

Connecting Graduates to Jobs: Towards a National Graduate Employment Strategy

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UPNG 2019

Background

- Researcher's awareness of being in the Helping & Human service profession
- Social work approach – assisting students secure employment
- I have been assisting my students in job applications over ten years.
- **“UPNG student employment outcomes: results from a survey of economics graduates” (Rohan Fox, 2018) – Despite economic hardships economic graduates overall did manage to find jobs.**
- **“What future for PNG economics students? Findings from a graduate exit survey.” (Michael Cornish & Methuselah Wabiria 2017)**

Conundrum

- “You need experience to get a job – and you need a job to get experience.” A challenge for many graduates (James S et al. 2016)
- Majority of job advertisements require applicants with 3 or more years of practical experiences
- So students who do not get a job after 6 – 12 months since graduating, will become “very experienced” in job applications!!

Over 1, 000 graduated in April 2019 - UPNG



Perception in media (opinion piece)

Job opportunities in short supply for graduates

[January 23, 2017 The National Letters](#)

Article Views: 1,125

ALLOW me to express my concern about the lack of opportunities for new graduates coming out of our universities.

Every year, it's the same old story of lack of job opportunities and areas for skills utilisation.

A lot graduates have technical skills and knowledge that can help develop Papua New Guinea but most do not have the opportunities because of the limited employment market. Many of them end up in mediocre jobs that do not relate to their field of study, for instance physics graduates doing clerical or administrative work.

If the Government can claim that there's a rise in the number of Grade 12 school leavers going into universities this year, it should also be more concerned about where those school leavers will end up years down the line after they graduate from university and how will they utilise the knowledge gain from their respective fields of study.

Most graduates either end up working odd jobs that do not match their skills or end up joining the disciplinary forces due to lack of opportunities.

The Government should be more realistic.

Boasting about the increase in the number of student enrolments going into higher institutions is an understatement.

They should focus more on how they can cater for the growing number of graduates who do not have access to jobs they can help develop and utilise their newly acquired knowledge and skills.

Realist

Port Moresby

<https://www.thenational.com.pg/job-opportunities-short-supply-graduates/>

Friday 5th april 2019

For this small research, what did we do?

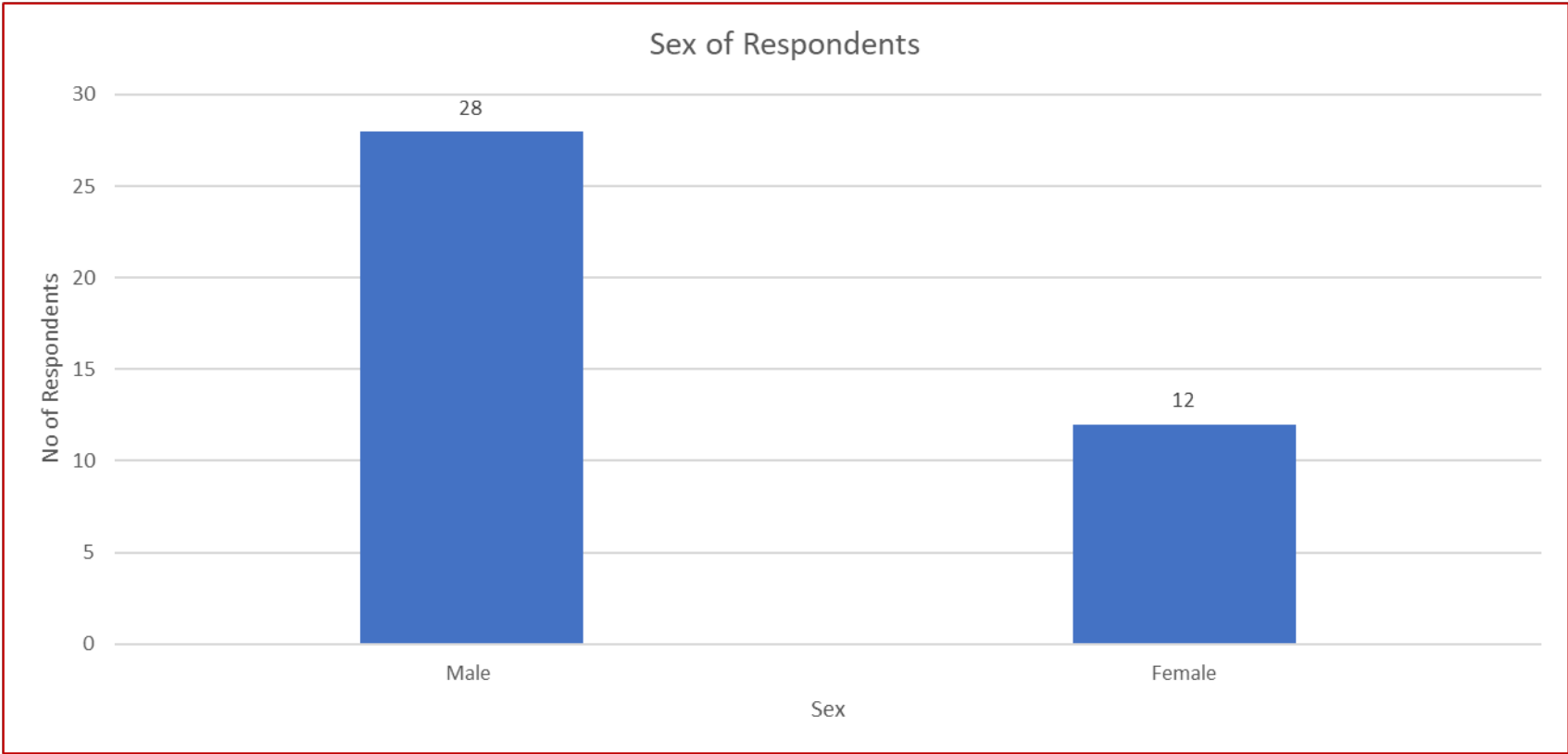
- **Aim:** *To establish “where” and “how” graduates are searching and applying for jobs (and feed results back into my coaching)*
- Made available 80 spaces across schools except MedSch, no structured sampling method used, participation was on first-come-first serve basis
- Incentives: a. Editing of CV & to be on email job coaching program; b. K500 draw for 3 winners to use in job search/application efforts.
- Participants filled a questionnaire (17 closed-ended questions)
- For entire month of April we bought newspapers & downloaded job vacancies from <https://www.pngworkforce.com/>
- on weekly basis

