Collaboration between Higher Education and Labor Market in Kinshasa, DR Congo

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The transition of new graduate students from school to the labor market in Democratic Republic of Congo has been a major topic for debate over the last twenty years. This study identifies the factors affecting collaboration between higher education and the labor market in Kinshasa, the Capital city of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Even though the demand for access to higher education is very high, results revealed that the current curriculum and policies have inherent inefficiencies that do not provide new graduates with sufficient skills to easily move into and be productive in the labor market (African Development Bank, 2012). Moreover, with an outdated curriculum and the high level of corruption, universities are now lucrative markets where professors trade grades for sex and money (International Governance Institute, 2011; Kutumisa, 2015; 2009; Zindi 1998; Simelane, 2001; Taiwo et al, 2014). The results of this study suggest the need for collaboration between higher education institutions and employers in order to design effective curricula and build up an educational environment that truly benefit current students and their future employers.
Keywords: DR Congo, Kinshasa, Higher education, employers, new graduates, labor market, knowledge, skills

The education system in the Democratic Republic of Congo has suffered from decades of war, political instability and economic decline (World Bank, 2005). In fact, since 1996, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has been embroiled in violence that has killed as many as 5.4 million people. The conflict has been the world's bloodiest since World War II (World Bank, 2008).

The Democratic Republic of Congo is the second largest country in Africa, after Algeria, with 2.345.000 km2. Occupied by Belgium and known as Belgium Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo became independent in 1960, and gained the name République Démocratique du Congo. The country was named Zaire by president Mobutu, until 1997 when Laurent Desire Kabila took power and renamed it République Démocratique du Congo. The country's population is today estimated to 71 million, 14% of which is in the capital city Kinshasa (Ministry of Budget, 2014).

Despite a per capita DGP of about US$100 in 2003 to a per capita DGP of US$ 800 in 2015, the DR Congo is ranked as one

of the poorest countries in the world. Furthermore, the country's education system has also suffered from conflicts that led to lootings by soldiers in 1991 and 1993 (World Bank, 2005). The lootings resulted in a destruction of schools' buildings and furniture and other educational infrastructures that the country has never been able to totally recover. Moreover, the lack of road infrastructures has led to the abandonment of schools in provinces or other rural areas (World Bank, 2008).

To remediate to the aforementioned consequences of socio-economic and political instability on education, the Congolese educational system has undergone several reforms and expansions, at all levels, in 1971, 1981, 1996 and 2003 (World Bank, 2005). These educational reforms have partially improved the overall education system, by increasing the number of students; adapting the educational system which was the vestige of the Belgium colonial heritage to the realities, culture, needs and expectations of the country; decentralizing the higher education system and encouraging participatory leadership; and changing the status of most institutes to universities (Kutumisa, 2015; World Bank, 2005).

As the results of the reforms and expansion of the educational system, there has been an increase in the number of primary education schools, from 43, 218 schools in 2012/2013 to 48, 147 in 2013/2014. There has also been an increase of 7,4% in the number of registered students at the primary education level, from 12.600,876 in 2012/2013 to 13. 534, 625 in 2013/2014 (République Démocratique du Congo, 2014).

As of the number of Secondary schools in the country, there has been an increase of 4,7%. In fact, the country moved from 22,698 secondary schools in 2012/2013 to 23,759 schools in 2013/2014. Regarding the overall number of secondary students, the country has had 9,8% of increase; It had 3. 995, 631

students schooled in 2012/2013 and 4.388.425 students during the academic year 2013/2014 (République Démocratique du Congo, 2014).

At the university level, which is the focus of this study, the number of Higher Education Institutions has increased from 764 in 2014 to 901 in 2015. This increase has been effective, despite the government's decision to close Higher Education Institutions that do not meet the standards set by the Ministry of Education and its partners (République Démocratique du Congo, 2014). Only three of these Higher Education Institutions, which are The University of Kinshasa, The University of Kisangani and The University of Lubumbashi, have the capacity to provide doctoral studies and degrees in the country. The estimated number of students in Higher Education is therefore 604.000 and the one of professors is 1965 (République Démocratique du Congo, 2014).

