Sojourners Return", it is found out that the recent sojourners do not easily enjoy employment opportunity like the early sojourners who effortlessly gained employment in various sector of China`s labor market.

Enkhtur (2019) noted that short internship works received by alumni helped them to build personal connections on the other hand foreign alumni failed in their careers. According to the International Graduate Outcomes report (2019), international alumni from UK universities are successful with satisfying careers and the majority of international graduates recognize that their UK degree is a vehicle for their success and this meant that 69% of respondents could progress more quickly in their chosen career. In another research titled "Chinese international business graduates: A career dilemma: Repatriate or Stay?" researchers noted that Chinese foreign business graduates are caught in a dilemma when choosing the best path for their career and lifestyle (Tharenou, 2015). Also, in research "The African alumni project, Career Choices, Return Paths and Social Contributions", it is concluded that acquiring an international degree at some point could be a disadvantage in certain circumstances when a superior perceives the international graduate as a threat. Also, a number of international graduates (57%) of women preferred to live and work in the diaspora because of the greater opportunities outside Africa (Marsh et al, 2016).

In China, it was found out found that guanxi¹ presents both opportunities as well as obstacles to Chinese returnee alumni. Returnee graduates to initiate their careers back home in China, one had to adopt local guanxi practice by utilizing and developing social relations with the local people in China since they had lost some of their local connections (Guo, Porschitz and Alves, 2013: 12).

A study on the employability of Chinese graduates from Malaysia upon returning to China employment market indicated that educational and learning activities and soft skills have a great influence on alumni employability and also findings justify that English proficiency is considered an important criterion towards graduates' employability back home (Kiong et al., 2019:358). Likewise, a study on conceptions of positive career outcomes was held by Chinese alumni from Australia. "Chinese returnees' conceptions of positive career outcomes after graduating from Australian universities" notes that Chinese returnees consider international and cultural exposure as a very strong contributing factor to their career success (Lin-Stephens, Uesi and Doherty, 2015: 127).

Conclusively most of those research evaluates the general lives of returnees ranging from their social contribution, factors affecting their employability, challenges, and strategies, and adaptive features in their countries. Nevertheless, there is a need for their career progress to be assessed. In the same vein, according to OECD (2018), 14,282 African students reportedly attended higher the education year 2017 in Turkey of which 220 are Ugandans. In addition, it is indicated that the number increased to about 16401 African students enrolled in Turkey in the year 2018 of which the total number of Ugandans enrolled at Turkish higher education also increased to 238. Similarly, statistics provided by the Turkish council of Higher Education indicate that the number of Ugandan students enrolled increased to 293 in the year 2018-2019, 307 in the year 2019-2020, and also 300 Ugandan students reportedly enrolled in the year 2020-2021(YÖK, 2021). This shows how much Turkey has become lately an

¹ Generally, the term guanxi has three meanings attached to it first," it indicates the existence of a relationship between people who share a status group or who are related to a common person. People with this type of guanxi may never come in contact with one another, but if they do, they start with a conversation that recognizes the pre-existing relationship. Secondly, the term refers "to an actual connection or direct contact between people". Thirdly, the term refers to the actual people with whom one has a strong connection (Bian, 1994).

education hub for Africans at large and Ugandans specifically. However, there is little literature known about the career progress of Ugandan returnee alumni from abroad. This, therefore, raises a need for research on the post-study life of Ugandan alumni after their return back to Uganda. In this study, the researcher seeks to explore how Ugandan Alumni from Turkey progress in their career and post-study general experiences upon their return to Uganda, more specifically in the field of commerce and academia due to the perceived wider opportunity in the fields. The study limits the research to one country (Uganda) and one host country (Turkey).

Aim of the Study: The study aims to understand and describe the career experiences of Ugandan graduates from abroad, specifically from Turkey's higher education programs. I will operationalize this aim in two dimensions:

1. Their experience as being students abroad, namely in Turkey.
2. Their current experience in terms of career development in their home country.

Problem Statement and research questions: Statistics indicate that 5360 internationally mobile tertiary Ugandan students enrolled abroad for higher education in 2014, and by 2015 the number decreased to 5017 whereas 2016 witnessed a relative increase when 5794 Ugandan sojourners target various universities abroad as their learning destinations. It is also indicated that the number has increased to 6,032 in the year 2018 whereby 238 of 6,032 Ugandan students attend universities in Turkey (UNESCO, 2021). Evidence shows that the number of internationally mobile Ugandan students abroad is reported to have decreased to 5626 in the year 2019 (See figure 1).

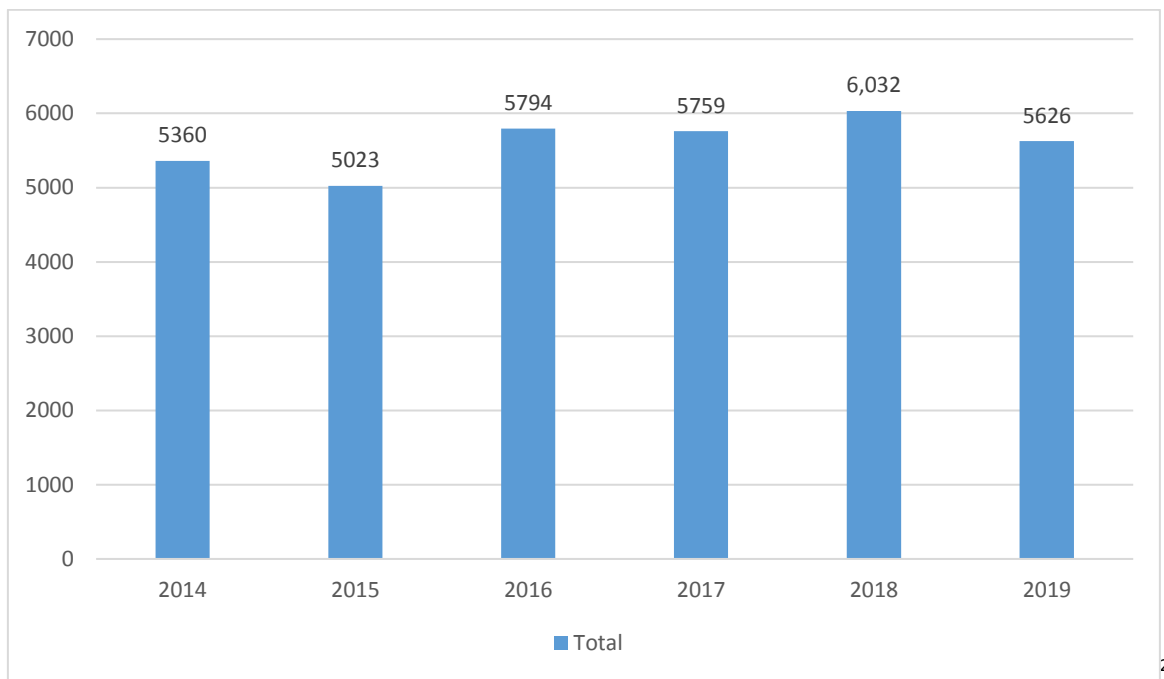


Figure 1: Total outbound Internationally Mobile Tertiary Ugandan Students Studying Abroad

Source: UNESCO (2021).

In addition, OECD (2021) statistics also indicate that about 155 Ugandan graduates reported having been graduated from Turkey in the year 2014-2019. This triggers my curiosity about their hopes, expectations, experienced challenges, and their response to surmount those challenges, and concerning the accessibility and my participant observations, since I'm also in Turkey, I decided to study on the Ugandan alumni from Turkey. As such investigative research about their experience of education abroad specifically in Turkey and how do their educational experiences abroad affect their career experiences in their home country Uganda is necessary. In the same context, owing to the fact that the rate of unemployment in Uganda increases year in, year out as statistics indicate that 12 percent (1.4 million persons) of the population aged 14-64 years were unemployed during 2018/2019. Also, current statistics show that the youth (18-30) unemployment rate was at 17 percent in the year 2018/2019 showing a decline from 18 percent in 2017/2018 (UBOS, 2019). There is a need to investigate

² Currently, we could not find data on the number of Ugandan overseas students going abroad in the year 2020-2021. However, due to Covid19 pandemic effects, there is a possibility that the number of enrollment of mobile students has declined or might have registered with online education.

how Ugandan alumni from abroad and from Turkish universities in specific fare in the already saturated labor market. Moreover, OECD statistics show that approximately 53.3% of those sojourners who graduated from various Turkish universities in the year 2018 were on postgraduate learning adventures. This indeed opens a door for inquisition about their possible career. Therefore, to fill this gap research is needed to be done to divulge the Ugandan students' career experience with the dimension for studying abroad.

The main research question of the current study is:

- How can we understand and describe the career experiences of Ugandan alumni who graduated from abroad, specifically from Turkey?

There are three sub-questions such as;

- How do the Ugandan alumni describe their experience of being graduated from abroad, specifically from Turkey?
- How do the Ugandan alumni describe their experience of a career in their home country after being graduated?
- What consequences can be drawn from the experiences of Ugandan alumni from abroad as to reach some critical reflection and meaning for the alumni themselves, their parents, the governments, the higher education ecosystem in both Turkey and Uganda, and the labor market in general?

Significance of the Study: The research sheds more light on the career experiences of Ugandan graduates from Turkey.

By mirroring their experiences of education abroad and career in their host country, we hope to explore the details of the experience and provide some reflection for the alumni in the course of their career development.

The results may be of interest to the Uganda government and higher education institution, whose understanding of the professional development and performance of Turkish alumni who return to Uganda from Turkey will be enhanced. And also, for the parents of the alumni, for the actors of the labor market, etc.

To promote further understanding of the value of Turkey's higher education among the public and also to promote Ugandan alumni and their contribution to the government of Turkey.

To understand the product or results of Turkey scholarship programs for Ugandans.

To provide recommendations on possible development in education policies in both Uganda and Turkey.

The results of this thesis will help Ugandan students as well as their parents to make a well-informed decision before coming to Turkey for their academic journey by presenting the prospective challenges faced to new students in Turkey.

Research Methods: This research deployed qualitative research methods. Semi-structured interviews were used in the study. In the analysis process, data were transcribed, the coding process was initiated, and common themes were determined.

Scope of the Study: Some international graduates have been able to succeed, and others have not succeeded in their career life by being exposed to different kinds of challenges in their home country. In this context, the study targets Ugandan alumni from Turkey.

Participants for the study were recruited using purposeful, criterion sampling strategies (Meriam, 2009). The study includes Ugandan alumni respondents who had engaged and successfully completed their degree in any of the academic levels; degree, master's, or doctoral degree from any university in Turkey from the year 2013-2018. The interviewees should have been graduated at least two years. This will have to allow time for alumni to be able to articulate the meanings of their experiences hence the researcher believes the selected respondents possess in-depth knowledge of the topic of the study. This study attempts to focus on the experiences shaped around the career life and progress of Ugandan alumni who graduated from Turkish universities.

CHAPTER 1: THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

This chapter is organized into 2 sections: (1) Uganda's social-economical context, (2) Uganda's labor market. The chapter starts with a brief discussion of Uganda's social-economical context. Then describes the education system in Uganda, and the higher education system in Uganda. The chapter will conclude by describing and reviewing the literature on Uganda's labor market and its linkage with graduate employment opportunities in Uganda.

1.1. Uganda's Social-economical Context

Based on Worldometre Elaboration of the latest United Nations data (2020), it is reported that Uganda's population was at 44,269,594 in the year 2019. In the year 2020, statistics indicate that Uganda's current population is estimated at 45,741,007. In addition, Uganda's population is equivalent to 0.59% of the total world population (Worldometers, 2020).

Agriculture is one of the most important sectors of the economy, in addition, 72% of the workforce is employed in the agricultural sector. One of the country's major exports are coffee at (16%) and gold at (10%). There are few numbers of the industrial sector in Uganda most of which depend on imported inputs from abroad e.g. heavy equipment and processed oil. Overall productivity is hindered by a number of factors such as inadequate infrastructure, lack of sophisticated technology in agriculture as well as corruption (The World Fact Book, 2020).