- Results cannot be representative of the entire UPNG graduate population, but provide a window into their world.

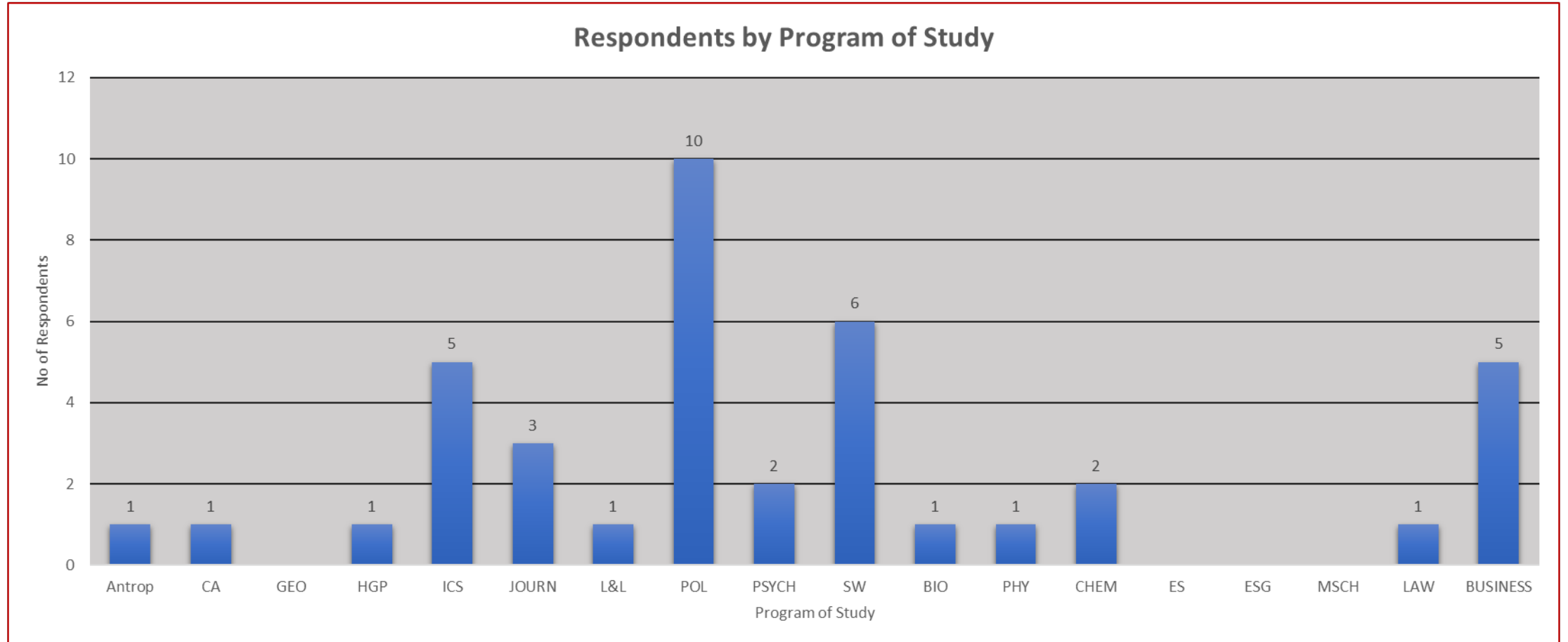
Conducting Graduate Job Search Survey & CV editing