Despite those reforms and increase in the number of students and educational institutions, experts argue that the Congolese educational system is known to be both ineffective and outdated (Virima, 2008; Mokonzi & Kadongo, 2010; Eyanganunga, 2006). In the Congolese classroom, learners are expected to memorize static lectures, and have few opportunities to use critical thinking skills or apply what they learn in class (World Bank, 2005). Referring to the requirements of the labor market and the new industrial world, an educational system must be a practical one in order to boost industries and improve the socio-economic welfare of the population (Van Der & Wolbers, 2006). But the Congolese higher education system in particular is still struggling to enforce reforms made after 2003 (Eyanganunga, 2006; and African Development Bank, 2012).

The Congolese higher education system is therefore struggling with the lack of qualified personnel, inadequate

infrastructures, outdated curricula, under-staff, lack of libraries, low teachers' remuneration, lack of basic services and underfunding, and corruption (Teferra and Altbach, 2004). A lack of adequate infrastructure means that in most universities, there are not enough seats for students, and buildings are in desperate need of repair (Teferra & Altbach, 2004). For example, in case of rain, students must move to one side of the classroom to avoid being wet. The curricula used in most provinces and schools are outdated in that they do not meet the labor market needs and requirements, and do not consider technological trends in education. Most of the higher education institutions are understaffed, typically with staff that lacks qualifications. For example, it is common to have someone with a degree in physics teaching biology, statistics and mathematics (Teferra & Altbach, 2004; Jeged, 2012).

There are not adequate libraries (availability and quality of materials) to facilitate students' knowledge acquisition. Teachers receive a low salary and are unable to send their own children to school or cover their daily expenses. This low salary is seldom received on time, and teachers sometimes get paid after four months of services. There is also a lack of basic services such as water, electricity and sanitation in most universities (Teferra & Altbach, 2004; Jeged, 2012). According to Aborisade (as cited by Zeilig & Dawson, 2008, p. 5), upon occasion, lecturers and students have had to relieve themselves in nearby bushes. Moreover, corruption has taken over meritocracy as professor trade grades for money and sex (Mokonzi & Kadongo, 2010).

In 2006, the minister of Public Administration denounced corruption and negative values in the anti-corruption week meeting with presidents of higher education institutions (Tamina, 2015). She argued that:

In fact, everybody knows that a plague of unknown origin is rampant in our universities and institutes of higher education. This virus manifests itself under various forms, including: (1) marks that are sexually transmitted (PST); (2) my man or my woman: grades are no longer given merit, they are given based on ethnic and tribal lines and monetary transactions; (3) and operation dissertation: professors write dissertations for their students. (Tamina, 2015)

The trade of grade for money is mostly experienced by male students, while the one of grade for sex is experienced by female students (Kitsita, 2014; Kutumisa, 2015; Taiwo et al, 2014; Morgan, 2010; Morley, 2011; 2009; Zindi 1998; Simelane, 2001).

Even though the issue of sexual harassment in higher education is a global issue that cannot only be attributed to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in particular, fighting against corruption under all its forms in higher education's environment, including the trade of grade with sex, is one of the most discussed topics of debate in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Musadila, 2003; International Governance Institute, 2011). Within the academia in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, no one is spared by corruption, which is attributed to a low salary that administrators, senior lecturers, assistants and professors receive from the government (Mokonzi & Kadongo, 2010).

Many of the problems experienced by institutions of higher education in DR Congo can also be attributed to under-funding (Teferra and Altbach, 2004). In DR Congo, the budget allocated to education has significantly increased from 6% in 2007 to 16.05% in 2014, out of 8.9 billion dollars (Ministry of Budget, 2014). Despite this, changes have not been seen since the issues

are so deep-seated and require more time and money than what has been provided up until now.

Similarly, the DR Congo's labor market is completely out of balance (African Economic Outlook, 2012). The demand for jobs has rapidly increased since 1990, when supply started to fall as the result of plunder, wars and other economic crisis (African Economic Outlook, 2012). This situation has favored the emergence of an informal employment sector. According to BMI Research Group (2016), the Democratic Republic of Congo has a largely rural, unskilled labor force, with a large proportion of the population in informal labor. In fact, in the absence of any real employment policy to help the youth, some wealthy individuals have launched initiatives to help, but due to a lack of coordination between their efforts assessing their influence on job creation, their initiatives are less successful (African Economic Outlook, 2012).

