



Assessment of University Curricula to the Relevance of Labour Market Demand in Arusha Region, Tanzania

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Abstract: *This study assessed the relevance of university curriculum to the labour market demand in Arusha Region, Tanzania. The objectives were to: examine the shortcoming of various aspects of universities curricula to labour market demand and determine the strategies to enhance Universities Curricula to the labour market demand. Human Capital Theory guided the study. The study adopted convergent mixed methods design. Interview guide and questionnaires were used to collect data from respondents who consisted of 60 postgraduate students, 12 lecturers and 10 employers selected from a population of 350. Cronbach Alpha reliability correlation coefficient for postgraduate students' questionnaire after the pilot study was, $r = 0.799$ while qualitative instruments were confirmed through cross-validation among different data collection methods. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics in the SPSS Version 25. Results were presented in form of tables of frequencies, percentages and means. Qualitative data were thematically analysed using thematic coding. Findings revealed that there is limited financial assistance, inadequate ICT materials and insufficient industry engagement. Additionally, the strategies include integrating practical experiences, establishing clear guidelines for funding virtual learning projects, and fostering industry partnerships. The study concluded that there is need to establish industry advisory boards to provide continuous input on curricula development, ensuring it meets current market needs. Incorporate project-based learning and real-world problem-solving into the curricula to develop practical skills. The study recommends that universities should place a stronger emphasis on entrepreneurship education to better prepare graduates for starting their own ventures that would contribute to economic growth.*

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Keywords: Curricula, Labour, Market, Universities, Demand, Arusha

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1. Introduction

In the 21st century job market, the alignment between Universities Curricula and the evolving demands of employers has become a critical concern. As technology

advances, industries transform and globalization accelerates, there is a growing need to evaluate the effectiveness of higher education in preparing students for the challenges they will face upon entering the work force (Williams, 2022). According to Brown & Green (2019) and Smith et al. (2020), there is a potential mismatch

between what is taught in universities and the skills and knowledge sought by employers. The evolution of technology, globalization and rapid changes in the job market has highlighted the importance of aligning universities curricula with the dynamic needs of the labour market. While higher education institutions aim to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary for success, concern persists about the relevance of curricula to contemporary job requirements (UNESCO, 2019).

European commission (2021) identified regional challenges in graduate employability. These are specific challenges affecting the employability of graduates, stemming from disparities in the alignment between educational offerings and regional labour market dynamics. Country specific perspectives on graduates on the preparedness provided by their university's education may exist, requiring understanding of national trends and students' experiences. National Higher Education Council (2018) argue that research dissertation aims to delve into the assessment of the university's curricula across diverse disciplines, investigating the extent to which they meet the current and future demands of the labour market. A global perspective on graduate perception and preparedness also is the problem because global landscape may exhibit diverse perspectives among graduates on the preparedness provided by their university education, highlighting the needs for in-depth understanding of international variation (OECD, 2017).

Anderson and Johnson (2018) suggest that the traditional universities curricula may not always keep pace with the rapidly evolving demands of industries. Employers increasingly seek graduates with not only academic knowledge but also practical skills and adaptability (Smith & Brown, 2021). This has promoted a growing recognition of the need to assess and enhance the alignment between university programmes and the expectations of employers. Consequently, expanding the knowledge in financial management in education is necessary. This enhances the coverage of financial management topics within curricula to equip students with essential financial literacy and management skills. Jackson (2019) affirms the need to provide more financial assistance to students for acquiring necessary technology devices to support virtual learning and ensure equitable access to education. The study also found the need to increase the integration of technology in curricula by incorporating more tech-related courses and practical applications to keep pace with technological advancements.

In recent years, Patel & Williams (2022) have identified mismatches between the skills graduates possess and those sought by employers. These mismatches not only affect individual employability but also contribute to broader

issues such as unemployment and underemployment. As the global workforce undergoes transformative changes, it became imperative to scrutinize the effectiveness of higher education in preparing students for the challenges of the contemporary job market.