1.1.1. Uganda Education System

According to UNESCO (2021), the official school-age by level of education include; pre-primary (3-5), primary (6-12), secondary (13-18), and tertiary (19-23). Compulsory education lasts seven years from age 6 to 12. The Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) conducts and manages the three examinations held at the end of the preprimary, primary, and secondary levels (ordinary and advanced levels). It also awards and issues official certificates for these examinations. Among language courses, only English is

compulsory. However, Kiswahili, and other local and foreign languages, are available for optional study at some schools.

1.1.2. Higher Education in Uganda

According to Achanga and Bisaso (2018), Higher education is defined as “A form of education provided or pursued at the post-secondary level; sometimes it is referred to as tertiary education which leads to the attainment of certificate, diploma or degree”. It is indicated that much of the Ugandan higher education market is driven by international students (ICEF Monitor, 2017). Most of the degree programs are for three years. However, law and agricultural degrees require four years and medicinal degrees require five years of study (Liang, 2004: 2).

The higher education system of Uganda boasts 44 private universities and 9 public universities in the year 2018/2019. Ugandan institutions are classified into 3 sub-sectors, namely: Tertiary Institutions (OTIs) sub-sectors, Universities, and other Degree Awarding Institutions (ODAI) and Others. For admission to a diploma program in Uganda, one requires a direct entry from secondary schools such as Uganda certificate of education (UCE) with at least five passes and advanced certificate of education with one principal pass and 2 subsidiary passes. Additionally, for admission to a degree program, one must have obtained the Uganda certificate of education (UCE) and advanced certificate of education (UACE) direct entry from schools. Also, one requires a bachelor's degree or its equivalent for a master's program and a master's degree or its equivalent for a doctoral degree (NCHE, 2019a).

The current data shows that students in Uganda prefer joining colleges and universities more than other tertiary institutions. Therefore, due to the increasing demand for university education in Uganda, 2018-2019 had the highest enrolment from 183,084 in the year 2017-18 to 192,346 out of the total enrolment in higher education institutions of 275,254.

In general, the university sub-sector had the highest number of foreign students as 2018/2019 witnessed an increase in the number of foreign students from 18,903 in 2017/18 to 20,124 in

2018/19. This implies that higher education in Uganda is attractive regionally and globally (NCHE, 2019a).

Demand for higher education in Uganda has increased significantly over the past several decades, Enrollment in post-secondary institutions grew from around 5,000 in the 1970s to almost 125,000 in the 2005/06 academic year. A decade later, enrollment had nearly doubled, growing to more than 250,000 in 2015/16, the latest year for which enrollment data are available (WENR, October 8, 2020).

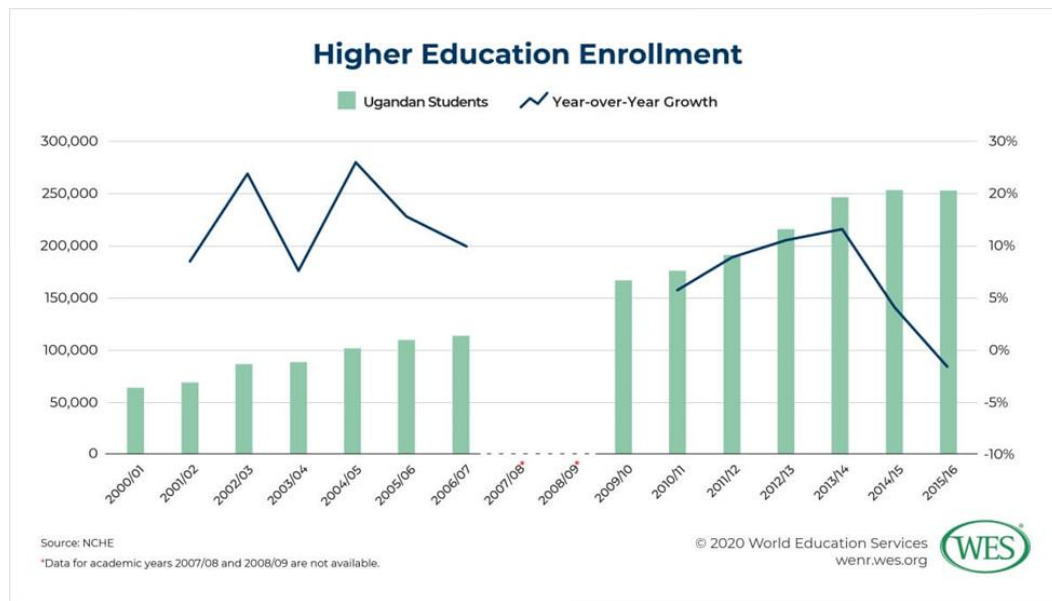


Figure 2: Higher Education Enrollment in Uganda

Source: World Education Services (2020).

On the other hand, statistics provided by the national council for higher education in Uganda indicate that the total student enrolment over a period of the last five years has been increasing steadily from 261,087 to 275,254. This is further illustrated in the table below;

Table 1: Total Student Enrolment Trends Since 2014/15

Year	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Students	257855	254043	259027	261087	275254
%Growth	4.20%	-1.5%	1.9%	0.8%	5.43%

Source: National Council for Higher Education (2019). The State of Higher Education and Training in Uganda 2018/19. (pp-29).

1.2. Uganda's Labour Market

About 73% of the working-age population in Uganda was residing in rural areas in 2016/2017. The mean age of the working-age population was 30 years, indicating that the majority of the working-age population are young people. Statistics show that out of the about 9.0 million employed people, 44 percent were females. The age group contributing the highest share of the employed population the adults aged 31-64 years (50%) followed by the youth 18-30 years (43%). The children (14-17 years) constituted about seven percent of the employed population (UBOS, 2018: 19-29).

The majority of Uganda's workforce is operating in the informal economy, and they are not applying the minimum wage determinations. In addition, informal employment is covering at least nine out of ten (92%) of Ugandan youth workers. Only 18% of young people are in paid employment. It is a legal requirement in Uganda for the employer to provide an employment contract for each employee whom he/she employs. Child labor is visible in Uganda and about 12.5 million children (aged 6-17 years) represented 33% of the total population in 2017. More than one-half (60%) of all children attended school exclusively, while another quarter (24%) combined working and attending school at the same time (DTDA, 2019: 8-16).

Uganda's informal employment plays a vital role in the economy with vast opportunities both in urban and rural areas. Informal entities usually operate on a small scale, mostly unregistered without permanent addresses, run at a low level of organization, with little or no division between labor and capital as factors of production, labor relations based on casual employment, next of kinship, and social bonds, rather than formal contracts. In addition, final accounts are absent (DTDA, 2019:8-13).

According to the Labour market profile (2019), the Ugandan labor market struggles with low skills as well as low productivity jobs, but it is seen that many significant mechanisms are put in place to better the daily lives of workers. Further, it is evident that in Uganda majority of the youths seek employment in the informal sector due to the fact it provides vast opportunities of jobs in Uganda where approximately nine out of ten (87%) of the total employment operate in the informal sector and more so the majority of these workers are not acquainted with rudiments knowledge about the regulations and rights of labor. This indicates explicitly that there are limited opportunities in the formal sector in Uganda. Additionally, it is noted that 80% of youth work with small enterprises employing less than five workers.

The slow decline in informal employment which constitutes the major employment windows for the youth has left its mark on the economy of Uganda. This is seen in the Uganda-World Bank Overview (2019) which categorically reported that the economy of Uganda is growing at a slower pace, hence little or no impact on poverty. "In the five years to 2016, average annual growth was 4.5%, compared to 7% in years before". In development challenges, the number of poor persons witnessed an increase in all regions in Uganda with exception of the Northern region, which is regarded as the poorest, although it experienced a poverty decrease from 44% to 33%.

Women in Uganda register a high unemployment rate than that of men. Additionally, in 2019, about 17 percent of the youth aged 18-30 years were unemployed and this is a clear indicator that youths in Uganda have difficulties in securing a job in the labor market (UBOS, 2019:44). Additionally, data show that 49 percent of the youths in Uganda were in employment with more males at sixty two percent than the females (24%). It can also be noted that 39 percent of the youth were neither in employment nor education nor training with more females (52%) than males (24%).

Further, it is estimated about 740,000 young people in Uganda enter the Labour market each year and that only 34.5 % of the employed population worked as wage and salaried employees. Therefore, it is worthy to mention that in Uganda young are frustrated due to lack of access to formal jobs which forces workers to engage in informal activities with low pays.

1.2.1. Graduate Employment Opportunities in Uganda

It is reported that in the last four years, about 400,000 students in Uganda graduate every year both from private and public universities. However, Uganda Investment Authority reported that only 150,000 jobs were created annually, and this implied that 350,000 of the graduates were being added to the statistics of unemployed youth annually (Kamuhanda, 2020).

From the above statistics and reports, we can conclude that both graduates and non-graduates employable people in Uganda are facing the challenge of unemployment. Alas, graduates Ugandans are in a deep mess of unemployment the more.

According to the Challenge fund for youth employment report (2019), Uganda's national unemployment rate is 9.2% and the unemployment rate for youth aged 18 – 30 is 13.3%. The rate is highest in Kampala, where 21% is out of work, the majority of whom are young. It is further noted that youth who have completed tertiary education are more likely to be jobless than those with only primary education.

Vincent and Robert (2019) revealed that a reasonable number of the 2012 Ugandan graduates from Makerere University were engaged in self-employment as a way of addressing the problem of graduate unemployment in Uganda. A study conducted by Kintu et al., (2019) revealed that most employers agreed that the graduates possessed the basic skills, ICT skills, interpersonal skills required for work. However, there were negative perceptions regarding their decision-making, reasoning, self-esteem, sociability, and integrity/honesty.

Musisi and Sessanga (2019) found that many Ugandan graduates fall short of employers' expectations implying that they lacked employability skills to meet the existing Labour market demands.

In another study of 995 universities, tertiary institutions graduate, and 120 employers in Uganda, aimed at identifying where and the conditions under which the graduates were employed, by course and by the institution. The study confirms that ninety-seven percent of the respondents were employed by the time of the study and (46.2%) reported having acquired jobs through open, competitive, and transparent methods. Whereas diploma holders

were more likely to set up their own private business and also get jobs through personal contacts than degree holders (NCHE, 2006).

A tracer study for the 2014 graduates in seven colleges and universities (public and private) in Uganda shows that most of the graduates (66.2%) were employed in areas related to their field of training and only (21.5%) graduates were engaged in work that is not related to their areas of study. Further, 68.2% of the diploma holders engaged in work related to their area of study whereas 67.9% engaged in work not related to the field of study. It is found out that most of the graduates in Uganda obtained job information from relatives/ friends (33.3%), newspapers at (16.8%), Internship at (15.3%), door to door hunting at (5.8%), those opting for self-employment at (14.8%) and the number of graduates making use of the internet to search for jobs is reported still very low at (1%) one percent. Employers in Uganda reported that the most commonly encountered challenge was the mismatch between graduate's grades and the output, high labor turnover for organizations in rural areas due to the fact that most graduates preferred to work in urban areas, high costs of orientation training, and low salaries that proved to be challenging in the recruitment of graduates (NCHE, 2019b:3-4).

Using data from a graduate tracer at eleven universities in East Africa, results have shown that grades attained were not considered as vital in recruiting graduates and also found out that engineering graduates were contacted by companies for their first job, unlike graduates from other departments (Egesah, 2019).

Lutwama and Kigongo-Bukenya (2004) traced graduates from the east African school of library and information science. The study indicates that 65% of the graduates are employed in both private and academic institutions, with Kyambogo University, Mbarara, and Makerere Universities as the major employers of government institutions. It was noted five percent of the graduates are employed in banking institutions and non-governmental organizations. 26% are employed in government organizations.

In conclusion, in this section, the researcher has discussed Uganda's social-economical context, which includes the education system and higher education system in Uganda. Also, the researcher described Uganda's labor market and its linkage with graduate employment opportunities in Uganda.

CHAPTER 2: EMPLOYABILITY AND HIGHER EDUCATION

This chapter begins by reviewing literature related to the concept of employability and its linkage with higher education in general. The chapter also presents a general explanation and previous research references about the effects of studying abroad (higher education) on the employability of returnee graduates. The chapter then presents literature related to barriers to returnees' career development. This chapter concludes with previous research related to the employability of returnee graduates in Uganda and the effect of studying abroad.

