

**SCHOOL TO WORK TRANSITION AMONG EMPLOYED  
GRADUATES IN ACCRA.**

**BY**

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**DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that, except for references to other people's work, which have been duly acknowledged, this work is the result of my own research work carried out under the supervision of Dr. James Dzisah and Prof. Akosua Darkwah of the Department of Sociology.

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to the Almighty God for His steadfast love, infinite mercy, grace and the gift of intellect for the entire duration of my studies and to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Mills for their unwavering support, sacrifices and encouragement. I am forever grateful.

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God richly bless you all.

## ABSTRACT

The transition from school to work is one that has long been the focus of academic attention. Two assets, formal and informal have been identified to offer a more successful transition. However, there is a lack of clarity in our context about which supersedes the other in determining this successful transition. Generally, this study sought to explore the nature of assets that enabled an easy transition from school to work. To achieve this, the study utilized a mixed methods approach; a survey of 209 employed graduates working in six formal organizations and interviews with 7 respondents. The study revealed that, it takes a graduate as early as one year and at least five years to get a job in Accra after tertiary education. The study also disclosed that, out of the varied strategies used in securing jobs, the family factor was the main source of finding out about job vacancies. As Granovetter (1974) argued, the study found that informal assets specifically social networks were the most important factor for successful school to work transition among employed graduates in Accra. In this study, it is also found that, the status of members in one's social network was key. The study, however, recommends graduates make use of their formal assets (skills, qualification, work experience, course of study etc) rather than their informal assets (family friends, acquaintances) since it is the formal assets that would help them stay in the organisation when there is a change in the structure of the organisation.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 BACKGROUND

...Meet Naa Odarley, Nana Ama, Joojo and Kofi. All four have graduated from their universities, ended their National Service at their various postings and searching for jobs in the labour market. This is their first transition from school to work. Who will make an appreciable school to work transition? Fortunately, Naa Odarley gets a job amidst the limited employment opportunities and where having a degree does not guarantee one a job. How did she get in...?

The transition from school to work is an important phase in the life of every graduate. School-to-work transition is not just one single event that is, moving from being a student to being a worker but a series of transitions that varies significantly across both individuals and countries (Korpi et al., 2003). It refers to the time in an individual's life when he completes his or her tertiary education or training and acquires a steady job in an organisation (Wolbers, 2003).

Just like "rites of passage" where individuals move from one life stage to another (from birth to death), school to work transition can be likened to the progression from being a student to being a worker (Gangl, 2002). It can also be seen as a period where individuals are integrated into the labour market. To Wyn et al (1997 p. 96), „transition to adulthood“ means that every individual in his life moves from childhood to adulthood and this stage has its own responsibilities that is, a destination at which one „arrives“ and this marks his or her economic independence and other aspirations as well.

As an important life event, this transition is a crucial stage in the lives of graduates because it is usually their first and major entry into the labour market and their lifelong careers as well, and can be very unstable (Korpi et al., 2003). This instability involves various efforts and ways to establish themselves in the world of work since the quest for a smooth school to work transition can be very tedious. Additionally, this causes them to make difficult decisions such as how to respond to the opportunities and constraints of the labour market (Schoon and Silbereisen, 2009).

According to the International Labour Organization (2011), the 2008 world's financial crisis or global economic recession had negative effects on both developed and developing countries. It led to the loss of jobs as both private and public institutions froze employment because of low demand for goods and services. This situation mainly affected young workers as compared to the older ones; the reason being that the younger workers had little experience thus, making it difficult for graduates to make a smooth transition into the labour market. By the end of 2009, the world's unemployed had increased to two hundred and five million. Also, aside unemployment, there was a decline in the quality of employment where employees had to accept unfavourable working conditions.

Asafu-Adjaye (2012) reiterated this point by making it known that; higher unemployment levels among graduates in Africa in recent times have reinforced the uncertainty about the effects on education in terms of employability. He further argued that, the economic crisis and cuts in public expenditure in most African states as a result of the structural adjustment programs implemented in the late 1980s hindered many graduates' labour market opportunities (ibid.).

Transition from school to work is not as straightforward as it looks or sounds. According to Te Riele (2004), this transition is made up of lots of ups and downs. In confirmation of this,

Scherer (2005) posits that whereas in some countries graduates have to wait a long time before they enter the labour market, in others, they have a smooth transition into the labour market; and whereas some graduates are stable in their first jobs, others are not. This integration process according to Muller and Gangl (2003) is not solely a result of the individual's decision but also economic conditions, job market conditions, government policies and rapid technological changes which they respond to in diverse ways.

In developed countries such as Austria, Sweden and Belgium, graduates have fairly easy transitions as job opportunities are available and graduates in these countries are able to get jobs during the first six months after their graduation but in developing countries like Cote d'Ivoire, it takes individuals one year to get into the labour market and more than five years in countries like Kenya, Malawi, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, among others. In fact, graduates have to wait for a long time before getting employed and as a result taking up other temporary jobs for lack of better job opportunities (Fares et al, 2005). In Ghana, it is common among graduates from universities to secure employment in the formal sector. In 2008, it was estimated that less than two percent of those who complete school are able to get jobs in the formal sector (ISSER, 2008). However, this figure has changed as it is estimated that only eight percent are able to get jobs in the formal sector of the economy with the remaining ninety-two percent in the informal sector (NDPC 2010). This therefore depicts the unavailability of jobs to match the number of graduates seeking employment in the formal sector.

Employability is an individual's achievement and it is the ability of a graduate to get employment (Harvey, 2001). McQuaid (2006) referred to employability as the various factors that together affect a person's likelihood of securing a job; that is, the quality of being employable. These factors, she classified as individual factors (the person's skills, qualifications, work experience, length of unemployment, demographic characteristics);

personal circumstances (access to resources, family support, caring responsibilities); and external factors (labour market demand, mobility).

To Green et al (2011), these methods have normally been divided into formal and informal methods and are deployed in ways which differ from person to person to facilitate their entry into the labour market. Thus, one factor will not ensure a successful transition into the labour market for everyone. The formal methods comprise the services of employment agencies, responding to advertisements in newspapers, journals and recently, the internet. The informal methods include social network, ethnicity among others. They also further classify job search behaviour as „active“ or „passive“ depending on the diverse actions that an individual engages in to seek employment, with the former being associated with greater actions than the latter. Another concept used in studies of job search is that of job-search „intensity“ which is variously considered as the time spent by individuals looking for jobs, the number of applications made or the number of different job-search methods used (ibid).

Granovetter's (1974) work on "Getting a Job" proposed that, numerous employees not only get jobs through their formal assets (internet, skills, qualification, and work experience) but also get jobs through their informal assets (social network), that is, whom they know. He brings out a clear distinction between what he refers to as strong and weak ties. For him, strong ties are formed between people and their families and close friends while weak ties are formed between people and their colleagues and acquaintances. To him, strength of ties is the combination of the amount of time devoted to a relationship, the emotional intensity within the relationship, the intimacy between members as well as the mutual service rendered. He also makes it clear that these ties; strong and weak both have values they contribute in order for individuals to secure jobs.

This study thus seeks to explore and understand how this eight percent are able to make it into the formal sector and the assets they deploy to transition from school to work effectively. These assets are what Bourdieu (1984) calls capital which comes in different forms; economic, cultural, social and symbolic. Either one or a combination of all four makes this transition possible.

## **1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

University education is a frequently chosen pathway for individuals to be employable in the workforce (Perez-Pena, 2012). However, in recent years, there has been a debate about the extent to which university education offers a simple transition to employment. One school of thought has it that, graduates are able to make an easy school to work transition while the other holds that, graduates are not able to make an easy school to work transition. The consensus is that a lot of factors other than simply attending a university determine the ease of one's transition. These factors include the internet (Green et al 2011), skills (Brown et al 2003), qualifications (Brown, 2003), work experience (Tomlinson, 2008) and social network (Elias, 2000), advertisements (Opoku Nyarko et al, 2014). A key point to note about this discussion is the fact that, the literature available, focuses on the developed countries where securing a job is fairly easy. However, not much is known within the Ghanaian context. Therefore, the extent to which formal and informal assets are relevant in getting graduates jobs in Ghana is not known. This study therefore seeks to fill this gap by understanding the keys to a successful school to work transition in the Ghanaian context to ascertain to what extent the factors identified for such transitions are applicable in the Ghanaian context.

## 1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

Generally, this study seeks to explore the factors that are at play in getting graduates permanent jobs in the formal sector of Ghana's economy.

The specific objectives are:

- To explore the extent to which formal assets (knowledge, skills, qualifications, work experience) determine graduates' employment.
- To examine the extent to which informal assets (family, friends, acquaintances and social networks) determine graduates' employment.
- To examine which combination of formal and informal assets increase a graduates' chances of securing early employment.

## 1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions are posed to give a specific focus to the study.

- What is the extent to which formal assets are relevant in getting graduates jobs?
- What is the extent to which informal assets are relevant in getting graduates jobs?
- Which combinations of assets deployed by graduates facilitate their employment?

## 1.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A number of theoretical frameworks have been used in the analysis of graduates' entry into the world of work and their relative performance in their occupations (Couppié and Mansuy, 2004). These include theories of human capital (Becker, 1964), labour mobility (Sicherman and Galor, 1990), job search (Mortensen, 1970), job matching and turnover (Jovanovic, 1979, 1984), job competition (Thurow, 1975) and labour market segmentation (Doeringer and Piore, 1971). These theories in different ways, explain the employment situation of graduates, especially during their early years in the labour market.

Strength of ties plays an important role in getting people jobs. A study conducted by Granovetter (1974) on two hundred and eighty-two professional, technical and managerial employees from Massachusetts found that eighty-four percent of respondents got jobs through their ties. Levin et al (2004) in a study of one hundred and twenty-seven people from three organisations discovered that weak ties provide relevant information about the labour market which is in line with Granovetter's strength of weak ties. Similarly, a study conducted by Franzen et al (2006) on eight thousand university graduates found that forty-four percent got their jobs through social network. These studies confirm the strength of ties in one's transition from school to work.

This study being undertaken therefore draws on Granovetter's (1974) work on "Getting a Job" which proposed that, numerous employees do not only get jobs through their formal assets (internet, skills, qualification, and work experience) or "what you know" but also get jobs through their informal assets (social network) or "who you know" to assess the transition of graduates in Accra from school to work.

This points to the fact, that in order to get a job, it is not only about one's personal achievement but whom he knows also plays an important role in getting a job. This he calls

the strength of ties which is either weak or strong. To him, strength of ties is the combination of the amount of time devoted to a relationship, the emotional intensity within the relationship, the intimacy between members as well as the mutual service rendered. That is, the kind of social relationship that exists between the individual and the people in his or her network also helps individuals to secure jobs.

## **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study seeks to explore the factors that are at play in getting graduates permanent jobs in the formal sector of Ghana's economy. The idea is to understand the transition of graduates from school to work in modern Ghanaian society and unearth the various assets employed by graduates in modern Ghanaian society to facilitate their entry into the labour market. This will reveal the most effective asset employed by graduates in modern Ghanaian economy. An insight into the extent to which these assets play a role in securing jobs will also come to bare.

More so, through this study, new knowledge will be added to existing literature on school to work transition and relevance of the assets used in securing jobs in Ghana. And finally, the results of this study will serve as a basis for any further research on the topic being studied.

## **1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

There are many formal organisations in the Accra. However, the study covers the formal organisations in the Accra Metropolitan Assembly. Thus, the public and private organisations are included in the sample in order to get a representative sample so as to reveal the assets used and the extent to which the assets play in securing graduates jobs. Contextually, the study focuses on the various assets deployed by graduates to secure jobs in these

organisations and further looks at the extent to which these assets get graduates jobs in the Ghanaian economy.

## 1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is first and foremost restricted to graduates who have secured jobs after graduating from the university and had their National Service. Though a study of this nature should have covered the whole country to reveal the most used asset among employed graduates in Ghana, time and financial constraints did not make it possible for a nationwide study, thus limiting the study to the Accra Metropolitan Assembly.

## 1.8 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

The following definitions are provided to ensure the uniformity and understanding of these terms throughout the study.

School to work transition has been defined variously. For the purpose of this study, **school to work transition** refers to the period where individuals graduate from the university and secure employment in a formal organisation.

**Graduate:** For the purpose of this study, a graduate refers to an individual who has completed four years of university education and has graduated.

**Stable employment:** For the purpose of this study, stable employment refers to when a graduate attains full time employment in an organisation and is satisfied with his or her job.

**Assets:** For the purpose of this study, assets refer to the resources used by graduates to gain employment.

**Formal assets:** For the purpose of the study, formal assets are personal achievements such as education, skills, qualifications, work experience that graduates make use of in order to get jobs.

**Informal assets:** For the purpose of the study, informal assets are social networks; family, friends, acquaintances and associations graduates draw upon to secure jobs.

## 1.9 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The thesis is organised into six chapters. First and foremost, chapter one covers the introductory section of the study. That is the research background, research problem, the objectives of the study, the research questions which guides the study, the theoretical framework underpinning the study, the scope of the study, the significance of the study as well as the limitations of the study, the definition of concepts and concludes with a summary of how the entire thesis has been organised.

Secondly, chapter two focuses on the literature review. The chapter is devoted to the body of work on the school to work transition of graduates. First, it begins with an overview of the content of the chapter. The review presents an overview of the nature of school to work transition among graduates, this is followed by a review on the various assets; formal and informal graduates use in order to get employed. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of the discussion had.

Chapter three covers the research methods used in carrying out and obtaining data for the study. The chapter begins with an overview of its contents. This is followed by describing the research area, explaining the research design and sampling procedure. The chapter continues with the data collection methods, how data was managed and analysed and the ethical issues considered in conducting the study.

Chapter four analyzes data on the first part of the findings from the field. It gives a description of the respondents of the study, then, presents general information about the jobs of respondents, the strategies of job search of respondents, the formal assets as well as the informal assets of respondents of the study.

Chapter five continues with the findings of the study. It looks at the role of assets in getting a job. The chapter also presents results of nonparametric tests conducted to find the relationship between the assets deployed by graduates when searching for jobs and how long it takes them to get employed and finally presents the findings on the combination of assets used in gaining employment in Accra.

Chapter six, the final chapter, covers the main arguments of the study in response to the research questions, summarises the key findings of the study, suggest recommendations for consideration for future policies and draws a conclusion on the study.