Unemployment among DR Congo college graduates is a staggering 70%. Quintini (2007) attributes this high unemployment rate to the limited number of jobs available, a mismatch between training and the skills sought by employers, and the slow rate of retirement among public employees. Moreover, even those who do find a job immediately after graduation are not working in the area of their respective majors. This makes the integration process of young people into the labor market far from smooth, with the transition from school to work characterized as a turbulent and uncertain period for new graduates (Van Der Velden, 2006).

This study focused on understanding the effectiveness of the Congolese higher education system in preparing youth for employment beyond graduation. Specifically, we have analyzed survey data from recent graduates (within 5 years) and employers in the city of Kinshasa, about the Congolese higher education program; the survey asked questions about how well the Congolese higher education system prepares students for employment. Therefore, we have clarified the expectations of the learners, how they view themselves. Moreover, we have reported the expectations of employers from the schools or universities, and how they view graduated students from work preparedness.

Recognizing that little to no research has been conducted within the area of higher education and employment in the Democratic Republic of Congo during the last two decades, this research will clarify the state of the Congolese higher education system, and may serve as a launching point for other researchers to conduct their own research on DR Congo's education and employment.

Conceptual framework

Education plays a central role in preparing youths to enter the labor market and in equipping them with the skills needed to engage in lifelong learning experiences (Tazeen, 2008). With an outdated curriculum and inherent policies, the Congolese education system does not provide those who graduate necessary skills and knowledge in order to easily enter the labor market (African Development Bank, 2012), while education and relevant skills are the main factors of good labor market outcome (Ionescu, 2012).

Tazeen (2008, p. 11) found that the linkages between education and the labor market can be defined as a three-tiered relationship: the determinants of education determine educational outcomes, which, in turn, determine the labor market outcomes of individuals. For the purpose of this study, we explored the current higher education system in use in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and examined its effectiveness in preparing youth for employment beyond graduation, in the capital city of Kinshasa.

While Congolese students are complaining about the inefficiency of higher education institutions to prepare them for the workforce, employers report difficulties in finding enough skilled workers among newly graduate college students (Mokonzi & Kadongo, 2010). Higher education labor market alignment seems to be the last best strategy to solve the issues of qualified and skilled new graduate students (Holzer, 2013; Sherrill, 2013; Beaudry, Green, & Sand, 2013). Cleary and Van Noy (2014) therefore suggested the following strategies for higher education labor market alignment (LMA): Career Pathways and Stackable, Credentials Sector Strategies, employer Engagement, Work-based Learning (apprenticeships, internships, and cooperative education), Competency-based Education, Active and Problem-based Learning, Learning Outcomes Assessment, Career, Academic, and Support Services, Reform 21st-Century Skills, and Some College Industry Partnerships. These strategies provide resources that may guide the implementation of changes and measurement of outcomes of the collaboration between higher education institutions and employers in Kinshasa.

To examine how well the current Congolese education system prepares students to integrate the labor market in Kinshasa, we used the human capital and signaling theories. Human capital theory posits that formal education is critical and highly instrumental for the improvement of the productive capacity of a population (Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2008; and Oppedisano, 2014).

Human capital theory implies that education renders people more productive, and it raises the marginal product of an educated worker relative to one not so educated (Becker, 1993; Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2008). This statement has two meanings: it asserts that each job entails a certain complement of cognitive skills which can only be acquired by formal schooling; and it also assumes that the marginal product of an individual worker can be exactly identified (Van der Merwe, 2010; Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2008; Blaug, 1992). Moreover, Research shows that education raises human capital, which raises productivity, confirming the efficiency rationale for education (Tazeen, 2008; and OECD, 1997).

