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**Attitudes of Zambian Young Adults Towards the Chinese Economic  
Influence on Zambia**

**Bachelor's Thesis**

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Declaration:

I declare I wrote the Bachelor's thesis myself, using only the listed bibliography.

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**ABSTRACT:**

*This paper examines the attitudes held by Zambian young adults towards the ever-increasing economic influence that China has on Zambia. The findings indicate that there is a stark negative sentiment among Zambian young adults towards Chinese small businesses in Zambia but positive views on the infrastructure projects conducted by Chinese firms using Chinese loans. Further, there is a correlation between the level of education attained and negative perceptions held about by Zambian young adults towards Sino-Zambia relations. Further study is recommended across demographics to influence policy. As well as an increase in awareness among young adults of the aforementioned issues.*

## Table of Contents

<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>6</b>
RESEARCH OBJECTIVES .....	6
RESEARCH QUESTION.....	7
<b>1. LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	<b>8</b>
OVERVIEW OF CHINA AND AFRICA RELATIONSHIP .....	8
CHINA’S INVOLVEMENT IN MICRO AND SMALL BUSINESSES IN AFRICA.....	9
REASONS FOR CHINA’S PRESENCE IN AFRICA.....	10
SATISFACTION OF AFRICANS WITH CHINESE ECONOMIC INFLUENCE .....	10
PERCEPTIONS OF CHINA’S ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL INFLUENCE ON AFRICA.....	11
OVERVIEW OF CHINA-ZAMBIA RELATIONSHIP .....	13
ATTITUDES TOWARDS CHINA’S INFLUENCE ON ZAMBIA .....	14
RESEARCH GAPS .....	15
<b>2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>16</b>
RESEARCH DESIGN .....	16
DATA COLLECTION .....	16
DATA ANALYSIS.....	16
<i>Accessibility and ethical issues</i> .....	16
<b>3. FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS</b> .....	<b>18</b>
PROFILES OF RESPONDENTS.....	18
<i>Perceived reasons for China’s presence in Zambia</i> .....	19
<i>Perceived economic benefits</i> .....	22
<i>Perceived impacts of China’s rise</i> .....	24
<i>Views on Chinese small businesses in Zambia</i> .....	29
<i>Service delivery and business conduct</i> .....	31
<b>CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	<b>35</b>
LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH.....	36
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	<b>37</b>
4.0 APPENDICES .....	40
<b>1. SURVEY</b> .....	<b>40</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

Figure 1: Age distribution of the respondents .....	18
Figure 2: Respondents by Sex .....	18
Figure 3: The highest level of education attained so far.....	19
Figure 4: China is just in Zambia for natural resources .....	20
Figure 5: Educational Level as a Determinant of Perception.....	20
Figure 6: How much of China and Zambia’s interests are in common? .....	22
Figure 7: Educational Level as a Determinant Of Perception.....	22
Figure 8: Common interests- Attitudes by sex .....	23
Figure 9: What effect do you think China as a rising global power will have on Zambia? .....	25
Figure 10: Educational Level as A Determinant of Perception.....	25
Figure 11: For Zambia, China’s Policy of “Non-interference” is .....	27

Figure 12: Educational Level as A Determinant of Perceptions towards non-interference policy .....	28
Figure 13: Views towards Chinese small businesses in Zambia .....	29
Figure 14: Sex as a Determinant of Perceptions towards non-interference policy .....	29
Figure 15: Educational Level as A Determinant of Perceptions towards Chinese small businesses .....	30
Figure 16: Your level of satisfaction with Chinese Companies that Work on Large Projects in Zambia.....	32
Figure 17: Educational Level as A Determinant of Perceptions towards Chinese delivery on large projects.....	32
Figure 18: Sex as A Determinant of Perceptions .....	33

## INTRODUCTION

The People's Republic of China is not only the world's most populous country, with a population of 1.412 billion as of 2021 (World Bank Data, 2021) covering an area of 9.6 million square kilometers, but it has also experienced tremendous economic growth in recent decades and has become the second most powerful economy in the world at a GDP of 17.73 trillion US dollars. Its GDP per capita stands at 10,500.40 US dollars. (The World Bank, 2021)

Zambia, a country in Sub-Saharan Africa is among the world's poorest countries and has one of the least developed and diversified economies. Zambia's economy is estimated to have contracted in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic by 4.9% and rose in 2021. Its 2021 GDP stood at 21.2 billion US Dollars with a GDP per capita of 1120.6 US Dollars, nearly one-tenth that of China (The World Bank, 2022). Yet, it is also a country abundant in natural resources. The country covers an area of 752 617 square kilometers with a population of 18.9 million as of 2021. It has been experiencing economic challenges ranging from high inflation to seriously unsustainable debt levels. (Mwanawina, 2008) Bilateral relations between China and Zambia can be traced back to as far as 1949, years before Zambia gained independence from Great Britain. The relationship between the two countries, historically, focused on China's assistance towards Zambia's struggle for independence and economic reconstruction. China's adoption of the open-door policy--the 1899 and 1900 United States- initiated principles meant to uphold China's territorial integrity and ensure equal benefits among nations trading with China ( Encyclopaedia Britannica )—as well as China's Go Out Policy, which was a Chinese government initiative launched in 1999 to foster Chinese investments in other countries with the aim of stimulating the economic development of both China and the host country (China National Research Office, 2006) increased the focus and broadened areas of economic cooperation to include initiatives such as direct investment and the provision of loans.

Today the presence and influence of China in Zambia are so vast that Zambia has been termed the “poster child” for China's bilateral relations with African countries. With not only an influx of Chinese immigrants, but visible large infrastructural projects run by the Chinese, and the presence of numerous Chinese State-owned enterprises. Amid this vast cooperation, views of different stakeholders on China's influence on Zambia and Africa at large are mixed. Some see Chinese foreign direct investment (FDI) in Africa as a hidden form of neo-colonialism. Some western commenters argue that China does not have an interest in the development agenda for the African continent and that the investments by China in Africa stem solely from the country's increasing demand for raw materials. (Koumou & Manyi, 2016). Furthermore, while some in the country have expressed positive sentiments, there are some Zambian leaders who have spoken against China, an example is the former president of Zambia, Michael Chilufya Sata whose negative sentiments towards the Chinese have been used as a tool for populism and which he later retracted after assuming power. (Palitza, 2011)

### Research objectives

The aim of this study is to empirically examine the attitudes of Zambian young adults toward the Economic Influence that China has on Zambia based on their views on different

aspects of the aforesaid influence. These include how much the two countries' interests are in common, and their levels of satisfaction with the quality of work done by Chinese companies on substantially sized projects, such as airports, national stadiums, and roads. What is their perception of the Chinese non-interference policy? Do they think China is only present in the country to obtain and exploit its natural resources and what effect do they think China as a rising global power will have on the country and finally their view of small Chinese-owned businesses in Zambia?

Additionally, it will be determined what, if any, influence sex and level of education attained have on the attitudes held. The findings will inspire more research in the subject area. The study focuses on the attitudes towards exclusively the economic relationship between Zambia and China but does not assess the level of Chinese involvement in Zambia, nor does it assess the impact thereof, but rather focuses on the views of local young adults.

### Research question

What attitudes do Zambian young adults have towards China's economic influence on Zambia?

## 1. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Overview of China and Africa relationship

Over the years, Sino-Africa relations have continued to grow in both economic and political spheres. China has been recognized as the largest trading partner with Africa with a trading volume amounting to a record high of US\$185 billion in 2018 and \$192 billion in 2019 (Sais-cari-b, 2021; Amoah, et al., 2020).

The first 2006 Chinese Africa Policy Paper on China-Africa Bilateral relations outlined four major areas of cooperation including (China's second Africa policy paper, 2015):

1. Political
2. Economic
3. Human resource development
4. Peace and security

Furthermore, it is estimated that more than one million Chinese nationals currently live and work in various jobs in different African countries (Park, 2021). Also, thousands of African immigrants are living in China in cities (Bodomo, 2020). Recent data shows that the proportion of Africans studying in China has increased more than in any other region over the past decade (Li, 2018). Stakeholder interest has been attracted by the increase in temporary and permanent migration between the two environments. Consequently, studies on the dimension of the human flow are increasingly being conducted within the framework of China-Africa studies (Dankwah & Amoah, 2019).

In 2015, China issued its second Africa Policy Paper, which extended to include, among other objectives, cooperation on climate change action, broadening cooperation on the press, radio, and television, and science and technology sharing. Based on this paper, Economic relations between Zambia and China involve trade, aid, and foreign direct investment. Other areas include Boosting industrialization, agricultural modernization, infrastructure development, financial cooperation, resource, and energy cooperation (China's second Africa policy paper, 2015)

Though the United States remains the largest aid donor to African countries, China has taken the lead in supporting the African continent through infrastructure loans (Muchira, 2018; Shepherd & Blanchard, 2018). The partnership between China and African countries has contributed to making the African continent the home of some of the fastest-growing economies in the world (Mitchell, 2019). China's foreign direct investment in African countries is steadily increasing and reached USD 3 billion in 2020 alone. Over 1,100 joint projects have been implemented, making a significant contribution to Africa's economic recovery. Under the Belt and Road initiative, 46 African countries, including Zambia and the African Union Commission have signed cooperation agreements with China. (MFAPRC, 2021). The main forms of Chinese foreign aid are concessional loans, grants, and interest-free loans as well as scholarships and other programs.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), which is defined as the purchase of a substantial portion of interest stake in a company, or the complete purchase of a company by another company or investor outside its borders, does not include stock investment in a foreign company (Investopedia, 2022). FDI contributes to the development of a country as it contributes to human capital development and technology transfer, boosts the business environment, and supports the integration of the country into international markets



(Kastrati, 2013). Zambia has been cited by China's President Xi Jinping as being China's top destination for Foreign direct investment (FDI) in the African continent (Daka, 2020). As of 2020, Zambia was third after South Africa and Congo DR (Fu, 2021). Chinese investors in Zambia are largely State-owned enterprises, which invest heavily in mineral resources and infrastructure sectors (Morris, 2009). An example of this is the China Non-Ferrous Metals Corporation's 85% stake in the Zambian Chambishi copper mine. Chinese involvement in African countries is subject to much scrutiny and debate among development and policy experts, and academics alike, particularly owing to the way China's support is rendered. Most of China's assistance is not in the form of aid or grants, but rather as loans. For this reason, China has been accused of trying to lock African countries into a "debt trap" (Hairong & Sautman, 2019b). Countries like the United States and other countries have warned African states not to succumb to China's "debt diplomacy" (Green, 2019). Some perceive China as being on a strategic move to seize key assets of some African countries if they fail to pay the loans (Kidane & Brautigam, 2020; Brautigam, 2020; Sun Y. , 2014)

Political leaders in many African countries have a positive attitude towards China's involvement in their countries. They have spoken out in favor of China's contribution to their countries' infrastructure, pointing to visible improvements that help stimulate economic activity, create jobs for local workers, and in many cases lead to tangible improvements in roads, railways, bridges, and other transportation networks that benefit the daily lives of ordinary citizens. Others point to Chinese aid projects to highlight how their governments have improved basic services and quality of life through Chinese cooperation. According to David Shin, African government officials are usually not very critical of Chinese cooperation because "they don't want to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs" (Shinn & Eisenman, 2020; Sautman & Hairong).