This chapter gives an overview of the study under study. In order to throw more light on this, the chapter that follows explores the empirical works on school to work transition.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an overview of literature in the area of school to work transition. Its primary purpose is to give an understanding of the transition of graduates from the university. As assets used in securing jobs have broadly been categorised under formal and informal and the importance of both depends on either how they are used or how they are combined, there is a section that looks at the formal assets graduates use in order to secure jobs. A section on the informal assets used in securing jobs is then looked at. Afterwards, a section on job satisfaction follows. The chapter then concludes with a summary of what has been discussed.

#### 2.1 NATURE OF SCHOOL TO WORK TRANSITION

Securing a job after years of education is one of the most important and difficult time in the lives of young graduates. This period can be very unstable as it involves different efforts and varied ways to enter the labour market, or it can be a fairly smooth process. During this period of transition, graduates are faced with difficult decisions like: higher education, job search and how to respond to the opportunities and problems of the labour market. A decision taken by the graduate during this period goes a long way to affect his or her future career as well as other transitions of life like leaving one's parents and forming a family of his or her own (Schoon and Silbereisen, 2009).

According to Muller and Gangl (2003), this transition process does not only depend on the graduates' decision but also from the opportunities and constraints formed by economic conditions such as the improvement in technology, disappearance of manual jobs, involvement of women in the labour market and government policies. In developed countries

such as Austria, Sweden and Belgium, graduates have fairly easy transitions as job opportunities are available and graduates in these countries are able to get jobs during the first six months after their graduation but in developing countries like Cote d'Ivoire, it takes individuals one year to get into the labour market and more than five years in countries like Kenya, Malawi, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, and others found in the Sub Saharan region, graduates have to wait for a long time before getting employed and as a result taking up other temporary jobs for lack of better job opportunities (Fares et al, 2005).

School to work transition has transformed over the years from short and straight forward routes which were available to previous generations to lengthy and less clear cut routes in modern times (Wyn et al, 1997) indicating that, the road from education to the labour market is not easy as graduates in search of jobs outnumber the jobs available.

There are many views with regards to what a successful school to work transition is. To Cellini (2006), some use objective criteria such as employment versus unemployment, job performance ratings and levels of turnover while others use the subjective criteria like work attitudes, stress levels and perceptions of how well they fit in the world of work.

As a result of this, a successful school to work transition has been defined by Ng et al (2007 p116) as "a state in which individuals are employed after leaving school, perform at levels acceptable to their employers, and have positive attitudes towards their work environments and job requirements."

However, the school to work transition cycle ends when the individual's place in the labour market has gotten to the "degree of consolidation affording him or her a reasonable set of skills to undertake the adventure that constitutes a large part of workers' life cycles in today's labour markets, characterised as they are by instability and high productivity demands" which leads to a promising career (Ramirez, 1998 as cited in Jeria, 2009 p320).

As a result of this, various assets and methods which are grouped into formal and informal are used by graduates to facilitate their entry into the labour market (Schoon and Silbereisen, 2009). These assets are discussed in the next section.

## **2.2 FORMAL ASSETS**

### **2.2.1 Services of Employment Agencies**

The use of services of employment agencies by individuals to secure jobs in organisations or aid in the transition of graduates from school to work is another of the range of job seeking methods. It is when vacancies in organisations are made known to the employment agencies who then relay the information to graduates who register with these agencies so they can apply for the vacant positions in the organisations thus, acting as a mediator between the graduate and the organisation. In Ghana currently, there are about forty-six registered companies that act as employment agencies for organisations (Oppong, 2008). These agencies are specialised in delivering specific tasks to various organisations who in this case are their clients. They add great value to organisations as they help organisations assess, hire and retain the right people (Dessler, 2002). To Hansen (2009), employment agencies allow organisations to focus and modernize its capabilities as the world of business is becoming more complex and advanced.

### **2.2.2 Response to Advertisements/ Direct Applications**

Response to advertisements either through newspapers or public media of jobs available in organisations is one of the formal methods used by graduates in the transition from school to work though it is rapidly becoming outmoded. It is when an individual on seeing an advertisement of a job he or she is interested in writes an application letter and adds his or her curriculum vitae (CV) and sends it to the recruiting organisation. Findings of a study

conducted by Adjei and Mohammed (2014) revealed that graduates use the response to advertisements through application letters to gain employment in organisations. In their study, twenty-three percent of respondents applied for vacancies using application letters and fifty-two percent of the respondents rated the use of application letters as one of the effective ways of securing jobs. A study conducted by Opoku Nyarko et al (2014) on four hundred and four workers found responding to advertisements to be the second most frequently used by graduates to get jobs with social networks being the first factor.

### **2.2.3 Internet**

As a result of technological changes and the diffusion of the internet in modern society, the use of the internet has become one of the most important ways of looking for, as well as, getting jobs amongst graduates. Its impact on the job market therefore has garnered high interest. This is because; it has brought about changes in the ways in which people search for jobs. According to Suvankulov et al (2012), this recent development has overshadowed the traditional ways (such as personal referrals, job fairs, private and public employment offices and newspaper advertisements) of getting jobs. According to Green et al (2011), one of the formal assets used by graduates to ease their entry into the labour market is the use of the internet. Individuals are therefore able to access the internet from a number of places including their homes, workplaces, schools, and libraries as a result of the production and sale of new wireless devices such as modems, broadband, router and wifi, which gives one the opportunity to access the internet anywhere at any time.

According to Suvankulov et al (2012), since graduates are able to access the internet from different places, it gives graduates the opportunity to access information on available jobs at any time, any day and also allows them upload their curriculum vitae (CV) and cover letters on organisations' job boards. Likewise, it gives organisations the chance to also place their

advertisements on their job boards and this has a positive outcome in getting graduates jobs. In the same study, it was found that university degree holders who used the internet in searching for jobs had the probability of being employed within twelve months. Autor (2001) also reiterates this point.

Mang (2012) posited that one of the reasons why people use the internet when searching for jobs is that it has greatly enhanced the job search process. The use of the internet is a fast and efficient way of getting jobs since it gives first-hand information on job opportunities. That is, it allows individuals to have quick and easy access to a wide range of job opportunities and employment websites like Monster.com, employment portal websites for major businesses, streamlined online application systems which allow job seekers to access thousands of job offers. Recently, other websites like LinkedIn and Jobberman.com, Jobs in Gh. have began operation, performing the same functions as the other employment websites that is, serving as a source of information about jobs, wages, employers and relevant economic conditions. Nakamura et al. (2009) also provided evidence to prove that the internet is one of the tools used by graduates to acquire jobs in modern times. In their study, 87.6% of male respondents between ages 25-34, and 93.8% female respondents of the same ages, indicated using an Internet jobsite in 2007 to secure their jobs; 41.8% male respondents between ages 25-34, and 39.3% of female respondents from the same group, also indicated that, in using the internet, they successfully acquired their current or most recent job in 2007. Also, Stevenson (2009) reported from his study that, the primary means by which employees gained employment was through the internet which they believe helped them find jobs. Also, in the same study, majority of the participants revealed that the Internet was an effective method of job search.

In Ghana, a study conducted by Adjei and Mohammed (2014) revealed that, out of the varied ways in which individuals get jobs, the use of the internet is one of the most effective tools

used by graduates to gain employment in Ghana. Their study further revealed that it takes a graduate a shorter time, usually, between six months to one year for those who employ the use of the internet to secure jobs.

#### 2.2.4 Skills

Skills are an important factor for people and organisations at large because it is the key to their success. To get a driver's license, one has to pass both the theory and practical test. Passing one and failing the other does not justify getting the license as this individual would pose a threat to human lives. In a similar way, in a world of increasing globalisation and technological change, patterns of work are shifting very fast with the emergence of new sectors, as there is the diffusion of technology, and demographic changes that are reforming the workforce over the time (Oliver 2015). This therefore implies that, although a degree is a proof of intellect, having that alone is not enough to land a graduate a job (Rae, 2007). To Rae (2007), graduates need other requirements or characteristics in order to gain employment since it contributes to the growth and development of organisations. Skills acquired by individuals through their years of education contribute to their quick entry into the labour market (Brown, et al., 2003).

A skill is usually referred to as personal characteristics that help an individual to get a job. According to CEDEFOP (2009), skills such as listening, speaking, reading, writing and mathematics are the basic skills every individual needs to be able to carry out their tasks in the world of work. In recent times, there are discussions on skill requirements of graduates. Researchers like Poku-Boansi and Afrane (2011) in their study proved that the lack of skills such as communication, problem solving and analytical skills of most graduates negatively influence their transition from school to work. Likewise, Pitan and Adedeji (2012) in their study found that about sixty one percent (60.6%) of employed graduates lacked skills such as

communication, information technology, decision-making, critical thinking, interpersonal relationship, entrepreneurial, technical and numeracy skills. Yorke (2004) found that, although individuals expect to gain knowledge and skills needed in order to function in their fields of work, they lack strategizing and communication skills.

### **2.2.5 Qualifications**

The use of one's educational qualification is another of the pathways graduates take in order to be employable in modern Ghanaian society. According to Australian Bureau Statistics, most students considered having a degree as a means of acquiring employment. This is because to be successful in one's occupation, education is needed. Educational qualification and employment has changed over the years as a result of changes in society (CEDEFOP, 2009). Bourdieu (1984) defined qualifications as the education and skills acquired and used to access jobs in the labour market. Collins (1979) described credentials as a tool used in the job market, where every qualification is important.

Literature on qualifications of graduates posits that qualifications bestow status and are a symbol of educational qualifications conferred by colleges and universities in the form of degrees (Bills, 2003). In the job market, one's qualification serves three major functions. First, it links educational institutions to the labour market; it is an efficient tool for filling jobs by linking workers with employers; and it serves as hiring criteria, establishing parameters and guidelines for entry into the job market (Brown, 2003). Watson in his work also found that having a degree facilitates graduates' entry into the labour market and also revealed that the nature of the qualification plays a vital role in getting graduates jobs. Graduates in a study conducted by Stewart and Knowles (2000) believed a degree will not only guarantee one a job, but, a very good job.

To Gangl (2000 p.3) as cited in Ionescu et al (2012), the qualifications attained by individuals are a main asset used to secure jobs as a result of the competition that exists over available jobs in the labour market. Globally, one's qualifications are relevant because it plays a role in attaining jobs as it serves as a proof that an individual has acquired knowledge that will help him or her work effectively and efficiently (Ogege, 2011 p. 253-254).

Psacharopoulos (2007) in Asafu-Adjaye (2012) reported that, once, in the European Union labour market, the more educated have a better chance of gaining employment as compared to those who are less educated. To find out if the same could be said of Ghana, Asafu-Adjaye used a probit model to estimate the effects of education on employment in Ghana using data from the fifth round of the Ghana Living Standard Survey (GLSS 5). Results showed that, individuals with primary, secondary and tertiary education have higher chances of being employed as compared to those with lesser qualifications or no qualifications all things being equal (ibid).

Furthermore, using the 2009 Eurostat database, Ionescu et al (2012) in a study of thirty-two countries found that one's qualifications play a role in securing jobs, the study also showed that, having a higher educational level would set you apart from those who do not have it. Likewise, Shildrick et al (2010), in a thirty man interview also revealed that qualifications and education are important in securing jobs.

### **2.2.6 Work Experience**

Work experience is another important factor that graduates deploy to enter the labour market and find suitable jobs. This is because the labour market is flooded with graduates with good credentials (Tomlinson, 2008). A lot of studies have been done on how work experience contributes to getting a job. A study conducted by Harvey (1997) on graduates who were very satisfied with their job revealed that, having had work experience facilitated their

employment. To them, work experience facilitated their employment since it gave them the opportunity to practice the knowledge they had acquired from school, and gave them an insight of what work is about. In the same study, it was revealed that, lack of relevant work experience made it difficult for a graduate to enter the labour market. More so, a study conducted by Jackson (2015) on the relationship between work experience and employability showed that employers prefer graduates who have work experience since they have some knowledge about the work environment.

Work experience comes in many different ways for example, through internships (Jensen, 2009), volunteering to work (Bourner and Millican 2011), and service learning (Prentice and Robinson, 2010). It acts as a buffer over other individuals entering the labour market (Taylor 2004). This is because students who engage themselves in internships, short term placements, voluntary work and service learning get exposed to the work environment, enhance their competencies and this goes a long way to affect their employability positively since they acquire practical knowledge and can easily apply what they learnt in their work environment (Knight and Yorke, 2002).

A report from Smith and Green (2005) showed that individuals saw work experience as an avenue to interact with different people thus, boosting their confidence. Likewise, a study carried out by Heckhausen and Tomasik (2002) emphasizes this fact and also add that, work experience helps graduates transit from school to work easily. Smith (2011) in her work made it known that work experience gives individuals greater advantage than only qualifications.

## 2.3 INFORMAL ASSETS

### 2.3.1 Social Capital / Social Network

With the expansion in the educational system and the competition among graduates with the same credentials, another of the strategies deployed by individuals among the many other employment search behaviours that facilitates their entry into the labour market is social capital (Thompson et al, 2008). This is so because, it is said that majority of jobs that are available are never advertised and this to them is known as the “the hidden job market” (Adjei and Mohammed 2014). Social capital is one of the informal methods used in job search that can be traced to Karl Marx’s (1933) who believed that capital is a resource possessed by the bourgeoisie who at the end of the day control the means of production. Social capital refers to the benefits that inhere in family, friends, acquaintances, colleagues and social organisations or associations, which individuals possibly take advantage of in achieving certain goals. To Forret and Dougherty (2001 p.284), it is "individuals' attempts to develop and maintain relationships with others who have the potential to assist them in their work or career". To Wanberg et al (2000 p.492), it is "individual actions directed toward contacting friends, acquaintances, and other people to whom the job seeker has been referred for the main purpose of getting information, leads, or advice on getting a job".

This therefore means that, social capital focuses on social relationships and networks, values, access to resources in families, friends, colleagues and even social organisations. Individuals in recent times rely on family relations, ethnicity, friendships, old school mates and other affiliations such as religion and social organisations to secure job opportunities. This makes social capital a great asset to secure employment in modern Ghanaian society. This situation usually goes with the saying that, accessing job opportunities now is dependent on the “who you know” principle and not the “what you know” principle; implying that, people get

opportunities to job over others because they have either built or have access to social capital in the form of strong ties and networks.