Sex of Respondents



Respondents by Program of study



Preliminaries: Questions

- Q1: Whether respondents had a Job Search Plan

Yes = 20; No = 20 (total response: 40)

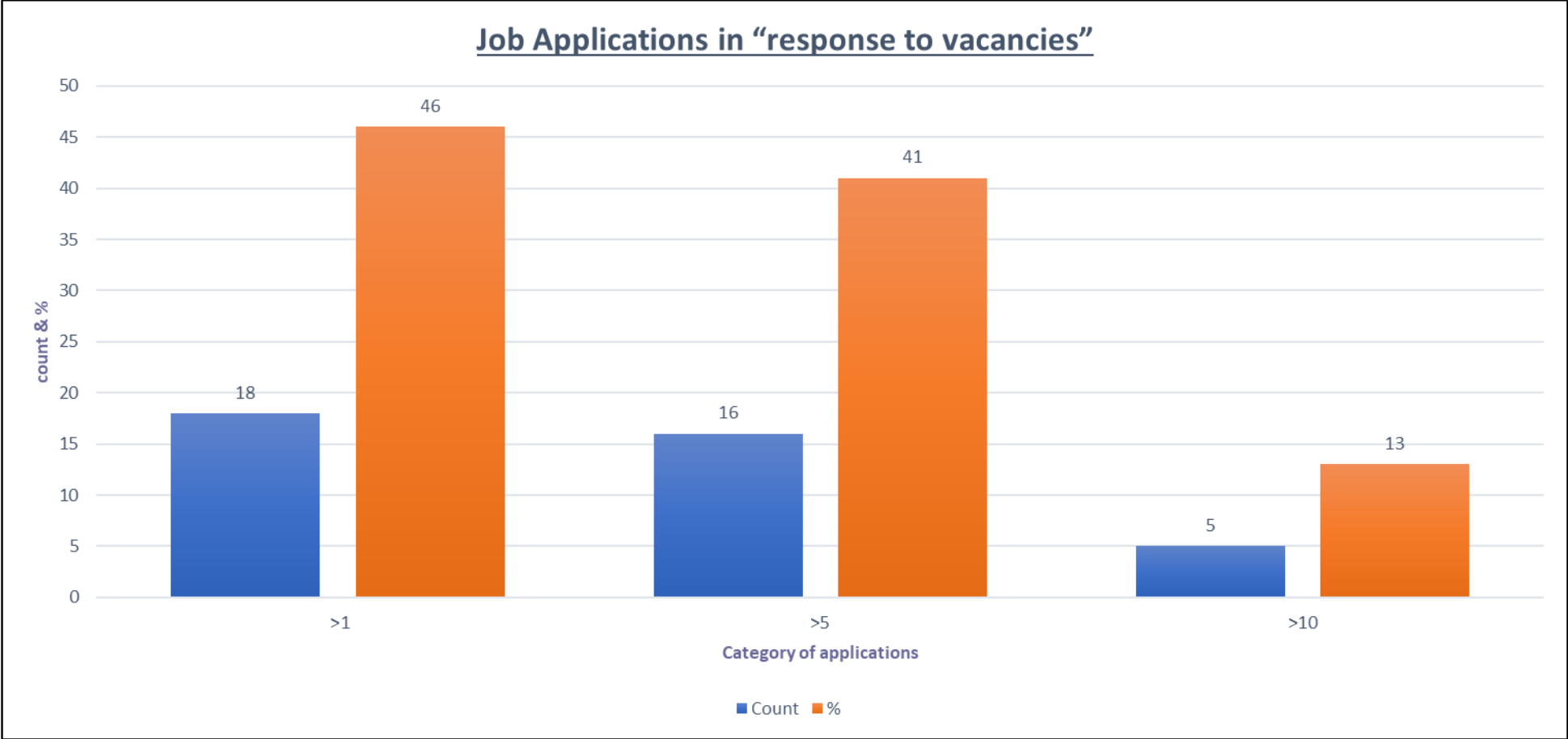
Q2: Career or employ goal indicated in CV