World Bank (2020) reported that global misalignment problem between universities curricula and labour market needs persist regarding the potential misalignment of Universities Curricula with the rapid evolving demands of the worldwide job market. UNESCO (2019) reported international discrepancies in curricula relevance. Internationally, variations in the alignment between universities curricula and labour market demands may exist, posing challenges for graduates seeking employment across borders. International employer dissatisfaction with graduates' skills is a problem. Employers across borders may express dissatisfaction with the skills of universities graduates, indicating potential global trends in the misalignment between academic training and workforce expectations (World Economic Forum, 2018). The relevance of universities curricula to labour market demands has become a critical issue in contemporary higher education. Despite the rapid changes in the global economy and the evolving nature of work, many universities have been slow to adapt their curricula to meet the needs of employers and the labour market (Bui et al., 2020). This misalignment has resulted in graduates who are often inadequately prepared for the workforce, leading to high unemployment rates among young professionals. Recent empirical study conducted by Jackson (2019) highlights a persistent gap between the skills taught in universities and those required by employers, indicating a pressing need for curricula reforms that align educational outcomes with market expectations.

According to Ministry of Education Science and Technology, in 2019, the national problem of mismatching between universities curricula and labour market needs in Tanzania persisted indicating the potential misalignment of universities curricula with the specific demands of the domestic job market, potentially leading to challenges in workplace preparedness and competitiveness. Challenges in potential gaps in skills and knowledge acquired during universities education and mismatch between the curricula and job market demand may affect the employability of graduates in Tanzania (National Labour Board, 2022). Nationally, employer dissatisfaction with graduates' skills may be a problem with a country with mismatch in the skills of the universities graduates, indicating potential challenges in meeting the expectations of domestic industries (National Chamber of Commerce, 2017). By examining the current state of alignment between education and employment needs, the study sought to identify areas for improvement and contribute to the

ongoing dialogue on optimizing higher education for the benefit of both students and employers. Therefore it was necessary to conduct a research to assess the universities curricula across diverse disciplines. As such, the study investigated the extent to which curricula meet the current and future demands of the labour market.

1.1 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the shortcomings of universities curricula towards labour market demand?
2. Which the strategies enhance universities curricula to the labour market demand in Arusha Region?

2. Literature Review

The theoretical and empirical literature was reviewed with reference to themes created from research questions. The study was grounded on Human Capital Theory proposed by Gary Becker in 1964.

2.1 Theoretical Literature Review

The theory posits that education and training contribute to the accumulation of skills and knowledge, enhancing individuals' productivity and employability (Becker, 1964). Universities in Arusha Region act as institutions where individuals invest in their human capital through academic programmes and skill development. The curricula content represents the specific human capital acquired by students during their academic journey, including general and industrial specific skills.

2.1.1 Strengths of the Theory

The theory suggests that the accumulation of human capital contributes to economic development in Arusha region, leading to improved productivity and overall societal well-being. Collaborative initiatives between universities in Arusha region serve as mechanism to enhance the quality of human capital formation by aligning curricular content with real world demands.

2.1.2 Application of the Theory to the Current Study

When there is mismatch between the skills acquired through university education and the demands of labour market in Arusha region, it may result in unemployment or underemployment. However, availability of adequate financial support and ICT equipment enhances the provision of courses such as Bachelor of Information

Technology (BIT), Bachelor of Accounting and Auditing and Bachelor of Criminology which are relevant to the market demand. The theory enables the current study to assess the relevance of universities curricula to the labour market demand in Arusha Region, the variety and structure of academic programmes offered by universities, the contents of courses, including the theoretical knowledge and practical skills embedded in the curricula.

2.2 Empirical Review

The researcher reviewed empirical studies on the shortcomings of various aspects of universities curricula to labour market demand and the strategies to enhance universities curricula to the labour market demand in Arusha Region.