2.1. The Concept of Employability and the Effect of Higher Education

This section starts by reviewing literature related to the concept of employability and higher education in general. The section also presents a general explanation and previous research references about the effects of studying abroad (higher education) on the employability of returnee graduates and also presents literature related to barriers to returnees' career development.

2.1.1. Employability and Higher Education

Harvey (2001) has defined employability in two different ways namely; institutional and individual. He referred to individuals being able to demonstrate attributes to obtain jobs whereas in the practice of institutional, employability is related to higher education institutions. According to Magdalene (2015), "To gain employment in today's challenging economic situations, new graduates' hard skills need to be complemented by a good blend of employability skills". More recently, research done by Chhinzer and Russo (2017) highlighted that employers in Canada value soft skills, problem-solving and also expect engagement in continuous learning when defining graduate employability.

Many researchers have studied the linkage between higher education and employability from different perspectives. Brennan (2016) as cited in Michaela (2018:80) notes that "the relationship between higher education and employment is not only about 'getting a first job', but also about 'doing that job', 'changing that job', and 'getting a different job' in the future".

Within the context of higher education, employability relates to the process by which we prepare students to negotiate graduate life and work (Bennett, 2018).

Tran (2015) puts forward the view that skills are not the only vital aspect in making the transition from university to working context. It is further noted that it takes time and effort for university graduates to transform the skills and knowledge learned in higher education. University graduates in Vietnam considered professional knowledge as the most essential asset for employability after graduation. Similarly, in his study of student perception of the role of higher education credentials for graduate employability, Tomlinson (2008) has shown that despite the fact academic qualifications are still seen as a major dimension of their employability, students increasingly see the need to add value to the academic credentials so as to gain a competitive advantage in the labor market. This research highlighted that students viewed that their potential as graduates, was no longer represented through their academic attainments in higher education.

Ali and Jalal (2018) examined the relationship between higher education and employment. The results revealed that higher education is a predictor of employment for university graduates. However, Stiwne and Alves (2010) mentioned that despite higher levels of education, it is still difficult for young graduates to enter the job market.

A study on the relationship between higher education and employment found that when compared to other European counterparts, UK graduates are found to fare less especially when entering the labor market for the first time thereby taking longer to settle into a career with fairly good earnings. However, some graduates fare less due to mismatches for different reasons such as indicators of social networks, social and cultural histories, educational backgrounds, and others (Little and Arthur, 2010: 292).

For some employers, Walter et al., (2017) note that over ninety percent of the employers were contented with skills presented by the university graduates hence they are found employable in the labor market. However, Pauw, Oosthuizen and Van der Westhuizen (2008) suggests that employers are reluctant in employing university graduates due to the fact that students lack employability soft skills, and workplace experience. This is related to a lack of

career guidance in choosing qualifications for employment prospects hence employers prefer more experienced workers instead.

In particular, universities in Africa have been criticized for producing graduates who lack employability skills (Ssebuwufu, Ludwick and Béland, 2012). In Nigeria, Pitan and Adedeji (2012) confirmed that university graduates' skills demanded by employers in the labor market were found to be higher than the supply. In Kenya, the situation is not different as employers believe that university graduates lack basic employability skills (Kalei, 2016). Further, findings by the IUCEA survey have shown that east African universities (Uganda, Kenya, Burundi, Rwanda, and Tanzania) produce graduates that are not fully prepared for the job market. Results indicated that half of the graduates seemed to be not prepared for the job market and Uganda was reported to have the worst record with sixty-three percent of alumna found to lack employability skills (Nganga, 2014).

2.1.2. The Effects of Studying Abroad/Returnees Employability upon Return

An increasing number of people have sought education abroad with a hope that studying abroad would bring positive returns such as employment opportunities and career developments upon return back home. Studying abroad increases (15%) an individual's possibility of being employable in a foreign country (Parey and Waldinger, 2011). In other research studying abroad enhances employability by providing graduates with a wide range of skills that employers look for, a possibility that graduates will work abroad thus more likely to benefit those who would wish to pursue an international career and also relates to better labor market outcomes (Pietro, 2019a; Pietro, 2015b). Pietro (2013c) also notes that those who studied overseas are more likely to be in employment three years after graduation compared to domestic graduates.

Several opinions suggest that study abroad experience plays a vital role in preparing graduates for the labor market. Graduates may improve or acquire a number of skills that are highly valued in the labor market as a result of studying abroad. Employers consider the value of graduates' academic majors and the degree of preference when hiring (Trooboff, Berg and Rayman, 2008: 20). However, Tran, Blackmore and Rahimi (2021) notes that returnees could

be seen to lack the localized knowledge needed to operate in the Chinese labor market and also the ability to adapt to the local environment upon return back home.

Wiers-Jenssen (2008) have compared graduates who have studied abroad and domestic graduates. They found that international graduates hold jobs with more international assignments in the domestic labor market than domestic graduates. Some studies have shown that the alumni who had gained working experience before traveling for studies abroad turned out to be the most competitive than those who had no experience before. It was concluded that having an international degree does not guarantee the returnee to get employed but their employability is at an advantage compared to the domestic alumni but more comprehensive experiences are required (Teng, 2017).

Compared to domestic graduates from China, a quality international education qualification helped them to obtain more opportunities in the labor market (Hao, 2012:269). To sustain employability, returnee graduates had to develop and utilize various forms of capital such as human, cultural, social, identity, psychological and agentic capital (Pham, 2021).

Further, according to Hao, Wen and Welch (2016), in their work titled "When Sojourners Return", it is found out that the recent sojourners do not easily enjoy employment opportunities like the early sojourners who effortlessly gained employment in various sectors of China`s labor market.

Other studies indicate that studying overseas may negatively affect the transition from higher education to employment. For example, Karmel et al., (2016) suggest that the Australian foreign graduates are found struggling in the labor market (home and overseas) compared to domestic graduates due to the fact that 15 percent of overseas graduates obtain a full-time job within a four months' period after graduation. Aker and Görmüş (2018) found that return migrants face far more employment challenges than domestic graduates.

Additionally, prior research found that 40% of the international Erasmus graduates were less likely to be employed or have an active working contract with employers in Romania compared to domestic graduates (Crăciun, Orosz and Proteasa, 2020). Wiers-Jenssen and Try (2005) analyze short-term labor market careers among international Norwegian graduates.

Results indicate that studying abroad has both negative and positive effects. It is further noted that Norwegian graduates with a foreign degree are found to be less employable and have a higher risk of over-education compared to home graduates. However, among those engaged in employment, 'international' alumni have higher wages.

Also, results from a graduate survey from higher education institutions (Twelve countries) indicate that internationally mobile graduates seemed to have more frequent assignments that required an understanding of different cultures, foreign language proficiency, and international dimensions of their academic knowledge and also rewarding and high-status assignments hence were more satisfied with their job than domestic graduates upon return back home (Schomburg and Teichler, 2006:127).

As for the studies in Turkey on returnee alumni, the results demonstrate that returnee scholars took advantage of their abroad education from western countries through several networks in their professional career, such as getting access to sources not available in their home country. However, it was evident that returnees at some point felt of being unappreciated and forgotten about by authorities in Turkey. Returnee scholars reported issues about their dissatisfaction with their institutions, colleagues, and programs while some reported that they had to be involved in administrative work of which had nothing to do with their academic fields gained abroad hence the scholars' ability to provide long-lasting benefits to Turkish higher education was minimized (Karakaş, 2020; Çelik, 2012). Likewise, Musa (2019) notes that Ethiopian returnee graduates from Turkey maintained international practices that they created while during their stay in Turkey. Upon return, the majority were employed mostly in private businesses and more so with Turkish companies in Ethiopia, nonetheless many engaged in jobs unrelated to their profession but were happy with the salary.

2.1.3. Returnees Career Development Experiences

Results from a study on early career development in Chinese banking show that returnees from state-owned banks suggested that regulations, wage, and promotion systems lacked transparency, and also there was a lack of professional training in state-owned banks which caused a certain amount of job dissatisfaction for returnee employees. In addition,

respondents noted that neither their overseas education nor subjects studied at higher education, in general, were particularly applicable to their current job (Zhang, 2013:301-303).

Results from another study, returnee alumni inquiries were obtained to help explore and evaluate how study abroad impacts returnee alumni career path and professional development. Results indicate that returnee graduates are motivated by their experience in choosing a career path, the results indicate that alumni who were taught in a foreign language and alumni who lived in a homestay were more likely to work in a position with an international or multicultural dimension (Franklin, 2010:186).

Additional research on careers was reported by Li (2005). Findings from the study show that the percentage of returnee alumni in high leadership positions is reportedly still very small. It is further indicated that the majority usually serve in the functional areas such as education, foreign trade, finance, foreign affairs as well as science and technology due to the fact that majority of returnee leaders are underscored by the fact that most spent only one to three years overseas as visiting scholars, and very few have solid academic credentials or broad professional experiences abroad.

Likewise, a study on conceptions of positive career outcomes held by Chinese alumni from Australia. "Chinese returnees' conceptions of positive career outcomes after graduating from Australian universities" notes that Chinese returnees consider international and cultural exposure as a very strong contributing factor to their career success (Lin-Stephens, Uesi and Doherty, 2015: 127).

A recent study conducted by Ünal (2018) confirms that majority (40%) of Turkey graduates from Kyrgyzstan are employed in the private sector (finance and banking) whereas 35% of the returnee graduates are entrepreneurs (Agricultural production, construction, textile, and tourism), 12% reported to have been working in academic institutions and also 13% in public institutions upon return in Kyrgyzstan. It was further observed that the Turkey graduates who work at a public institution have a say in Kyrgyzstan's top-level management and the majority who work in the private sector are in the service industry, especially in banking and finance as well as top-end managing positions at certain businesses.

Compared to the international graduate outcome report (2019), results show that international graduates from UK universities go on to successful and satisfying careers, and also recognize that the degree got from the UK helped them progress more quickly in their career (69%). Twenty-one percent of Chinese graduates of the UK indicated that they were employed in the insurance, pensions, and finance sector, compared to 5% of graduates from the USA and 6% of alumni from India. Likewise, graduates from India were more likely than graduates from China or the USA to work in IT and computing: 15%, 7%, and 4%, respectively (Skidmore and Stern, 2019).

2.2. Employability in Uganda (Africa) and the Effect of Studying Abroad

The employability of returnee students has been well reported in the literature. For example, a study on experiences of public health graduates of Australia scholarship awards from Uganda and Mozambique revealed that respondents strongly believe the Australia Africa scholarships contributed considerably to the improvement and quality of their life. However, the study also shows that Ugandan and Mozambique returnees struggle to find a suitable job upon return and also face challenges in implementing their skills and knowledge (Amazan et al., 2016:62).

Thomas (2008) examines the relationship between higher education and the likelihood of employment among African migrants' evidence from Uganda. Results show that the returning Ugandan graduates with vocational credentials and university degrees are found to be more employable than non-migrant graduates. However, returnees with secondary school certificates or below had no employment advantage more so than university graduates.

In the study of Abimbola et al., (2016) perspectives of Australian-funded Master's-level alumni from Uganda, Mozambique, and Kenya, it is found that the higher education scholarships achieve the goal of spreading Australian influence through returnee alumni who gain the capacity to become agents for development back home.

Also, in a survey "The African alumni project, Career Choices, Return Paths and Social Contributions". The report shows that a large number of alumni work in research institutions and universities (44%) with only seven percent working in the public sector. African alumni

who pursued fields of study especially in health or agricultural sciences that were related directly to opportunities in their home contexts were able to return and apply their learning. It was evident that the majority were employed in the country of origin (83%) and fifty percent (50%) in the diaspora. It is found that the key components of an international education experience such as international networks, academic skills, and intercultural skills played an important role in their current work (Marsh et al, 2016).

A study on post-graduation lives of 12 Ugandan graduates from Chinese universities provides evidence that returnees were able to convert Chinese language ability into income-generating opportunities or employment. The majority of participants were found to work with Chinese companies in Uganda. In addition, Chinese culture and language ability was valued by employers in the Ugandan labor market and this played an important role in the post-graduation career of Ugandan alumni (Mulvey, 2019).