Created by the Nobel prize Michael Spencer, signaling theory assert that by the means of diplomas, prospective employees signal their competences to employers (Van der Merwe, 2010). This theory supports that since the real productivity of a prospective employee is not fully known, education conveys information about the level of motivation, discipline and other characteristics of the workers such as diligence and, punctuality, which indirectly predict productivity and efficiency (Kim & Mohtadi, 1992; and Zaharie, 2011). Other researchers have criticized these theories arguing that education should be considered as a screening tool, not as key to productivity (Van der Merwe, 2010, Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2008).

Methods

This study used a multiple approach to collect and analyze data from new graduate students and employers in Kinshasa, the capital city of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Therefore, findings are integrated and inferences are drawn using both qualitative and quantitative (descriptive) approaches. In fact, participants responded to a survey questionnaire made of open and close-ended questions. Other data such as reports were collected through the Congolese Government and the World Bank websites. Since this research was intended to produce a baseline of information, we mainly proving descriptive statistics.

Participants

The subjects included in the sample were graduate students and employers, in the capital city, Kinshasa. We targeted this city because it has the best universities in the country, and universities there produce more than 50% of the country's new graduates each year, while the majority of companies are also located in this city (Virima, 2008). Participants were selected based on following inclusionary criteria: the new graduates must have graduated within the last 5 years, from one of the following main universities in the city of kinshasa: Université Pédagogique Nationale (UPN), Université de Kinshasa (UNIKIN), Institut Supérieur de Techniques Appliquées (ISTA), Institut Supérieur d'Informatique, Programmation et Analyse (ISIPA), Institut des Bâtiments et des Travaux Publics (IBTP), Institut Facultaire des Sciences de Information et de la Communication (IFASIC), Institut Supérieur de Commerce (ISC), Université Protestante du Congo (UPC) and Université Catholic du Congo (UCC). They could either be employed or unemployed; employers on the other hand must have been employing new graduates; they could have either or not be familiar with the educational training quality offered at the higher education level, in contact with educational institutions and offered a capacity building program for unskilled or unproductive new graduates within their companies.

The e-mails addresses of both employers and new graduates were provided by Higher Education Institutions (departments and schools), the DR Congo Investment Promotion Agency (ANAPI in French) and www.bizcongo.cd, since they are considered as public domain by law (government). Each year, ANAPI and www.bizcongo.cd publish a list of all the companies and organization (public and private) in DR Congo, the names of their managers and their contacts: e-mail addresses, telephone numbers and faxes. Each Higher Education Institution's department or school also saves a list of its students' contacts for anyone who might need to particularly contact the students.

A total of 106 people were asked to participate in this research. Responses were obtained from 74 respondents, including 42 new graduates and 32 employers. The 21 graduates and 11 employers who did not complete the survey and did not meet the selection criteria were excluded from the research, resulting in a sample of 42 new graduates and 32 employers.

Instrument

An online survey was conducted using the online computer software Surveymonkey® to gather and analyze data from participants, via their e-mail addresses. Two questionnaires were therefore used as data collection instruments: One for new graduates, with 19 questions and another one for employers with 13 questions. The questionnaires included a consent note section in the introduction, and had both open and close ended questions. Many questions also had an option for comments, with the possibility of providing some rich qualitative data.

They were piloted using four graduate students and four employers, and improvements were made based on their responses and feedback. Moreover, their responses and feedback allowed us to ensure both the validity and reliability of the questionnaires.

Limitations

Little research has been conducted on the Congolese higher education system. The research to date does not include all higher education students enrolled in Congolese universities because the Ministry of Higher

Education does not frequently update and publish these numbers.

Moreover, the trade of grade for sex has been addressed in the literature review since it is one of the facets of corruption in academia in the Democratic of Congo, but we did not go deeply into it because it is a completely different topic that requires a whole study.

Another limitation to this research is the limited access to internet in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The inaccessibility to internet prevented participants to actively respond to the online survey. It would have been better if we personally travelled to the Democratic Republic of Congo and collected data using other techniques such as interview or focus group.

Procedures

The primary researcher, a national from DR Congo, selected managers from the list of employers known to hire new graduates, then contacted employed and unemployed graduates via solicitation for participation letters. Those solicitation letters were sent to them via email before administering the questionnaires in order to explain the reason we were contacting them and what the research consisted of. Then, the questionnaires were sent to both employers and new graduates who positively responded to the solicitation for participation letters, via their e-mail addresses. Each of them received a link of questionnaire in both English and French in order to select the language they feel comfortable with. It took approximately 9 to 10 minutes for a respondent to fill out and submit the answers.