These resources differ from person to person and is usually advantageous in the development of their human capital and their jobs as well (Try, 2005). The extent to which an individual accesses his or her social capital is dependent on three things; connections (who he knows), the strength of these connections (how well he knows them), and the resources available to these connections (educational, occupational, general life status) (ibid). According to Holzer (1987), graduates disadvantaged in this form of networking rely more on their formal methods while the advantaged make use of their social network.

According to Kadushins (2004) and Lin (2001), there are two perspectives involved with social capital. These are “the individual” and the “the group”. The “individual perspective” focuses on how the individual accesses and utilizes resources available in the social networks to acquire a job. Since this is to be advantageous for the individual; he invests more into it with the hope of benefitting from it (Lin, 2001). The group perspective also focuses on social capital at the group level, looking at how groups are formed, how it is maintained as a collective resource and how it increases members’ life chances of belonging to that group (Kadushins, 2004).

Every individual possesses some resources. According to Lin (1999), these resources possessed by individuals can be grouped into two namely; “personal resource” and “social resource”. The personal resources are mainly possessed or identified by the individual when the need arises and it can be easily disposed off if and when the individual so wishes. However, individuals’ social resources are gotten through his or her direct or indirect relationship or ties.

Granovetter (1973) states hypothetically in his “strength of weak ties” that, graduates with weaker ties often form links that draws the individual to other social sources for the information which they would not be able to achieve from their own circles and get access to information different from what they receive. Thus, weak ties act as a bridge between graduates and their strong ties (Seibert et al., 2001).

The number of people counted upon by an individual when searching for a job either reflects a large network or small network. Kadushins (2004 p.4) identified the various kinds of networks: ego-centric, socio-centric and open system network. Ego-centric network refers to a single group of individuals for example “best friends”. Socio-centric networks a found within a particular geographical location for example, connections that exist between a particular year group or co-workers in an organisation. Finally, the open system networks are the ones with less clear cut boundaries for example connections between corporations.

Literature on employment and other related topics see the use of social networks to play an important role in securing jobs (Putnam, 2000). According to Drentea (1998), social network makes available to graduates, a wide range of people in different social and professional positions and these people give graduates the necessary information, guidance and advice in getting jobs. It is also seen by Wanberg et al.(2000) as “efforts made by individuals to get in touch with friends, acquaintances, and other people to whom the job seeker has been referred in order to obtain information, lead, or counsel on getting a job” (p 492).

According to Kanfer et al (2001), the quality of the social network or social capital is very important as this influences the ease with which one gets employment. For example, a graduate looking for employment after contacting one important person will be successful in getting employed, whereas another remains unemployed after contacting five to ten less important people. Wanberg et al 2002 also affirms this. This shows that, the ease with which

individuals get employed is based on not only the number of people one knows and the types of social network available to them but the quality of the social network. Also, a survey conducted by Shuttleworth et al (2008) revealed that the use of social network as a tool to enter the labour market placed second after “adverts in the press”. Shildrick et al (2010) in their thirty interviews found that majority of their respondents got jobs by means of social network.

A study conducted by Brook (2005) on Labour Participation: The Influence of Social Capital revealed that, social capital plays an important role in determining one’s employment and that people who have built strong connections with other people are more likely to be in full-time employment than those who are not networked. However, in terms of job search, the study established the fact that, it is not based primarily on trust but networks. Another important finding was that, the effect of social capital varied among individuals and it may act to worsen existing inequalities or differences between people from different backgrounds. This fact was also confirmed by Stone et al, (2003).

According to Brook (2005), the result of individuals not being able to acquire jobs was because they did not know people who could help them get jobs as compared to those who have acquired jobs. To him, the kind of job an individual acquires is dependent on the kind of people you know. This fact was also confirmed by Stone et al (2003). In addition, according to Mouw (2003) although people use diverse methods to find work, a large number of them obtain their job through personal contacts. This therefore presumes that, individuals may either be advantaged or disadvantaged depending on his or her social network.

Likewise, an analysis of Labour Force Survey data on job search from 2006 and 2009 proved that social networks are the most common and widely used method that eases individuals’ entry into the labour market. Findings also showed that one in four individuals in their current

employment was employed by “hearing from someone who worked there” (Green et al, 2011) proving that “who you know” matters and plays a role in getting jobs. Thus, individuals who employ this strategy have easy access into the labour market in spite of their use of other methods of job search.

Saks (2005) posits that for more than three decades, employees who acquired employment through informal methods have positive attitudes towards work than those who got jobs through the formal methods.

### **2.3.2 Family and Peers**

A study by Gerry et al (2000) showed that families, friends, classmates and colleagues are contributing factors that aid graduates in accessing jobs. The family is the first point of contact from where individuals get advice and help. As such, the family; nuclear and extended do not only provide material, emotional, motivational among other kinds of support to their children but also help with job opportunities available by contacting their network or social capital, relational assets, powers of association among others (ibid). According to the study, families get in touch with close friends and acquaintances that are in various socio-economic statuses to help them access employment for their children. To Try (2005), if a graduate’s parents have high educational qualification, he or she may have access to information that would help him or her in getting a job.

Friendship network is another important determinant of successful school to work transition. Growing up and being enrolled in school and going through the educational system, friends are made and ties are established. As such, these friends come in handy as individuals search for jobs as well as giving information on job vacancies. This is because friendship network has been found to be productive as it increases one’s probability of getting or finding a job (Granovetter, 1974).

Results of a study carried out by Gerry et al (2000) proved that strong ties exist between schoolmates in spite of the differences in age. To them, this tie is established as a result of attending either the same secondary school or tertiary school, staying in the same, past or present residence and other forms of relationships with other people. One interviewee who took part in the study explained how she heard of a job vacancy through a girl she knew from school.

Also, the differences in the educational status of individuals in one's network influences graduates' transition to work. This variation has been found to increase the chances of a graduate to acquire a job especially, through family and friends and decreases one's chances of securing a job through an advertisement. This supports the fact that one's diversity of network increases the resources he or she can access to secure a job (Stone et al, 2000). In addition, their study also showed that, the more dense the networks of friends or family, the likelihood of securing a job. This finding according to them is in relation with the strength of weak ties theory developed by Granovetter (1973). Thus, the conclusion that, one's social network plays a role in influencing his or her transition into the labour market.

The literature review has elaborated on the theoretical framework based on Granovetter's strength of weak ties; making known that not only does formal assets get people jobs but also, informal assets (strength of ties) play a role in getting people jobs. Also, the review identified services of employment agencies, response to advertisements (direct applications), internet, skills, qualifications, work experience and social capital or network as assets deployed by graduates to facilitate their smooth transition into the labour market. From the review, various research findings have shown that indeed, these assets play roles in one way or the other in order to get employed. Additionally, there was limited literature in Africa and Ghana as most write ups were based in Europe. The following chapter, chapter three, covers a discussion of the methods used in carrying out this study.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODS

#### 3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is devoted to the various methods and procedures employed by the researcher in gathering primary data for the study as well as the methods of analysis in order to achieve the objectives highlighted in the first chapter and answering the research questions as well. Within the various disciplines, researchers use a number of different methods to conduct research and have given various reasons for using those research methods. According to Kumekpor (2002), these methods however must be formalised, rigorous, and verifiable.

#### 3.1 STUDY AREA

The study area for this work is Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) which is in the Greater Accra Region. The Greater Accra Region is the smallest of the ten administrative regions and the administrative and commercial capital of Ghana. It lies within latitude 5° 33' N and longitude 0° 11' W occupying a total land size of 3,245 km square or 1.4 percent of the total land area of Ghana. It has a population of 4,010,054 according to the 2010 population census and bordered on the North by the Eastern Region, on the West by the Central Region, on the East by the Lake Volta and on the South by the Gulf of Guinea.

According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, the total population of the Greater Accra Region was 4,010,054 representing 16.3% of the country's total population; this includes 1,938,225 males (48.3%) and 2,071,829 females (51.7%). Most (90.5%) of the inhabitants of Accra, according to the census report, are in the urban areas of the region.

The Gas are the largest ethnic group in the region and are organised into six independent towns namely; Ga-Mashie, Osu, La, Teshie, Nungua and Tema. The region also has a Christian population of 76.8 percent while Muslims constitute 17.2 percent. Other religious affiliations make up 4.6 percent while a small percent, 1.4 represent the traditional religion.

Accra serves as the centre of the region's economic and administrative activities. It situates Ghana's government administration, an area called the ministries, offices of public institutions such as the Volta River Authority, Electricity Company of Ghana, Ghana Water Company, Ghana Revenue Authority, the city's main banks and other departments and stores.

The area was selected as the study area because not only does it represent the seat of most administrative and business capital of the nation but where graduates search for jobs. It also employs graduates to contribute to the realisation of the objectives of these organisations and structurally suitable with respect to conducting the study. Also, since the capital city of Ghana capital is sited here, the residents, including employees, are diverse in culture, education, and economic activities.

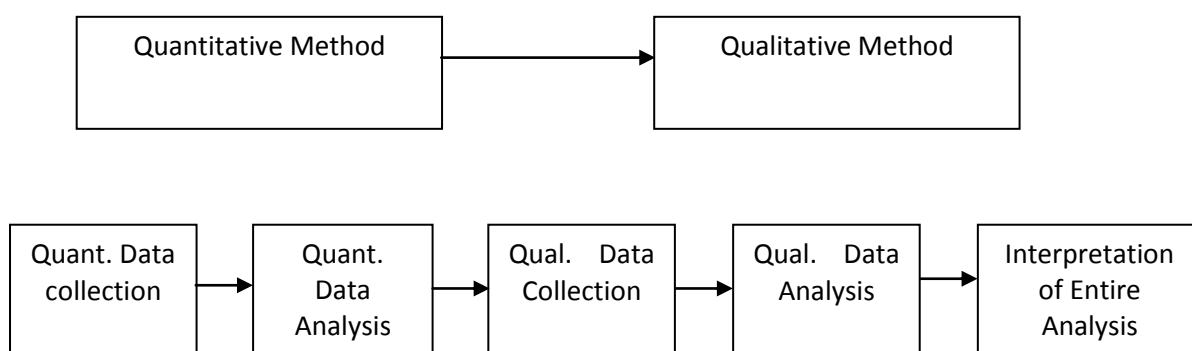
### **3.2 STUDY DESIGN**

The quality of every research is based on its research design. In some studies it refers to the whole research process, beginning from identifying a problem, reading available literature on it, formulating questions which guides the researcher to answer the problem identified, the procedure to carry out the study, and conclusions, whereas in another study, research design refers only to the procedure used in carrying out the research for example, data collection and analysis (Conrad and Serlin, 2011). In trying to understand the keys to a successful school to work transition of employed graduates in Accra, a mixed methods approach was adopted to collect the relevant data. This method focused on combining both quantitative and qualitative

research methods to better understand and explain the research problem and also help the researcher to increase the credibility of her study.

Specifically, the explanatory sequential mixed methods design was utilized in carrying out the study; this mixed methods design consists of two separate stages: quantitative, followed by qualitative (Creswell, 2009). Accordingly, the quantitative data was collected and analyzed after which the qualitative data was collected and analyzed. Thus, the results of the quantitative data informed the questions and the respondents for the qualitative study. The data from the two methods was merged at an intermediate stage to give a better understanding of the data collected from the field (see Figure 1). As a result, the findings from the interview helped in explaining the quantitative data collected.

The rationale behind the adoption of this mixed method approach was that, the quantitative data provided a general understanding of the research problem, bringing out the facts while the qualitative data looked at the subjective meaning and explained the statistical results generated from the quantitative data in more depth (ibid.). In addition, the quantitative data collected assisted in the selection of participants for the qualitative study and the kind of questions to ask.



**Source:** *Adapted from Creswell (2009)*

**Figure 1: Sequential explanatory design**

### 3.3 QUANTITATIVE METHOD

The quantitative approach describes the study population, sample size, the sampling method and procedure. Also, the data collection instrument used in collecting the data, how the data were collected, processed and analyzed is explained subsequently. The following sections details how the objectives of this approach was achieved using the quantitative approach.

#### 3.3.1 Target Population

According to Babbie (2005) the study population is the total elements of the researcher from which the sample is actually selected. Thus, the population of a study is the larger group from which individuals are selected to participate in a study. In obtaining the relevant information to give a comprehensive analysis of the research problem, the target population for the study comprised all employed university graduates living in Accra who have worked for a maximum of five years in a permanent employment position.

The criteria for eligibility to be part of the quantitative study included the following:

- The respondent should be a graduate from an accredited University in Ghana living in Accra.
- The respondent should have completed his or her National Service.
- Respondent should be in permanent employment in a formal institution.
- The respondent should be in his or her first five years of employment.

On the other hand, the exclusion criteria for the quantitative study included:

- The respondent is searching for a job.
- The respondent does not have a University degree.
- The respondent has worked for less than a year.

- The respondent has worked for more than five years.

### **3.3.2 Study Population**

For the quantitative study, the focus was on only employed university graduates living in Accra who have worked for a maximum of five years in a permanent employment position. These people were selected because they are in the early stages of their transition and would be able to provide information on how they acquired their employment which is relevant in conducting the study.

### **3.3.3 Unit of Analysis**

In every research, there is the need for the researcher to identify the actual observable units, objects or occurrences which are to be measured in order to study the particular phenomenon (Kumekpor, 2002). These observable units are termed units of analysis or sampling units. The unit of analysis for the quantitative study constituted the individual employed graduate. This is because they would help the researcher achieve the aims and objectives of the study.

### **3.3.4 Sampling Frame**

The list of all employed university graduates living in Accra and working in formal institutions constituted the sampling frame for the quantitative study. This list was obtained from the Human Resource Personnel departments of the selected institutions or organisations. The sampling frame helped the researcher select respondents representative of the population under study.

### 3.3.5 Sampling Method and Procedure

In every social research, sampling is very important. According to Osuala (2005), it is when a part of the population is used as a representation of that population. In order to select the participants for the study, the stratified sampling technique was used. According to Neuman (2012), “stratified sampling is a random sample in which the researcher first identifies a set of mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories, divides the sampling frame by the categories, and then uses random selection to select cases from each category.”