2.2.1 The Shortcomings of Various Aspects of Universities Curricula To Labour Market Demand

The study by Donald (2018) sought to determine the Student's Perceptions of Education and Employability in United Kingdom. The study used questionnaires and interviews to collect data. The respondents comprised of 540 students. Data was analyzed using descriptive and correlation analysis tools. The study revealed a strong positive correlation of $r(88) = 3.611$; $p < 0.01$ between participatory leadership in decision making and academic performance. Further, results show a strong positive relationship between Student's Perceptions of Education and Employability ($r(88) = 0.714$; $p < 0.01$) and significant with a positive correlation between transparency and Employability ($r(97) = 5.028$; $p < 0.01$). The results imply that continuous curriculum review, enhance digital marketing and technology integration and strengthen financial and entrepreneurship education. Moreover, the result indicates a strong relationship between good policies in education and employability and the conclusion was that by addressing these areas, universities can better prepare graduates for successful careers in an ever-evolving job market. The study recommends introducing comprehensive digital marketing courses and practical experiences in emerging technologies, developing advanced modules in financial management and implementing a dynamic process for regular curricula updates based on industry feedback and labour market trends. Gangl (2019) analysed features of the European labour markets in order to classify them. According to the findings, United Kingdom and France are the main representatives of internal labour markets, while Netherlands, Austria and Germany stay for occupational labour markets. Conclusions of the analysis indicate that in internal labour market countries with low level of generic competences is associated with lower wages, while in

occupational labour markets lack of discipline-specific competencies is associated with a wage penalty.

A study was conducted in Saudi Arabia by Adel (2020) on Bridging Higher Education Outcomes and Labour Market Needs: A Study of Jouf University Graduates in the Context of Vision 2030. Longitudinal survey design was adopted in a purely quantitative study that involved 220 graduates. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was employed to analyze the data. The study found that career services, counselling, skills, competencies, and curricula design positively influenced employability outcomes. However, industry partnerships and work-integrated learning had no significant impact.

In Australia and New Zealand, Ferns & Zegwaard (2018) carried out a study on Critical Assessment Issues in Work-Integrated Learning. Case study research design was adopted in a mixed methods study. Thematic and statistical analyses were applied for data analysis. The study emphasizes the importance of experiential learning and industry collaboration in improving graduate employability. Similarly, the study highlights the need for curricula that incorporate practical skills, industry partnerships, and inclusive education to better meet labour market demands.

A study conducted in Cameroon by Alemnge (2020) stipulates that the implementation of any syllabus partly depends on the instructional methods and evaluation strategies used. This study, therefore, examines the history syllabus in order to determine how teaching and assessment methods used in its implementation contribute to the development of the stipulated graduates' competences. The case study design was used to carry out the study. The study population consisted of graduates' employers and lectures in four universities in Cameroon. The study revealed that the revised Universities Curricula syllabuses in Cameroon are based on the competence approach, with entry through real life situations. The objective was to enable learners develop a number of competences for successful interaction within the school milieu and the society in general and to enable learners make a smooth transition from school to the world of work.

In Tanzania, Mushi and Mtweve (2018) conducted a research to explore the employer perceptions of university graduates' preparedness for the labour market. The study used questionnaire in data collection. The study found deficiencies in graduates' practical skills, communication abilities and adaptability to workplace dynamics, indicating a need for curricula revisions to address these shortcomings.

2.2.2 The Strategies to Enhance Universities Curricula to the Labour Market Demand

Gault et al. (2018) researched on the benefits of undergraduate Business Internships in United States. Descriptive survey research design was adopted in a purely quantitative study. The finding shows that Business internships significantly enhance job marketability, suggesting that integrating internships into the curricula could bridge the education-employment gap. Lack of information on the sample size and methods used in sampling limits the broader applicability of the findings. Instead, the current study selected 82 respondents involving post graduates students, lecturers and employers. Post graduates students were sampled using stratified and simple random sampling techniques, employers were purposively selected while stratified random sampling technique was employed to select lecturers from different departments or faculties. More to the point, the current study collected both qualitative and quantitative data where the one set of data addressed the weakness of the other.

Donald et al. (2018) researched on the Student's Perceptions of Education and Employability: Facilitating Career Transition from Higher Education into the Labour Market in the United Kingdom. The study was mixed methods since it collected both quantitative and qualitative data from 540 university students. Thematic and statistical analyses were used to analyze the data in the SPSS version 22. The finding shows that there is a significant gap between academic education and required employability skills, suggesting a need for practical skills integration.

Gault et al. (2020) conducted a study on effects of business internships on job marketability: the employers' perspective in the United States. The study distributed 600 questionnaires to employees of selected universities to collect quantitative data. Descriptive survey design and statistical analysis were employed to analyzed data. The finding shows that there is significant positive impact of internships on job marketability, advocating for their integration into curricula. If the manager ignores those kinds of complaints it could lead to potential conflict. The study addresses stress at work, an important area of organizational management within academic institutions.