Open-ended questions and comments were coded using the following themes: knowledge, skills, curriculum, policy, education system, teacher training; while the close-ended questions were automatically analyzed by Survemonkey@, in percentage.

Results

The results of this research are divided into two parts; the first focuses on the views of new graduates, and the second on those of employers.
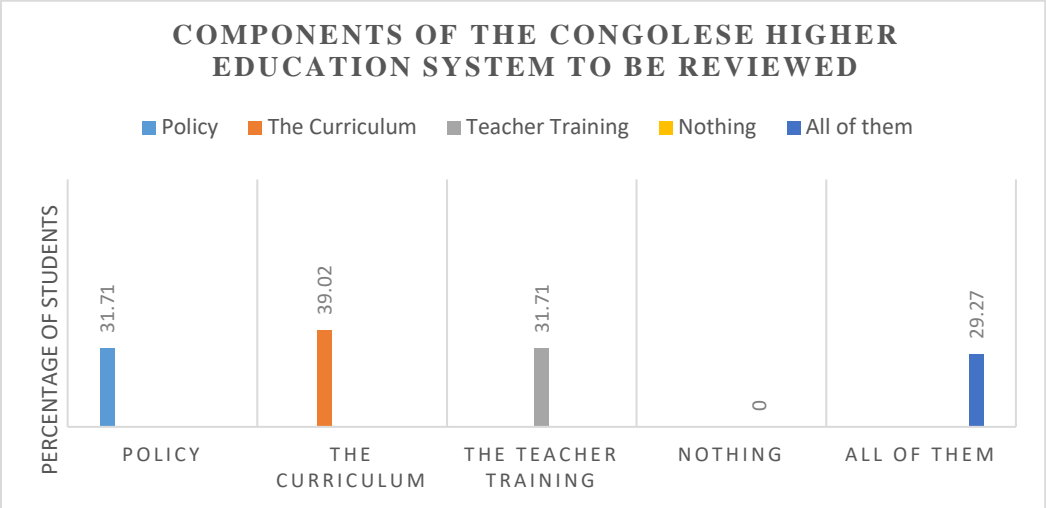
New Graduates

The data showed that, of the 42 new graduates who completed the survey, 83.34% felt prepared for labor market after graduation, while 11.28% felt not well prepared. Regarding their satisfaction, 83.34% were very satisfied, and 14, 28% were very dissatisfied and 2.38% were unable to classify their knowledge. Almost 73.81% of them described the skills acquired from higher education helpful in real life setting, 21.43% somewhat helpful, and 4.76% not at all helpful. Figure 1 illustrates how new graduates view and rate (percentage) the Congolese higher education system, its curriculum, the knowledge and skills they acquired, and the policies that regulate the sector.
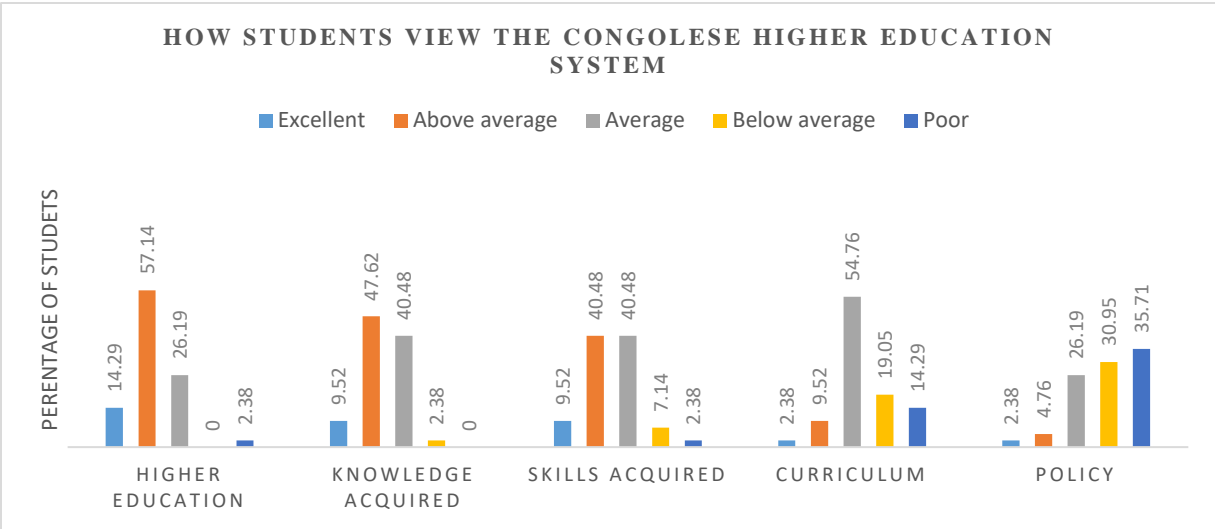
Graph 1. How new graduates view the Congolese higher education system, based on their academic experience.