Firstly, by observing the list of all organisations within the Accra Metropolitan Assembly, the researcher categorized all the organisations into two groups based on their ownership and management. Organisations were categorised into public organisations (that is organisations established by and funded by the state) and private organisations (that is organisations established and operated by private individuals). From these groups, three private (The Royal Bank, UT Bank and First Atlantic Bank) and three public organisations (Volta River Authority, Ghana Water Company Limited and Electricity Company of Ghana) were randomly selected with the help of three colleagues to avoid bias. In all, six institutions were sampled for the study. The researcher then contacted the Human Resource Personnel of these institutions and discussed the survey with them. A list of all employees who fell within the researcher’s criteria for the survey was then submitted to the researcher; one hundred and fifty from The Royal Bank, one hundred and forty-seven from First Atlantic Bank and one hundred and thirty-three from UT Bank. Also, two hundred and seventy was obtained from Volta River Authority, one hundred and forty-six from Ghana Water Company Limited and one hundred and fifty-four from Electricity Company of Ghana.

From the lists given to the researcher, the population for the study was estimated at one thousand (1000); four hundred and thirty (430) that is, forty-three percent (43%) from the

private institutions and five hundred and seventy (570) that is, fifty-seven percent (57%) from the public organisations. The researcher then used  $S = \frac{X^2 NP (1-P)}{d^2 (N-1) + X^2 P (1-P)}$  a formula by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) to appropriately estimate the number of respondents to be selected for the study. Thus, the sample for the study was estimated at two hundred and seventy-eight (278). Afterwards, the researcher calculated the total number of people to be selected from both private and public organisations using the percentages stated above. This was estimated at one hundred and twenty (120) people for the private organisation and one hundred and fifty-eight (158) people for the public organisations. Subsequently, the researcher calculated the proportions for the various organisations using the numbers obtained from the Human Resource Departments with Royal Bank having thirty-five percent (35%), UT Bank having thirty percent (30%), First Atlantic Bank having thirty-five percent (35%), VRA having forty-seven percent (47%) Ghana Water having twenty-six percent (26%) and ECG having twenty-seven percent (27%). These proportions and total number to be selected from private and public organisations were then used by the researcher to calculate the actual number of respondents to be selected from these organisations. Results from the calculations indicated forty-two (42) respondents to be selected from Royal Bank, thirty-six (36) to be selected from UT Bank, forty-two (42) to be selected from First Atlantic Bank, seventy-four (74) to be selected from Volta River Authority, forty-one (41) to be selected from Ghana Water Company and forty-three (43) to be selected from Electricity Company of Ghana adding up to the sample size of two hundred and seventy-eight estimated for the study. To select these samples from the organisations, the names of employees on the lists given the researcher were numbered. The numbers were written on pieces of paper, folded and put in a basket and after thorough shuffling and reshuffling, the researcher selected the units until the required number was obtained. This also helped the researcher to select respondents fairly representative of the various organisations selected for the study.

After the selection process, the Human Resource Personnel introduced the researcher to the employees whose numbers were picked and during their lunch time, the researcher was then given the opportunity to introduce the study and its objectives to the employees. During this period, the researcher also took the opportunity to assure employees of anonymity, confidentiality and to encourage them to willingly participate; as a means not to disrupt their work schedule and also to encourage honest responses, the researcher requested that the selected participants completed their questionnaires during their lunch time when they were free and collected after the lunch break.

However, this mode was the case in all organisations with the exception of two organisations. In one of those organisations, the Human Resource Personnel invited the researcher to attend the safety meeting of the organisation in order to administer her questionnaire. This meeting was organised every Friday for all employees and safety measures at the workplace was discussed thus, a good day to meet the employees. On the agreed day, the safety meeting ended earlier and the researcher was allowed to administer the questionnaire and the researcher collected the completed questionnaires when the employees finished responding to them. In the other organisation, the researcher had to leave the questionnaires with the employees and collect them on an agreed day. With the help of the Human Resource Personnel, these questionnaires were collected and handed over to the researcher on the agreed day. As a result of this approach, the survey recorded a 75.2% response rate; in all, 209 employees returned their questionnaires out of the 278 questionnaires distributed.

### **3.3.6 Sample Size**

Sample size is very important when conducting a research. This is because, the sample size has to be representative of the population and reflect the characteristics of the population as well. To determine an effective sample size for the survey, the researcher applied the formula

for determining sample size for surveys by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) (see figure 2); hence with a target population of one thousand (1000), the estimated sample size was two hundred and seventy-eight (278).

$$S = \frac{X^2 NP (1-P)}{d^2 (N-1) + X^2 P (1-P)}; \quad \text{Where}$$

S = Required Sample Size

X = Z value (eg. 1.96 for 95% confidence level)

N = Population Size

P = Population Proportion (assumed to be 0.5)

d = Degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (0.05); it is margin of error.

**Source: Adapted from Krejcie and Morgan (1970)**

#### **Equation 1: Formula for determining sample size**

### **3.3.7 Data Collection Instrument**

The main instrument used for collecting the quantitative data was the self-administered questionnaire (see Appendix 1). This is because the respondents were literate and could read, understand and respond to the questionnaire with little or no supervision. According to Mau et al (2001), it is a simple and convenient approach to collecting data from a large sample size, effective and ensures anonymity. It also gives the respondent the privacy to give unbiased information since there is limited interference and enable them to be more candid in their answers.

Prior to collecting the data, an introductory letter (see Appendix 3) explaining the purpose of the study was sent to the organisations, a bond of confidentiality was signed by the researcher

in order not to reveal information about the organisation to other people, a copy of the questionnaire was scrutinised by the Human Resource Personnel to make sure the information the researcher wanted was not one that was going to be about the organisation. Afterwards, an arrangement was made with the Human Resource Personnel before the administration of the questionnaires.

The focus of this study, which is, exploring the factors that come to play in getting graduates jobs in the formal sector of Ghana, has rarely been investigated. As such, the survey instrument was designed to collect relevant data needed for the study being undertaken by the researcher. The questionnaire had six sections. The first section covered the bio data of the respondents. This part sought respondents to provide bio data such as sex, age, marital status, ethnicity, religious affiliation and the type of organisation in which they worked. The second section required respondents to answer questions on the background of their job. Questions in this section was adapted from Mau et al (2001) and modified appropriately for the study. Then, the third section required respondents to answer questions on the extent to which respondents' formal assets facilitated their employment. The fourth section also required respondents to answer questions on the extent to which informal assets are relevant in getting graduate jobs. Questions in this section was adapted from Wanberg et al (2002) and modified appropriately for the study. The fifth section required respondents to answer questions on the combinations which ease the securing of jobs by graduates. The last section sought respondents to respond to questions on the extent to which the new forms of assets help graduates to secure jobs.

The questionnaire was structured to include both open and closed ended questions. The open ended questions gave respondents the opportunity to provide their own answers to the questions while the close ended questions provided respondents with a set of answers to choose from. There were also three Likert scale questions with five point response ranging

from completely disagree to completely agree to address issues relating to respondents' network size, strength of the relationships as well as the status of members making up their networks. The Cronbach's alpha for the likert scale questions were .699, .824 and .895 respectively. The questionnaire was structured this way to help the researcher address the research problem.

In order to promote candid responses from respondents, questionnaires were given out with the help of the Human Resource Personnel and respondents were given time to complete the questionnaires without disruptions. Respondents were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. Completed questionnaires were collected after respondents had completed the questionnaires and were collected with the help of the Human Resource Personnel.

### **3.3.8 Pre-testing of Data Collection Instrument**

According to Bell (2005, p. 147), "however pressed for time you are, do your best to give the questionnaire a trial run, as without a trial run, you have no way of knowing whether your questionnaire will succeed". To Saunders et al (2007), the purpose of getting a pilot study done is to test the questionnaire the researcher has developed on a small group of people before the major study. This is because, having a pilot study makes deficiencies known to the researcher in order for the deficiencies to be addressed before data is collected for the study Ruxton and Colegrave (2006). Since the questionnaire was developed by the researcher for the first time, the questionnaire was given out to fifteen randomly selected employees who were asked to read through the questions and instructions as well and then, give feedback or comments on the questions in terms of how they understood it. It took approximately a week to complete the pre-testing exercise. The questionnaire was thus re-designed based on the suggestions and comments from the pilot study.

### **3.3.9 Quantitative Data Processing**

To draw inferences, meaning and conclusions from data collected, data collected from respondents were processed in three ways, namely, coding, data entry and data cleaning. After collection of the data, the closed ended questions were coded as such while the open ended questions were themed for coding since there were varied responses for those questions. After coding, the data was entered into the computer using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) software, version 22. Data cleaning was done to identify and correct errors during coding. Errors found were referred back to the questionnaire and rectified accordingly. With the help of the SPSS software, the data was interpreted into univariate and bivariate analysis. At the univariate level, the frequencies of variables were generated to describe the variables. At the bivariate level, the strength of associations between the variables was established using chi-square test of independence and independent t-test. The next section discusses the qualitative approach to the study.

### **3.4 QUALITATIVE METHOD**

Sequentially to the quantitative approach, this study also adopted the qualitative approach. This design was used because the researcher intended to explore an aspect of human behaviour which was difficult to quantify (Boodhoo and Purmessur, 2009). Questions for the quantitative study mainly focused more on the formal assets and how it influenced their successful transition with little attention on the informal assets and did not also give respondents the opportunity to express themselves. However, the researcher employed the qualitative method to explore the informal assets available to the respondents and how these informal assets were used by them to acquire their current jobs. This qualitative method also gave the researcher the opportunity to probe further on issues that arose during the analysis of the quantitative data that was collected by the researcher.

As the quantitative data gave a general understanding of the research problem, the qualitative research approach, allowed the respondents to provide detailed information by describing their perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, views and feelings as well as the meanings and interpretations of circumstances (Hakim, 2000). In all, ten individuals, five males and five females were to be interviewed. Due to work schedules, seven individuals; five males and two females were interviewed and information used to complement the quantitative data collected. These individuals were selected based on an inclusion and exclusion criteria developed by the researcher.

### **3.4.1 Target Population**

The target population for the qualitative study included all employees who participated in the quantitative study and got their jobs using their informal assets. The researcher believes that these individuals could give detailed information on the subject matter.

For the interviews, the criteria for inclusion were:

- The interviewee should have gotten his or her first job within a year after National Service.
- The interviewee should still be working in his or her first job.
- The interviewee should have worked more than a year and less than five years.
- The interviewee should be less than forty years old.

On the other hand, the exclusion criteria for the interview were:

- If the interviewee has been working less than a year.
- If the interviewee has worked more than five years.
- If the interviewee is above forty years old.

### **3.4.2 Sample Selection and Size**

Since the results of the quantitative study informed the questions and participants of the qualitative study, the purposive sampling technique was employed for selecting participants for the qualitative study. To Neuman (2012), the purposive sampling method is most appropriate when the researcher wants to select exclusive cases, which are especially informative, and when the researcher wants to identify particular types of cases for in-depth inquiry. As a result, participants of the qualitative study were all contacted via telephone and an appointment scheduled at a time of their own convenience. This was made possible since participants in the quantitative study were required to put down their telephone numbers on their questionnaires. This enabled the researcher to get in touch with them for the qualitative study and to also call for any clarifications concerning their responses in the quantitative study. In all, seven (7) employees (five males and two females) were contacted for the qualitative study.

### **3.4.3 Data Collection Instrument**

An in-depth interview guide (see Appendix 2) was developed for interviewees to probe the extent to which informal assets facilitate job acquisition of graduates. According to Silverman (2013), in-depth interviews give better insight of social phenomenon as compared to questionnaires. The interview guide was semi-structured to allow participants the freedom to express themselves on related dimensions of the topic while not losing focus of the study. Interviews were held in different places and at times convenient with the interviewees. The researcher introduced herself to interviewees, explained the purpose of the interview and also informed them of how long the interview was going to take. As such, there were breaks during the interviews. They were made aware of the interview being a voluntary one and could decide to withdraw if they were not comfortable, although they were encouraged to

participate. The interviewees were also assured of confidentiality of their responses. Their permission was sought to record the interview. At the beginning of the interview, respondents introduced themselves by mentioning their sex, age, marital status, educational level, ethnicity and religion followed by the questions on the interview guide. The researcher personally conducted the in-depth interviews because this type of data required skills in order to gather the right data for analysis.

#### **3.4.4 Qualitative Data Processing**

All in-depth interviews were also audio-recorded with the knowledge and permission of the interviewees. For the qualitative data, notes taken from the interviews were organised and the audio-responses from the in-depth interviews were transcribed verbatim. The face-to-face interaction with respondents allowed for further clarification when answers needed to be followed up. Analysis began after the first interview was transcribed and continued till all the interviews were conducted and transcribed. The translated transcriptions were grouped under common themes and coded accordingly. The researcher analyzed all data from the field work. Data was then incorporated by including narratives with quotes to support findings from the quantitative data. All names used in the qualitative analysis are pseudonyms.

#### **3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION**

A number of ethical issues were considered while conducting the study to ensure that participants were not harmed in any way. The researcher presented an introductory letter to Human Resource Personnel of organisations from which data was going to be collected explaining the study to them. Participants were briefed on the aim of the study before administering the questionnaires and before the interviews as well. The consent of participants was sought; they were assured of the privacy, anonymity and confidentiality. In order to ensure this, no personal information such as name, identification card, etc were taken

from the respondents. It was also made clear to them that their contribution was voluntary and had full authority to refuse or to withdraw at anytime if they changed their mind about participating. Participants were assured that data would be used for the intended purpose. Respondents were made to leave their questionnaires with their Human Resource Personnel and in situations where respondents and completed the questionnaires and submitted immediately, the researcher did not look at the responses, did not tag the questionnaires with respondents, and did not forge responses. Data collected from participants was kept carefully by not disclosing it to anyone. Finally, the researcher sought for ethical clearance from the College of Humanities Ethics Committee of the University of Ghana to ensure that all ethical issues regarding the study were met, the quality of the data collection instruments are efficient, and the methods employed for the study are of standard (see Appendix 4).

The following chapter, chapter four, elaborates on the findings from the data collected from the field.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSES AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the presentation, analyses and interpretation of the data collected from the field. The order of presentation in this chapter includes a section on the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, a section on the description of respondents' current employment, a section on the sources of job search, a section on formal assets and a section on informal assets.

#### 4.1 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

**Table 1: Sex of respondents**

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
<b>Sex</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>51.7</b>
	<b>Female</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>48.3</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2017**

The Table 1 above shows the sex of respondents of the study. Respondents of the study were two hundred and nine. Out of this number, one hundred and eight representing 51.7 percent were males whiles one hundred and one representing 48.3 percent were females. This clearly shows that majority of respondents for this study was males. This report for more males than females in this study is consistent with a study conducted by Adjei and Mohammed (2014) which revealed a majority of males (58%) taking part in the study as compared to females (42%).