Furthermore, there have been different reactions among the citizens of African countries themselves concerning China's intervention and dominant presence in their countries. These views are important considerations as policymakers seek to gain a sense of the micro-level impacts of the heavy Chinese presence. As Barry Sautman and Yan Hairong explained, "African opinion is nowhere near as negative as Western media reports, nor as positive as official Chinese sources" (Sautman & Hairong, 2018).

China's emergence as a global player is often viewed with skepticism. (e.g., Michel, 2008). China is often perceived as exploiting African economies while showing no real interest in their sustainable economic, social, or political development. In particular, the harmful effects of China's entry of cheap goods into African markets (Alden, 2017), the substandard working conditions maintained by many Chinese firms (Kinyondo, 2019), and the negative consequences of China's indifference to human rights standards and Beijing's constant flirtation with 'rogue governments' on the continent have been highlighted in several publications (Piccone, 2018; Gamso, 2019).

### China's involvement in micro and small businesses in Africa

Many Africans decry the poor quality of Chinese products and believe that their low prices are causing the collapse of local industries (Koumou and Manyi, 2016). For example, the Poultry Association of Zambia (PAZ) in the Kitwe region called on the Zambian government to limit the participation of foreign entities in small-scale industries that Zambians can carry out. In an interview with ZANIS in Kitwe, Chabu Nyengele, the Kitwe regional chairperson of PAZ, lamented the intrusion of Chinese nationals into the poultry

sector, claiming that they were seriously harming local poultry farmers. He warned that local farmers could not compete with Chinese investors who have more capital and can produce chickens in less time and sell them at lower prices. (Lusaka Times, 2017)

## Reasons for China's presence in Africa

China is known for its policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of host countries (Tull, 2006; Brautigam-c, 2009). This principle is explicitly stated in Chinese official documents: 'China's foreign aid is guided by the principles of not imposing political conditions, not interfering in the internal affairs of recipient countries, and fully respecting their right to choose their path and model of development (State Council, 2014).

China's development finance typically combines commercial interests with concessional financing. Like the principle of non-interference, China explicitly states that its development policy should lead to a win-win situation. China often allocates aid according to the requirements of recipient governments (Dreher, et al., 2019). However, unlike other donors who often use local implementing agencies, China controls the projects it funds from inception to completion and often employs Chinese contractors in recipient countries (Brautigam-c, 2009).

According to Hanauer and Morris (2013), there are several reasons for China's presence in Africa. Firstly, it is increasingly in need of natural resources, especially oil and gas. Thus, to secure future supply, China is investing heavily in the oil sector in countries such as Sudan, Angola, and Nigeria. In addition, investment in Africa, which is an important market for Chinese exports, could contribute to China's efforts to restructure its economy away from labor-intensive industries, especially as labor costs in China continue to rise. Furthermore, China is seeking to gain political legitimacy. The Chinese government believes that strengthening China-African relations will help increase China's international influence. China seeks to play a more constructive role in ensuring regional stability, partly to reduce security threats to its economic interests.

According to a study by the British bank Standard Chartered, it is estimated that, in the long term, China could import much more food from Africa, where 60% of the world's uncultivated land is located, the World Bank. "Given Africa's potential, that is where China is likely to turn."

To better foster long-term and sustainable relations with Africa, China is working to develop soft power (media, culture, and people-to-people exchanges) and provide increased support in areas such as health, sustainability, and security. (Lyle J. Morris, 2013)

## Satisfaction of Africans with Chinese economic influence

Studies show that Africans' attitudes towards China are almost identical to those of Western countries. The perceived impact of imports from China is negative. However, this effect is counterbalanced by China's perceived impact on poverty reduction through a greater emphasis on economic, social, and cultural human rights as opposed to political and civil rights, including through foreign direct investment (Hanusch, 2012). However, some trade unions, civil society groups, and other groups in African society have criticized Chinese companies for poor working conditions, unsustainable environmental practices, and worker layoffs. Good governance organizations warn that China negotiates unfair

deals that exploit the relative weakness of African governments and encourage corruption and wasteful decision-making. They argue that China maintains a neo-colonial relationship in which Africa exports raw materials to China in exchange for manufactured goods. In some countries, dissatisfaction with Chinese business practices has led to popular protests and violence against Chinese businessmen and migrants. (Hanauer and Morris, 2013; Lusaka Times, 2013).

Chinese investments are also problematic from an environmental perspective. Chinese companies do not respect environmental regulations and attach more importance to the exploitation of raw materials and the implementation of infrastructure projects (roads, bridges, railways, dams, etc.) than to environmental issues (Koumou and Manyi, 2016). South African President Jacob Zuma warned that the current “unbalanced” trade model is not sustainable. He argued that Africa was exporting raw materials to China while importing mainly cheap manufactured goods. Maged Abdelaziz, the special adviser to the UN secretary-general on Africa, told Africa Renewal that the continent needs to develop a strategy for its relations with emerging economic giants such as China, Brazil, and India. (Ighobor, 2013)

According to Human Rights Watch, abuses continue to occur in Chinese-operated mines, including poor health and safety conditions, regular 12- and even 18-hour shifts that involve hard labor, and anti-union activities that violate Zambian national laws and international labor standards (HRW, 2011). A 2012 report by Johannesburg-based South Africa Resource Watch (SARW) found that Chinese companies operating in sub-Saharan Africa often resort to unfair labor practices and subject local extractive workers to harsh and unfair working conditions. The report examined Chinese labor practices in Zimbabwe, Zambia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo and found that extractive companies are the main perpetrators of abuses and labor rights violations (MBAMALU, 2018). In addition to the said, the Chinese in Kenya have been accused of racist attitudes toward Africans (Goldstein, 2018).

Chinese cooperation has also helped undemocratic regimes to stay in power, increased the dependence of many African countries on raw materials and unskilled labor, contributed to the loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs in some productive sectors, such as textiles, and fostered high levels of indebtedness, economically disadvantageous decisions, and corruption of officials (Lyle J. Morris, 2013). Also, unlike other large donors, Chinese aid programs have encouraged local corruption, discouraged union participation, failed to increase political support for incumbent politicians, and reinforced the importance of ethnic identities in local areas (Isaksson and Kotsadam, 2020).

### Perceptions of China's economic and political influence on Africa

As previously discussed, perceptions of Sino-Africa relations vary. From a Western point of view, it is argued that Chinese policy favors trade relations with African countries because the political elites in these countries prefer loans, aid, and trade agreements from countries that do not attach governance issues as conditions such as corruption-free governance, democracy, sustainability, and transparency (Åberg, 2018). Others argue that China's engagement is leading countries follow non-democratic paths (Hess and Aidoo, 2019). Though there are such views, the west is accused of supporting non-democratic regimes in its pursuit of normative goals according to the Western development agenda,

which includes poverty reduction, improvement of health systems, and education. (Uddhammar, 2013). Moreover, this happened at a time when the West felt it needed access to important raw materials or to provide a ‘cushion’ against potential political enemies or military strongholds.

China’s presence in Africa has had a significant impact on the continent, from infrastructure development to trade, film, and education (Mwakideu, 2021). While efforts by Western countries such as the United States to encourage private investment and good governance have had little impact on the lives of ordinary Africans, China seems to have won friends in Africa with its large-scale strategy of infrastructure construction and investment in extractive industries. As Yun Sun, a Brookings scholar, writes, “The United States is increasingly being squeezed out of the continent politically and economically,” although China’s involvement will bring Africa only “short-term benefits and long-term negative consequences”. China’s involvement in Africa has had positive effects: it has created jobs, developed necessary infrastructure, and stimulated economic growth, especially in sectors or geographic areas where international financial institutions and Western governments and companies have been reluctant to engage (Lyle J. Morris, 2013) (Sun Y., 2013).

The number of Chinese companies operating in Africa has increased over the years with at least 1000 of them operating in Africa. There are approximately one million people of Chinese origin living on the continent (French, 2014). Many Chinese companies in Africa are privately owned, while others are partly or wholly state-owned. In this context, Chinese companies in Africa have considerable freedom to operate under market conditions and are supported by Chinese investment funds on favorable terms. Although Chinese FDI in Africa does not appear to be particularly large, it should be noted that revenues from Chinese contracts in Africa are significant. According to Johns Hopkins University, approximately 30% of China’s revenue from foreign construction contracts comes from African markets (Sais-cari, 2021). In addition to the construction of large-scale facilities such as parliament buildings, airports, convention centers, and football stadiums, Chinese funds often support large-scale construction and infrastructure initiatives that benefit the population by creating jobs and improving services (transport, electricity, etc.). Although some Western aid has led to similar projects, few such large-scale investments have been implemented due to the long and cumbersome monitoring process (Coons, 2011).

African officials and governments generally describe Chinese cooperation positively (Lyle J. Morris, 2013). At the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) held in Beijing in September 2018, African Union Chairperson and Rwandan President Paul Kagame praised China’s aid and investment strategy in Africa as a source of “profound transformation.” According to Kagame, China-African cooperation is beneficial to both partners and is based on mutual respect. Given the attendance at the summit, it is likely that this view is shared by most African heads of state and government. It has become a common belief among African leaders that China is a better partner for developing countries compared to Western companies and governments as it is perceived to have more altruistic motives. African leaders praise China’s contribution to their countries, helping expand economic activity, create jobs for local workers, and tangibly improve roads, railways, bridges, and other transport networks - all of which benefit ordinary citizens, even if only indirectly. (Hanauer and Morris, 2013; Aljazeera, 2019)

Surveys show that Africans generally view China positively, but public opinion is also negatively influenced by the perception that Chinese investment is a perpetrator of waste, poor working conditions, corruption, and layoffs. Despite these concerns, according to the Afrobarometer survey, many respondents in Africa have a positive view of China's economic and political influence on their country, rating it as "quite positive" or "very positive". However, the survey also found that most Africans still prefer the United States to China as a development partner.