Yes = 25; No = 13 (total response: 38)

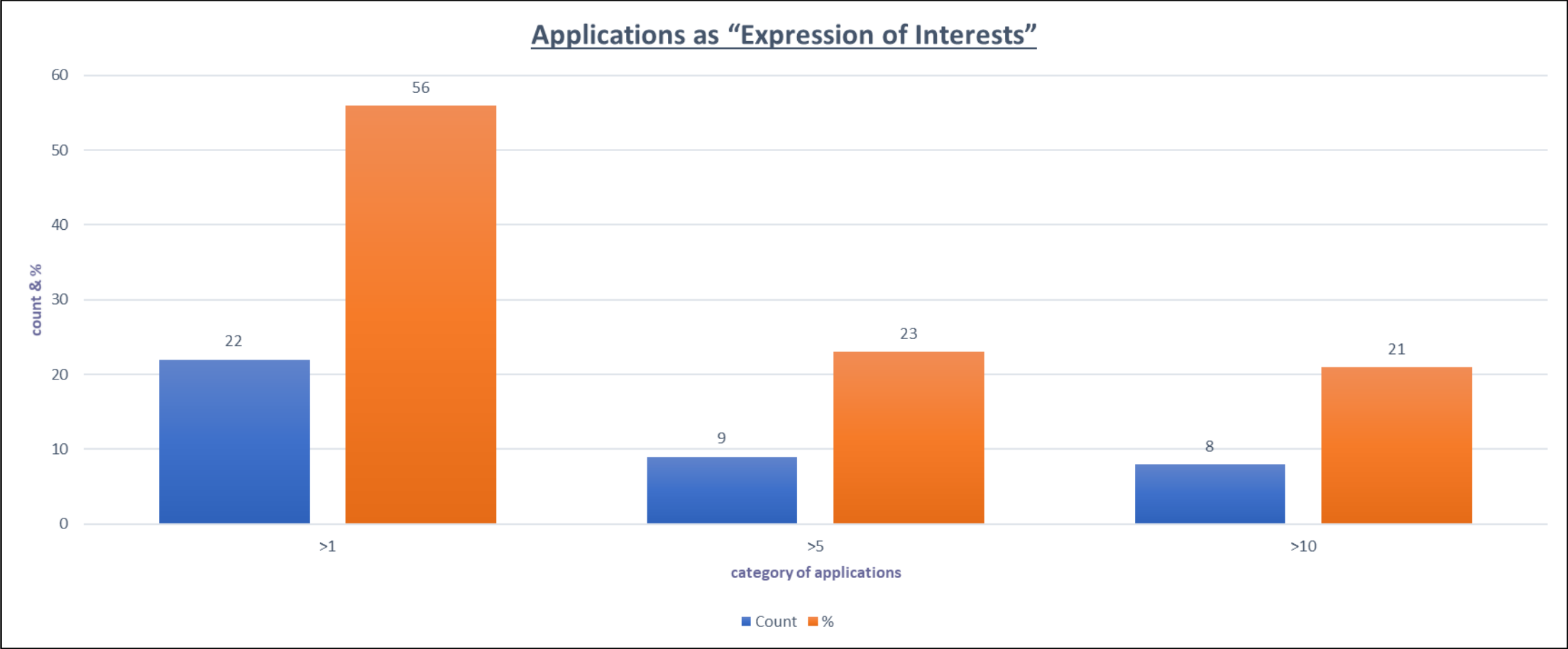
Q3: Respondents actively applying for jobs

Yes = 29; No = 11 (total response: 40)