**Table 2: Age of respondents**

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
<b>Age</b>	<b>20-24</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>13.4</b>
	<b>25-29</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>45.5</b>
	<b>30-34</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>38.3</b>
	<b>35-39</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2.9</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2017**

Age is a major factor to this study. The age categories ranged from 20 to 40 years. Results from the study shows that 13.4 percent of the respondents fall between the ages 20-24, 45.5 percent of the respondents between the ages 25-29, 38.3 percent of the respondents between the ages 30-34 and the remaining 2.9 percent of the respondents fall between ages 35-39. From the study, the ages of majority of respondents are between the ages 25 and 29 and fewer between the ages 35 and 39. This implies that majority of the respondents who have made a transition from school to work are between 25 and 29 years indicating the youthful nature of respondents of the study. Also, since they are new at their workplaces, have to learn from the older employees as they have been working for a longer period of time.

**Table 3: Marital status of respondents**

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Single</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>60.8</b>
	<b>Married</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>33.5</b>
	<b>Cohabiting</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>5.7</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2017**

According to the data collected for the study, one hundred and twenty-seven (60.8%) are single, representing the majority. Seventy (33.5%) are married whiles twelve (5.7%) are cohabiting. Majority of respondents are single because they are in the transition period and are in the early stages of their working lives. As such, they are preparing themselves in order to achieve their life expectations and desires and for that reason have to work, receive salaries and be stable enough to fend for themselves and their future as well.

**Table 4: Ethnicity of respondents**

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Akan</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>47.6</b>
	<b>Ga-Adangme</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>19.2</b>
	<b>Ewe</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>21.6</b>
	<b>Dagomba</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3.8</b>
	<b>Other</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>7.7</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>99.9</b>

**Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2017**

Ghana is a country with different people from different ethnic backgrounds and so are the individuals who work together in organisations in order to meet the aims and objectives of those organisations. From the Table 4, it can be inferred that respondents of the study are mostly Akans as they represent 47% with Ga-Adangme representing 19.2 %, Ewe representing 21.6%, Dagomba representing 3.8% and the other ethnic groups such as the Guan, Frafra and others representing 7.7%. Only one respondent did not indicate his or her ethnicity.

**Table 5: Religious affiliation of respondents**

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
<b>Religious Affiliation</b>	<b>Christian</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>91.3</b>
	<b>Islam</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>8.2</b>
	<b>Other</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>.5</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2017**

As a result of colonisation, there have been a lot of changes in the Ghanaian religion. In the society in which we live in, religion plays a very important role. This is because religion does not only outline the moral values of individuals but also influences the behaviours of individuals. One hundred and eighty-nine respondents representing a large percentage (91.3%) of respondents are Christians being members of various churches including orthodox, Pentecostal and charismatic. 8.2% of respondents are Muslims and 0.5% representing those who belonged to other forms of religion. However, two respondents did not indicate their religious affiliation. This ratio of Christians to Muslims was expected since the 2010 Population and Housing Census showed that 71.2 percent of Ghanaians are Christians and 17.6 percent are Muslims.

**Table 6: Type of organisation**

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
<b>Type of organisation</b>	<b>Private</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>45.0</b>
	<b>Public</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>55.0</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2017**

From Table 6 above, it can be inferred that, from the study, ninety-four respondents representing 45.0% work in private organisations whiles one hundred and fifteen respondents representing 55.0% work in public organisations. By this result, it is realised that, recruitment in the private organisations is gradually increasing as a result of the reduction in recruitment in the public organisations.

**Table 7: Bio-data of interviewees**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Marital status</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Religious Affiliation</b>	<b>Type of Organisation</b>
Kofi	Male	25-29	Single	Akan	Christian	Public
Nana	Male	25-29	Single	Akan	Christian	Public
Sena	Male	25-29	Single	Ewe	Christian	Private
Dan	Male	25-29	Single	Ga-Adangme	Christian	Private
Ben	Male	25-29	Single	Akan	Christian	Private
Grace	Female	25-29	Single	Akan	Christian	Public
Ida	Female	25-29	Single	Ewe	Christian	Public
<b>Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2017</b>						

The next section gives a description of respondents' current employment.

## 4.2 DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS' CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

**Table 8: Background information on respondents' job**

<b>Table 8: Background information on respondents' job</b>			
		<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENT (%)</b>
National service	Yes	116	56.9
	No	88	43.1
	Total	204	100
Preferred job	Yes	137	69.9
	No	59	30.1
	Total	196	100
Job relatedness	Not related at all	21	10.2
	Related	184	89.8
	Total	205	100
Knowledge and skills	Yes	177	87.2
	No	26	12.8
	Total	203	100
Additional skills	Information technology	6	33.3
	Other	12	66.7
	Total	18	100
Working after service	1-2 years	86	43.0
	2-3 years	48	24.0
	3-4 years	18	9.0
	4-5 years	48	24.0
	Total	200	100

**Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2017**

### 4.2.1 National Service

National service is a period in the lives of graduates from both private and public universities to serve their country for a year after their tertiary education. These graduates serve in private

or public organisations, receive some allowances from the government and receive certificates after their service. This program does not only give graduates the opportunity to play active roles in the development of their country but also gain the knowledge, experience and values for employment. This is a very important factor when it comes to the transition of graduates from school to work as it plays an important role in getting one a job in Ghana as the certificate is usually demanded for confirmation before being employed. Data from Table 4.8 thus reveals that, all respondents had their National service. Also, 56.9% of respondents are working in the organisations in which they had their National service while the remaining, representing 43.1% are working in different organisations other than where they had their National service.

#### **4.2.2 Preferred Job**

There is a simple Ghanaian adage which says “Work is Man”. Others are also of the view that, one is defined by the kind of work they do (NCDA 2008). Every individual, aspires to at least a good career that guarantees sustained and well rewarding employment or work, lend them good reputation and peace of mind in their lifetime. As a result of this, individuals prepare towards the world of work and future careers begin when in school to fulfil these aspirations. In finding out whether respondents were able to find their preferred jobs, Table 4.8 shows that, 69.9% of the respondents are currently in their preferred jobs. However, 30.1% were not able to find jobs that they prefer; a situation resulting from the scarcity of jobs. This result supports that of Adjei and Mohammed (2014) who in their study found that 73% of their respondents were in their preferred jobs while 27% were not in their preferred jobs.

Also, Kofi, who was able to gain employment and is in his preferred job, said “... *if you don't have a job, what have you achieved? This is who I've wanted to be and what I have always wanted to do and I am happy ...*”

On the other hand, Dan, who did not get his preferred job, said

*There are no jobs in Ghana now and since I have been looking for a job for some time now, this is the job I got. Everyone needs to start from somewhere right? So I am managing this one for the mean time. As soon as I get my preferred job, I will leave. As for those who got their preferred jobs, they are lucky*

From the excerpts above, it can be inferred that graduates who are able to get their preferred jobs see it as a life achievement while those who do not get their preferred jobs see it as a stepping stone to bigger things.

#### **4.2.3 Job Relatedness**

As individuals graduate and search for jobs, they search for jobs that are related to the courses they read during their tertiary education. This is not surprising as majority find themselves in their preferred jobs. Majority, 89.8% of the respondents who took part in the survey find themselves in jobs that are related to their course of study at the university. However, 10.2 % are in jobs that are not related to their course of study at the university. This is contrary to Stone et al (2012) who in their study found that 40% of graduates say their job is not related to their course of study while 22% said their job is related to their course of study. This implies that, graduates who have gotten jobs in Accra are working in positions that are related to their course of study. This can be seen in Table 8 above.

#### **4.2.4 Knowledge and Skills**

Education gives one the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills in order to be employable in the labour market. Complementarily, education and skills development are the

pathways for human capital and career development, productivity, and the general employability of the population of any nation. Ghana's first President, Kwame Nkrumah envisioned this and added that education and skills are tools needed for the advancement of the individual and society at large according to Akyeampong (2008: 1-2). From the survey, Table 8 shows that, 87.2% representing a majority are able to use the knowledge and skills they acquired during their years of education at their workplaces. This result is satisfactory because it indicates that the academic programmes of the various universities are relevant. However, just 12.8% are not using the knowledge and skills they acquired from school. This result corroborates with that of the job relatedness. This is because if their jobs are related to what they studied in school, then they are able to apply the knowledge and skills they acquired without difficulty. This result refutes the results of a study conducted by Poku-Boansi and Afrane (2011) who in their study proved that the lack of skills such as communication skills, problem solving skills and analytical skills of most graduates negatively influence their transition from school to work. Likewise, this result refutes that of Baah-Boateng (2013) who found in his study that skills mismatch negatively influences graduates' transition from school to work. One employee, Ida, who shared her view on this said

*"...It is good to know the knowledge behind what you are doing. It's a good feeling when you are able to translate the knowledge and skills you have acquired to what you are doing especially at work."*

#### **4.2.5 Additional Skills**

Skills are the tools needed to carry out tasks at the workplace in order to increase general employability of individuals as well as their productivity. To be effective and efficient at the workplace, Table 8 revealed that some respondents have acquired additional skills. 66.7% of these respondents representing a majority need skills such as project management skills,

banking skills and accounting skills whiles 33.3% need information technology skills. The following excerpt is in consonance with this result.

*The world is changing and there are always new ways of doing things so you must try and adapt to the change by learning these new methods of doing things to be more efficient, else you will be left behind. (Grace)*

#### **4.2.6 Years Working after National Service**

The survey conducted focused on graduates who have been working between one and five years. Results from Table 8 revealed a majority, 43.0% working between one and two years, 24.0% working between two and three years, 24.0% working between four and five years and the least, 9.0% working between three and four years. This shows that majority of the respondents are in the early years of transition after graduating from the university and are adjusting to their responsibilities and work schedules (see Table 8).

#### **4.3 STRATEGIES OF JOB SEARCH**

In Ghana, there are various methods or approaches graduates deploy in order to get jobs in the labour market. These methods or approaches can be grouped into formal which includes the newspaper, career fair and internet and informal which includes family members, members of old school associations, members of church or mosque and members of professional organisations. From the survey, over 50% of the respondents used informal methods of job search whiles less than 50% used formal methods of job search.

**Table 9: Strategies of job vacancies**

		<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENT (%)</b>
Strategies of job vacancies	Newspaper	25	13.0
	Career fair	15	7.8
	Internet	16	8.3
	Family member	54	28.1
	Member of church/mosque	21	10.9
	Member of professional organisation	18	9.4
	Member of old school group	10	5.2
	Other	33	17.2
	Total	192	99.9

**Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2017**

Table 9: Strategies of job vacancies continued.

#### 4.3.1 Newspaper Advertisement

Newspaper advertisement is the most popular traditional method of making known job vacancies to the general public and for interested applicants to apply for the positions advertised. From the survey (see Table 9), 13.0% of the respondents got their jobs through the newspaper adverts. Most organisations advertise job vacancies through the newspaper since most people like to read the newspaper while others also buy newspapers because of their search for jobs. It is seen that the newspaper is a reliable source.

#### 4.3.2 Career Fair

Career fairs also known as job fairs are programmes organised by organisations for job seekers and to give them information about how they can be employed in their organisations. During these fairs, job seekers meet with executives of organisations and present their Curriculum Vitae which they scrutinize and select people for interviews and employment.

Results from the survey showed that 7.8% of respondents got their jobs using this method of job search (see Table 9).

#### **4.3.3 Internet**

In this modern day and age known as the computer age, where there is a variety of job websites such as jobberman.com, jobs in Gh and recently, LinkenIn, few respondents, 8.3% got jobs through the internet. This result does not concur with that of Nakamura et al. (2009) whose study provided evidence to prove that the internet is one of the tools used by graduates to acquire jobs in modern times. It also refutes Stevenson (2009) results from his study that, the primary means by which employees gained employment was through the internet which they believe helped them find jobs. Also, in the same study, majority of respondents felt that the Internet was an effective method of job search. It also refutes results of a study conducted by Adjei and Mohammed (2014) which found that, out of the varied ways in which individuals get jobs, the use of the internet is one of the most effective tools used by graduates to gain employment (see Table 9).

#### **4.3.4 Family**

Children are parents' priority and as such, get worried when after years of educating their children, they do not get employed and have to stay at home. When parents are faced with this alarming situation, they tend to help their children secure jobs. They do this by contacting people they know and giving their children information on job vacancies they have heard of. This is revealed in the survey (see Table 9) as majority, 28.1% of the respondents got to know of job vacancies or got jobs through their family members and this is because the family is the first point of contact from where individuals get advice and help, thus, the most common means of securing jobs. This result however is in line with a study conducted by Gerry et al (2000) proving that families are contributing factors that aid

graduates in accessing jobs. Also, it confirms Granovetter's strength of ties which indicates that people you know help in securing employment. Thus graduates not only get jobs through the use of their human capital but also through their social capital. This therefore implies that, this informal asset is playing a bigger role in getting graduates jobs in Accra while the formal assets of these people help them sustain their jobs. Dan had this to say

*You see, after my National Service, I was not getting a job. This bothered my parents a lot especially my mum so she contacted some of her friends and told them about my situation and asked them to help me get a job. There were even instances where she took copies of my CV and certificates which she gave to them. There was a time I also heard my dad talking to a friend to help me get a job.*

#### 4.3.5 Groups

Being a member of groups, associations and professional organisations also gives individuals the opportunity to get jobs. This is because being part of these groups gives individuals the opportunity to build their social capital as well as meet and interact with people who are working in different organisations who can help them get jobs due to their positions in their organisations or link them to other people who can help them get jobs. From the study, 14.6% said they got their jobs as a result of being part of groups be it in the church, mosque, old school associations and professional organisations as well (see Table 9). Sena who got a job as a result of being in a group said

*I am very active at church. I belong to the youth fellowship and the praise and worship team. When I was searching for a job, I told some people who work in corporate institutions in the church and gave them my particulars when they asked for it. I was invited by some organisations including where I work to write aptitude tests and here I am.*

Ben also says

*Errm, I wanted to join the Rotary Club but I didn't do much follow up on that but I have friends who are members of this club and have gotten jobs. You know, groups like these comprise of corporate individuals so if there are vacancies in their organisations, they make it known to members first so that those who don't have jobs can apply. This is how some of my friends who are members of Rotary Club got jobs.*

#### 4.4 FORMAL ASSETS

These are resources acquired and achieved by individuals on their own through education and training which they use to acquire jobs and sustain them.