A study conducted by Krieger et al., (2021) focused on explaining the non- adoption of advanced data analytics in auditing among African countries. The study was guided by a process theory. Data was collected from interviews. The results indicated that the technological capability of the audit firm, both amongst auditors and among innovation teams, affects successful technology adoption across different phases of the adoption process, most notably during the ideation and deployment activities. Therefore, it is important to bridge the gap between the

audit domain and technology. Auditors were curious and interested with technological affinity which supported the ideation phase, which in turn can improve the acceptance of solutions by other auditors, as they are involved in the development process. Involving auditors in the ideation phase can help to align the solution's design with the auditors' mind-set in order to ensure usability, which affects the diffusion of the solution into operational use. The study recommended review the curricula content to ensure it includes current industry trends, technologies, and practices. Courses should be designed in consultation with industry experts to align with job market requirements.

A research by Joseph (2021) focused on the strategies to enhance curriculum by incorporating ICT in secondary schools in Tanzania: A study of Selected Secondary Schools in Mikindani Municipality. The study was cross sectional and descriptive in nature. A sample of 120 participants was involved. Data were collected through questionnaire and interviews. The study results show ICT facilitate teaching and learning, it widens access to education resources, it enhances learners' understanding, it facilitates learners to work collaboratively, teacher's working efficiency and it enhances learner's employability in the lesson. Poor ICT infrastructure, lack of ICT skills and knowledge, lack of technical support and lack of teachers' training were the critical challenges limiting the use of ICT for teaching and learning in universities. Accordingly, the study recommends that, the government policy makers to make it mandatory for schools to invest in infrastructure including computer laboratory and recruitment of specialised technician in schools for providing technical support.

3. Methodology

In this study, convergent mixed methods design was adopted whereby the researcher collected both quantitative and qualitative data at the same time, analysed them separately, and then compared the results to see if the findings confirm or disconfirm to each other (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Similarly, the two approaches complemented and addressed the weaknesses of one another. The current study target population included 350 participants from four universities, that is, 100 lecturers from different departments, 200 postgraduate students, 50 employers from industries in Arusha Region. According to Gay and Airasian (2017), a sample of between 10% and 30% of the target population is representative enough. Consequently, this study sampled 10% to 30% of all the target population from four universities which included 12 lecturers from different university departments, 60 post graduates students and 10 employers (from industries) in Arusha Region. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to select 15 postgraduate students from each university. The students were categorized into

female and male. Similarly, 10 employers were purposively selected while stratified random sampling technique was employed to select 12 lecturers from different departments. Interview guide sought information from lecturers and employers while questionnaires were used to collect data from postgraduate students.

A five-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree=5, Agree=4, Undecided=3, Disagree=2 and Strongly Disagree=1 was used to develop closed-ended part of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into four sections. Section A sought to find out demographic information of the respondents while section B examined the shortcomings of various aspects of Universities Curricula to the labour market demand and Section C determined the strategies to enhance Universities Curricula to the labour market demand in Arusha Region. Interview guide comprised of two sections each with probing questions. Validity of the research instruments was ensured by human resource experts. In order to check for reliability of quantitative instruments (questionnaires) the researcher conducted a pilot study and select 10% sample of respondents where research tools were administered to different groups of respondents and Cronbach Alpha Coefficient method of measuring internal consistency of tests and measures was used to compare correlation coefficient. The reliability coefficient correlated at $r=0.799$. According to George and Malley (2023), the instruments were found to be fairly reliable for the study. Those subjected to the pilot study were excluded during the actual study. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics in the SPSS Version 25. Results were presented in form of tables of frequencies, percentages and mean rating. Qualitative data were thematically analysed using thematic coding. Upon receiving the research permit, the researcher personally visited universities where primary data was collected, made self-introduction, and administered research instruments to the respondents and collected them on the agreed date. The researcher audio recorded the conversation for later transcription with the consent of the interviewee.

4. Results and Discussion

The findings were discussed with regard to themes derived from research questions. The discussion is triangulated with Human Capital Theory and empirical studies reviewed.