New graduates commented that they received above average knowledge and skills from the universities they attended. They are positive about their labor market integration agreeing that higher education helped them understand the labor market's needs and requirements. Recent graduates in this study also believe that the curriculum used at the higher education level is effective. Despite their positive views on the curriculum, the majority of new graduates would like to have the curriculum, the teacher training, and the policies which accompany them reviewed by the government. Figure 2 shows the components of the Congolese higher education system that new graduates would like to have reviewed or changed. These components are the key points the ministry of education and specialist across the country believe should be changed.

Graph 2. Components of the Congolese higher education system that new graduates would like to have reviewed or changed.

Regarding employment of individuals who graduated from college in the last five years, this study revealed that only 40.48% are currently employed while 59.52% are still unemployed. For those employed, 42.31% found a job 1-2 years ago, 26.92% 3-5 years ago, 11.54% right after graduation. It is worth noting that 51.85% of them reported having received training at the beginning of their employment, and 48.15% reported that they did not. Among those who positively responded to this question, some clarified that it was mandatory for them to be trained since their new jobs were not related to their fields of study. Those trainings are mainly based on how the company operates and the use of computer software to be used daily in their duties.

Describing their chances and likelihood of finding a job in their field of study in DR Congo through an open-ended question, only 33.33% of new graduates believe that they have a chance to find, while 63.41% of them are considering leaving DR Congo for another country to find employment or pursue higher education. Those who expressed the desire to leave the country cited the following as the main reasons:

- They would like to go abroad in order to pursue higher education, acquire necessary knowledge and skills, then come back to help the country towards development.
- Others were motivated to move abroad permanently due to low salary, poor working conditions, corruption, nepotism, favoritism, and lack of job opportunities.

Compared to those looking forward to leaving DR Congo, some expressed the desire to stay and to create their own businesses, and contribute to the country's development by fighting against corruption, nepotism, favoritism and any kind of social unfairness which is destroying the country. Those mentioned factors are described by new graduates as key elements that are worsening the country's socio-political stability, which in turn affect the development of an effective education.
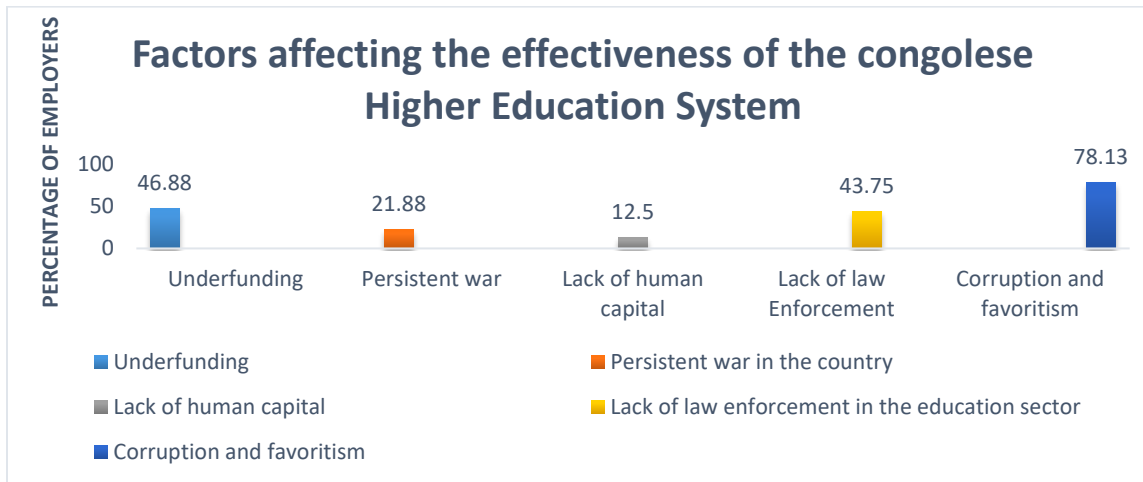
Employers