**Table 10: Respondents' formal assets**

		FREQUENCY	PERCENT (%)
Secondary school	Single Sex	99	47.4
	Mixed School	110	52.6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>100</b>
University	Private	60	28.7
	Public	149	71.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>100</b>
Programme Studied	Social Science/ Humanities	62	31.3
	Natural Sciences	39	19.7
	Technical Programmes	25	12.6
	Business Programmes	72	36.4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>
Qualification	Bachelors	202	96.7
	Masters	7	3.4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>100</b>
Class Obtained	First Class	31	15.3
	Second Class Upper	110	54.2
	Second Class Lower	52	25.6
	Third Class	6	3.0
	Pass	4	2.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>100</b>
Internship	Yes	157	82.6
	No	33	17.4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>100</b>
Years of Internship	Less than a year	92	60.1
	1 year	50	32.7
	2 years	10	6.5
	3 years	1	0.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>100</b>
Internship Related to Course of Study	Yes	129	78.2
	No	36	21.8

	<b>Total</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>100</b>
Professional Certificate	Yes	77	37.6
	No	128	62.4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2017</b>			

Table 10: Respondents' Formal Assets continued

The educational ladder has different stages; primary, basic, secondary and tertiary. At the primary level, one attends school, learns, is examined and promoted to the next class. This is done till the sixth class after which the pupil begins his basic education. Getting to the end of basic education, the student is given the option to choose a secondary school he or she would like to attend for his or her secondary education. This choice he or she makes depends on many factors which include personal reasons, what he or she has heard about the school, because of friends, educational standard of the school or reasons known to parents among many others.

From the study, (see Table 10) 47.4% of the respondents attended single sex schools. These single sex schools they attended include Wesley Girls High School, Accra Girls High School, Aburi Girls High School, Mfantipim Boys School, Presbyterian Boys School, Prempeh College and other single sex schools nationwide. *"I got this school by merit"* says Nana. According to Ben, *"my elder brothers attended that school so I thought of following suite"*. Kofi says *"this SHS was the school of my choice and besides, as an Anglican, I felt the school would best suit me"*. *"My parents felt that SHS was more secured in terms of security"* says Ida. 52.6% of the respondents attended Mixed Schools. These mixed schools include Akosombo International School, Labone Senior High, Achimota Senior High, Oforipani Senior High School, Ghana National Senior High School, Tema Senior High School among others nationwide.

After secondary school education, individuals apply to institutions either private or public institutions for their tertiary education. For tertiary education, (see Table 10) respondents of the study either attended private or public universities. 28.8% of the respondents attended private universities such as Ashesi University, Central University, Methodist University and Wisconsin University while 71.3% representing a majority attended public universities nationwide. They include, University of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, University of Cape Coast and University of Development Studies. It can be inferred from this result that, most people working in organisations as well as Heads of State have studied in these institutions thus making the institutions prestigious thus, making it easy for graduates from these institutions to secure employment. To Ida, *“...if you want to get a suitable job, then you’ve got to go through to the university and that is it because without university education, no one will employ you...”*

At the universities, these respondents read different courses. 31.3% read courses under the Social Sciences/ Humanities, 19.7% read courses under the Natural Sciences, 12.6% read Technical Programmes and 36.4% read Business courses. From the survey, it is realised that most respondents read Business courses. This is because graduates read courses that are in line with the employment situation at hand and as there is the establishment of more organisations in Accra especially banks, graduates with business administration background have the opportunity to secure jobs based on the courses they read (see Table 10).

According to Bills (2003), qualifications bestow status and are a symbol of educational qualifications conferred by colleges and universities in the form of degrees. To Gangl (2000 p.3) as cited in Ionescu (2012), the qualifications attained by individuals are the main asset used in acquiring jobs as a result of competition for jobs available on the labour market. One’s qualifications are relevant because it plays a role in attaining jobs as it serves as a proof that an individual has acquired knowledge that will help him or her work effectively

and efficiently (Ogege, 2011 p.253-254). From the study, 96.7% of the respondents representing a majority have a Bachelors degree. This is in line with Asafu-Adjaye's (2011) probit model used to estimate the effects of education on employment in Ghana using data from the fifth round of the Ghana Living Standard Survey (GLSS 5) showing that, individuals with primary, secondary and tertiary education have higher chances of being employed as compared to those with lesser qualifications or no qualifications all things being equal. 3.4% of respondents have Masters Degree in order to set themselves apart from those with only the Bachelors degree. This supports the results of Ionescu et al (2012) who in his study found that one's qualifications play a role in securing a job; the study also showed that, having a higher educational level would set you apart from those who do not have it (see Table 10).

University education is no different from that of the primary, basic and tertiary. Whereas an individual cannot move from basic and secondary education without the required certificates, so it is with securing a job. Securing a job is not about having a degree only but also having good qualification. This is because, without good qualification, the transition of graduates from school to work is not easy. From respondents' qualifications acquired at the university, 15.3% had First Class, 54.2% had Second Class Upper, 25.6 graduated with Second Class Lower, 3.0% graduated with Third Class and 2.0% graduated with a Pass. This is shown in Table 10 above.

The labour market is flooded with graduates with good credentials (Tomlinson, 2008) so having additional attributes facilitates one's employment in the Ghanaian society. Work experience comes in a variety of ways for example, through internships (Jensen, 2009), volunteering to work (Bourner and Millican 2011), and service learning (Prentice and Robinson, 2010). From the study, respondents had internships in order to get some work experience. 60.1% had internships for less than a year, 32.7% had internships for a year,

6.5% had two years internship and 0.7% had three years internship. They had their internships during their vacations. This supports the results of a study by Harvey (1997) on graduates who were very satisfied with their job revealing that, having had work experience facilitated their employment. To them, work experience facilitated their employment since it gave them the opportunity to practice the knowledge they had acquired from school, and gave them an insight of what work is about. In the same study, it was revealed that, lack of relevant work experience made it difficult for a graduate to enter the labour market (see Table 10).

78.2% of respondents had internships that were related to their course of study at the University while 21.8% did not have course related internships. Also, 37.6% acquired other professional certificates aside their degrees to set them apart from others in the labour market while 62.4% did not acquire professional certificates (see Table 4.10).

*Personally, I think the value of having a degree is being lost these days, that is, everyone is going to the university and going through the “conveyor belt” and most graduates have the same qualification so the need to set yourself apart because the degree alone is not enough on its own to get you a job...”(Nana)*

*“...Hmm, there are too many graduates and few jobs. Since we all have degrees, nothing differentiates us but when you have something extra, it puts you on top of others...” (Grace)*

*“... if you do not have any experience, it does not make you stand out from the other people...” (Sena)*

This shows that there is the need to add value to oneself to be advantageous in the labour market.

#### 4.5 INFORMAL ASSETS

According to Adjei and Mohammed (2014), there is “the hidden job market” as majority of jobs that are available are never advertised. As a result of this, graduates get to know of job vacancies through family, friends, acquaintances and other people to whom the for the purpose of getting information, leads, or advice on getting a job (Wanberg et al, 2000). This is the reason why in modern Ghanaian society, people say that getting a job is based on “who you know” and not “what you know”; implying that a graduate may have all the formal assets but if he or she does not know anyone to help him or her, it would be difficult for him or her to get a job.

Literature on employment and other related topics see the use of social networks to play an important role in securing jobs (Putnam, 2000). A survey conducted by Shuttleworth et al (2008) revealed that the use of social network as a tool to enter the labour market placed second after “adverts in the press”. This is not in line with the survey conducted as more than 50% of respondents got their jobs through informal sources such as family, friends, members of church/mosque, members of professional associations and old students’ associations. This result is in line with Granovetter’s findings that graduates not only make use of their formal assets when looking for jobs but also use their informal assets.

**Table 11: Graduates’ informal assets**

	<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENT (%)</b>
Size of network	Disagree	103	54.8
	Agree	85	45.2
<b>Total</b>		<b>188</b>	<b>100</b>

Strength of network	Disagree	117	61.9
	Agree	72	38.1
<b>Total</b>		<b>189</b>	<b>100</b>
Status of tie members	Disagree	127	67.6
	Agree	61	32.4
<b>Total</b>		<b>188</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2017</b>			

Table 11: Graduates informal assets continued.

#### 4.5.1 Size of Network

According to Kanfer et al (2001), the quality of the social network or social capital is very important as this influences the ease with which one gets employment. For example, a graduate looking for employment after contacting one important person will be successful in getting employed, whereas another remains unemployed after contacting five to ten less important people. This does not support the result of the study conducted as 54.8% of respondents disagree that the size of one's network eases his or her job acquisition while 45.2% agree that the size of one's network plays a role in getting him or her a job. This shows that a graduate may know many people but these people will not play any significant role in helping the graduate to secure a job (see Table 11).

*"...I don't think it is that easy. You need a lot of determination. It is not only about the experience oo but building up of contacts because it's a general competition among graduates. For instance, one of my friends has been employed because of his contacts..."*  
(Ben)

*"... See, the graduate market is getting overcrowded. There are too may graduates and few jobs so if you have no one to help you, you will not get a job (Dan).*

#### 4.5.2 Strength of Network

The strength of one's network, that is, the kind of people in one's network also plays a role in the acquisition of jobs. In Granovetter's strength of weak ties proposition, individuals who are weakly tied to have access to more information on employment than what is gotten by the individuals themselves (Siebert et al, 2001). This means that the ease with which individuals get employed is based on not only the number of contacts available to them but also the strength of ties that exist between the members of the social network. From the study, 61.9% of the respondents disagree that the strength of one's network plays a role in getting one a job and 38.1% agree that the strength of one's network plays a role in getting one a job. Based on this result, one can say that, a graduate may have good relations with the people he or she knows but this relationship they have will not play a role in securing him or her a job (see Table 11)

#### 4.5.3 Status of Tie Members

The status of the people who make up one's network help graduates to get jobs. This is because if the people in one's network are people with good education, have good jobs and live good lives, they get information on jobs and make it available to people in search of jobs (Aguilera, 2002). Results from the survey shows that, 67.6% of respondents disagree that the status (educational and occupational) of tie members plays a role in getting one a job while 32.4% of respondents agree that the status (educational and occupational) of one's tie members play a role in getting one a job (see Table 11).

**Table 12: Groups respondents belong to**

		<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENT (%)</b>
Member of Youth Organisation	Yes	120	60.6
	No	78	39.4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>
Member of Old Students' Association	Yes	127	62.3
	No	77	37.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>100</b>
Member of Professional Organisation	Yes	31	15.9
	No	164	84.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2017**

#### 4.5.4 Member of Youth Organisation

Ghana as a country is becoming more religious and this is influencing graduates' transition from school to work. Graduates join organisations at their various churches in order to build their social capital which they make use of to gain employment. This is because, in joining these groups, those who are employed are able to give them information on job vacancies and sometimes are referred to recruiting organisations. From the study, as shown in Table 12, respondents are part of organisations as well as associations, 60.6% are members of youth organisations in their various churches and 39.4% do not belong to youth organisations in their churches.

#### 4.5.5 Member of Old Students' Association

Being a member of the Old Students' Association of the school one attended also plays a role in smooth school to work transition. This is because, every school has its values and principles that shape their lives. Also, some people from these schools hold different positions in different organisations. As a result, when organisations are employing

individuals for positions within their organisations, tend to consider people from their Alma Mata and have that allegiance. From the study, 62.3% respondents are members of their Old Students' Associations and 37.7% are not (see Table 12).

#### **4.5.6 Member of Professional Association**

Being a member of a professional organisation also plays a role in graduates' smooth transition from school to work. This is because, these organisations consist of corporate individuals with objectives and hold meetings at regular intervals in order to meet their objectives. However, since these people are in the corporate world, they tend to have or get information on employment. In view of this, they make it known to individuals in that organisation before any other person. Also, most graduates also join these groups not only because of building social capital but also to secure jobs. From the Table 12 above, it is inferred that 15.9% belong to professional organisations while 84.1% do not belong to professional organisations.

#### 4.6 COMBINATION OF ASSETS

Granovetter's (1974) work on "Getting a Job" (GAJ) proposed that, numerous employees do not only get jobs through their formal assets (internet, skills, qualification, and work experience) or "what you know" but also get jobs through their informal assets (social network) or "who you know". This points to the fact, that in order to get a job, it is not only about one's personal achievement but whom he knows also plays an important role in getting him a job thus, the combination of the two.

<b>Table 13: Combination of assets</b>			
		<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENT (%)</b>
Combination of assets	More formal assets and less informal assets	152	82.2
	Less formal assets and more informal assets	33	17.8
How long it took to get a job after using this combination	Less than a year	70	36.8
	1 year	68	35.8
	2 years	30	15.8
	3 years	16	8.4
	4 years	1	.5
	5 years	2	1.1
	Other	3	1.6
Recommendation	Yes	145	82.4
	No	31	17.6

**Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2017**

From the study, 82.2% representing a majority of respondents got jobs through the combination of more formal assets and less informal assets while 17.8% of respondents got their jobs through the combination of less formal assets and more informal assets. Using these combinations, it took 36.8% of respondents to get jobs in less than a year and 63.2% to

get jobs after a year. Also, 82.4% of respondents recommended the use of the combination of assets in the search of jobs in order to ease their employment while 17.6% said otherwise.

The next chapter, chapter five, explores the role of assets in getting a graduate a job.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### GETTING A JOB: THE ROLE OF ASSETS

#### 5.0 INTRODUCTION

As the numbers of graduates outnumber the jobs available in Accra, graduates deploy various assets in order to facilitate their employment. This chapter presents the results of nonparametric tests conducted to find the relationship between the assets deployed by graduates when searching for jobs and how long it takes them to get employed. The chapter ends by looking at the determinants of job satisfaction among employed graduates in Accra.

#### 5.1 THE EXTENT TO WHICH FORMAL ASSETS DETERMINE GRADUATES' EMPLOYMENT.

In finding out whether the secondary school an individual attends plays a role in getting job, a chi-square test was run.

**Table 14: Relationship between secondary school attended and years taken to get a job.**

Years taken to get a job after NS <sup>1</sup>	Secondary School Attended		
	Single	Mixed	
Before a year	44(41.9%)	61(58.1%)	2.022
After a year	36(52.9%)	32(47.1%)	
<i>Chi-square value= 2.022</i>		<i>P value= 0.155</i>	

\* P < 0.05

<sup>1</sup> National Service

**Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2017.**

Results depicted in the chi-square Table 14 above is a test run to find out if the secondary school one attends plays a role in getting one a job. Results of this test show that majority (58.1%) of respondents who attended Mixed Schools landed their first job within a year after their National Service as compared to 41.9% who attended Single Sex Schools. Also, 52.9%

of respondents who attended Single Sex Schools got jobs after a year after their National Service as compared to 47.1% who attended Mixed Schools. This shows some kind of relationship between the variables however, statistically, this relationship is not significant as the P value (0.155) is more than 0.05. Therefore, getting a job earlier or later is not dependent on the Secondary School a graduate attends.