4.1 The Shortcomings of Various Aspects of Universities Curricula To Labour Market Demand Arusha Region

Research questions one sought to examine the shortcomings of various aspects of universities curricula to

the labour market demand in Arusha Region. Questionnaires were administered to postgraduate students who were required to agree or disagree with the items based on a five-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree=5, Agree=4, Undecided=3, Disagree=2 and Strongly Disagree=1 was used to develop closed-ended part of the questionnaire. Table 1 presents the summary of their responses and the results of quantitative data.

Table 1: Postgraduate Students' Response on the Shortcomings of Various Aspects of Universities Curricula to Labour Market Demand Arusha Region (n=60)

Shortcomings of Various Aspects	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean
	F	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Limited financial assistance	48	80.0	1	1.7	11	18.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.62
Inadequate ICT materials	51	85.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	9	15.0	4.4
Limited industry engagement	26	43.3	32	53.3	2	3.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.4
Poor technology integration	17	28.3	43	71.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.28
Inadequate knowledge on financial management	33	55.0	18	30.0	0	0.0	9	15.0	0	0.0	4.25
Poor internet connectivity	0	0.0	29	48.3	0	0.0	31	51.7	0	0.0	2.97
Mismatch between graduates' skills & local job opportunities	17	28.3	1	1.7	2	3.3	9	15.0	31	51.7	2.4
Average mean score											3.90

Source: Field data, 2024

Table 1 shows that limited financial assistance is a barrier to having the necessary aspects of labour market in the Universities Curricula. This shortcoming posted a mean score of 4.62 which was above average mean score of 3.90. In terms of percentage rating, 48 postgraduate students strongly agreed accounting for 80%, one student agreed accounting for 1.7% while 11 were undecided accounting for 18.3% of the respondents who identified inadequate finances as a barrier. This is the highest-rated shortcoming, indicating a significant barrier for students in accessing education relevant to the work force. The high score indicates that limited financial assistance is a significant issue affecting students' ability to complete their education and gain necessary skills. Goldrick-Rab et al. (2020) agreed with this finding but further noted that insufficient financial aid is a major barrier to relevant aspects such as frequent field training in the universities curricula. This leads to lower overall attainment of necessary skills for the labour market.

Inadequate ICT materials recorded mean score of 4.4. The researcher found that this is a critical issue, reflecting the need for better information and communication technology resources in universities. Inadequate ICT materials significantly hamper students' ability to gain relevant digital skills. In this regard, a study by Wilson et al. (2021) found that lack of access to modern ICT tools and resources

in educational institutions limits students' ability to learn and apply new technologies, making them less competitive in the job market, especially in tech-driven fields.

Limited industry engagement also recorded a mean score of 4.4. This finding highlights a gap in collaboration between universities and industries, affecting the relevance and applicability of skills taught. Limited engagement with industry partners restricts students' opportunities for practical experience and networking. In support, research by Bravenboer (2020) indicates that healthy industry-university partnerships enhance students' employability by providing real-world experience and exposure to current industry practices. The lack of such engagement leaves students underprepared for the workplace.

Another barrier to various aspects of Universities Curricula to labour market demand is poor technology integration. This barrier recorded a mean score of 4.28 showing a substantial need for better integration of technology in curricula to keep pace with industry advancements. The curriculum's poor integration of technology is a major shortcoming, preventing postgraduate students from acquiring essential digital literacy and technological skills. A study by Mishra and Koehler (2021) recorded affirmative support to this finding but further established that effective technology integration into the curricula is

crucial for preparing students for a digital economy. The absence of such integration leads to graduates lacking essential technological skills required by modern employers particularly in the digital age.

Inadequate knowledge on financial management had a mean score of 4.25 that was above average mean score of 3.90. This indicates that financial management in education is insufficiently covered thereby affecting graduates' preparedness. The curriculum does not sufficiently cover financial management skills, which are essential across various job sectors. A study by Lusardi and Mitchell (2019) highlights the importance of financial literacy for both personal and professional success. Graduates with poor financial management skills are less prepared for roles in business, finance, and management.