A Tracer study report on experiences of 2004-2020 graduates from Uganda, Kenya, Malawi, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique supported under various support programs has indicated that ninety percent of the graduates' report that the skills and knowledge acquired at universities were very useful for their job. In the same report, over seventy-five percent of Ph.D. graduates from research institutions and universities report that academic credentials acquired from universities were a requirement for their job hence found to be employable (RUFORUM, 2020).

In this section, the researcher discussed the Concept of Employability and the effect of higher education, including employability and higher education, the effects of studying abroad upon return, and returnee's career development experiences. Finally, the researcher discussed employability in Uganda (Africa) and the effect of studying abroad.

Overall, there are few literatures known about the career experiences of Ugandan alumna from abroad. All reviewed studies focused on exploring career paths, effects of studying abroad as well as employability of returnee alumni from European and Asian countries. However, their studies have not aimed to investigate the career progress of Ugandan alumni specifically from Turkey. Therefore, the present study aims to understand and describe the career experiences of Ugandan alumni specifically from Turkey.

CHAPTER 3: THE FIELD RESEARCH ON THE CAREER EXPERIENCES OF THE UGANDAN ALUMNI FROM TURKEY

3.1. The Context of the Field Work

This chapter presents a brief background of foreign students in Turkish higher education. Then the research design of this study is subsequently described. Then the chapter explains why a qualitative perspective is most appropriate for the study and why the participants were selected for the study. The procedure of data collection, data analysis, and the trustworthiness of the study are presented. Lastly, ethical considerations, the role of the researcher, strengths, and limitations of the study have also been described.

3.1.1. Foreign Students in Turkish Higher Education

Many countries have considerably increased enrolment rates in higher education in a way that these countries aim to become centres for education and research. In recent years, Turkey is one of the countries that has taken strategic steps to strengthen the internationalization of its higher education (Özer, 2016).

In the last 10 years, the number of foreign students studying in Turkey higher education institutions has increased by seventy-five percent and according to current statistics, Turkey has become one of the most international students welcoming countries in the world with more than 200 thousand foreign students, including 20 thousand with scholarships (Türkiye Scholarships, 2021). The university system is governed by the council of higher education. The medium of instruction at state universities is the Turkish language however English, German and French languages can be considered in some departments. International student applicants who are accepted to university but not able to present the efficiency in Turkish language, are required to produce a minimum of B2 certificate of Turkish language prowess. Graduate-level programs consist of master and doctoral programs, whereas in private universities, medium instruction is English, one year of study for those whose level of English is found not proficient upon entrance. Further, Turkish universities run on a two-

semester system (fall and spring semesters). Some universities have summer school programs (Türkiye Scholarships, 2021).

Statistics indicate that over 125,000 international students reported having enrolled at various Turkish universities in the year 2017/2018. OECD (2018) statistics show that about 125,138 total number of international mobile students are hosted in the year 2018 and this represents a 1.7% mobility rate of international students. Also according to the council of higher education, it is reported that currently, about 185,047 international students attend universities in Turkey of which 4,674 are on their Erasmus program (YÖK, 2019).

Turkey is named as one of the countries that have accommodated the most international students worldwide taking the 10th spot as it entertained about 125,138 foreign students in Turkish universities in the year 2018. Turkey offers competitive education to foreign students and it is indicated that over 207 Turkish universities offer 60,000 different programs for international students both on private and government scholarship programs (TRT World, 7 December, 2020).

Turkey supports educated young talented people from different parts of the world to contribute to their career and development both in life and their countries and among those are scholarships awarded to the African students. According to the numbers provided by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the scholarships granted by Turkey to African students are strengthening Turkey's African policy. So far, it is observed that since 1992, Turkey has granted more than 14,000 African students graduate, post-graduate, and doctorate scholarships amongst which a total of 365 scholarships were granted to Ugandan students (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021).

As indicated above, UNESCO (2017) statistics show that about 14,282 African students reportedly attending higher education in Turkey among which 220 are Ugandans. Further, OECD (2018) statistics also indicate that the number has reached about 16401 African students enrolled in Turkey and the total number of Ugandans enrolled increased to 238. In addition, figures provided by the Turkish council of Higher Education indicate that the number of Ugandan students enrolled in Turkey has reached about 293 students in 2018-2019 and 307 students in the year 2019/2020. However, the number is reported to have

declined with about 300 Ugandan students enrolled in the year 2020-2021 and this is due to the Covid19 pandemic effects (YÖK, 2021). (See figure 3)

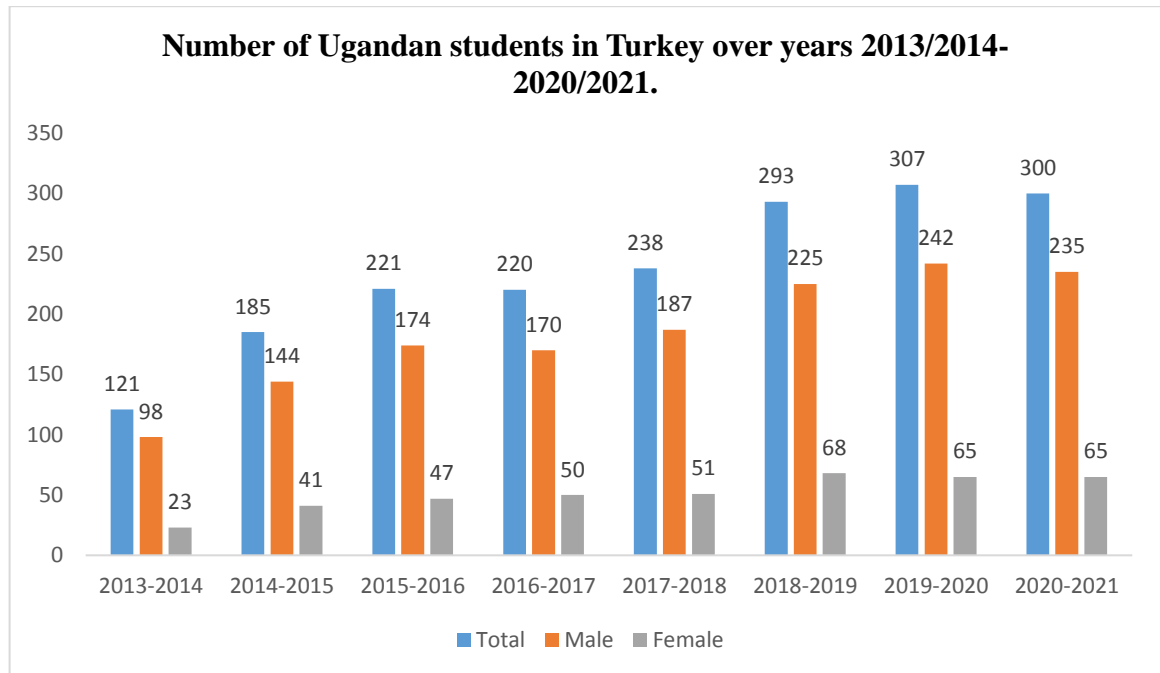


Figure 3: Number of Ugandan Students Enrolled Over Years in Turkey

Source: YÖK, (2019); YÖK, (2021).

3.2. The Methodology of the Field Research

This section contains detailed information on the methodological approach that will be used in this study. The section will deal with the research design of this study, selection of participants and the reason for selection, the methods of data collection that were used for the study are presented, how data was analyzed and lastly the chapter concludes with details of how criteria for judging the trustworthiness of this qualitative study are met.

3.2.1. Research Design

The study deploys a qualitative perspective to explore the career experiences and progress of Ugandan graduates from Turkey upon their return to Uganda. In qualitative research, "researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences, the researcher

is the primary instrument of data collection" (Merriam, 2009). Watson (2018) also describes qualitative research as "used to gain an in-depth understanding of human behavior, experience, attitudes, intentions, and motivations, on the basis of observation and interpretation, to find out the way people think and feel".

Qualitative perspective seemed most appropriate to answer the research questions in this study:

- How do the Ugandan alumni describe their experience of being graduated from abroad, specifically from Turkey?
- How do the Ugandan alumni describe their experience of a career in their home country after being graduated?
- What consequences can be drawn from the experiences of Ugandan alumni from abroad as to reach some critical reflection and meaning for the alumni themselves, their parents, the governments, the higher education ecosystem in both Turkey and Uganda, and the labor market in general?

3.2.2. Selection of the Participants

Participants for the study are recruited using purposeful sampling strategies. Merriam (2009: 77) explains purposeful sampling, "as is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned". Similarly, the researcher specifies the characteristics of the population of interest and locates individuals with those characteristics (Johnson and Christensen, 2014:364). The sample of this research includes Ugandan alumni respondents who had engaged and successfully completed their degree in any of the academic levels; degree, master's, or doctoral degree from any university (Public and Private) in Turkey from the year 2014-2018. A total of seven respondents both men and women who have been educated in different programs (bachelor's degree, master's degree, and doctorate degree), have different socio-economic positions and have benefited from different scholarship programs, graduated at least two years before, were interviewed.

During the interviews, the participants were asked to state the universities they graduated from and specify their departments. It was concluded that the respondents studied in their degree in Turkish language and respectively studied at four universities from three different cities in Turkey namely; Sakarya University, Kocaeli University, Istanbul University, and Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif University. Due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, it was impossible to reach out to the participants physically. As such virtual consultation was perfectly arranged via the zoom application. It is important to state here that my connection and relationship with some Ugandans available on the "Ugandan alumni from Turkey" WhatsApp group/platform aided in data collection. Such WhatsApp groups were established by Ugandan overseas graduates from Turkey. Therefore, through personal connections, participants' contact details were retrieved through Uganda alumni from the Turkey association and were invited by email.

3.2.3. Data Collection

A total of seven (7) Ugandan returnee graduates from Turkish universities were interviewed. In the view of Patton (2002:341), the purpose of interviews is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective. Semi-structured interviews were used in the study. Semi-structured interviews were deployed because this sort of interview allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic (Merriam, 2009:90). Qualitative interviews require face-to-face interviews with the participants but in case this is not possible, interviews can be conducted with tools such as mobile phones, zoom, skype, and other applications. Due to the outbreak and effect of the covid19 pandemic, interviews were conducted via zoom application, recorded, and transcribed. Interviews were conducted in the English language, and each took between 20 to 40 minutes. Narrated experiences of interviewees are collected and analysed to give a voice to Ugandan international graduates from Turkey to examine how they make sense of their career experiences after graduation in Uganda.

During the interviews, demographic information including gender, area of employment, employment status, level of education, year of graduation, University, and the department was collected. Open-ended questions were prepared by the researcher and after obtaining informed consent, participants were asked to respond to questions (e.g. "How did you

integrate into the new life in Uganda?, "What are your feelings about being graduated from Turkey?", Can you tell me about the highlights of your study experience in Turkey?", "Describe how the degree earned from Turkey contributed in any way to your career progress?" and "what are the challenges you faced upon your return back home?").

3.2.4. Data Analysis

In qualitative research, "Analysis proceeds by extracting themes or generalizations from evidence and organizing data to present a coherent, consistent picture" (Neuman, 2014:176). Additionally, the process of data analysis involves organizing the data, conducting a preliminary read-through of the database, coding and organizing themes, representing the data, and forming an interpretation of them"(Creswell, 2013:179). In the analysis process, data were transcribed and significant phrases that relate to the lived career experiences are identified. The coding process was initiated, and common themes were determined by the researcher in accordance with the purpose of the study. "Direct quotations" were frequently used in the study.

Once descriptions and themes have been obtained, the researcher in the final step may approach some participants a second time to validate the findings.

3.2.5. Trustworthiness of the Research

To prevent the possibility of misinterpreting the data or findings of the study, the researcher used member checks (respondent validation) to solicit feedback on data interpretations and conclusions from some of the participants that were interviewed in this study (Merriam, 2009). Member checking was implemented by providing a copy of the complete report to two participants and requesting that they identify any possible data misrepresentations. Both the members validated the accuracy of the emerged themes (findings).

Having the research questions, interview questions, data analysis and findings reviewed by the research specialist (supervisor) also helped in ensuring readability and accuracy in this study. The researcher is a Ugandan, Master's student at the graduate school of business, Sakarya University. The respondents were aware of my role as a researcher.