**Table 15: Relationship between university attended and years taken to get a job.**

Years taken to get a job	University Attended	
	Private	Public
after NS <sup>1</sup>		
Before a year	27(25.7%)	78(74.3%)
After a year	23(33.8%)	45(66.2%)

*Chi-square value=1.321*

*P value= 0.250*

\* P < 0.05

<sup>1</sup> National Service

**Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2017.**

Testing to find out if the University attended plays a role in getting one a job in Table 15 above, the test reveals that 74.3% of participants of the study representing a majority attended Public Universities and got a job within a year after National Service while 25.7% who attended Private Universities got jobs within a year after their National Service. In the same vein, 66.2% who attended Public Universities got employed a year after National Service with the remainder, 33.8% who attended Private Universities getting employed a year after National Service. With a chi-square value= 1.321 and P value=0.250, how early or late a graduate gets a job is not dependent on the University attended.

Courses individuals pursue in the universities are courses chosen by them in relation to their career path. Above is the result of a chi-square test to find out the relationship between the courses read by graduates and the years taken to get employed.

**Table 16: Relationship between course of study and years taken to get a job.**

Years taken to get a job after NS <sup>1</sup>	Course of study			
	Social Sciences/ Humanities	Natural Sciences	Technical Programmes	Business Programmes
Before a year	32(31.4%)	21(20.6%)	13(12.7%)	36(35.3%)
After a year	18(28.6%)	9(14.3%)	8(12.7%)	28(44.4%)
<i>Chi-square value=1.792</i>			<i>P value= 0.617</i>	

\* P < 0.05

<sup>1</sup> National Service

**Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2017.**

Results from Table 16 show that majority (35.3%) participants of the study read Business Programmes during their study in the university got employed within a year after National Service followed by those who read Social Science/ Humanities Programmes (31.4%), Natural Sciences (20.6%) and Technical Programmes (12.7%) respectively. Likewise, majority (44.4%) of participants of the study who read Business Programmes got employed after a year after their National Service followed by those who read Social Science/ Humanities Programmes (28.6%), Natural Sciences (14.3%) and Technical Programmes (12.7%). It is also seen that majority of those who got jobs earlier and later than a year read business courses however, with a P value greater than 0.05, getting a job is not dependent on the course one studies at the university.

To test if the class obtained by graduates play a role in getting them jobs, Table 17 below reveals the classes (first, second, third class and pass) one could obtain after years of education in the university.

**Table 17: Relationship between class obtained and years taken to get a job.**

Years taken to get a job after NS <sup>1</sup>	Class obtained		
	First Class	Second Class	Third Class and Pass
Before a year	11(10.7%)	88(85.4%)	4(3.9%)
After a year	11(16.2%)	51(75.0%)	6(8.8%)
Chi-square value=3.220		P value=0.200	

\* P &lt; 0.05

<sup>1</sup> National Service**Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2017.**

Majority, representing 85.4% of respondents had Second Class and this group of people gained employment within a year after their National Service followed by those who had First class (10.7) and Below Second Class (3.9). In the same vein, majority (75.0%) of respondents who got jobs after a year after National Service are those who had Second Class followed by those who had First Class (16.2%) and those who had Below Second Class (8.8%). Though this test signifies a relationship between the class one obtains from the university and how long it takes for one to get a job, statistically, this relationship is not significant as the P value (0.200) is more than 0.05. Therefore, getting a job is not dependent on the class one obtained from the university (see Table 17).

Work experience is also a vital asset that helps graduates to get jobs since it gives them an idea of what happens at the workplace and also gives one some basic skills needed at the workplace. A chi-square test on the relationship between the internships had by respondents and the years taken to get a job (see Table 18 below).

**Table 18: Relationship between internship and years taken to get a job.**

Years taken to get a job after NS <sup>1</sup>	Internship	
	Yes	No
Before a year	83(85.6%)	14(14.4%)
After a year	47(78.3%)	13(21.7%)
Chi-square value= 1.362		P value=0.243

\* P &lt; 0.05

<sup>1</sup> National Service**Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2017.**

Results of the chi-square test on the relationship between the internships had by respondents and the years taken to get a job show that 85.6% of respondents representing a majority who had internships got jobs within a year after National Service and only 14.4% who did not have internships got jobs within a year after National Service. Also, 78.3% of respondents who had internships got jobs after a year after their National Service with 21.7% of those who did not have any internship getting jobs after a year after National Service. Here, it is noted that, there exists a relationship between having internships and how long it takes a graduate to get a job however, this relationship is not significant as the P value (0.243) exceeds 0.05. This result is not in line with what Ben says about having work experience.

*In school, we were told that internships add up to your work experience. Sometimes when you are done with school, your first point of contact with work experience is National Service. Internships add up to your years of experience so personally, I had internships when I was in school. (Ben)*

Due to the competition that exists in the labour market between thousands of graduates which puts every graduate on the same board, some graduates set themselves apart in order to get jobs. In setting themselves apart, graduates obtain certificates in other courses to make them more marketable in the labour market.

**Table 19: Relationship between professional course read and years taken to get a job.**

Years taken to get a job after NS <sup>1</sup>	Professional course		
	Yes	No	
Before a year	40(38.1%)	65(61.9%)	.584
After a year	21(32.3%)	44(67.7%)	

*Chi-square value= 0.584*

*P value=0.445*

\* P < 0.05

<sup>1</sup> National Service

**Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2017**

To find out the relationship between professional courses read and the number of years taken to get a job, the chi-square Table 19 above show that 61.9% representing majority of respondents of the study who did not obtain professional certificates got jobs within a year after National Service and 38.1% who obtained professional certificates got jobs within a year after National Service. Also, 67.7% of respondents who did not obtain professional certificates got jobs after a year after National Service and 32.3% who obtained professional certificates got jobs after a year after National Service. With a P value of 0.445, there is no significant relationship between professional courses read by graduates to make them more marketable and the years taken to get a job.

Results from the above parametric tests run to find out the extent to which formal assets determine graduates' employment has shown that how early or later a graduate gets a job does not matter on the formal assets he or she possesses.

## 5.2 THE EXTENT TO WHICH INFORMAL ASSETS DETERMINE GRADUATES' EMPLOYMENT

In order to examine if the size of one's network varies by the time taken to get a job, an independence t test was conducted.

**Table 20: Size of network varies by years taken to get a job.**

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Sig
Size of Network	Before a year	96	12.0313	3.14376	.208	.835
	After a year	63	11.9206	3.46551		

*T value= 0.208*

*P value=0.835*

\*  $P < 0.05$

**Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2017**

Results depicted in the Table 20 above show that graduates who got a job within a year after their National Service (Mean=12.03; SD= 3.14) agree more that the size of one's network helps one to get a job whereas graduates who got jobs after a year after National Service (Mean=11.92; SD=3.5) less agree that the size of one's network helps in getting a graduate a job. However, this variation is not significant as the P value 0.835 is greater than 0.05. This result means that there is no significant difference between the extent to which those who got jobs earlier and later agree that the size of one's network guarantees a job.

*Network certainly; you must get to know people. Even if it's just volunteer work, helping out with something, taking part in activities, getting involved with things, joining groups, things like that. My family members know a lot of people. I think if you know other people you can inform them about your job search and they can help you get a job because a lot of people graduate every year. (Ida)*

“...yeah, networking is a sure thing. I really made good connections with a lot of people. My connections with people helped me a lot...” (Kofi)

In order to examine if the strength of one’s network varies by the time taken to get a job, an independence t test was conducted.

**Table 21: Strength of one’s network varies by years taken to get a job.**

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Sig
Strength of Network	Before a year	97	9.3814	2.80418	-.221	.826
	After a year	62	9.4839	2.92945		

*T value= -0.221*

*P value=0.826*

\*  $P < 0.05$

**Source: Researcher’s fieldwork, 2017**

Results depicted in the Table 21 above show that graduates who got a job within a year after their National Service (Mean=9.4; SD=2.80) less agree that the size of one’s network helps one to get a job whereas graduates who got jobs after a year after National Service (Mean=9.5; SD=2.92) agree more that the strength of one’s network helps in getting a graduate a job. However, this variation is not significant as the P value 0.826 is greater than 0.05. This result means that there is no significant difference between the extent to which those who got jobs earlier and later agree that the strength of one’s network guarantees a job.

**Table 22: Status of members in network varies by years taken to get a job.**

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Sig
Status of Tie Members	Before a year	96	11.7708	2.59343	2.378	.019
	After a year	62	10.7258	2.85249		

*T value= 2.378**P value=0.019*

\* P &lt; 0.05

**Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2017**

In order to examine if the status of members of one's network varies by the time taken to get a job, an independence t test was conducted. Results depicted in the Table 22 above show that graduates who got a job within a year after their National Service (Mean= 11.77; SD=2.59) agree more that the status of members of one's network helps one to get a job whereas graduates who got jobs after a year after National Service Mean=10.72; SD=2.85 agree less that the status of members of one's network helps in getting a graduate a job. This variation is significant as the P value 0.019 is less than 0.05. This result means that there is a significant difference between the extent to which those who got jobs earlier and later agree that the status of members of their network got them a job. That is, the worth of people in one's network, that is, their educational status, occupational status as well as their general life status is what secures one a job as compared to the size of one's network and the strength of one's network. This is therefore in line with Granovetter's strength of ties "...My dad spoke to someone who he used to work with to help secure an interview for me..." (Grace).

### 5.3 THE EXTENT TO WHICH COMBINATION OF ASSETS DETERMINE GRADUATES' EMPLOYMENT

**Table 23: Relationship between assets combined and years taken to get a job.**

Years taken to get a job after NS <sup>1</sup>	Combination of assets	
	More formal assets and less informal assets	Less formal assets and more informal assets
Before a year	76(80.9%)	18(19.1%)
After a year	47(79.7%)	12(20.3%)
<i>Chi-square value= 0.033</i>		<i>P value=0.857</i>

\* P < 0.05

<sup>1</sup> National Service

**Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2017**

To find out the relationship between assets combined and the number of years taken to get a job, the chi-square Table 23 above shows that 80.9% of respondents who combined more formal assets and less informal assets got jobs within a year after their National Service as compared to 19.9% who combined less formal assets and more informal assets. Also, 79.7% got jobs after a year after National Service when they combined more formal assets while 20.3% of respondents who combined less formal assets and more informal assets got jobs after a year after National Service. From this table, it is seen that combining more formal assets and less informal assets plays a role in getting one a job. However, with a p value more than 0.05, there is no significant relationship between the assets combined and the number of years taken to get a job. This implies that, how long it takes a graduate to get a job does not depend on the assets combined.

## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 6.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the summary of the major findings of the study in response to the research questions, draws conclusions on the study and suggests recommendations for consideration and future research as well.

#### 6.1 SUMMARY

University education is usually a pathway chosen by individuals who want to be employable in the labour market. Out of the thousands of individuals who graduate from the various universities in Ghana after years of education, only 8% of graduates are absorbed into the formal sector. This research project therefore sought to explore the factors that are at play in getting graduates permanent jobs in the formal sector of Ghana's economy thus, the keys to a successful school to work transition. To be able to do this, three objectives were outlined to help achieve the aim of the study. These were to explore the extent to which formal assets (knowledge, skills, qualifications, and work experience) determine graduates' employment. To examine the extent to which informal assets (family, friends, acquaintances and social networks) determine graduates' employment. To examine which combination of formal and informal assets increase a graduates' chances of securing early employment.

The mixed methods specifically the sequential explanatory mixed method was employed in carrying out the study and in this case, the quantitative study preceded the qualitative study. The target population for the study comprised all employed university graduates living in Accra who have worked for a maximum of five years in a permanent employment position. Using the stratified sampling method, private and public organisations within the Accra

Metropolitan Assembly were selected for the survey. Also, by employing Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) formula for determining sampling sizes for surveys, the researcher estimated the sample size for the survey at two hundred and seventy-eight (278). However, two hundred and nine (209) that is, one hundred and eight (108) males and one hundred and one (101) females actually participated in the study giving a response rate of 75.2%. The purposive sampling technique was, employed to select ten (10) employed graduates for the qualitative study. However, seven (7) employed graduates were available for the qualitative study. Also, the selection of the respondents, who participated in the quantitative study, was based on the result from the survey. Using a self-administered questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide for the survey and the qualitative study respectively, the data was collected and analyzed in two phases; first the quantitative data collection and analysis then second, the qualitative data collection and analysis. The two analyzed data, however, were later merged at an intermediary level.

## **6.2 KEY FINDINGS**

In finding out the factors that come to play in getting graduates permanent jobs in the formal sector of Ghana's economy, it was found that in Accra, it takes a graduate as early as one year and at least five years to get a job post National Service. This finding supports that of Fares et al (2005) who in his study found that in developing countries like Cote d'Ivoire, it takes individuals one year to get into the labour market and more than five years in countries like Kenya, Malawi, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, and others found in the Sub Saharan region, thus, graduates have to wait for a long time before getting employed.

Findings from the study show that the family factor (28.1%) was the main source of finding out about job vacancies. This is so because there is "the hidden job market" as majority of jobs that are available are never advertised (Adjei and Mohammed, 2014) and as such

graduates have to rely on family, friends, acquaintances and other people with the purpose of getting information, leads, or advice on getting a job (Wanberg et al, 2000). This finding also supports the saying “getting a job is based on who you know and not what you know”.

In other jurisdictions like developed countries, formal assets like employment agencies, advertisement, internet, skills, qualifications and work experience are utilized in getting jobs. However, this is not the case with this study as these assets were not found to play significant roles in getting graduates jobs.

Graduates also have available to them, informal assets which include the number of people they know, the strength of the relationship they have with these people and the status of the people they know which they make use of when searching for jobs. From the study, it is evident that the status of the people a graduate knows plays a vital role in getting him or her a job. This finding is in line with Kanfer et al (2001) who in their work found the quality of one’s social network to be important in influencing the ease with which he or she gains employment. Likewise, this finding supports Granovetter’s thesis on strength of ties which states that, not only do people get jobs using their formal assets (internet, skills, qualification and work experience) or “what you know” but also by making use of their informal assets (social networks) or “who you know” thus, showing the important role informal assets (social networks) play in getting a graduate a job in Accra.