Poor internet connectivity with a mean score of 2.97 was likewise identified as another shortcoming of universities curricula towards labour market demand. The researcher established that this a moderate issue, but still a significant barrier to accessing online resources and learning opportunities. Although not the most severe issue, poor internet connectivity is a considerable hindrance to students' ability to access online resources and learning platforms. Poor connectivity issues can disrupt learning and limit access to educational resources, particularly in remote learning scenarios. Research by Johnson et al. (2020) added that reliable internet connectivity is critical for effective online learning. Reliable internet connectivity is essential for accessing online resources, participating in virtual learning, and acquiring digital skills. Inadequate internet infrastructure can severely limit these opportunities, particularly in developing regions. This issue, while less significant than others, still negatively affects students' ability to engage fully with their education and professional development opportunities (European Commission, 2015).

Mismatch between graduates' skills and local job opportunities got the lowest mean score of 2.4. Although rated lower, it highlights a critical misalignment between education outcomes and job market needs. A significant mismatch exists between the skills graduates acquire and the local job market's demands, indicating a major alignment issue. In this respect, Gracia (2019) highlights the need for curricula that is responsive to local economic conditions and employer needs to ensure graduates are job-ready.

While responding to the theme on shortcomings of Universities Curricula towards labour market demand, one employer put forth the argument that:

The shortcomings of universities curricula towards labour market demand include weak partnerships with industries; focus on examinations instead of soft skills and inadequate financial supported towards modern programmes that are market driven such as constructions of machines, vehicles, mobile phones among others. Rigid and inflexible curricula structures that limit the ability to introduce new and relevant courses quickly is another barrier (Personal Interview, 30thMay, 2024).

The response indicates that overreliance on traditional examination methods fails to evaluate practical skills and real-world problem-solving abilities. Universities may provide limited career services and guidance, leading to a lack of awareness among students about the job market and potential career paths. The disparity between the skills taught in universities and those demanded by local job markets leads to high unemployment and underemployment rates among graduates. Gracia (2019) supports the finding by highlighting the need for curricula that are responsive to local economic conditions and employer needs to ensure graduates are job ready.

4.2 Quantitative Findings on the Strategies to Enhance Universities Curricula to the Labour Market Demand in Arusha Region

Research question two of this current study was set to investigate the strategies to enhance Universities Curricula to the labour market demand in Arusha Region. Selected postgraduate students, filled the questionnaires to indicate their level of agreement based on a five-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree=5, Agree=4, Undecided=3, Disagree=2 and Strongly Disagree=1 was used to develop closed-ended part of the questionnaire. However, lecturers and employers responded to interview guide. Data on this objective from respondents are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Responses from Postgraduate Students Strategies to Enhance Universities Curricula to the Labour Market Demand(n=60)

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean
	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Integrating practical experiences	40	66.7	17	28.3	3	5.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.62
Clear guidelines on utilizing funds for virtual learning projects	31	51.7	27	45.0	2	3.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.48
Industry partnership	17	28.3	42	70.0	1	1.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.27
Infusing global perspectives in the curriculum	17	28.3	40	66.7	3	5.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.23
Need for entrepreneurship education & innovation	33	55.0	10	16.7	0	0.0	17	28.3	0	0.0	3.98
Strengthening career development services	28	46.7	1	1.7	31	51.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	3.95
Technology integration in the curriculum	0	0.0	29	48.3	31	51.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	3.48
Provision of adequate ICT materials	2	3.3	41	68.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	17	28.3	3.18
Adequate financial assistance for acquiring necessary technology devices for virtual learning	9	15.0	18	30.0	2	3.3	31	51.7	0	0.0	3.08
Grand mean score											3.92

Source: Field data, 2024

From table 2, postgraduate students indicate that integrating practical experiences posted the highest mean score of 4.62 as one of the strategies to enhance Universities Curricula to the labour market demand. This mean score is above an average mean score of 3.92. The highest-rated strategy emphasizes the importance of incorporating hands-on experiences within the curricula. Integrating practical experiences, such as internships and work placements, into university curricula is highly effective in bridging the gap between education and employment. While lending credence, Gault et al. (2020) highlight that internships significantly improve job marketability by providing students with hands-on experience and professional networking opportunities. Similarly, Ferns and Zegwaard (2019) emphasize the critical role of work-integrated learning in developing practical skills and enhancing employability.