3.2.6. Ethical Considerations

For the current study, before each interview, participants were informed about the scope of the research. The researcher applied for approval or consent of participants and was informed about whether it was appropriate to use recording devices during the interviews. Following this information, participants who agreed to take part in this study signed the consent form. In accordance with the university guidelines, the researcher applied for the approval of the Sakarya University graduate institute ethics committee. This research asked about their experiences while studying abroad specifically in Turkey and their career experiences upon return back home to Uganda.

3.2.7. Strengths and Limitations of the Study

There is a general literature review related to career experiences of Ugandan Alumni from abroad, but the research that examines the experience of returnee graduates is limited and we don't know the details of their experience apart from statistics. Therefore, the importance of this thesis is to contribute to the literature. On the other hand, there were limitations to this thesis in terms of research methods. A qualitative research perspective was employed in this study. This technique limits the reaching of a larger pool of participants. In qualitative research, a limited number of participants brings more reliable and in-depth data. However, this limits the volume of data. Since individuals can have different experiences and results, the findings of the current study do not allow me to generalize for a larger sample group. Moreover, seven of the respondents were returnee graduates from only three cities and four Universities in Turkey and this is one of the features that limit the research. The current study did not include the employers of the Ugandan alumni from Turkey. Employers are the people who have direct interaction with the study abroad alumni. They could provide useful information on the performance of the Ugandan alumni from Turkey. Their views could provide a rich description of the returnee's contribution to the Uganda labor market.

This chapter has discussed the methodology (research design), the trustworthiness of the research, research ethical considerations, and the strength and limitations of the study have

also been discussed in this section. The next section provides the findings generated from the data.

3.3. Findings

Following the research questions, this section presents the findings derived from the data. Details about participant's status are presented such as gender, employment status, area of employment, work experience before going abroad for further studies, and area of specialization. Prior to concluding, the section addresses the conclusion, limitation of the study and suggests areas for future studies.

3.3.1. Information on Profile of Participants’.

Among the respondents, 4 were Ph.D. graduates, 2 at master's level, and 1 at bachelor's degree level. After the examination of the general profile of the participants, around 5 out of 7 respondents are working in academics and two participants were also employed in the business sector. Six males and one female.

A considerable number of graduates who had work experience between five and seven years were able to retain or continue with their previous work after graduation hence witnessing career progress. In addition, graduates with zero work experience did not experience career development but instead had to change their career path hence resorted to business.

Table 2: Details about Participant’s Status

Level of education	Degree	Masters	Doctorate
Area of specialization	City and regional planning.	Islamic basic sciences Electronics & communications engineering.	Computer science & computer engineering. Communication & general journalism. Radio and TV Journalism Public Administration
Area of employment	Business	Academia Business	Academia Academia Academia
Employment status	Self-employed	Employed Employed	Employed Employed Employed Employed
Work experience before going to Turkey	0 Years of experience	5 years 0 years of experience	7 years 7 years 7 years 7 years

We identified three themes that Ugandan graduate students experienced. The themes included, Participant’s evaluation, challenges faced, and changes because of studying in Turkey.

3.4. Theme 1: Participant's General Evaluation

In this theme, cognitive representations centered on participants' general evaluation with both studying abroad and Turkey. (See figure 4)

Participants were asked about how they feel being graduating from Turkey and also how they are satisfied with studying abroad. The codes that occur under this theme are "Satisfaction" and "Dissatisfaction".

3.4.1. Participants' Satisfaction of Their Experience

3.4.1.1. Satisfaction with Studying Abroad

While examining participants' Satisfaction with their experience with studying abroad, all participants expressed satisfaction in response to the question "Are you satisfied with studying abroad? In what ways?" The two sub-codes were formed as follows.

- Professional development
- Personal development

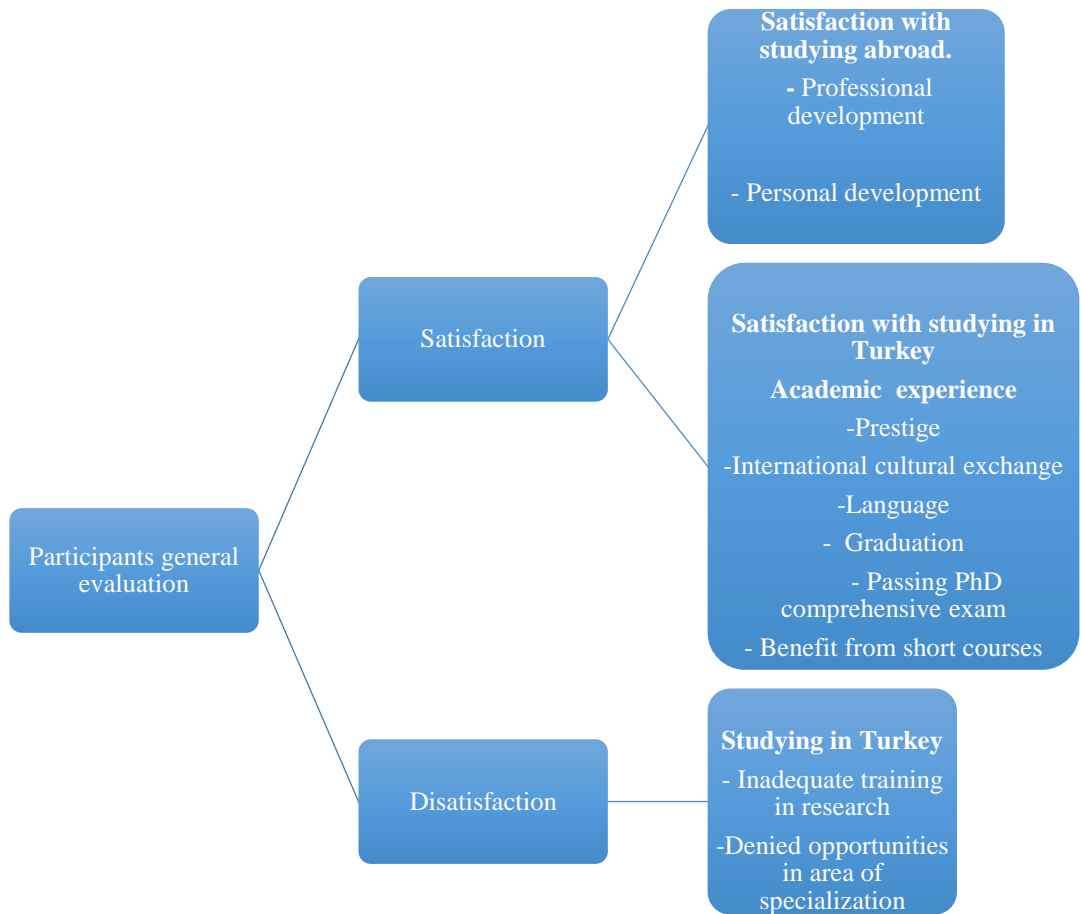


Figure 4: Participant’s General Evaluation

Professional development was evident as participants expressed that they had a chance to learn new skills, getting introduced to a new language and knowledge as well. Participant's comment on this topic "professional development" sub-code was created. This was evident in the following response;

P2: "Yes, I am satisfied with studying abroad. In a way that I acquired new knowledge, skills, and experience from abroad. Equally, I met and interacted with new friends. I also learned Turkish as another foreign language and Turkish culture; this broadened my understanding."

Some of the graduates narrated that they were able to improve one's themselves whereby they learned new ideas and this helped them to survive in life in a way that changed the way he/she thinks and the way they act today. A "personal development" sub-code was created for the statement above. This was also evident in the following response;

A degree respondent noted that *"I can say I am glad because studying from Turkey helped me to improve on myself."*

3.4.1.2. Satisfaction with studying in Turkey

It is evident that all of the participants were satisfied with studying in Turkey. A code-named "satisfaction" was created. This code has been handled with six sub-codes and the expressions belonging to this code are handled with six sub-codes.

- Prestige
- International cultural exchange
- Language
- Graduation
- Passing Ph.D. exam
- Benefits from University short programs

Studying in Turkey is an honor since it is not easy to be admitted thus results revealed that consistently, participants felt proud and satisfied with being studied in Turkey and abroad as well. Participants' statements on this issue are collected under the "Prestige" sub-code. Some of the featured statements are as follows:

P7: "I am proud of being a graduate from Turkey."

P2: "Being a graduate from Turkey, it's a big honor and opportunity, since not everybody can be admitted and graduate from Turkey."

Interacting with native citizens allowed students being able to build strong connections both with local and many people from different places, have a new experience in education, learning new skills and language and this was quite a consistent finding. This experience is included in the code-named "international cultural change". Featured statements are as follows:

A master holder in Islamic basic science noted *"first of all I feel lucky because I was connected to many people, I am among the alumni of YTB, I got many friends there and I think I did some things I couldn't have done in Uganda when I was in Turkey and also when*

I came back I am still connected with some of my friends whom I studied with there the experience is very good.”

A male Ph.D. graduate who had worked for a private university in Uganda mentioned that *“I was able to interact with many colleagues from various countries whom we share the common knowledge and two the learning experience teaching in Turkey was quite different from the teaching I was used to in my country.”*

P5 expressed; *“I can say I had a good time while studying in Turkey the professors I had were good people, they were always willing to help me, whenever you are stuck they were always willing to provide assistance, even when I was studying language the teachers were so good and this is something that is not usually common in other places sometimes you have to look for the professors, so I would say the experience was positive and it is something that I recommend the education system in Turkey”.*(P.5 electronics and communication engineering).

P7(Public administration) mentioned: *“My academic experience in Turkey I can tell you that for sure it has been very good because at least I have met various professors, experienced lectures. They have mentored me, trained me and they have really treated me very well”.*

P4 (Islamic basic science) also shared: *I got connected to a library (research Centre) in Istanbul it’s an Islamic research Centre called Wisam. I got introduced to a professor there and I think I got many things from that place have benefited from it very much basically in the academic life”.*

It is found out that getting introduced to a new language was one of the greatest achievements participants experienced. A code “Language” was created and some of the featured statements are as follows;

P2: *“My greatest moments while studying in Turkey was when attained the C1 certificate for the Turkish language from TÖMER”.*

Graduating from the university and language center was one of the great achievements for graduates while in Turkey. A sub-code “graduation” was created and some of the featured statements are as follows;

P7 shared: *“The happiest or the greatest moment was the day I defended my master’s thesis. After defending it these people they all accepted and agreed that Eid could be awarded a master’s degree and that is one of my happiest moments”*.

Another stated that: *"My greatest moment was finishing the language, the school head threw us a party congratulating us, we shared the ice cream, there was kind of games we played and that was a good moment having finished the language school and we were given that sendoff which was a good moment". (Participant 1).*

Passing the Ph.D. comprehensive exam upon one trial was a great achievement that returnees experienced during their stay in Turkey. A sub-code "Passing Ph.D. comprehensive exam" was created. 2 out of 7 respondents shared;

P3 shared: *"My greatest moment was when I passed my Ph.D. comprehensive exam because it was a hard exam I thank God upon one trial I passed very well"*.

The study revealed that respondents were able to benefit from the facilities provided by their universities. A code "Benefits from short courses" was created. A male Ph.D. graduate currently working in academia stated;

"Studying from Turkey was a great opportunity in my academic life. As it ranged from acquiring new knowledge to enriching my academic career. Which modern learning facilities at our university, I acquire new skills essential to my profession. I also benefited a lot from specialized short courses organized by YTB, especially through the Istanbul media Academy" (Radio and TV journalism).

3.4.2 Participants’ Dissatisfaction of Their Experience

On the other hand, a small number of informants noted that although they were satisfied with studying in Turkey, they were also disappointed and results revealed that 2 of the 7 participants were dissatisfied with studying in Turkey, with some of the reasons cited that there is slow progress in academia in as far as research is concerned and also graduates being denied opportunities in their field of study. Again, according to the data, this description is included in the code-named "Dissatisfaction". This code consists of two sub-codes;

- Inadequate training in research
- Denied opportunities in the area of specialization

A female Ph.D. graduate in general journalism shared some dissatisfaction with studying in Turkey whereby she stated that the training she received in as far as research is concerned in her field of study was not enough compared to the training she received back home in Uganda at her master's level. A sub-code named "inadequate training in research" was created for expressions related to this subject. Some of the returnees expressed their dissatisfaction;

P3: "Fifty-fifty, happy at the exposure and so on and on the other hand also missing that part that training I would have got from home here because I feel, I don't know I have weighed the system and I feel our system is much stronger than the Turkish system as far as research is concerned but at least in my area not talking about other areas."