There is also a general feeling among Africans that their governments are borrowing too much from China. (Mureithi, 2021; Afrobarometer, 2020) This negative perception of the population has created obstacles to Chinese investment and business and has often posed a significant challenge to China's strategy of developing long-term political and economic relations. (Oya & Schaefer, 2019)

### Overview of China-Zambia relationship

The Forum on China–Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) summit in 2006 has seen the relations between Zambia and China grow stronger following China's pledged support to Africa (Large & Alden, 2018).

China has become Zambia's largest trading partner, taking up 36.66% of all of Zambia's exports. Almost 80% of Zambia's exports to China are unrefined copper, while its imports are in a wide range of manufactured and value-added goods. As of 2020, there were no imports of services from China. Exports to China in 2020 amounted to a value of 1.46 billion US Dollars while its imports were valued at 893.73 million US Dollars (Trading Economics, 2020). China has supported its trade with Zambia and other countries by allowing for zero-tariff treatment on 97% of taxable goods from less developed economies with which it has diplomatic ties. (China Daily, 2015)

### *Zambia's young adult population*

The young adults make up most of Zambia's population; with children below 15 accounting for 46.4%, those aged between 15 and 35 making up 50.6%, and those aged 65 or older making up only 3.1% of the population. The young adults, defined as those aged between 15 and 35 make up 36.7% of the population. (United Nations Population Fund, 2016). As noted by Zambia's electoral commission and acknowledged by president Joe Biden at the 76<sup>th</sup> United Nations General Assembly, the young adults of Zambia, who make up the majority of Zambia's adult population, (Index Mundi, 2021) through their majority participation in Zambia's 2021 general election, showed the power that this demographic have to influence policy and their willingness to participate in matters of national concern. It follows that to have a functioning democracy and thriving economy, the concerns of the people must be considered, and policies implemented that are in their best economic and social interest. The young adults of Zambia not only make up most of the country but also make up the largest number of the unemployed in a country whose unemployment rate is 26.07% in 2020 (Macrotrends, 2020). Much of the existing research on Sino-Zambia relations has been focused on political and macroeconomic issues, with limited discussion on the perception of the people who are affected by the ever-increasing levels of bilateral cooperation. News reports, documentaries, and other media, as well as literature, have skimmed issues including the effect of Chinese competition on Zambian

businesses, the ill-treatment of Zambian workers, and the individual costs borne by individual citizens. These barely provide an accurate picture of the attitudes held by Zambians. (Carol Wang).

An understanding of the attitudes held by the young adults of Zambia towards Chinese influence and presence is vital in informing policy at all levels, from high-level national policy to regional, and even human resource policy within private organizations. This understanding would help decision-makers and all stakeholders, including individual Chinese and Zambian citizens solve challenges in progressive ways to prevent potential social harm and violent pushback. As has been the case in times past when Chinese immigrants to Zambia have been assaulted or even killed. The study will add to the body of knowledge regarding the perceptions and attitudes of Africans towards the economic dominance and presence of China in Africa. A step toward eliminating propaganda, from both Western and Eastern sources.

### Attitudes towards China's influence on Zambia

In Zambia, there has been what some analysts and academics have termed the anti-China sentiment. The cause of this is multi-pronged, a major factor being the poor working conditions and meager wages endured by Zambian employees in Chinese-run businesses and organizations. In 2005, at least 50 Zambian workers were killed in an explosion at the Chambishi mine, on a Chinese-owned Brgimm Explosive plant, in the Copperbelt province of Zambia. Chinese managers in 2010 shot workers who were protesting poor labour conditions at the Collum coal mine. State-imposed shutdown measures in the wake of the Coronavirus pandemic saw many local businesses close and suffer. Some Chinese-owned businesses in the country, however, opted for employees to instead live on business premises, sometimes forcibly, under poor conditions. These incidents have been cited as proof of dissatisfaction with labour standards. This has further, in some instances, led to violence against Chinese business owners. Examples of this include the murder and burning of three Chinese nationals at their warehouse in May 2020 by Zambian attackers. Another factor is the participation of the Chinese in small-scale businesses such as barbershops and saloons, chicken runs, and grocery shops, which are believed to be the prerogative of Zambian citizens. This increases competition and “steals” customers from poor locals who are usually more limited in their access to financial means for running their small businesses. (Jenni Marsh, 2020).

Similarly, there has been an increasingly negative sentiment toward China among the Zambian people. Some have questioned the quality, necessity, and longevity of Chinese-built infrastructure; others have questioned the usefulness of some Chinese projects in the country. The Chinese have also been accused of taking jobs and businesses ideally meant for Zambians by engaging in micro and small-scale businesses.

Some Zambian citizens have taken to official news media sources and social media articles to express their discontent with China's involvement in the country, with rumours about China's loan untransparent terms circulating, some coined the term “Chambia” derived from China and Zambia to signify Zambia's perceived compromised sovereignty. Some went further to create a flag of “Chambia.” (Ruwe, 2020) (Appendix 2)

## Research gaps

The literature shows that though there is an increased discussion about the Chinese economic and political participation and influence in Africa, there remains much research that has been done on the subject, particularly on the attitudes held by the young adults, the continent's largest demographic. It is also observed that there is little information about how the Africans feel regarding the Chinese involvement or participation in micro and small-scale businesses in Africa and the perceived motivations behind China's presence in Africa. While there are reports regarding the generally poor working conditions in Chinese firms and the effects of Chinese FDI, there remains a need for investigation into the extent of such conditions and their consequences

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research design

A descriptive cross-sectional survey and quantitative methods were used in this study. The quantitative approach is useful for obtaining general information about the research topic, and testing and validating hypotheses and theories. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) explain that a descriptive study provides information about the current state of phenomena to explain the current conditions or variables of a situation. The researcher, therefore, considers this research design to be the most appropriate for this study.

In this study, four variables were identified. The first variable is the economic benefits associated with the presence of Chinese companies and the investment by the Chinese government in Zambia. From the literature, it was observed that the perceptions or attitudes of Africans are influenced in part by the economic value to Africa associated with Chinese investments. The other variable that was identified is the impact on local small businesses by Chinese companies and general trading activities. The literature shows that when Chinese people engage in small-scale businesses, dissenting views among Africans tend to rise. Africans prefer to see Chinese people only engaging in big businesses as they are viewed as large-scale investors. The fourth variable is the service delivery and business conducted by the Chinese people.

### Data collection

The study was conducted in Zambia. A simple random sampling technique was used. In this type of sampling, all elements in a population stand an equal chance of being included as a part of the study sample.

This sample size comprised 80 young adult men and women from across the country who had access to the internet and a valid email address. The study used both primary and secondary sources to collect data. For primary data, an online semi-structured survey was used. For secondary data, the researcher used publications, journals, articles, national and international news, media sources, and government publications. Data was collected using an online survey. Respondents were identified first and then the researcher gave potential respondents basic information on the study along with a link to the survey.

### Data analysis

After collecting the data. The Likert scale data were analyzed using statistical methods applicable to ordinal data.

### Accessibility and ethical issues

The researcher ensured that all participants had an equal chance to participate in the study. There was no discrimination on any grounds in the selection of respondents. The survey was only conducted online and thus did not include the digitally excluded young adults population.



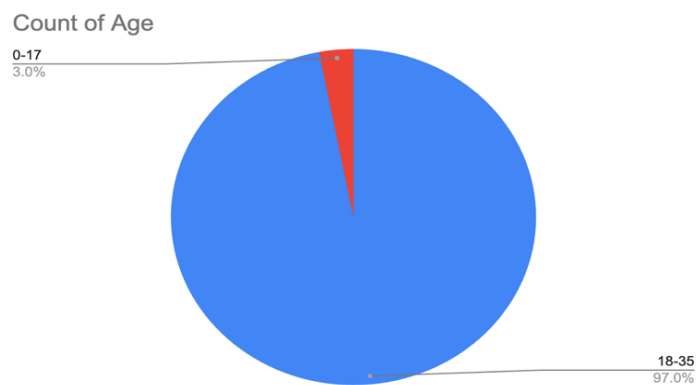
To ensure that the research process respected moral principles, the researcher provided all participants with all the necessary information about the research and participation was volitional. The researcher also made sure not to record any private information about the participants. The online surveys ensured maximum anonymity and confidentiality of the participants were adequately maintained. Finally, no deceitful practices were engaged during the study.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

#### Profiles of respondents

The survey targeted 100 respondents from Zambia, out of which 80 respondents answered the survey questions successfully, representing an 80% response rate.

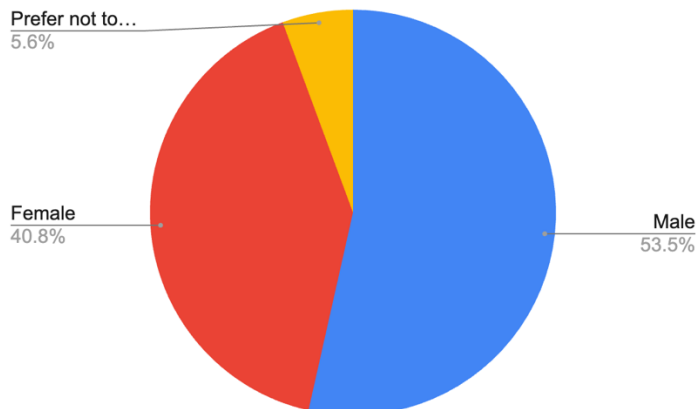
Figure 1: Age distribution of the respondents



Two age groups were targeted: below 18 and between 18-35. 97% of the respondents were aged between 18 and 35.