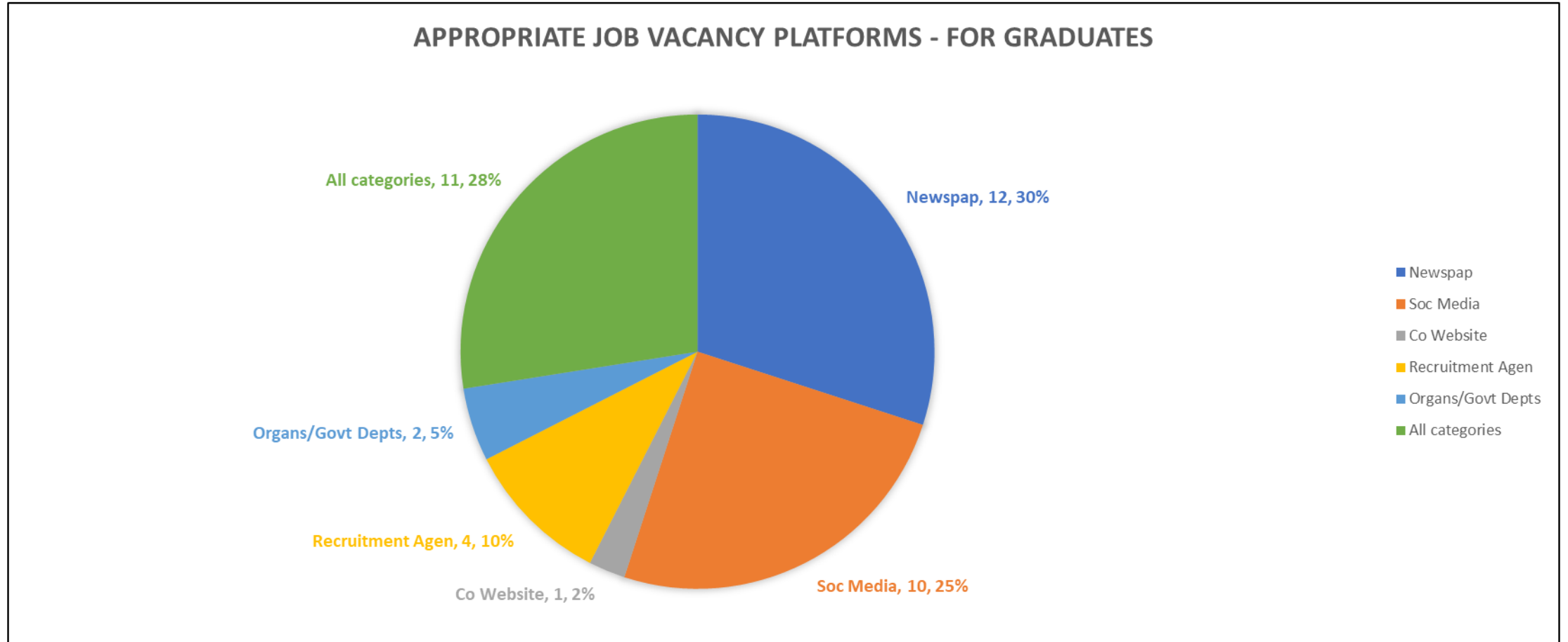
Job Applications by respondents



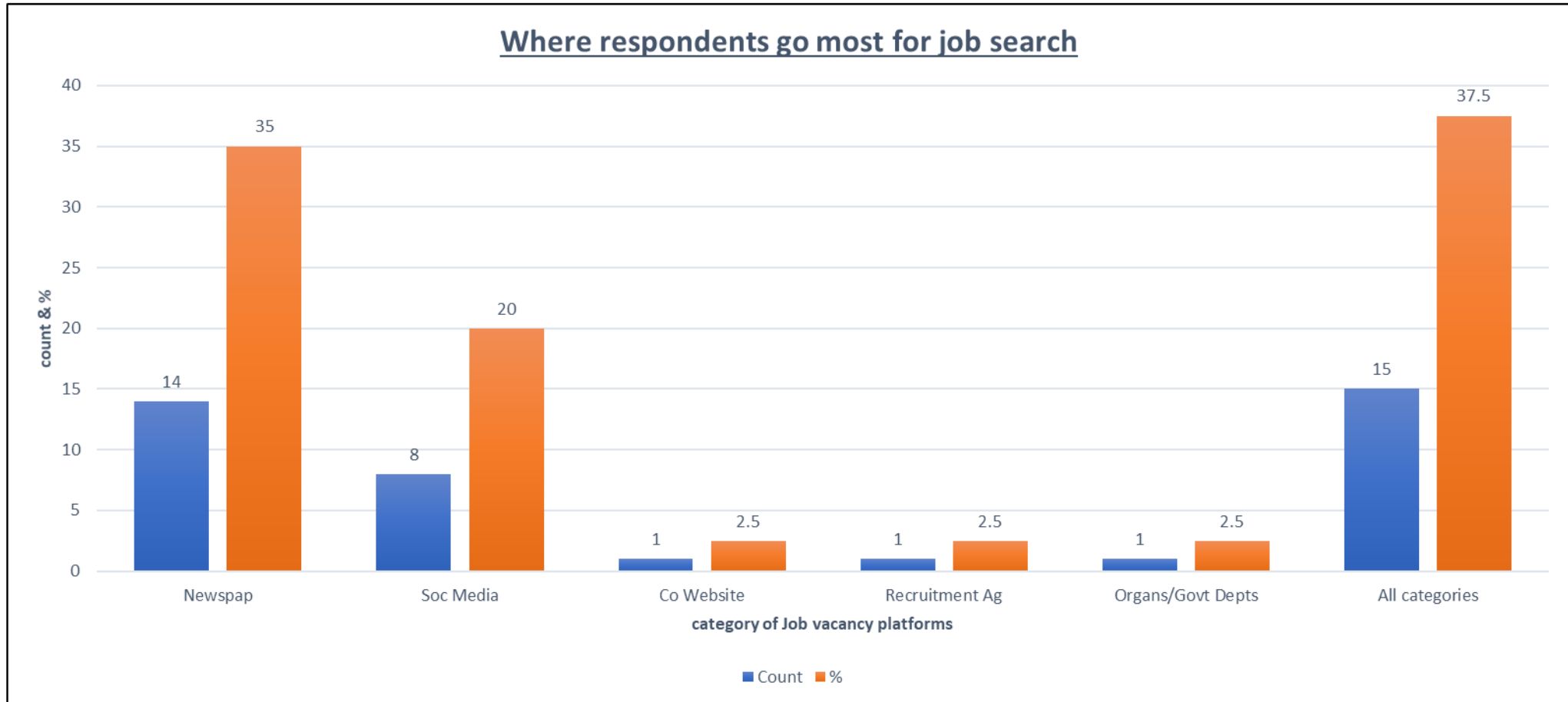
Job Applications – Expression of Interests



Where do graduates look for jobs?



Job vacancy platforms



Mediums used to send job applications

Mediums used by graduates when sending out applications

Cat	Postal Address	Email	Hand-deliver	Filling appl on co/dept website	A combination of all	TOTAL
Count	3	19	9	1	8	40
%	7.5	47.5	22.5	2.5	20	100