The data showed us that one of the respondents was disappointed with studying from Turkey in a way that ever since they graduated, they have never got a chance to operate in their area of study. A sub-code named "Denied opportunities in the area of study" was created for expressions related to this subject.

According to the city and regional planning degree holder, graduating from Turkey is a great achievement in life although disappointed that a degree from Turkey did not help him find a job in his area of study as he noted that; *"Well I am happy that I was happy to graduate and take my academic life on a certain level and it is always a good point to graduate from abroad and I am happy about that though up to now ever since I graduated I never got a chance to operate and run life in a field that I studied from so that one I am kind of disappointed."*

3.5. Theme 2: Challenges Faced

In this theme, participants focused on the challenges faced while studying in Turkey and the challenges encountered upon return back home. A number of challenges ascended from the interviews with the respective graduates. A theme named "challenges" was created. This theme has been handled with two codes "challenges while studying in Turkey" and "challenges upon return home."(See figure 5)

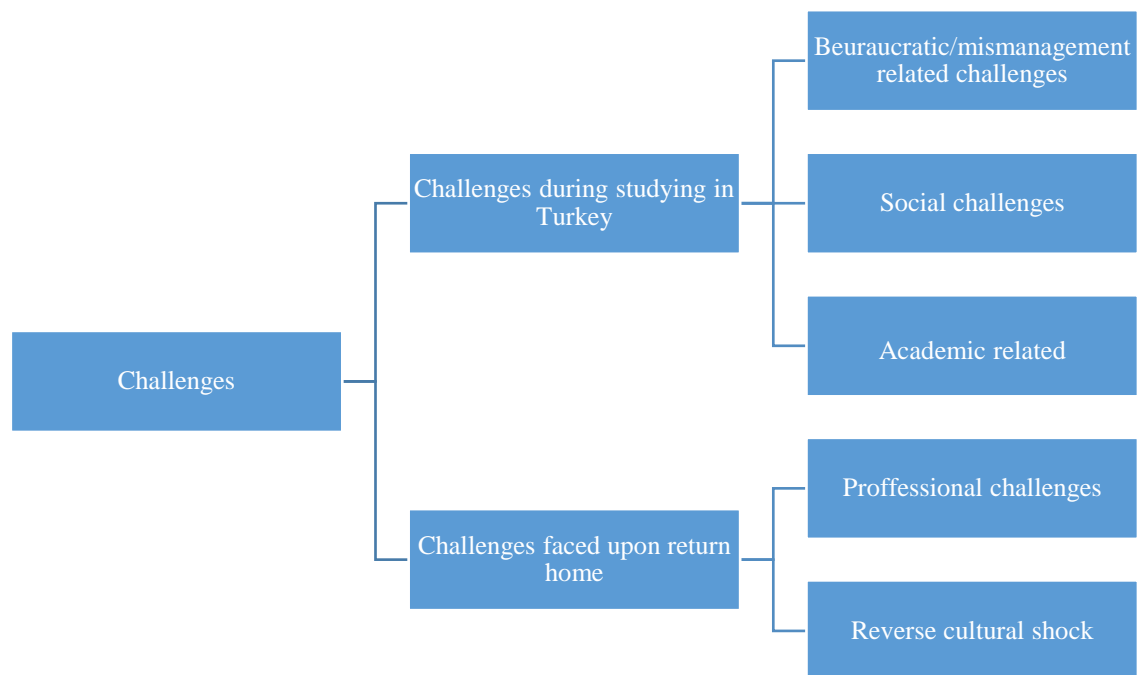


Figure 5: Challenges Faced

3.5.1. The Challenges Participants Faced During Studying in Turkey

Participants mentioned a range of distresses that challenged them while on their academic journey in Turkey. Three main sub-codes emerged;

- Social-related challenges
- Bureaucratic/Mismanagement related challenges
- Academic related challenges

Social challenges have been suggested as a problem. For statements regarding this subject, the "social-related challenges" code was created. The sub-codes expressed in this Context are:

- Racism
- Language barrier

Racism has been suggested as one of a challenge encountered by the alumna during their stay in Turkey. Participants could feel a bit low in some situations where the native people teased

them to an extent that they could feel unhappy with the native's behaviour towards them. This was evident in the following response;

A degree graduate noted that; “my lowest moment I didn’t have much but I always felt low whenever I felt some kind of racism by some fellow students or out on the streets because being a black guy in Turkey is kind of difficult and whenever I got in that situation I always felt low.”

Another noted: “lowest moment was the part of racism, whereby you are in the bus you are the only black person and then people are laughing amongst other things. Another lowest moment is that when somebody had asked me what I had come to do to Turkey yet we here in Uganda we accommodate foreigners we never ask them why they even come to our country but one time I was moving around and then somebody asked me “Ne işiniz var burda” so I was wondering really how impolite that was.” (Participant 3)

Reflecting on the experience, getting introduced to a new language was a challenge to all foreigners abroad since it was the basic requirement for doing a course in Turkey, and results revealed that all the respondents mentioned the language barrier as the major challenge both in academics and society encountered not only among Ugandan students but to all foreigners in the country. A sub-code “language barrier” was created and some of the featured statements are as follows;

During the narrative interview, P4 talked about how challenging it was learning the Turkish language as he describes his academic experience. He shared: “Generally any academic experience has got challenges, times of joy and so on but in general my academic experience in Turkey was not bad though challenging I met some challenges especially learning a new language.”

And also a radio and TV journalism graduate in his narrative said: “My lowest moments while studying in Turkey was when I went to the supermarket for the first time and I couldn’t buy what I wanted due to language barrier.”

A Ph.D. student in communication and general journalism also stated “The hardest bit was the TOMER period where we had to learn Turkish language and acquaint ourselves with it

and then after that preparatory year you had to go to class and you cannot understand anything the professor is saying and they could say you have to speak or study in Turkish because it is a basic requirement for doing your course.” This statement validated the language barrier as one of the major challenges encountered by students while on their academic journey in Turkey that the Ph.D. graduate experienced.

A degree student also commented: *"I think the academic experience there is all surrounded by the language barriers and that is the Turkish language, if you are a foreigner you need to learn Turkish even if you are having your lessons in English, still you need to learn Turkish to be better that is what I experienced and it is something difficult to many students to adjust."*

It is further revealed in our study that participants faced one of the biggest challenges in terms of mismanagement by the Turkey scholarship team and the government as well both during their time of arrival and the time of departure after their graduation in Turkey. A “Bureaucratic related challenges” code was created and two sub-codes have emerged:

- Accommodation problem
- Residence permit

According to the respondents in our study, they experienced a challenge of accommodation during the time of their arrival in Turkey and this was due to the mismanagement with the Turkish scholarship team for the government-sponsored students. One of the graduates was directed to the female's dormitory yet he was a male student and did not know any single word in the Turkish language. Others were stranded and had nowhere to stay at the time of arrival and instead were taken to private hostels of which the living conditions in private dormitories were not good and this is connected to the mismanagement of the Turkish scholarship team. A code "Accommodation" was created and the difficulties experienced by the participants before are expressed as follows:

A master graduate noted that; *"Also the lowest moment was shifting things from hostels when I first reached Turkey I was directed to a female hostel yet I am a male. When I reached the place I was told that it was a female hostel I was stranded for about four hours and I didn't*

know any word in Turkish I was stuck and didn't know where to go, till now I still remember that moment."

Another stated: *"As far as my lowest moment is concerned, probably the living conditions we had at the beginning because there were no dormitories when we have just arrived in Turkey and there was no place for us to stay and they had to take us to a private dormitory and the conditions were not so good."*

Participants uninformed about the cancellation of the residence permit before departure required the graduate to pay a fine at the time of departure from Turkey and this regarded as one of the lowest moments. Participant 1 commented upon this issue and statements on the subject are gathered under the code of "Residence permit". Some of the related statements are;

P1: "The lowest moment was when I found that my residence permit has been counselled on my way back home reaching the airport where I realized from the airport that my residence permit had been actually counselled three months earlier and had to pay a fine and after paying a fine I actually meet my flight in the toughest that was one of my lowest moment."

It is revealed that the participants faced numerous challenges in academics and this caused the graduates considerable stress hence this affected their ability to study well. An "Academic challenges" code was created and two sub-codes have emerged:

- Unfamiliar education system
- Lack of support from professors

The education system in Turkey is quite different from the education system in Uganda. Graduates felt that the new experience in the education system was one of the main reasons why they didn't perform to the expectations in their first year. The time given for an exam was not enough since they are new to the system. The statements of this experience are in the code named "Unfamiliar education system". A participant expressed that:

P4: "The system was very new because for us in Uganda how we do the exams, that was a new experience but we managed to survive the first time you struggle and the second time you get familiar with the system especially with the time given for an exam."

It is further revealed that some of the professors do not provide enough support to students as far as research for Ph.D. students is concerned. A "Lack of support from professors" sub-code was created and this was evident from the following response;

A female Ph.D. graduate stated that: *“And then my lowest moment was during my research whereby I didn’t get support from my professor I should say if I got the support it was about 40 percent that is why I was saying I really miss our system back home because now that am part of the system it is very supportive.”*

3.5.2. The Challenges Participants Faced Upon Their Return to Uganda

Participants mentioned a range of distresses that challenged them upon returning home to Uganda. Three main sub-codes emerged;

- Social related challenges
- Economical related challenges
- Professional related challenges

One of the challenges returnees faced originated from social problems. The statements belonging to this issue, “Social related challenges” sub-code was created and it was mainly about reverse cultural shock.

The reverse cultural shock was one of the most emphasized and major challenges faced by the Ugandan graduates upon return back home. Findings show that a big difference in the lifestyle between Turkey and Uganda whereby according to the participants, the Ugandan lifestyle was somehow challenging than the lifestyle lived in Turkey therefore participants had to change to fit in the new society and accept changes. The featured statements related to this issue were as follows:

Electronics and communications engineering masters graduate shared *“... when you come back the people you knew as friends before are no longer the way they were, you find when they are totally different people and a lot of things which changed within that period so it is really difficult to reintegrate whereby you need time to adjust into the new system.”*

Also, computer science and computer engineering Ph.D. graduate shared: *"Returning back home the challenge I found a lot of things had changed so realizing a lot of things had changed I had also to change within the environment I had to face the challenges of accepting the changes and also adjusting."*

Another noted: *"Well upon my return to Uganda, first of all, those people after having seen me that I am from abroad they thought that I am no longer at their level, that I don't fit in their society and they thought that I am above them. Those people whom I used to be with before going abroad, when I went back they thought that I am above them, I cannot listen to them, I cannot take their view, in such a way that is the challenge I got."*

Radio and TV journalism graduate also noted: *"While in Turkey, I live Turkish lifestyle which is advanced compared to the Ugandan lifestyle. So, getting used to the Ugandan style was somehow challenging. For instance, in Turkey, one can access and use social media with ease, whereas in Uganda OTT tax is mandatory. Same with food, transportation, language, people, religion among others all differ Turkey and Uganda, hence a challenge to the returnee."*

A teacher at a secondary high school said: *"When you go back home some words unknowingly when you are speaking to people back home you find yourself speaking Turkish and people can look at you that's a very big challenge by the way."*

We discovered that some of the participants experienced economic challenges upon returning home. A sub-code "Economic related challenges" was created. This code was mostly about the lack of jobs.

It is revealed that there are limited jobs in Uganda for returnee graduates. We also discovered that those who had work experience before almost lost their jobs upon return. Statements on the subject are as follows:

A masters graduate who is currently a teacher at a secondary high school said: *"Then you find when you lost a job you find a hard time to get a job even if you left officially but if you come back officially sometimes they tell you to regain the job but it can take some time remember you don't have a job, you have to eat, survive struggling to get lunch, etc."*

It is found that participants mentioned some of the experienced constraints in the development of career upon return back home. A "Professional related challenges" sub-code was created and three sub-codes emerged.