It is also evident from the study that the kind of combination of assets deployed in the labour market does not play a role in getting one a job as the test revealed a no significant relationship between the assets combined and how long it takes one to get a job.

### 6.3 CONCLUSION

From the study conducted, it is noted that in Accra, graduates possess a wide range of assets be it formal or informal which they deploy either separately or combined to facilitate their employment. In Accra, formal assets do not facilitate a graduate's employment but rather his or her informal assets particularly the status of the people who make up the network since they have information on employment vacancies as a result of who they are, where they work and people they know. Thus, the worth of the people a graduate knows is the main determinant for his or her successful school to work transition. This finding is in line with Granovetter's strength of ties which proposed that, numerous employees do not only get jobs through their formal assets (internet, skills, qualification, and work experience) or "what you know" but also get jobs through their informal assets (social network) or "who you know" to assess the transition of graduates in Accra from school to work. This therefore makes known the importance of social network or social capital in the search of jobs. This implies that, graduates applying for a position may possess the same formal assets but what makes the difference is the quality of one's weak ties; that is, those who have strong weak ties especially weak ties with higher status in the society transit faster than those who do not have strong weak ties.

## **6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommends that students should engage in voluntary work during their vacations as this would make them acquire the skills, values and experiences needed at the workplace.

Graduates should make use of their formal assets (skills, qualification, work experience, course of study etc) rather than their informal assets (family friends, acquaintances) since it is the formal assets that would help them stay in the organisation when there is a change in the structure of the organisation.

## **6.5 SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

To find out whether the findings of this study are corroborated or disconfirmed in other regions of the country, the researcher recommends a National survey in order to ascertain the extent to which the findings of the study are representative.

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**APPENDIX 1**  
**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**  
**MPhil IN SOCIOLOGY**

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR DATA COLLECTION**

**TITLE: DETERMINANTS OF SCHOOL TO WORK TRANSITION AMONG EMPLOYED GRADUATES IN ACCRA.**

AIM: The primary objective of this study is to examine the factors that facilitate easy access of graduates into the formal labour market in Accra. Information given will solely be used for academic purposes. It is to enable the researcher write her thesis in partial fulfilment for MPhil Sociology. Respondents are therefore ensured of full confidentiality, privacy and anonymity. Thank you for your cooperation.

**Please tick the appropriate answer in the bracket and write out your response where necessary.**

**Questionnaire ID.....**

**SECTION A: BIO-DATA OF RESPONDENTS**

1. Sex: 1. Male           (    )  
          2. Female       (    )
  
2. Age: 1. 20-24       (    )  
          2. 25-29       (    )  
          3. 30-34       (    )  
          4. 35-39       (    )  
          5. 40-44       (    )  
          6. 45-49       (    )
  
3. Marital Status: 1. Single           (    )  
                          2. Married       (    )  
                          3. Cohabiting   (    )  
                          4. Separated   (    )  
                          5. Divorced    (    )  
                          6. Widowed     (    )
  
4. Ethnicity: 1. Akan           (    )  
                  2. Ga Adangme   (    )  
                  3. Ewe            (    )  
                  4. Dagomba     (    )  
  
                  5. Other.....

5. Religious Affiliation: 1. Christian ( )  
2. Islam ( )  
3. Traditionalist ( )

**SECTION B: BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON RESPONDENT'S JOB**

1. How many years post National Service did it take you to get a job?.....
2. Was this your preferred job?  
1. Yes ( )  
2. No ( )
3. How closely is your job related to your undergraduate education?  
1. Not related at all ( )  
2. Somewhat related ( )  
3. Closely related ( )  
4. Related ( )
4. Are you able to utilise your knowledge and skills acquired from your education?  
1. Yes ( )  
2. No ( )
5. If No, what additional skills do you need?.....
6. How did you find out about this job?  
1. Newspaper ( )  
2. Career Fair ( )  
3. Internet site (please specify) ( )  
4. Family member ( )  
5. A member of my church/mosque ( )  
6. A member of my professional organisation ( )  
7. A member of my old school group ( )  
8. Other (specify).....
7. Number of Years Working after National Service.  
1. Less than a year ( )  
2. 1 - 2 years ( )  
3. 2 - 3 years ( )  
4. 3 - 4 years ( )  
5. 4 - 5 years ( )

**SECTION C: THE EXTENT TO WHICH FORMAL ASSETS DETERMINE GRADUATES' EMPLOYMENT**

1. Secondary School Attended:
  1. Single Sex School ( )
  2. Mixed School ( )
2. Specify the School.....
3. University Attended:
  1. Private ( )
  2. Public ( )
4. Which University?.....
5. Major Course of Study: (specify the course)
  1. College of Humanities.....
  2. College of Sciences.....
  3. College of Art.....
  4. Business.....
  5. Law
  6. Other .....
6. Qualification:
  1. Diploma ( )
  2. Bachelors ( )
  3. Masters ( )
  4. Other.....
7. Class Obtained:
  1. First Class ( )
  2. Second Class Upper ( )
  3. Second Class Lower ( )
  4. Third Class ( )
  5. Pass ( )
8. Did you have any internship while you were at the University?
  1. Yes ( )
  2. No (skip to 10)
9. If Yes, for how many years?
  1. One year ( )
  2. Two years ( )
  3. Three years ( )

4. Four years ( )

10. Was the internship related to your course of study?

1. Yes ( )

2. No ( )

11. Did you obtain other professional certificates while at school?

1. Yes ( )

2. No ( )

12. If Yes, which of these did you obtain?

1. Marketing ( )

2. Accounting ( )

3. Information Technology (I.T.) ( )

4. Typing ( )

5. Other, specify.....

**SECTION D: THE EXTENT TO WHICH INFORMAL ASSETS DETERMINES GRADUATES' EMPLOYMENT**

1. How did you get this job?

From the statements below, select your response to indicate the size of your network.	1. Completely Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Completely Agree
I knew few people who could help me find a job.					
I knew a lot of people who could help me find a job.					
I could count on family, friends or acquaintances for information about jobs.					
I had connections I could talk to to help me find a job					

2. The people who helped me find a job are:

From the statements below, select your response to indicate the strength of the ties in your network.	1. Completely Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Completely Agree
People who helped me find a job are people I know very well eg. Parents, friends.					
People who helped me find a job are people I often talk to.					
People who helped me find a job are people I feel comfortable talking to, even about other issues.					

3. The people who helped me find a job:

From the statements below, select your response to indicate the status of the ties in your network.	1. Completely Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Completely Agree
People who helped me find a job have good education.					
People who helped me find a job have good jobs.					
People who helped me find a job are generally doing well.					

4. What is the ethnic background of your employer? .....

5. Are you a member of a youth organisation in your Church /Mosque?

1. Yes ( ).....
  2. No ( )
6. How often do you attend meetings?
1. Never ( )
  2. Rarely ( )
  3. Frequently ( )
  4. Very frequently ( )
  5. Always ( )
7. How often do you attend rites of passage (weddings, funerals, naming ceremonies) of members?
1. Never ( )
  2. Rarely ( )
  3. Frequently ( )
  4. Very frequently ( )
  5. Always ( )
8. Are you an executive in your youth organisation?
1. Yes ( )
  2. No ( )
9. Which position do you occupy?.....
10. Are you a member of any Old Students' Association?
1. Yes ( ).....
  2. No ( )
11. How often do you attend meetings?
1. Never ( )
  2. Rarely ( )
  3. Frequently ( )
  4. Very frequently ( )
  5. Always ( )
12. How often do you attend rites of passage (weddings, funerals, naming ceremonies) of members?
1. Never ( )
  2. Rarely ( )
  3. Frequently ( )
  4. Very frequently ( )
  5. Always ( )
13. Are you an executive in the association?
1. Yes ( )

2. No ( )

14. Which position do you occupy?.....

15. Are you a member of any Professional Organisation?

1. Yes ( ).....

2. No ( )

16. How often do you attend meetings?

1. Never ( )

2. Rarely ( )

3. Frequently ( )

4. Very frequently ( )

5. Always ( )

17. How often do you attend rites of passage (weddings, funerals, naming ceremonies) of members?

1. Never ( )

2. Rarely ( )

3. Frequently ( )

4. Very frequently ( )

5. Always ( )

18. Are you an executive in the organisation?

1. Yes ( )

2. No ( )

19. Which position do you occupy?.....

**SECTION E: COMBINATION OF ASSETS WHICH INCREASE THE CHANCE OF SECURING JOBS.**

1. Which of these combinations facilitated your employment?

1. More formal assets and less informal assets. ( )

2. Less formal assets and more informal assets. ( )

2. How long did it take you to get a job using this combination?

1. Less than six months ( )

2. One year ( )

3. Two years ( )

4. Three years ( )

5. Four years ( )

6. Five years ( )

- 7. Other, specify.....
- 3. Would you recommend this combination?
  - 1. Yes ( )
  - 2. No ( )

**SECTION F: EXTENT TO WHICH NEW FORMS OF ASSETS SECURE GRADUATES JOBS.**

- 1. Did you use any of the internet websites to find a job?
  - 1. Yes ( )
  - 2. No ( )
- 2. Which one of them?
  - 1. Jobberman.com
  - 2. LinkedIn
  - 3. Other, specify.....
- 3. How often did you visit these websites?
  - 1. Never ( )
  - 2. Rarely ( )
  - 3. Frequently ( )
  - 4. Very frequently ( )
  - 5. Always ( )
- 4. How many job offers did you receive? .....
- 5. Did the job offered match the kind of job you were searching for?
- 6. Did you find a job through an employment agency?
  - 1. Yes ( ).....
  - 2. No ( )
- 7. How many job offers did you receive? .....
- 8. Did the job offered match the kind of job you were searching for?

**APPENDIX 2**  
**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**  
**IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE**

**TITLE: DETERMINANTS OF SCHOOL TO WORK TRANSITION AMONG EMPLOYED GRADUATES IN ACCRA.**

**Interviewer introduces herself, explain consent and purpose of the interview.**

Thank you for giving me your time. I am very much appreciative of your willingness to be interviewed.

My name is Deborah N. K. Mills, an MPhil student of the University of Ghana, Department of Sociology conducting a study on the informal assets (social networks) that ease one's transition from school to work.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. The interview may last between 45minutes to an hour and as such, we will have one break. Information given will solely be used for academic purposes and would be kept confidential. Your name and/ or address would not be needed. You can decide to withdraw from the interview anytime you so wish, or refuse to answer any question you are not comfortable with.

Your participation would help in accumulating knowledge on the various social networks graduates deploy and the extent to which it facilitates their employment. Information gotten would add new knowledge to existing literature on relevance of social capital and networks in seeking jobs in Ghana.

I will need your permission to record the interview in order to help me capture everything we discuss but be rest assured the recording would not be used against you in any way but strictly for academic purposes and later discarded.

**Consent forms would be completed at this point and then, interview begins.**

**SECTION A: BIO-DATA**

1. Please tell me a little about yourself (sex, age, marital status, educational level, ethnicity, religion and organisation you work in).

**SECTION B: EXTENT TO WHICH SECONDARY SCHOOL ATTENDED FACILITATES EMPLOYMENT.**

1. Which Senior Secondary School did you attend?
2. Why did you choose that school
3. Were you posted there or your parents attended that school?
4. Did the secondary school you attended play a role in securing your job here?

**SECTION C: EXTENT TO WHICH RELIGION FACILITATES EMPLOYMENT.**

1. Which Church/ Mosque do you attend?
2. What is the name of your Church/ Mosque?
3. Why do you attend that Church/ Mosque?
4. Are you part of any group in Church/ Mosque?
5. Which one of them?
6. Why did you choose that group over the others?
7. What are some of the benefits of being in that group?

**SECTION D: EXTENT TO WHICH PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATIONS FACILITATE EMPLOYMENT.**

1. Are you a member of a professional organisation (Rotary, Full Gospel Business Men's Association, Women's Aglow, Zonta, Soroptimist)?
2. Who invited you?

3. Do you hold any position in this organisation?
4. What are some of the benefits of being in that position?

### **WRAP UP**

Interviewer would ask if interviewee has any question he or she would want to ask for further clarification.

Interviewer would also ask if there are any additions to the discussion.

### **Interviewer would thank the interviewee for his or her time spent.**

Thank you for sharing this time with me. All shared information would be kept confidential. What you have shared is of great importance and would go a long way to add up to the body of knowledge in the area of school to work transition in Ghana.

**End of interview.**

APPENDIX 3



**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY  
UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**

P. O. Box LG 65, LEGON-GHANA Tel: 0302-21-500312/500300 Ext:6154/6084 Tel./Fax: 0302-21-500312  
E-mail:sociolog@ug.edu.gh

My Ref No.....

A.24B

February 27, 2017

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

Miss Deborah Mills is an MPhil student at the Department of Sociology, University of Ghana.

As part of her academic programme requirement, she is conducting a research on the following topic:

**“DETERMINANTS OF SCHOOL TO WORK TRANSITION AMONG EMPLOYED GRADUATES IN ACCRA”**

The findings of this research will be used for academic purposes. The data which she seeks from you will be confidential and used for statistical purposes only. Identity of source of information will not be disclosed.

I would, therefore, be grateful if you could offer her any assistance that she might need.

**Dr. KODZOVI AKPABLI-HONU**

**THESIS COORDINATOR**

APPENDIX 4



UNIVERSITY OF GHANA  
ETHICS COMMITTEE FOR THE HUMANITIES (ECH)

P. O. Box LG 74, Legon, Accra, Ghana

17<sup>th</sup> March, 2017

My Ref. No.....

Ms. Deborah Mills  
Department of Sociology  
University of Ghana  
Legon

Dear Ms. Mills,

**ECH 094 /16-17: DETERMINANTS OF SCHOOL TO WORK TRANSITION AMONG EMPLOYED GRADUATES IN GHANA**

This is to advise you that the above reference study has been presented to the Ethics Committee for the Humanities for a full board review and the following actions taken subject to the conditions and explanation provided below:

Expiry Date: 14/03/18  
On Agenda for: Initial Submission  
Date of Submission: 13/02/17  
ECH Action: Approved  
Reporting: Bi-Annually



Please accept my congratulations.

Yours Sincerely,

Rev. Prof. J. O. Y. Mante  
ECH Chair

CC: Rev. Prof. M. P. K. Okyerefo, Department of Sociology