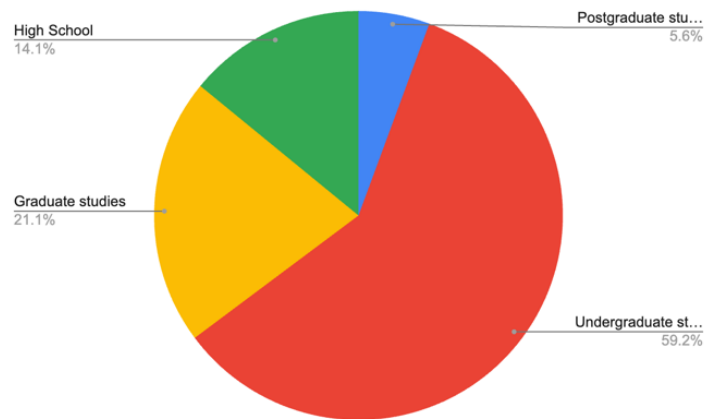
The majority, respondents between 18-35, would be caused by their higher chances of being found online on social media platforms.

Figure 2: Respondents by Sex



The respondents were also asked to share their sex. About 54% were males, 41% were females, and 6% preferred not to state their sex.

Figure 3: The highest level of education attained so far



To assess the highest level of education of the respondents, five categories of education were presented to them from which to make a choice. These were high school, undergraduate, graduate, postgraduate, and some school. The undergraduate formed the highest proportion of the respondents representing almost 60%, followed by 21% as graduates. For analysis, these were condensed as follows:

- Graduate and Postgraduate are categorized as Graduate
- Undergraduates and high school-level remained unchanged.

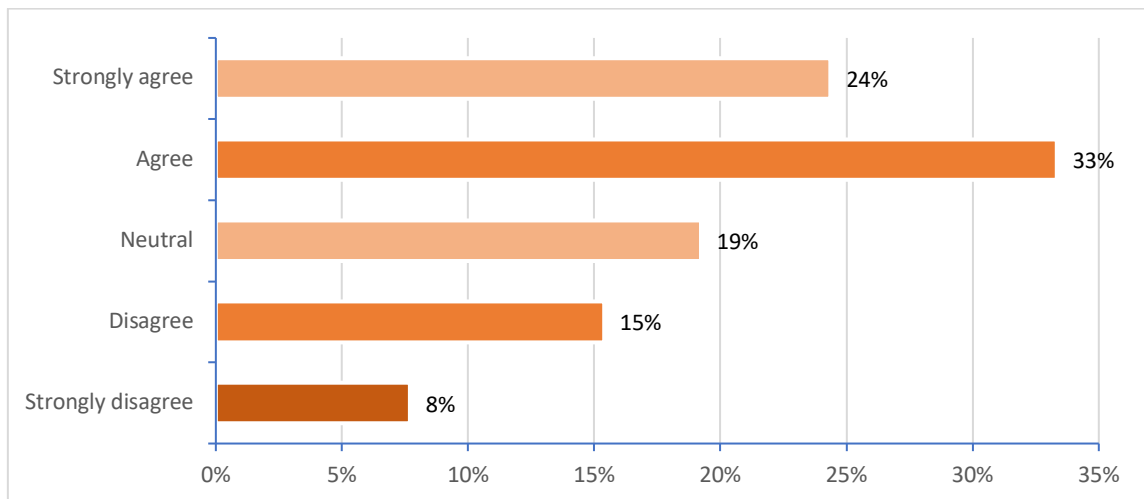
Most respondents were either undergraduate students or had obtained an undergraduate degree.

### Assessment and analysis by variable

Four independent variables guided the study. These were: Perceived economic benefits, interference with local businesses, Perceived reasons for Chinese presence in Zambia, Service delivery, and business conduct. The dependent variable for the study was “Attitudes towards the Chinese Economic Influence.”

### Perceived reasons for China’s presence in Zambia

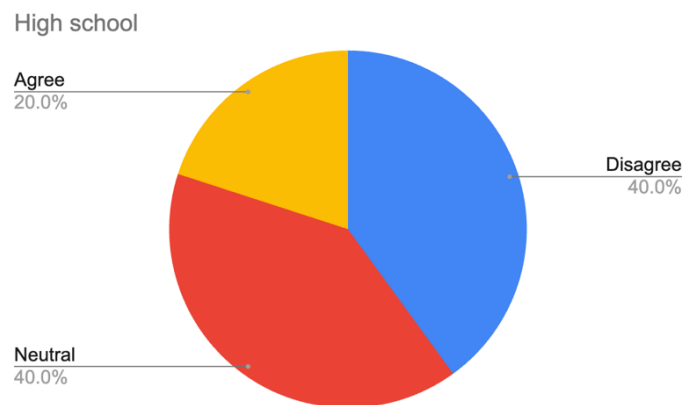
Figure 4: China is just in Zambia for natural resources

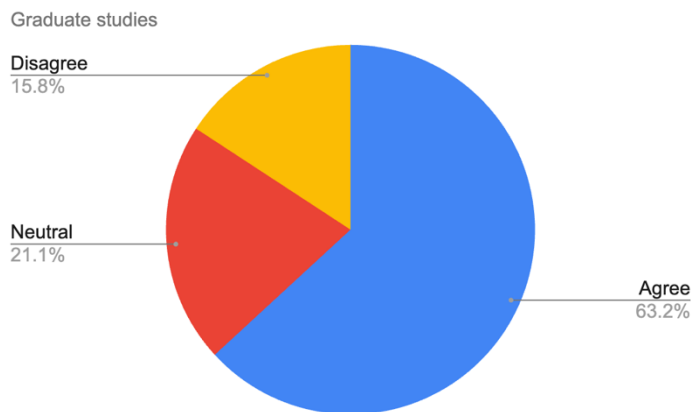
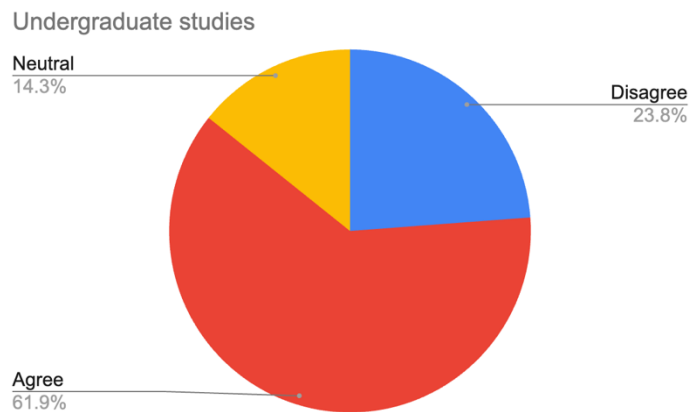


The respondents were asked to state whether they thought China was just in Zambia for natural resources and Likert was used to get the respondents' views, Respondents chose from the options: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. 33% said they agreed, while 24% strongly agreed that China is just in Zambia for natural resources. 19% were neutral, 15% disagreed, and 8% strongly disagreed that China is just for natural resources in Zambia.

*China is just in Zambia for natural resources*

Figure 5: Educational Level as a Determinant of Perception





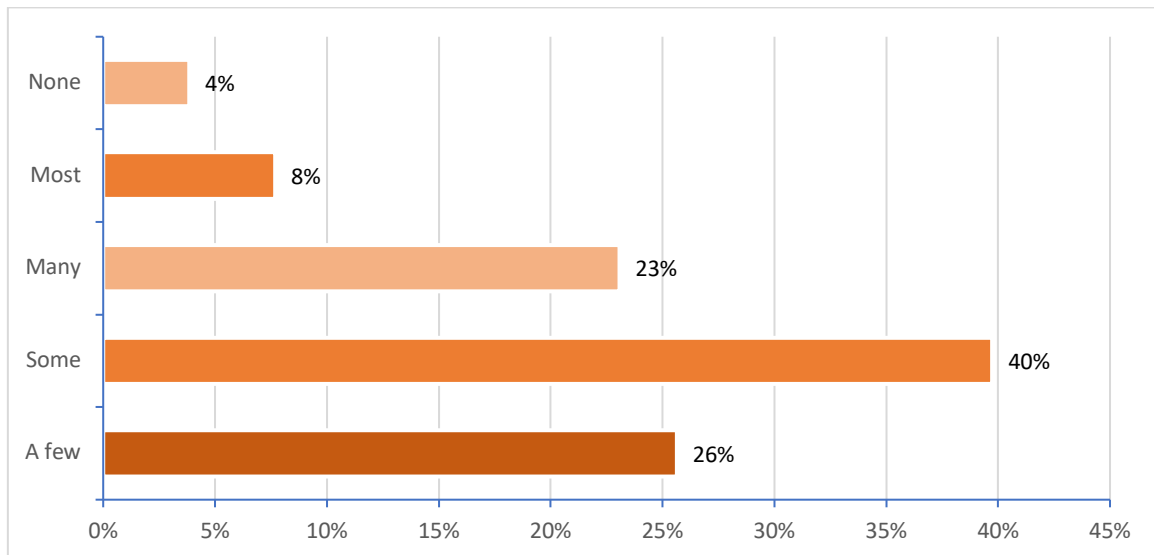
Further analysis based on the respondents' highest-level education revealed that over 60% of both graduate and undergraduate level respondents believed that China was solely interested in Zambia's natural resources. While only 20% of those in high school thought that was the case. 57% of high school-level respondents reported either no knowledge or neutrality. Only 15 % of graduates and postgraduates believed China had benign motives for its involvement with Zambia.