Employers were asked to assess the effectiveness of the Congolese higher education system in preparing new graduates for work. The survey results indicate that 78.13% of the employers responded that their selection criteria are based on the new graduates' skills, 62.50% on their knowledge, 56.25% on their ability to adapt and 43.75% on their experience. Employers responded that 62.50% of new graduates they hire work in the area of their field of study; only 37.50% said they did not. Almost all the employers (90.63%) offer professional development or internship opportunities to the new graduates. Regarding their satisfaction with the new graduates' labor skills, 62.50% of the employers are satisfied, 34.38% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 3.13% dissatisfied. On the application of new graduates' knowledge and skills to their work, employers asserted that new graduates need more training since they do not apply easily to their work environment. This is explained in the graph below.

EMPLOYERS VIEWS OF NEW GRADUATES' KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS APPLICATION

Graph 3. Employers' views of new graduates' knowledge and skills application in the work environment.

Regarding whether or not new graduates have received cutting edge education based on their needs, employers were evenly divided. Employers who responded yes to this question commented that the new graduates must be taught more in the work environment through learning by doing in order to close knowledge and skill gaps. Those who responded negatively explained that the new graduates they hire have great knowledge of theory, but putting what they know into practice on the job is the great issue. They recognized that the educational system is not tailored to the needs of the labor market.

Based on the new graduates' performance, 40.63% of employers think that the Congolese higher education system poorly prepares students for work, and 67.74% believe that the Congolese higher education system is primarily theory-based. Regarding the factors negatively affecting the Congolese higher education system, 78.13% described corruption and/or favoritism as the primary factor, followed by underfunding, lack of law enforcement in the education sector, the persistent war in the country, and the lack of human capital. The Figure 4 below illustrates their views.

Factors affecting the effectiveness of the congolese Higher Education System

PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYERS

- Underfunding: 46.88
- Persistent war: 21.88
- Lack of human capital: 12.5
- Lack of law Enforcement: 43.75
- Corruption and favoritism: 78.13

Legend:
- Underfunding
- Persistent war in the country
- Lack of human capital
- Lack of law enforcement in the education sector
- Corruption and favoritism

Graph 4. Factors affecting the effectiveness of Congolese education system

To the last question (open-ended): If you could give feedback to Higher Education for better preparing students for work, what would you suggest? Employers provided resourceful advice that the government can use to improve the country's educational system. They suggested:

- A deep review of the educational system (curriculum and policy): This review must start from kindergarten to the university. It should not be theoretical, but a practical one, which would provide students with updated knowledge and skills that the labor market requires.
- Promote partnerships: Both employers and the ministry of education should be great partners for any change to occur in education.
- Funding education: The government should increase the budget of education. The aim of this increment is to improve the salary of teachers, professors, other education professionals and build modern infrastructures.

- Fight nepotism and favoritism, which are now institutionalized in the educational system: Primary school, secondary schools and universities.
- Fight corruption: the trade of grades for money and sex, "sexually transmitted grade" between professors and students.
- Encourage creativity and excellence: Reward best students based on their academic achievement with scholarships and other financial aids.
- Close universities which do not meet the minimum standards required by the government: It is not all about the number of universities and students, but the quality of education and workers those educational institutions produce, and
- Hire more academic advisers to lead students to the right fields of study.