- Change in career path
- Value of Certificate
 - ✓ *Government requirements on language preference*
 - ✓ *Over qualification*
 - ✓ *Specialization*
- *Research*
 - ✓ *Set back in publishing*
 - ✓ *Research writing skills*

We discovered that participants expected to get jobs in their field of study upon return to Uganda unfortunately this was not possible especially to those that had no work experience in Uganda before and most especially those that studied their degree in Turkey. In addition, 2 out of 7 participants had to resort to plan b and change their career path or choices for survival. Experience related to the statement above was included in the code named "Change in career path". This is evident in the following response;

A degree student in city and regional planning shared: "Yes, of course, it affected me a lot because when I was chosen to study this course I always thought of working in Turkey before but after I graduated I never got that opportunity of working from there so I had to come back and that affected me by the time I came back here things were different there weren't any jobs at all according to my field of study and I had to get different choices towards my survival here."

A master's graduate also shared: "Before I came to Turkey I was studying information technology and programming which was the aim of my career but then when I studied in Turkey I did electronic engineering as I told you before and currently the work I do is related to my degree the one I did in Turkey not the one I did in Uganda. So I would say I took a total turn away from programming and currently I am doing a different career."

We discovered that a degree from Turkey affected the career path of some of the respondents where the graduates had to switch to another alternative for them to survive in life and also the fact that they were denied opportunities because of the certificate got from Turkey. Experience related to the statement above was included in the code named “value of certificate” and three sub-code emerged.

- Government requirements on language preference
- Over qualification
- Specialization

Results revealed that the English language was preferred by the majority of institutions in Uganda. This could mean that graduates with Turkish certificates especially in engineering were denied opportunities in their field of study because of the value of the certificate and also were demanded to have one more year in school or internship done in English hence some reputation for the alumna. A “Government requirements on language preference” code was created. As one of the respondents shared:

"Yeah I have ever, got rejected because of the fact that I studied in Turkey I have ever been rejected. And it required me something which I call a reputation, they were requesting me to have one more year in school here so that I could have some internship done in English which will make me familiar towards the work I had applied to and I couldn't do that I felt like it is some kind reputation because in Turkey I was studying in Turkish and here you know when you study in Turkish and you have to work in English they are kind different things you know." (Participant 6)

Participants revealed that some employers in Uganda could fear employing international Ph.D. graduates due to over qualification. This implied that they were rejected due to the value of the Turkish certificate of which to some extent some employers in Uganda felt uncomfortable working with overqualified graduates hence denied opportunities. A sub-code named "over qualification" was created for expressions related to this subject.

"Yes, I have been ever rejected because I went to a certain place they told me we cannot work with you because you are above this level, so they told me they cannot accommodate me my paper is beyond their level." (Participant 7)

Some of the respondents were rejected at job interviews due to their specialization in different areas of study. This appeared to decrease the chances of the graduates getting employed in the area of interest due to the fact that they did not specialize in one line. A sub-code named "specialization" was created for expressions related to this subject.

A Ph.D. female graduate in general journalism shared: *"Yes I have ever been rejected. Now when you look at the trend of the certificates in my bachelors I did bachelors of Arts in arts whereby I did a combination of communication skills and Luganda but I specialized in communication skills and for my masters, I did a master of science in information science. For Ph.D., I did a Ph.D. in general journalism so the panelists were saying I know a little bit of so much like the different areas that I have studied in other words I have not specialized in one line."* (Participant 3)

Respondents revealed that the expertise got from abroad affected their career in terms of research especially for returnees in academia. A code "Research" code was created and two sub-codes codes emerged;

- Set back in publishing
- Research writing skills

Findings show that respondents in academia faced a challenge in publishing their papers back home due to fact that the experience acquired abroad was a bit lacking hence less contributory in research. A sub-code "set back in publishing" was created and some of the statements are as follows;

A female participant who is a Ph.D. lecturer teaching at a public university in Uganda stated that; *"Yes for example in academia you have to move fast in terms of publishing but the experience I got is a bit lacking to that area so it's like am taking baby step via that direction I think it should have been more contributory in that area"*.

She also mentioned that there was a setback in research writing skills due to the fact that the English language was negatively affected by learning Turkish. A sub-code "Research writing skills" was created and some of the statements are as follows;

“The challenge I found that the Turkish language did a lot of damage to my English because almost in Turkey, the sentence construction is totally opposite to the sentence construction in English so it had an impact on my English and yet I need my English for writing especially in academia good English is a prerequisite to good writing in academia” (participant 3).

3.6. Theme 3: Positive Changes because of Studying in Turkey

In this theme, respondents focused on career experiences upon return back home to Uganda. It was observed that studying in Turkey had a positive impact on the career development of alumni.

Table 3: Positive Changes because Of Studying In Turkey
Positive changes because of studying abroad
Career development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion • Job offer
The ongoing relationship between Turkey and Uganda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional link • Business link

On the other hand, evidence from the interviews shows that participants grew within their careers and had more responsibilities after their academic journey in Turkey. This showed that there were significant changes because of studying from Turkey. Therefore, it would be correct to include the theme named "Changes because of studying in Turkey" This code consists of two codes according to the data.

- Career progress/Career development studying in Turkey
- The ongoing relationship between Turkey and Uganda

Participants registered significant changes in their careers. This was common with masters and Ph.D. graduates since they had working experience of 5 to 7 years of which 5 of the respondents were working in academia in both private and public universities in Uganda before they went for further studies. A code named "career progress/development" was created for expressions related to this subject and two sub-codes emerged.

- Promotion
- Job offer

For participants in academia, the degree got from Turkey helped them get promoted to higher positions at the workplace whereby some of the graduates were promoted from one rank to another rank, some had to change departments and also different roles. 5 participants commented upon this and statements on the above subject are gathered under the code named "Promotion". Some of the related statements are;

A male Ph.D. graduate in Computer science and computer engineering who is currently working at a private university in Uganda shared: *"Actually the degree I earned from Turkey helped me get a promotion from the position where I was working to a higher position and also change of department though not completely different but different roles because I was doing an administrative job but after my studies in Turkey I changed to an academic role."*

Also, a female Ph.D. graduate in Communication and general journalism who had worked at a state university in Uganda shared: *"Yes it helped me because I moved from one rank to another in the university where am teaching in Makerere University because when I went to Turkey I was an assistant lecturer and when I came back from Turkey I became a lecturer."*

Another Radio and TV Ph.D. graduate commented: *"With the degree, I earned from Turkey, I was promoted at my workplace to a higher position than one I served in before going to Turkey."*

We discovered that the degree got from Turkey to a larger extent contributed positively to the graduate's career in a way that it opened doors for a series of job opportunities for the international graduates. Statements on the above subject are gathered under the code named "Job offer" some of the lived experience featured statements are as follows;

"As I said before I left Uganda I didn't have any job experience, because I finished my university and within few months I started my master's and coming back, of course, the company I am working with is a Turkish company and the job I do is specifically what I studied from my masters so I can say without doing my masters in Turkey probably I wouldn't have this job and my career would not be at this stage, so the degree I got is basically the main reason as to why I am currently on my career path" (Interview with participant 5)

"The degree which I attained from Turkey just contributed positively to my academic career because as soon as I completed my academics here I was on market in my country everyone was in need and interested to work with me so I can say it contributed positively. As I told you that people were interested to work with me, because if you look at my academic papers are from abroad it's not from Uganda and from one of the recognized universities in the world. So just me having those papers, you know I graduated from Istanbul University those who know that university they feel even prestige to work with a person from such kind of a university." (Participant 7)

The research found that studying in Turkey has made graduates do business with Turkey and this implies that there is an ongoing strong relationship between Turkey and Uganda. Statements on the above subject are gathered under the code named “ongoing strong relationship between Turkey and Uganda” and two sub-codes emerged;

- Professional link
- Business link

We discovered that there is a professional link among the graduates with their supervisors in Turkey and also through the help from the ambassador, one of the respondents reported that there is an ongoing relationship with Yunus Emre Institute Introducing Turkish language studies at state university in Uganda. Statements on the above subject are gathered under the code named “Professional link”. As one of the participants said that:

"..... Through help from the ambassador we got in touch with some people from the Yunus Emre Institute and they wanted to introduce Turkish language studies at the university". (Participant 3)

“Yes there is a professional link between me and my supervisors at least at that level if there is any professional work they want me to be engaged in at least I have been engaged with them.”(Participant 1)

On the other hand, it was evident that although the majority of the respondents work in academia, it is found out that returnees also worked as translators and main contractors of the Turkish entities in Uganda. Statements on the above subject are gathered under the code-named "Business link". As some of the participants mentioned that:

"Well as I told you before the company I work with a Turkish company and they don't have an office or branch in Uganda, so I am their main link between them and their main contractor here in Uganda" (participant 5)

Another respondent added: *“Yes I have ever worked with many of them I think they are around three to five Turkish organizations and even established their branches in Uganda.” (Participant 7)*

A degree alumna also shared: *"Yeah I have ever thought of that and I have worked with a lot of businessmen who want to explore the investments to you know foreign countries I have been used as a translator, so I have been a link in some businesses between Turkey and my country.” (Participant 6)*

Another shared: “While in Turkey I did business with Turkish people up to now we are still doing some business with Gonen Tractor Company in Istanbul.” (Participant 2)

CONCLUSION

Summary of the Study and the Evaluation of the Findings

This study aims to understand and describe the career experiences of Ugandan graduates from abroad, specifically from Turkey's higher education programs. The aim is operationalized in two dimensions: (1) Graduates past experience as being students abroad, namely in Turkey. 2. Their current experience in terms of career development in their home country. The main research question is “How can we understand and describe the career experiences of Ugandan alumni who graduated from abroad, specifically from Turkey?” This question is developed into three sub-questions: 1. How do the Ugandan alumni describe their experience of being graduated from abroad, specifically from Turkey? 2. How do the Ugandan alumni describe their experience of career in their home country after being graduated? 3. What consequences can be drawn from the experiences of Ugandan alumni from abroad as to reach some critical reflection and meaning for the alumni themselves, their parents, the governments, the higher education ecosystem in both Turkey and Uganda, and the labor market in general?

To answer the above questions, qualitative research was conducted through in-depth interviews. A total of seven interviews were conducted with Ugandan returnee alumni from Turkish universities.

Regarding sub-question 1. In relation to other scholars' research findings (Hao et al., 2016; Hao, 2012), international education qualifications played an important role in one's career was also evident in the present study. It is clear that participants were satisfied with being studied in Turkey. Most interviewed participants suggested that Turkish higher education credentials played a vital role in one's career development especially when applying for jobs and also proved more advantageous for those who were employed before coming to Turkey especially Ph.D. returnees in academics turned out to be more competitive.

It is found out that interacting with native citizens abroad allowed graduates being able to build strong connections both with locals and many people from different places.

Professional development was evident as participants expressed that they had a chance to learn new skills, getting introduced to a new language and knowledge as well.

Graduating from the university, language Centre and passing the Ph.D. comprehensive exam seemed to be a great achievement for the alumni (Degree, master's, and doctorate) and this was one of the greatest moments during their stay in Turkey.

The study also revealed that graduates were able to benefit from the facilities provided both by the Turkey scholarship team and University.

However, a small number of the respondents were dissatisfied with studying from Turkey, with some of the reasons cited that training received in research for Ph.D. graduates in general journalism was not enough compared to training received back home. Also, degree students also dissatisfied with never getting a chance to operate in the area of study back home in Uganda.

On the other hand, results in this study revealed that the respondents faced challenges while on their academic journey in Turkey such as social-related (racism, language barrier), mismanagement related (accommodation and resident permit), and academic-related challenges (unfamiliar education system, lack of support from professors).

Recent research conducted by Musizvingoza, (2020) shows that participants reported difficulties in understanding lectures, and writing assignments and exams. This current study supports the findings in a way that the education system in Uganda is quite different from the education system in Turkey and also a new experience in the education system was one of the main reasons as to why they didn't perform to the expectations especially in their first year due to the fact that the time given sitting for an exam was not enough hence challenging. Considering that the language used in almost all the programs in Turkish universities is the Turkish language, we observed that Ugandan graduates have great difficulties with Turkish. The findings of the current research are in line with the findings of researchers like (Titrek et al., 2016; Ersan and Khalil, 2019: 186; Musizvingoza, 2020: 602; Yılmaz, 2018; Gebru and Yuksel-Kaptanoglu, 2020) which indicate that language played a large part and seemed to be a common challenge encountered by international students.