The views held by the more educated in the research sample agree with the findings of some studies that argue that China, the world's largest manufacturing power, is seeking to control Africa's natural resources, which include minerals, oil, and gas (Hanauer & Morris, 2013). China is almost entirely reliant on African countries for Cobalt and manganese imports. (Institute of Developing Economies Japan External Trade Organisation, n.d.) This is also likely to be influenced by the demographic's greater engagement and understanding of public political discourse and academic research, and minimally by the digital and traditional media portrayal of China's influence which, has

been shown to have a significant impact on collective attitudes towards issues of national interest as studies show that well-informed people tend to resist the effects of negative and positive media portrayals of groups or issues without sufficient backing. (Schemer, 2012)

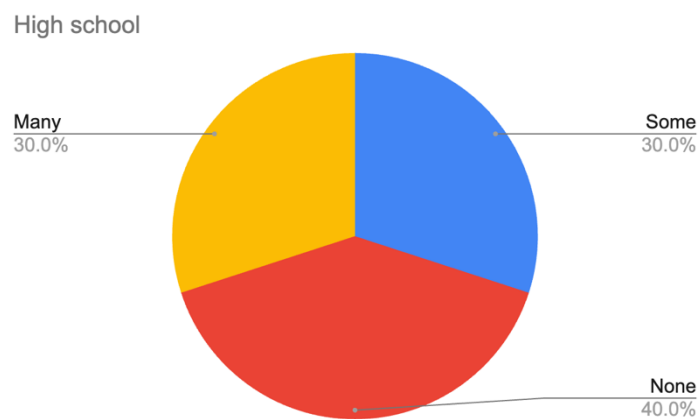
### Perceived economic benefits

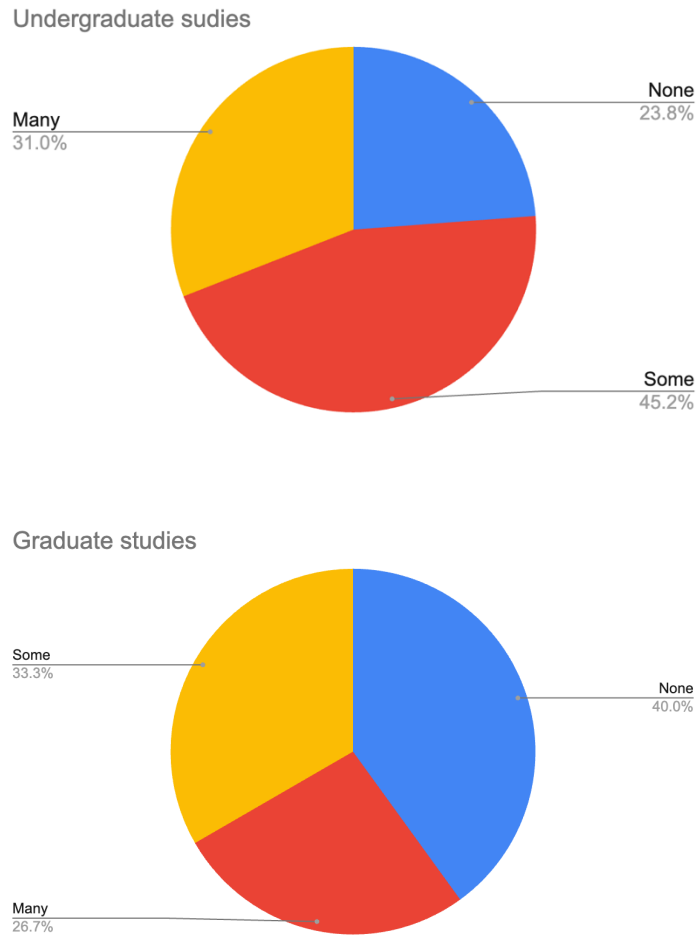
Figure 6: How much of China and Zambia’s interests are in common?



China proposes that it cooperates only in areas, social, political, and economic, that are in the best interests of both countries. The majority, representing 40% of the respondents, were in the neutral position saying there were some common interests between China and Zambia, 26% were less optimistic in their view, that there were only a few common interests held in common, and 23% believed the common interests were many. Only 4% said there was no common interest between the two countries.

Figure 7: Educational Level as a Determinant Of Perception

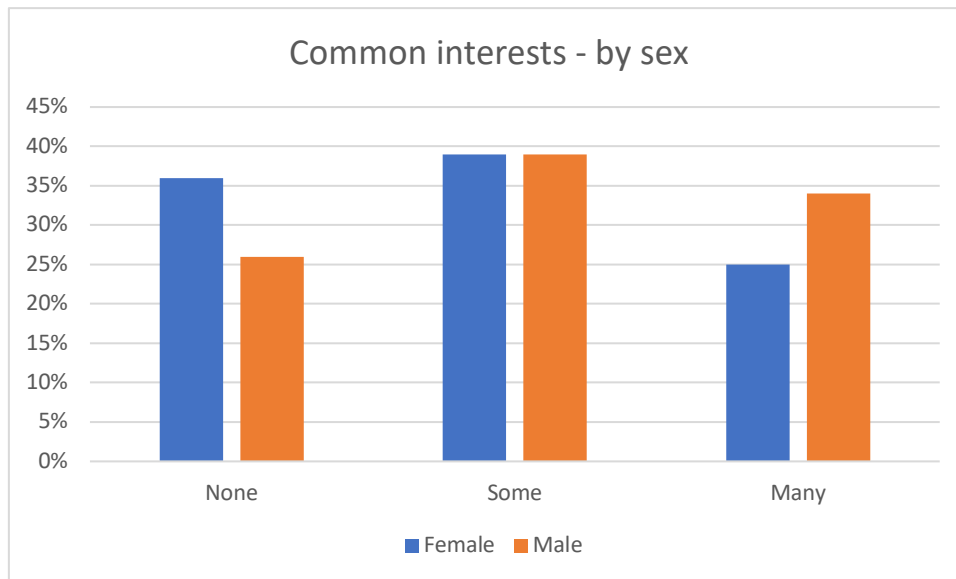




Furthermore, 40% of graduate and postgraduate-level respondents of both sexes perceived that very little to none of China and Zambia’s interests were shared while the remaining 60% was split between “some” – a fair number of interests, and many, which had the least. Undergraduate-level respondents held that a fair amount of the two countries’ interests is held in common.

Additionally, a greater percentage of female respondents believed that very little or none of the countries’ interests were held in common, contrasted to the greater percentage of men who believed that most interests were shared. Further study is recommended to enquire into the replicability and reasons for this observation.

Figure 8: Common interests- Attitudes by sex



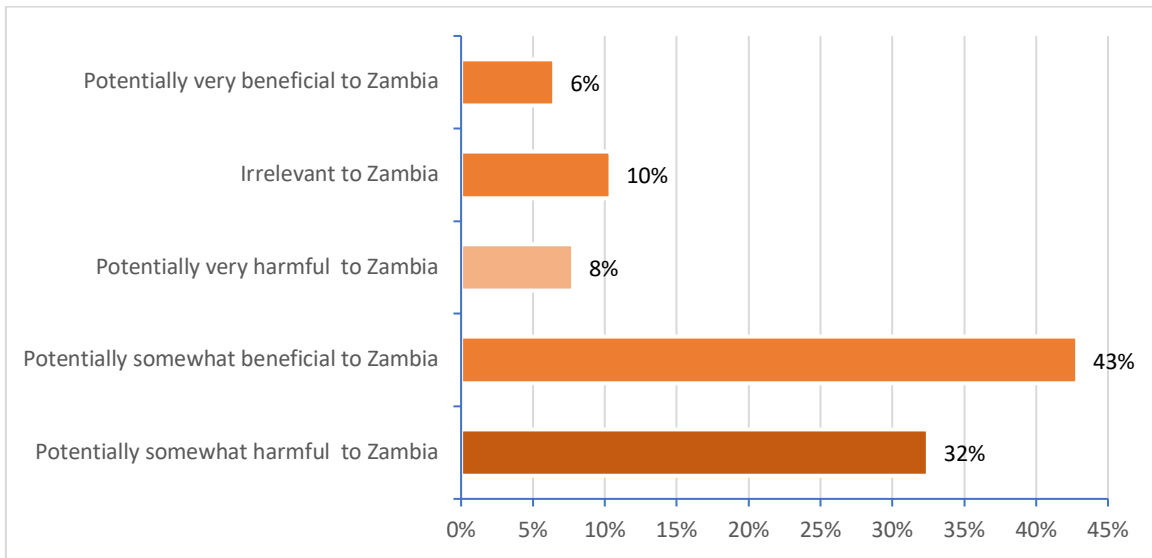
<b>Count of How much of Zambia and China's interests are in common</b>			
	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	
<b>None</b>		36%	26%
<b>Some</b>		39%	39%
<b>Many</b>		25%	34%

These findings could be considered alongside existing literature, which shows that there is a generally positive view of China’s economic impact on Africa (Mwakideu, 2021). As noted above, positive views can also be observed among officials and governments generally (Lyle J. Morris, 2013). The different surveys show that most Africans see China as having a positive economic impact on Africa (Mureithi, 2021; Afrobarometer, 2020).

#### Perceived impacts of China’s rise



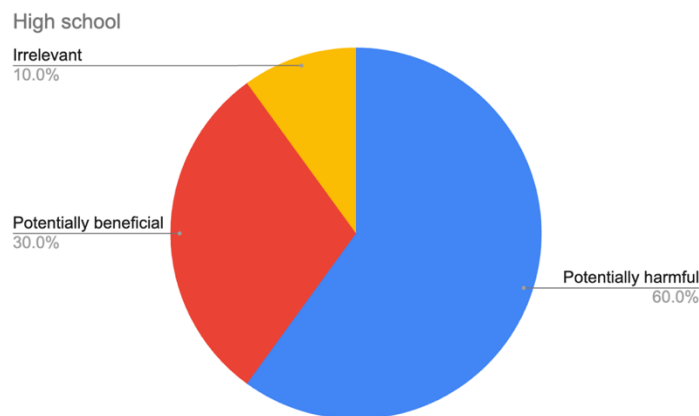
Figure 9: What effect do you think China as a rising global power will have on Zambia?

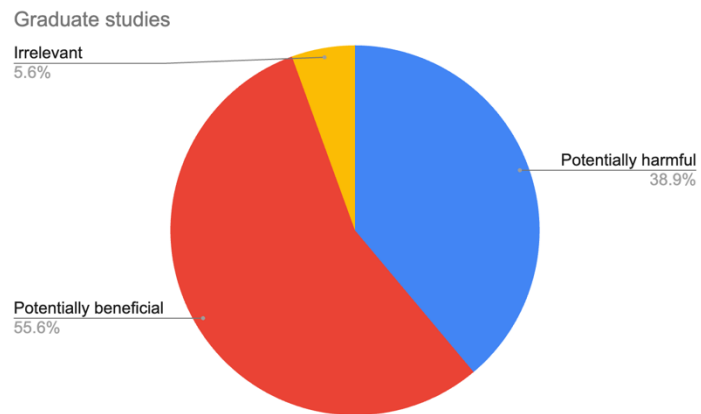
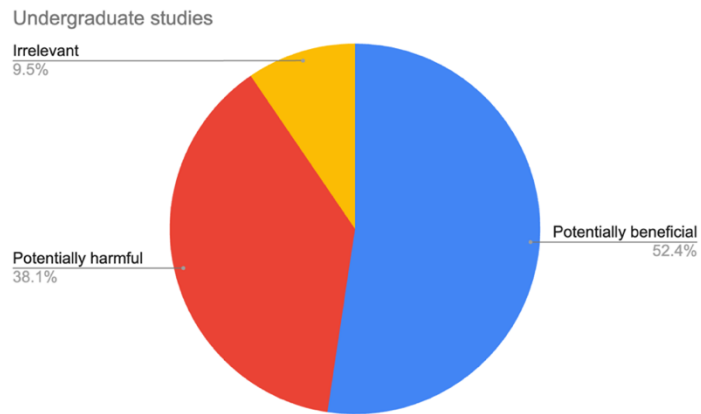


The respondents were asked about China’s rise as a global power will have on Zambia. They were asked to choose from five options: potentially very beneficial to Zambia, potentially somewhat beneficial to Zambia, potentially very harmful to Zambia, potentially somewhat harmful to Zambia, and irrelevant to Zambia. 42% said the rise of China as a global superpower would be potentially somewhat beneficial to Zambia, while 32% said the rise would be potentially somewhat harmful to Zambia. Only 6% thought the rise would be potentially very beneficial to Zambia, 10% saying it is irrelevant to Zambia, while 8% said the rise would be potentially very harmful to Zambia.