Clear guidelines on utilizing funds for virtual learning projects recorded a higher mean score of 4.48. The high score shows the need for transparent and effective use of funds to support virtual learning initiatives. The provision of clear guidelines on utilizing funds for virtual learning projects is crucial for effective implementation. This ensures that resources are appropriately allocated to develop high-quality virtual learning environments. A related study by Donald et al. (2018) suggests that transparent funding guidelines can enhance the delivery of

online education and ensure that students have access to necessary digital resources.

Industry partnership recorded a mean score of 4.27. The score was above average mean score of 3.92. This underlines the importance of collaboration between universities and industries to ensure curricula are relevant and practical. The alignment of university curricula with labour market demands is crucial for ensuring that graduates are well-prepared for employment and can contribute effectively to the economy. Developing strong partnerships with industries is essential for aligning curricula with labour market needs. Industry collaboration provides valuable insights into current market demands and helps universities tailor their programmes accordingly. Alanazed and Benlaria (2023) found that industry partnerships and work-integrated learning are key to improving graduate employability but often lack sufficient implementation. Gault (2020) also indicate that employers value graduates with practical experience gained through industry partnerships. Contrary to this finding, Adel (2020) reported that career services, counselling, skills, competencies, and curricula design positively influenced employability outcomes. However, industry partnerships and work-integrated learning had no significant impact.

Infusing global perspectives in the curricula got a mean score of 4.23. This implies that including global perspectives in the curricula prepares students for a diverse

and interconnected world. This approach enhances cultural awareness and adaptability, which are important traits in the global job market. To this extend, Greenberg and Nilssen (2019) argue that global perspectives in education help build soft skills that are critical for international work environments. There is need to include global perspectives to prepare students for a globalized job market. Entrepreneurship education fosters innovation and self-employment opportunities. Integrating entrepreneurship into the curricula equips students with the skills to start their own businesses and contribute to economic growth. Another, strategies to enhance Universities Curricula to the labour market demand in Arusha Region is the need for entrepreneurship education and innovation with a mean score of 3.98. The respondents recognized the importance of fostering entrepreneurial skills and innovative thinking among students. Entrepreneurship education fosters innovation and self-employment opportunities. Integrating entrepreneurship into the curriculum equips students with the skills to start their own businesses and contribute to economic growth. While in agreement, Alanazi and Benlaria (2023) highlight the need for entrepreneurship education to enhance employability by promoting innovative thinking and business acumen.

Technology integration in the curricula (3.48) was another strategy to enhance university curriculum to the labour market demand in Arusha Region. The finding Indicates a moderate focus on integrating technology into various disciplines within the curricula. Effective technology integration in the curriculum is essential for preparing students for the digital economy. Greenberg and Nilssen (2019) emphasize that integrating technology in education builds essential digital skills and enhances learning outcomes. However, poor technology integration remains a significant barrier, as highlighted by the study's findings

Provision of adequate ICT materials recorded a mean score of 3.18. This reflects the need for sufficient ICT resources to support modern learning environments. Adequate ICT materials are necessary for supporting digital learning and ensuring students have access to the tools they need. The study by Donald et al. (2018) concurred but also pointed out that insufficient ICT resources can hinder the development of digital literacy and technical skills. Universities need to invest in up-to-date ICT infrastructure to meet the demands of modern education.

Similarly, adequate financial assistance for acquiring necessary technology devices for virtual learning got a mean score of 3.08 with an average mean score of 3.92. This highlights the necessity of financial support for students to access essential technology for virtual learning. Providing financial assistance for acquiring necessary technology devices ensures that all students can participate in virtual learning. Alanazi and Benlaria (2023) lends credence by stressing the importance of financial support

systems in enabling students to access essential learning resources without financial stress.

Response from open ended questions from questionnaire pointed out that effective technology integration in the curriculum is essential for preparing students for the digital economy. Integrating technology in education builds essential digital skills and enhances learning outcomes. However, poor technology integration remains a significant barrier.