Discussion

The present study identified factors affecting the Congolese higher education system and their impact on the new graduates' transition into the labor market, in Kinshasa. Results supported that some factors affecting the transition from

higher education to the labor market are corruption and favoritism, curriculum and policies used in higher education, underfunding, lack of law enforcement in the education sector, persistent wars in the country, lack of human capital, and lack of collaboration between higher education and the labor market (employers) in determining what students should learn.

The findings of this study are consistent with those of the World Bank (2005) and a study conducted by Shapiro, Gough, and Pongi-Nyuba (2011), who found that new graduates from higher education have a great knowledge stored from school, but applying their knowledge within a real-life setting (skills) requires more training from their employers. Therefore, the Congolese higher education system has a discrepancy between the knowledge and skills it provides to new graduates. The result of this research shows a discrepancy from new graduates regarding the quality of the Congolese education system since they rate the higher education curriculum as good, but at the same time desire it to be changed or reviewed.

The Congolese education system has been described by both new graduates and employers to be theory-based. However, no support was obtained from employers and new graduates for the statement that most of the employed new graduates do not work in their area of study.

This unexpected result may be due to the fact that, prior to hiring new graduates, most employers provide them with the necessary skills' training they know the university did not provide. They provide them the opportunity to learn by doing as the solution to their skills gaps. Normally, students' professional gaps are supposed to be filled through professional development plans and internships, during the academic period (Baird, 2013).

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, students attend higher education for five years; during that time, each student is required to participate in two, three-month-long internships based on their field of study. The idea is to prepare and immerse students into the labor market environment and provide them with enough skills for their future careers. The goal is seldom reached, however, due to a lack of close supervision from both universities and instructors assigned to monitor internships (Kutumisa, 2015).

The results of this research sorted out significant gaps between employers' and new graduates' assessment regarding the outcomes of the Congolese higher education. New graduates indicated that they have been well-prepared for the labor market and are fully satisfied with the knowledge and skills they have been provided; in contrast, employers asserted that, based on the new graduates' performance, the Congolese higher education poorly prepares students for work. They even went further, claiming that new graduates need more training to apply their knowledge and skills.

Educational institutions and employers are said to be the best partners for quality education. But the discrepancy found between employers and new graduates illustrates how less aware students are of the labor markets' needs and requirements, and how employers mistrust the knowledge and skill offered by universities in Kinshasa. The employers' statement about the Congolese higher education to be theory-based is consistent with our research hypothesis.

Conclusion

The results of this research provide valuable insights on the factors affecting the transitions of new graduates from school to work in Kinshasa. The lack of collaboration between higher education and employers in determining the curriculum and policies add to corruption (trade of grades for money) and favoritism (giving high grade to relatives),

underfunding (the budget allocated to education), lack of adequate human capital, lack of law enforcement in the education sector and long term effects of persistent wars on education are the challenges that the government should fight in the coming years. Research in identifying factors affecting collaboration between higher education and labor market can continue. Future research may extend to new graduates and employers of other provinces of the country since each province has its own realities and the transition from school to work may vary or be perceived differently. The research would have been more effective if the researchers could travel to Kinshasa/DR Congo and interview new graduates, employers and officials of the ministry of higher education. Since access to internet is limited and most people do not know more about online survey, respondents were therefore reluctant to respond to the questionnaire.

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Appendix 3

The following technical words have been used in this research paper. They are therefore defined here based on the Congolese context for readers' edification and enlightenment.

Corruption:	Any form of social unfairness which results in the trade of grades with money or sex, from students to professors.
Curriculum:	Academic lessons and content taught in the Congolese higher education.
Factors:	Anything that influence or contributes to the improvement or decrease of the higher education system.
Favoritism:	The practice of giving grades to one person or relatives based on appreciation, not on merit.
Higher education:	Any educational institution that offer Bachelor degrees within 4 academic years.
Knowledge:	Facts, information, and skills acquired through experience or education
New graduates:	Any person who has graduated from the selected universities less than 5 years, either employed or unemployed.
Policies:	Collection of laws and rules that govern the Congolese higher education system.
Remuneration:	Money paid for a work or service.
Skills:	Ability and expertise to accomplish a task.
Transition:	The process of moving from higher education to the labor market