Additionally, results reveal that graduates experienced a challenge of accommodation during the time of their arrival in Turkey and this was due to the mismanagement with the Turkish scholarship team for the government-sponsored students.

It is further revealed that some of the professors do not provide enough support to students as far as research for Ph.D. students is concerned. It is found that the expertise got from abroad was not enough and less contributory in research among Ph.D. students in general journalism. However, some of the participants said that some of the professors were very helpful to them.

It is also found that a small number of participants to some extent felt low because of their race and this comes in the form of unfavorable attitudes towards international and especially black students (racism) both by fellow Turkish students and native people. Similarly, previous studies have also shown that African international students usually experience racism in their host countries (Okusolubo, 2018; Musizvingoza, 2020).

Regarding research question 2. From our observations, as with many scholars' research findings (Marsh et al., 2016; Hao, 2012; Lin-Stephens, Uesi and Doherty, 2015; Pham, 2021; Thieme, 2014; RUFORUM, 2020). This research is as important as it also reveals that to a large extent, the majority of returnee graduates believe that Turkish higher education has impacted their careers. Ph.D. and master's graduates have experienced a positive impact of the study in Turkey on their careers. Through utilizing various forms of capital (social capital and professional skills), it is evident that participants were viewed favorably by their employers and many in academia experienced promotions, switching from one rank and department to another at the workplace due to the degree got from Turkey. Also opened a series of opportunities (job offers) for the graduates such as the ongoing relationship between Turkey and Uganda.

Overall, there seem to be strong ties between the two countries. Our data suggest that graduates maintained their relationship between Turkey and Uganda in terms of business and professional links. Therefore, the present study confirms that Ugandan returnee alumnae became agents for developments back home. It was evident that the majority of the participants work with Turkish companies/organizations as translators in Uganda and also work as the main link and contractors of the Turkish entities in Uganda. This echoes Mulvey

(2019) observation about Ugandan returnee alumni from China which revealed that returnees maintained ties through post-graduation employment, and in doing so worked to further Chinese interests where some of the returnees had positions in industries that are relevant to Chinese economic influence in Uganda and some were able to convert the language ability into income-generating opportunities. Also, as (Musa, 2019; Abimbola et al., 2016) note that the majority of the returnee graduates are employed in private businesses and more with Turkish entities and also acted as agents of social change back home.

However, the interview data reveal that returnees experienced a range of constraints hindering their career progressions such as reverse cultural shock, lack of jobs, change in career path, Value of Certificate (Government requirements on language preference, over qualification and, Specialization), and research-related challenges such as setback in publishing and research writing skills.

In general, it is clear that alumni who studied in post-graduate programs faced fewer adjustments challenges than the masters and undergraduates upon return in Uganda due to the fact that they were employed and had gained working experience before traveling for further studies abroad hence turning out to be the most competitive. Returnee graduates (degree and masters) had difficulties in finding jobs related to their fields of study in Uganda. This was common especially for graduates who had no work experience before and those that studied for their undergraduate degree in Turkey. Returnees had to resort to plan b and change their career path or choices for survival. This echoes Teng, (2017) observation that having international qualifications (certificate) does not guarantee the returnee graduate to get employed but their employability is at an advantage compared to the domestic alumni but more comprehensive experiences are required. In addition to the above statement, the present study findings were inconsistent with the previous literature such as Thomas (2008), whose study indicated that Ugandan returnee alumni from African countries are likely to have a larger advantage in terms of employment only if they are returning to the previous jobs they had before traveling for further studies. This clearly shows that those with working experience before their initial departure from Uganda had fewer adjustments upon return back home.

Another constraint encountered by returnees in their career was that the English language was most preferred by the majority of government institutions in Uganda. This could mean that undergraduate students with Turkish certificates especially in engineering were denied opportunities in their field of study because of the government requirements on the language preferences when recruiting employees in the labor market thus were demanded to have one more year in school or internship done in English hence some reputation for the alumna.

Findings in this study also revealed that some employers in Uganda could fear employing international Ph.D. graduates due to over qualification. This implied that to some extent some employers in Uganda felt uncomfortable working with overqualified returnee graduates hence denied opportunities. Similarly, conclusions reached by Marsh et al., (2016:7) also revealed that graduates who returned to Africa mentioned that having an international qualification could be a disadvantage in certain circumstances for example when a superior perceives the foreign alumni as a threat.

For all interviewed Ugandans, a common constraint that all returnees struggled to overcome was the reverse cultural shock. Returnees reported that the Ugandan lifestyle was somehow challenging than the lifestyle lived in Turkey therefore participants had to change to fit in the new society and accept changes.

For Ph.D. graduates especially in general journalism, data shows returnees in academia have significantly decreased their productivity in terms of research. This is related to a setback in publishing and research writing skills which have been affected by both learning the Turkish language and expertise got from Turkey was a bit lacking and less contributory in research back home in Uganda hence negatively affecting their career.

Finally, in relation to Amazan et al., (2016), this study also confirms that change in career path for returnees was attributed to factors such as difficulties in finding jobs or opportunities in their area of study back home in Uganda especially among newly undergraduate and master's graduates with zero work experience. It took much more effort to find returnees working in government institutions due to the fact that some were denied opportunities because of the government requirements on the language preference to work in the public institutions. This clearly indicates that the government sector is not so attractive to returnee

graduates. Further, for Ph.D. returnees, some were rejected at job interviews because of specializing in one area/field and others were rejected due to over qualification.

In conclusion, with broad previous work and educational experiences prior to their studies in Turkey, many in academia were able to succeed in their career upon return to Uganda. Although a few alumni (Degree and Master's) had no educational and work experience before going for further studies, it was frequently cited as a great opportunity that exposed them to Turkish work styles and culture where many were able to work with Turkish entities especially NGO's in Uganda as main contractors due to the fact that the public sector is not so attractive to returnee alumni back home in Uganda.

Recommendations

Our findings have important suggestions for returnee Alumni, universities, Parents of the Alumni and higher education institutions (Uganda and Turkey), and prospective graduates.

First, the findings of the current study highlight the language as the major problem and challenge Ugandan graduates faced during their stay in Turkey. Therefore, before coming to Turkey, Ugandan students are recommended to develop their Turkish language proficiency in advance thus having a basic knowledge of the foreign language can be helpful for their adjustment journey in Turkey.

Secondly, findings highlight racism as one of the challenges faced by the graduates during their stay in Turkey. It could be possible that the native people lack information about multicultural society. Therefore, for a better study abroad experience an awareness creation program (orientation program) on international student's mobility and multicultural environment should be made for both the native people and foreign students and also put in place to help educate prospective students on how to integrate into the new environment and gain awareness about racism.

In addition, for the effective academic performance of international students, university administrators should consider designing Turkish language training in line with the academic needs of foreign students.

To sustain excellent academic performance, academic institutions should organize get-together programs involving international students and administration staff discussing the education system in the host country. For example, for higher education institutions in Turkey, findings from this research show that the time schedule given to sit an exam made it difficult for the graduates to perform to their expectations. Institutions might need to consider discussions about the education system with new foreign students in Turkey.

Turkish universities should look into providing guidance and counseling services for international students in a language other than Turkish.

Foreign students in Turkish universities might require a different social guideline with specific information that can assist them at each stage of their journey abroad.

We recommend parents to prepare their students for cultural shocks and also emotional intelligence to make them emotionally strong such that they shouldn't break down at every obstacle or challenge that they incur.

As the results of this research, it is recommended that the Turkish government should consider incorporating international Turkish alumni as employees or lecturers in Turkish universities. This will help in transferring new ideas for international African alumni into the system.

Based on the findings from the interviews, it was revealed that some Ph.D. graduates reported that they feel were given less attention or support by their supervisors (40%) and this seems to affect their productivity in research back home in Uganda. Therefore, this study suggests that lecturers should help students more with research work.

Finally, findings from this research show that Ph.D. graduates who had gained working experience before traveling for further studies in Turkey turned out to be the most competitive than those without working experience. This clearly shows that having an international degree is not enough for graduates to gain employment in Uganda. Masters and bachelor's degree graduates need to have the prior working experience to be more competitive in the labor market in Uganda.

Limitations of Study

This research aimed to explore the lived career experiences of Ugandan alumna from Turkey.

The results of the current research need to be understood with a number of limitations in mind. One of the limitations included limited access to Ugandan alumna from Turkey due to failure to track down study abroad participants up to seven years after their study experience in Turkey and also due to the pandemic. Although the researcher was able to interview seven respondents, having interviewed more participants would have contributed more to the trustworthiness of this research. Furthermore, the current study was limited to a sample of degree, master's, and doctoral graduates from a few universities in Turkey. Further research might explore the experiences of alumni from quite a number of universities in Turkey. Research with Ugandan returnee graduates from European countries would also be necessary because the career progress of returnees would be different for Ugandan alumni from different countries.

On a final note, a much more comprehensive study could be conducted about Ugandan alumni. Also, highly useful research could involve collecting data on employers of Ugandan returnee alumni from Turkey. Similarly, it would be useful to carry out a study on the teaching experiences of academic returnee professors from Turkey teaching in Ugandan universities (public and private).

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Demographic Background

Gender:

Level of education:

Employment status:

Area of employment:

Area of specialization:

Year of graduation:

General questions.

1. Can you tell me your area of specialization? Why do you think you were given the opportunity in that field?
2. Are you satisfied with your current working experience? In what ways?
3. With an occupational education background in Turkey, how did you integrate into new life in Uganda?

RQN 1. How do the Ugandan alumni describe their experience of being graduated from abroad, specifically from Turkey?

Sub questions

- a) Are you satisfied with studying abroad? In what ways?

b) What are your feelings about being graduated from Turkey?

- How can you describe your general academic experience in Turkey? /Can you tell me about the highlights of your study experience in Turkey?
- Can you give an account of one of your greatest and lowest moments while studying in Turkey?

RQN 2. How do the Ugandan alumni describe their experience of career in their home country after being graduated?

Sub questions

a) Did you have work experience before you went to Turkey?

b) As a Turkish alumnus, would you describe how the degree you earned from Turkey contributed in any way to your career progress?

c) Have you ever been rejected or accepted due to the value of the certificate?

d) In which way has the expertise abroad affected your career choices?

e) What are the challenges you faced upon your return back home?

f) Have you ever thought about developing professional link between Turkey and Uganda?

Has studying in Turkey made you do business with Turkey?

RQN 3. What consequences can be drawn from the experiences of Ugandan alumni from abroad as to reach some critical reflection and meaning for the alumni themselves, their parents, the governments, the higher education ecosystem in both Turkey and Uganda and the labour market in general?

Sub questions

- a) In which way did the study abroad change your life?
- b) Do you observe any difference between Uganda education system and abroad education system?
- c) In what way do you think the gap can be bridged in education system of Uganda?
- d) Did you undergo internship program during the course of your studies in Turkey? If yes, from your internship experience in Turkey, how do you think the internship structure in Uganda can contribute to the quality of employable personnel in labour market of Uganda?
- e) With your experience abroad do you think that the ecosystem of education in Uganda is doing enough to adequately equip the graduates with necessary tools to fare well in the labour market?
- f) Which of the government policy in education in Turkey can be used to enhance the quality of Ugandan labour market?
- g) In what area in Uganda education system do you think more attention is needed?
- h) What advise do you give to the parents of prospective students abroad?

CURRICULUM VITAE

Name Surname: Katende Nuha Mukiibi

EDUCATION STATUS

Degree Level	Education Unit	Graduation Year
Masters	Sakarya University/ Graduate School of Business/ Human Resources Management	Continues
Degree	Islamic University in Uganda Kampala campus/ Business Faculty/ Human Resources Management	2014
Secondary	Buziga Islamic Theological Institute	2010

WORK EXPERIENCE

YEAR	PLACE	WORK
2014- 2016	HIDA Uganda	Administrator

FOREIGN LANGUAGE

English

Turkish

PUBLICATIONS

1. An Investigation of Challenges Encountered by Female Academic Staff Working from Home during Pandemic: A Case of Sakarya University.