Applying for Graduate Development Programs

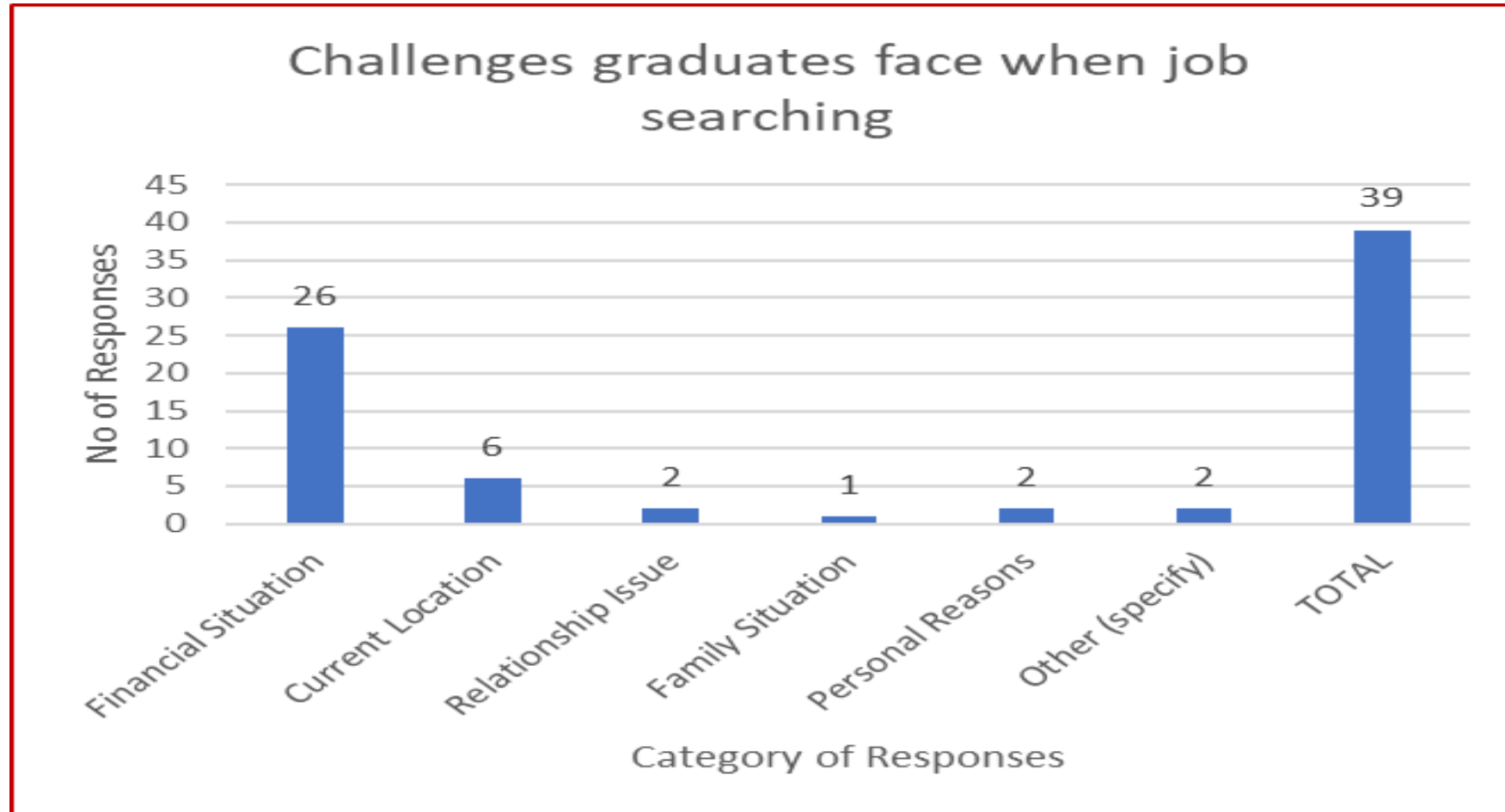
*6 respondents did not answer

*of those who answered indicated applying 51 times in total, suggesting that some applying more than once (when asked a supplementary question on how many times).

Graduates applying for any GDPs since completing studies in 2018

Cat	Counts (n)	%
YES	22	65
NO	12	35
TOTAL	34	100

Challenges faced when searching for jobs



Career advice sought

Career advice sought from expert since graduation, 2018

Cat	n	%
YES	18	46
NO	21	54
TOTAL	39	100

*1 did not answer

Career advice sought from an organization since 2018

Cat	n	%
YES	12	30
NO	28	70
TOTAL	40	100

CV editing & career development workshop

Willingness of graduates to have their CVs edited or not

Cat	n	%
YES	40	100
NO	0	0
TOTAL	40	100

willingness of graduates to attend workshop on career development workshop

Cat	n	%
YES	39	97.5
NO	1	2.5
TOTAL	40	100

Preliminary Conclusions

- All Respondents were still actively searching and applying for jobs, 5 months after completing studies
- Entry level Job vacancies (if available) appear to be scattered thus the different vacancy platforms used by the graduates. And when available appear not visible to graduates!
- Graduates need to be equipped soft skills such CV writing and cover letter, interview skills, and job search
- Financial issues pose a challenge to the graduates
- From monitoring newspapers and <https://www.pngworkforce.com/> for month of April, no job vacancies were appropriate to graduates.

Recommendation: *National Graduate Employment Strategy*

- **1. Increase Visibility of Entry Level Job Vacancies**

- DHERST can manage a web site dedicated entirely to capturing and posting jobs suitable for graduates;
- UPNG Career Office: Job Board - Regularly interact with industry players and govt agencies; Scale-up efforts to assist students in soft skills (CV writing and Cover Letter)

- **2. Establish a Graduate Employment Scheme:**

Provincial governments and state agencies to accommodate graduates who cannot secure jobs after a set period of time on a “basic allowance” to apply their skills and gain “experience. “

- Facebook group: PNG Career Development Inc.

- Researchers:

John K Kamasua

- Students:

- Kate Nema, Wabson Maya, Maria Joel, Leslie B