The results show that less than 50% of Zambian young adults see China rising as a global power, positively impacting Zambia. Even those who view the rising as beneficial, the majority see China rising as a global superpower as not very beneficial. Zambian young adults do not seem to have confidence that Zambia would sufficiently benefit from the rise of China.

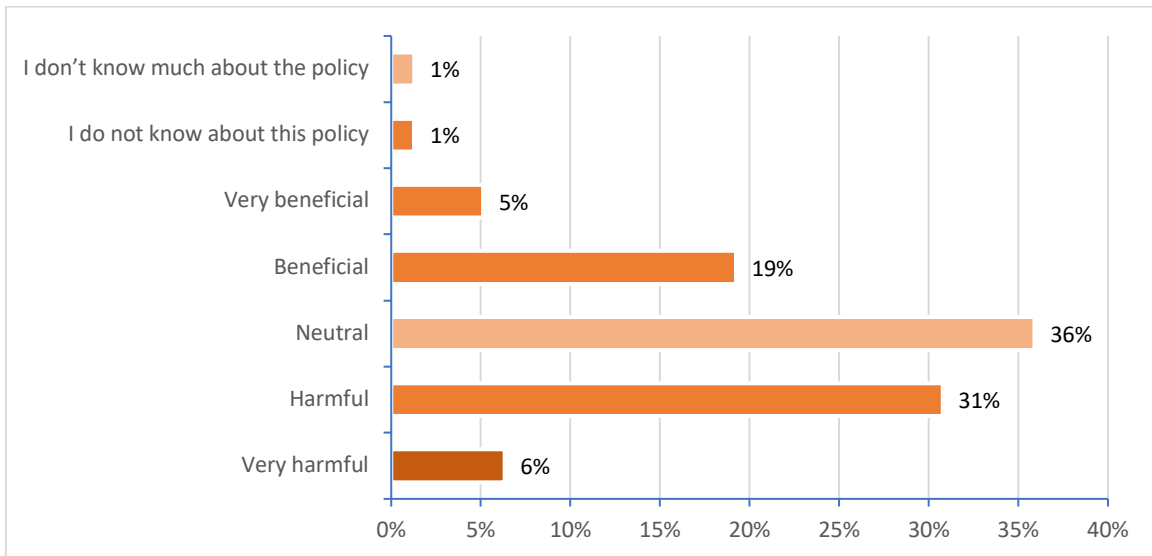
Figure 10: Educational Level as A Determinant of Perception





Across educational levels, the sentiment remained constantly predominant that Zambia stands to benefit from the rise of China as a global power. This could be influenced by an underlying understanding that the rise of China will provide spill-over positive effects for Zambia's and other economies through increases in bilateral trade. (Morrison, 2019)

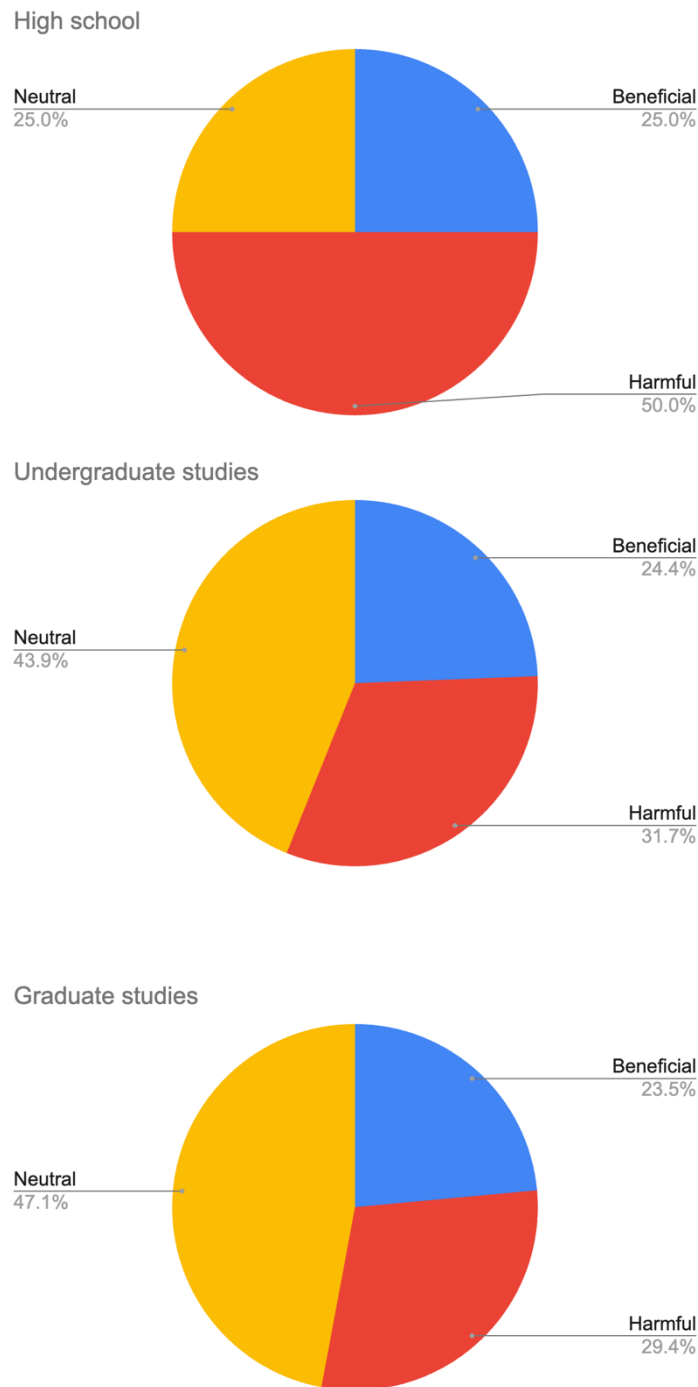
Figure 11: For Zambia, China’s Policy of “Non-interference” is



Regarding the effect of China’s Policy of “Non-interference,” the respondents were asked to state their thoughts using the Likert scale. Instead of asking whether the policy was beneficial, very beneficial, neutral, harmful, and very harmful, two more responses were added to the Likert scale. The required responses added were “I do not know much about the policy” and “I do not know about this policy.” 36% of the respondents were neutral, while 31% said the policy is harmful. Only 1% said they did not know about the policy, while 19% said it was beneficial. This could be because, unlike Western organizations and countries, whose assistance is frequently tied to conditions in governance and legal issues, and which could be seen as infringing upon the sovereignty of states, China completely abstains from national matters.

The results show that generally, people in Zambia do not see the China non-interference policy as beneficial to Zambia. This can be seen from the 35% who are indifferent about the policy and the 31% who are explicit that the policy is harmful. This could be potentially arising from the fact the Chinese have engaged with government regimes without any regard for their corrupt practices, which have been harmful to the general population and the long-term macroeconomic prospects of the country.

Figure 12: Educational Level as A Determinant of Perceptions towards non-interference policy



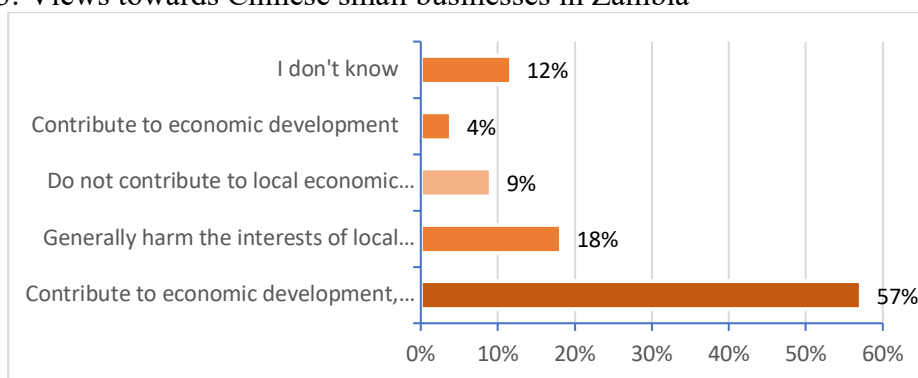
Most undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate educated respondents had neutral sentiments about China’s non-interference policy, some indicated that they thought it was only theoretical but not effectively implemented. The non-Interference policy is a political philosophy that “opposes any interference in the domestic politics and affairs of partner countries” (Hodges, 1915). High-school level respondents, however, predominantly thought it was harmful to the country

## Views on Chinese small businesses in Zambia

The respondents were asked to express their views regarding the effects of Zambia-based Chinese businesses. These are the businesses traditionally ventured into by Zambian citizens.

57% of the sample believed Chinese small businesses in Zambia contribute to the economic development but are also problematic to the local people. 18% believe small Chinese businesses generally harm the interests of the locals. 12% said they did not know the effect of these businesses, 9% believed these businesses do not contribute to local economic development, while 4% the small Chinese businesses contribute to economic development.

Figure 13: Views towards Chinese small businesses in Zambia



The results show that most Zambians see small Chinese businesses as beneficial to the economic development of Zambia. However, they also see these businesses as problematic to the local people.

Moreover, across age groups, the majority expressed concern with Chinese small businesses in the country. As having a level of macroeconomic benefit but posing challenges at a microeconomic level to citizens. The mixed views regarding small Chinese businesses can be attributed to Zambians finding it challenging to compete with Chinese businesses. Small Chinese businesses tend to set lower prices, leading to the collapse of local small businesses (Koumou & Manyi, 2016). In most cases, Chinese business has more access to capital, which enables them to set lower prices, thereby creating unfavorable market conditions (Lusakatimes-b, 2017).