During interviews on strategies to enhance universities curricula so as to be relevant to labour market demand in Arusha region, a lecturer observed that:

Educators should highlight the benefits of integrating internships into universities programs to enhance employability. These strategies are crucial in creating a supportive and transparent environment that fosters better educational outcomes. Emphasizes the importance of clear guidelines for virtual learning projects and the need for adequate ICT materials. They collectively contribute to a fair, transparent, and supportive educational environment. The implementation of these strategies helps to enhance cooperation, and promote a positive school culture, ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes for students towards labour market demand (Personal interview, 4thJuly, 2024).

Another employer pointed out that:

...yes, the alignment of university curricula with labour market demands is crucial for ensuring that graduates are well-prepared for employment and can contribute effectively to the economy. This assessment aims to evaluate how well the current curricula at the universities meets the needs of today's labour market (Personal interview, 5thJuly, 2024).

The response underscores the necessity for comprehensive strategies to enhance universities curricula and better prepare graduates for the evolving demands of the labour market. This is in line with the Human Capital Theory that guided this study. The theory explores the ability to predict relevance of universities curricula in labour market demand and ability to produce human capital that is employment friendly. According to Stephenson et al. (2018), the theory endeavours to produce a diverse range of human capital for universities administrators, lecturers and graduates as change agents in predicting labour market demand. The human resource also benefits the targets of change since respect and consideration for all involved

stakeholders are intervened with robust strategies for implementing aspects of Universities Curricula that are necessary for innovative change. Greenberg and Nilssen (2019) agrees by observing that integrating technology in education builds essential digital skills and enhances learning outcomes. However, poor technology integration remains a significant barrier, as highlighted by this study.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the findings of the current study, the following conclusions were drawn:

The study indicates several key areas where university curricula fall short in meeting labour market demands. The most pressing issues are limited financial assistance, inadequate ICT materials, and insufficient industry engagement. Addressing these shortcomings is crucial for improving the alignment of university education with labour market needs. The average mean score of 3.90 indicates a generally significant level of shortcomings across these areas. These findings suggest that while some issues are more critical than others, all identified shortcomings collectively contribute to the misalignment between university education and labour market demands. These findings underscore the need for continuous curricula updates and stronger industry partnerships to ensure that graduates possess the skills required in the modern workforce. Inadequate ICT infrastructures, low connectivity, unreliable power supply, and national budget constraints that may undermine the relevance of Universities Curricula to the labour market demand should be given special attention.

The study suggests several effective strategies for enhancing Universities Curricula to align more closely with labour market demands. The most crucial strategies include integrating practical experiences, establishing clear guidelines for funding virtual learning projects, and fostering industry partnerships. These strategies are essential for preparing students with the skills and knowledge required in the modern workforce. The findings also indicate that various strategies are essential for enhancing universities curricula alignment with labour market demands. These include collecting and analysing feedback from alumni regarding the applicability of their education in their professional careers, infusing global perspectives, promoting entrepreneurship education, integrating technology, providing adequate ICT materials, and offering financial assistance for acquiring technology devices are all critical to preparing students for the workforce. Establish industry advisory boards to provide ongoing input on curricula development, ensuring it meets

current market needs. Incorporate project-based learning and real-world problem-solving into the curricula to develop practical skills.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings and supported empirical evidence, the following recommendations were made to further enhance university curricula in alignment with labour market demands:

1. **Expand Practical Experience Opportunities:** Universities should increase the availability of internships and hands-on projects. Partnerships with local businesses and industries can provide more opportunities for students to gain practical experience.
2. **Develop Clear Guidelines for Virtual Learning Funds:** Institutions should establish comprehensive guidelines for the effective use of funds allocated to virtual learning projects. This includes prioritizing investments in high-quality virtual learning platforms and training faculty to deliver online courses effectively.
3. **Enhance Entrepreneurship Education:** Universities should place a stronger emphasis on entrepreneurship education to better prepare graduates for starting their own ventures and contributing to economic growth.
4. **Increase Technology Integration:** Curricula should be updated to include more technology-related courses and practical applications to ensure students are well-versed in modern tools and platforms. Focus on Digital Marketing Skills given the digital transformation across industries, universities should expand their offerings in digital marketing to meet the growing demand for these skills. It is necessary also to invest in upgrading ICT infrastructure, including computers, software, and other digital tools, to support modern learning environments and incorporate more technology-driven courses and practical applications within the curriculum to better prepare students for technologically advanced workplaces

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