Figure 14: Sex as a Determinant of Perceptions towards Chinese small businesses

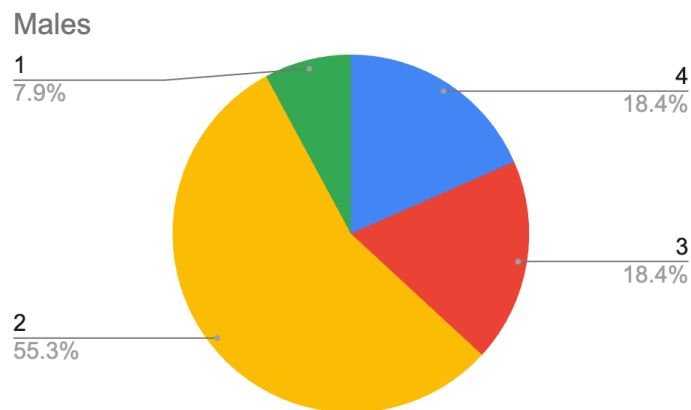
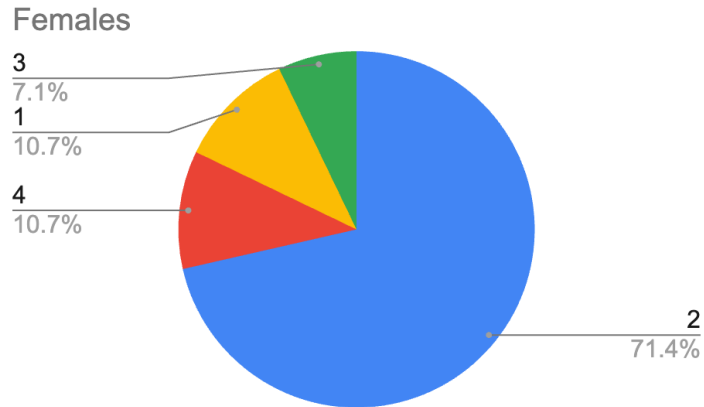
*Key*

*Do not contribute to economic development - 1*

*Contribute to economic development but are also problematic to local people - 2*

*Contribute to economic development - 3*

*Generally harm the interests of local people - 4*



71% of female respondents indicated the sentiments that Chinese small businesses contribute to economic development, but are also problematic to local people, compared to just 53% of male respondents. This might be indicative of the fact that more women engage in informal micro and small-scale trading activities compared to men and thus tend to be more affected by the competition from Chinese participants in informal businesses. The informal sector is comprised of 57% women and 43% men (Bupe Simuchimba Frank Chansa, 2020)

Figure 15: Educational Level as A Determinant of Perceptions towards Chinese small businesses

*Key*

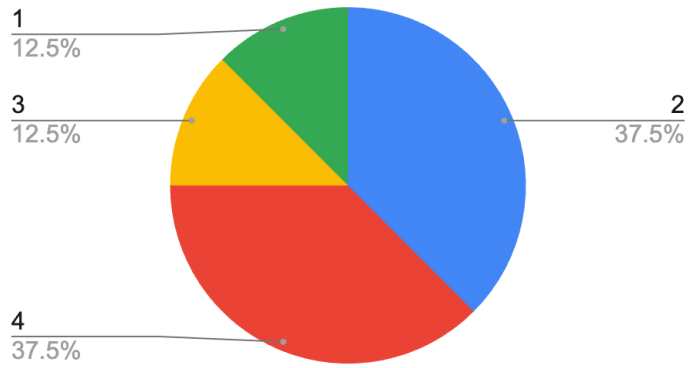
*Do not contribute to economic development - 1*

*Contribute to economic development but are also problematic to local people - 2*

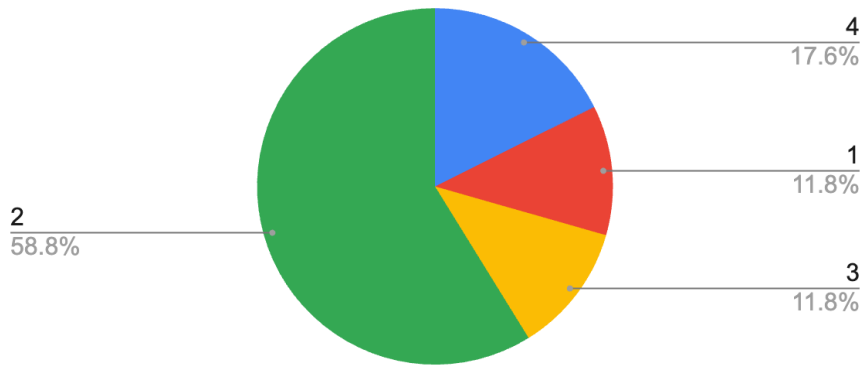
*Contribute to economic development - 3*

*Generally harm the interests of local people - 4*

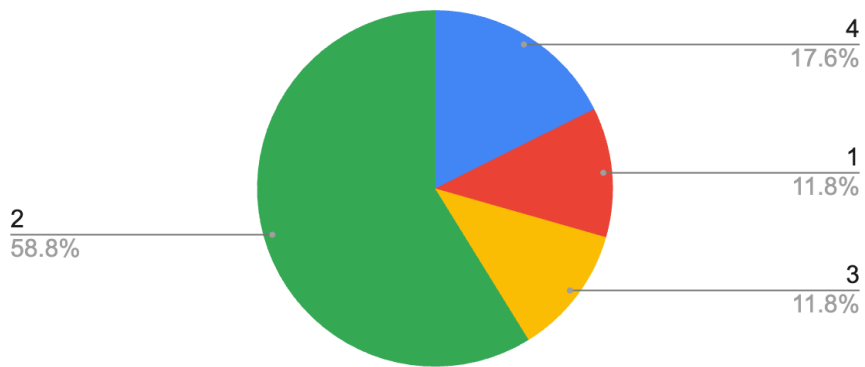
### High school



### Graduate studies

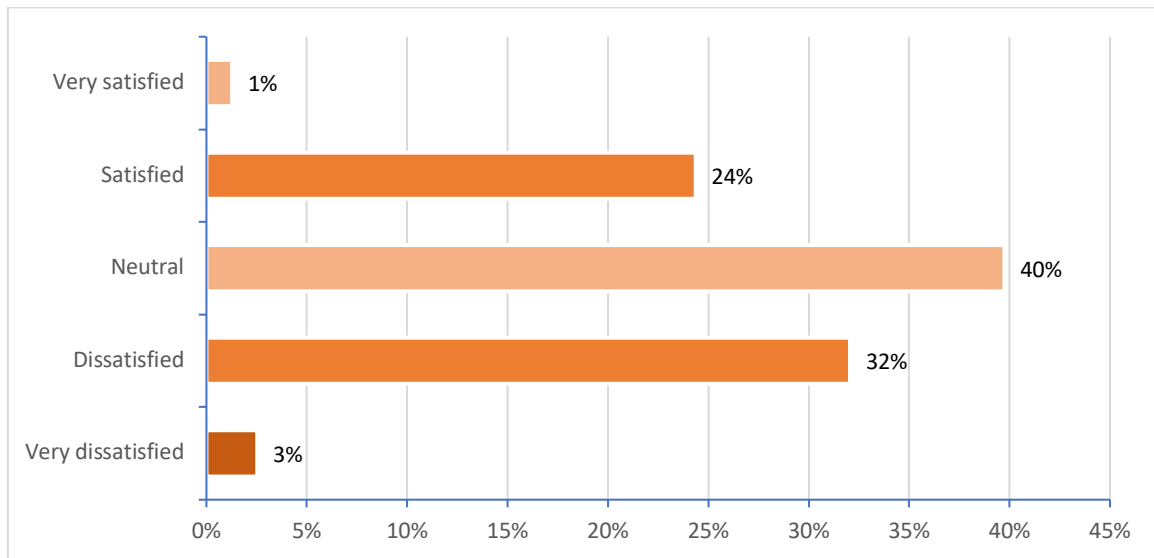


### Graduate studies



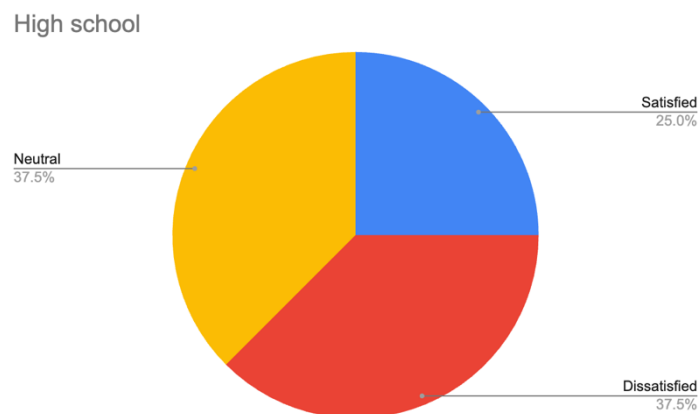
### Service delivery and business conduct

Figure 16: Your level of satisfaction with Chinese Companies that Work on Large Projects in Zambia



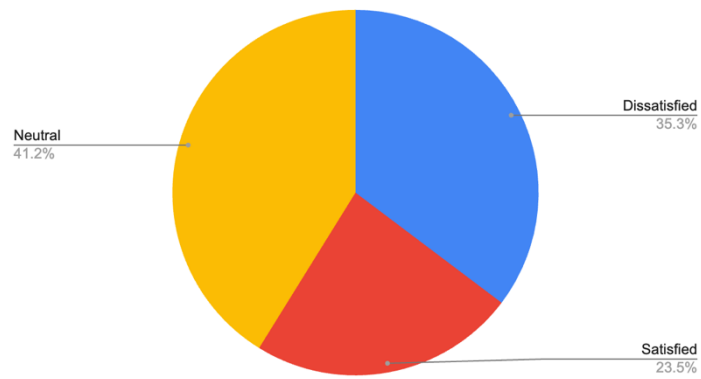
The respondents were asked about their satisfaction with the Chinese companies handling large projects in Zambia. The use of the Likert scales achieved this. Respondents were required to choose from five very satisfied, satisfied, neutral, dissatisfied, and very dissatisfied. Overall, 40% were neutral, 32% were dissatisfied, 24% were satisfied, 3% were very dissatisfied, and 1% were very satisfied.

Figure 17: Educational Level as A Determinant of Perceptions towards Chinese delivery on large projects





Graduate studies



Undergraduate studies

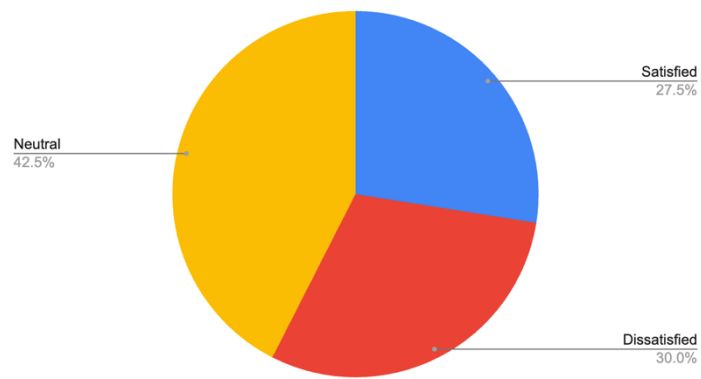
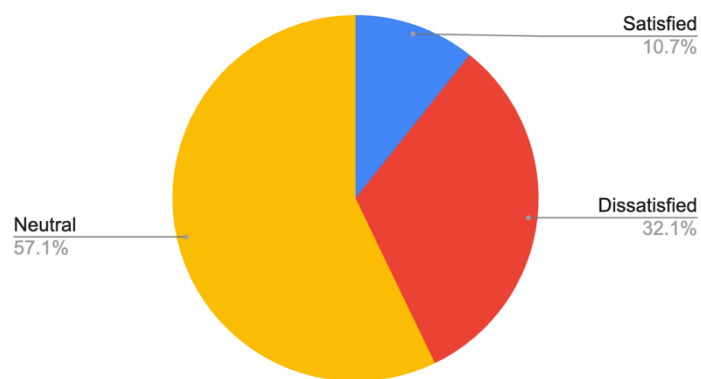
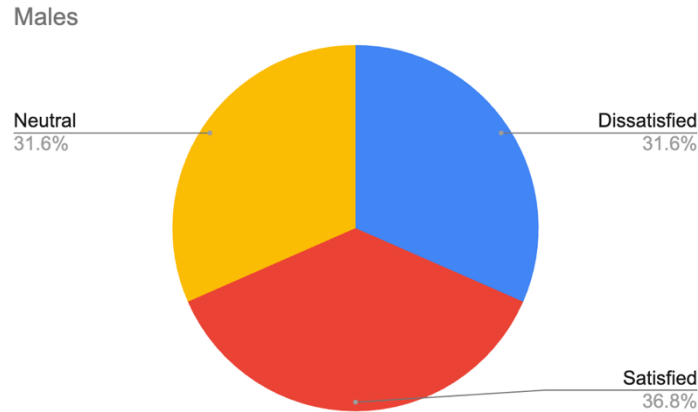


Figure 18: Sex as A Determinant of Satisfaction with large-scale projects

Females





The results show that a most significant proportion of Zambian young adults are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the operations of big companies in Zambia. However, there are many who are dissatisfied with the operations of the Chinese companies in Zambia. Studies even show that this dissatisfaction has led to widespread protests and violence against Chinese businesspeople and migrants (Hanauer and Morris, 2013; Lusaka times, 2013).

Furthermore, a significant number across education levels and sexes expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of work done by Chinese companies on large projects in the country. Consistent with this is a 2019 DW report that “Zambians question the quality and longevity of Chinese-built infrastructure. In 2011, a huge part of the Lusaka-Chirundu road, which was constructed by China Henan, was swept away by heavy rains shortly after it was completed.” These projects have been colloquially termed white elephants, in the question of their usefulness. Dissatisfaction could be further attributed to the fact that Zambian construction firms are almost never awarded the construction contracts, which are predominantly awarded to Chinese firms. (DW, 2019). Most of the respondents in the studied sample, however, expressed satisfaction with the work of Chinese firms on large projects. Thanks to these projects, thousands of Zambians are given jobs, and the country has seen noticeable infrastructural development from these initiatives, including the mega-road project, Kenneth Kaunda International Airport, a conference center, and sports stadia, among others, all of which facilitate national economic and social activity.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The goal of the thesis was to determine what views Zambian young adults have towards the economic influence China has over Zambia. To determine this, six questions were asked; the levels of interests held in common by the two countries, the levels of satisfaction with the work of Chinese companies on large-scale projects in Zambia, the effect of China as a rising power, and the Chinese non-interference policy on Zambia, China's motives for being in Zambia and the effects of Chinese-owned small businesses. From this study, it was concluded that most of the Zambian young adults studied believe that Zambia and China have some interests in common, and hence the relationship is beneficial to both Zambia and China. It is also concluded that Zambian citizens have both negative and positive views about the presence of small Chinese businesses in the country. On the positive side, these businesses are viewed as economically beneficial, while on the negative side, as problematic due to their interference with local businesses. Though the majority believe the relationship between China and Zambia is economically beneficial, the majority see China as only in Zambia for natural resources. There were also differences in the responses based on the sex of respondents.

Responding on their level of satisfaction with the work of Chinese firms on large-scale projects, about 40% of males said they were satisfied, compared to just 10% of females. The proportion of males and females who were dissatisfied was about the same, at 32%. A significantly greater proportion of females also expressed that Chinese small businesses are beneficial to the economy but harmful to local small business owners, at 71%, compared to just 18% of males.

As the views presented in this paper are not comprehensive or representative, we suggest the need for a more rigorous examination of the issues presented and their impact. These include the intersection of sex and perceptions, and their causes, the factors influencing the differences across educational levels and age groups. Further, inquiry into rural geographic areas of Zambia and age demographics not included in the study is recommended. An assessment of the attitudes towards China's influence and the effects of these, not only economically, but socially, culturally, technologically and in other fields would lead to important insights. Case studies of Chinese-owned companies would also be needed to get to the root of the often-cited poor working conditions that may cost many workers their health and wellbeing and that influence the general attitudes of Zambians towards the Chinese people and ensure compliance with national regulations and standards. Thus, both the public and private sectors will take better ground for evidence-based policy formulation in their efforts to cooperate in mutually beneficial ways. Based on the results of this study, there is an indicated need for the government to explain the common interest the two countries share with the people. In this way, they will be able to appreciate China's presence better. Also, to dissipate suspicion and speculation on China's motivations for being in Zambia, stakeholders should disclose contracts and Memoranda of Understandings on the countries' cooperation and loan repayment conditions, which are currently kept from the public.

The study results show that many Zambians see China as just for natural resources in Zambia. This shows less appreciation for the Chinese presence in the country. Therefore, there is a need for the government to make its dealings with the Chinese government transparent so that the people can evaluate the costs and benefits of such dealings.

It is also clear that the people of Zambia find small Chinese businesses problematic though economically beneficial. The main reason was their disruption of the local industry. Therefore, there is a need for the government to create policies that will protect small local businesses from unfair competition. There is also a need to create opportunities for small local businesses to access funding to compete favourably with Chinese and all other international businesses. Due to the limitations of this study imposed by scope and accessibility in view of the covid-19 pandemic, further investigation is recommended into the interaction of Chinese-owned small businesses in Zambia.

The study also shows that a considerable number of Zambians are not pleased with the working conditions and product quality offered by large-scale Chinese companies operating in Zambia. Therefore, there is a need for official regulations and regular compliance checks to assess Chinese firms' working conditions and ensure that Zambians are not exploited.

Further, the high opacity of Chinese loans to Zambia leaves room for discontentment among citizens in whose interests it is to understand the terms under their country is subject owing to Chinese debt. It is also recommended to engage and educate high school-age young adults further on Sino-Zambia relations to influence how they interact with and understand the opportunities and challenges presented by this global economic power.

#### Limitations of the study and directions for future research

The researcher recognizes that limitations could affect the results. One of these limitations was the budget limitation. Limitations in sample size were largely influenced by pandemic mobility restrictions and a lack of funds to increase the sample size by using multiple research instruments to collect data from Zambian young adults who could not be accessed through an online survey.

The researcher used the descriptive cross-section research design, which means that data was collected at a specific point in time, and as a result, the research could not show the trends in the attitudes of Zambians towards Chinese presence over time. For example, the changes that occurred with the change in government in the year 2021. The results of this study are not generalizable, given that most of the respondents might be from urban areas and may represent only the educated citizenry. They thus may not reflect the views of the majority of poor majority who work as general laborers for Chinese firms, who may, on average does not possess the same level of education as most of the survey respondents, and the elites who engage directly with the Chinese. However, they present the views of the urban young adult in the sample, which provides a starting point for further investigation of the issue, and the insights generated provide pointers to questions that may demand further research and attention.

Further, there was subjectivity in the definition of terms used in the questionnaire as no explicit definitions were provided.

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## a. APPENDICES

### 1. Survey



# China in Zambia

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\*Required

1. Email \*

2. Sex

*Mark only one oval.*

Male

Female

Prefer not to say

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Highest level of education attained so far

*Mark only one oval.*

Some School

High School

Undergraduate studies

Graduate studies

Postgraduate studies

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## 4. Age

Mark only one oval.

- 0-17
- 18-35
- Above 35

## 5. How much of China and Zambia's interests are in common?

Mark only one oval.

- Most
- Many
- Some
- A few
- None

## 6. Your level of satisfaction with Chinese Companies that Work on Large Projects in Zambia

Mark only one oval.

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neutral
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

10. My view of Chinese small businesses in Zambia is that they

*Mark only one oval.*

- Contribute to economic development
- Contribute to economic development, but are also problematic to local people
- Do not contribute to local economic development
- Generally harm the interests of local people
- I don't know

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Google Forms

2. Flag of “Chambia”



## Zadání bakalářské práce

**Autor:** Mbamu Chama

**Studium:** I1800550

**Studijní program:** B6208 Ekonomika a management

**Studijní obor:** Finanční management

**Název bakalářské práce:** **Postoje k vlivu Číny v Zambii**

**Název bakalářské práce AJ:** Zambian Attitudes towards the Chinese influence on Zambia

### Cíl, metody, literatura, předpoklady:

The goal of this thesis is to determine the attitudes held by Zambian young adults towards the growing economic influence which China exerts on Zambia.

### Contents:

Introduction, Literature review, Research methodology, Findings and data analysis, conclusions and recommendations, References, Appendices

### Methods

Descriptive cross-sectional study

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