

**ENHANCING THE EMPLOYABILITY OF DEVELOPMENT IN PLANNING AND  
MANAGEMENT GRADUATES, UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO**

by

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**DECLARATION**

I, Lebotsa Khutso Piet, declare that the dissertation titled: **Enhancing the Employability of Development in Planning and Management Graduates,**

**University of Limpopo**, is my original work, and that I have diligently cited and duly acknowledged all the sources consulted in this study. The research report is presented to the University of Limpopo, to fulfil the requirements for the Master of Development Studies in Planning and Management degree, and it has never been submitted before by me for any assessments at this or any other University.

Signature

Date

.....

.....

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## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is devoted to the people listed below:

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- Samuel Makgitle Masha.
- Lebogang Lebotsa.

## **ACRONYMS**

HEIs

Higher Education Institutions

SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
NSDA	National Skills Development Agency
DDPM	Department of Development Planning and Management
KM	Kilometre
SPSS	Statistical Package of Social Science
TREC	Turfloop Research Ethics Committee
HC	Human Capital
USEM	Understanding, Skills, Efficacy beliefs and Metacognition
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate in Education
NSA	National Skills Authority
NSF	National Skills Fund
NSDS	National Skills Development Strategy
4IR	Fourth Industrial Revolution

## **ABSTRACT**

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) graduates face high unemployment levels. This is largely ascribable to the absence of opportunities and or their lack of employability skills and abilities needed in the corporate world. Like other graduates across various fields of study in South Africa, Development Planning and Management graduates from the University of Limpopo are confronted with difficulties of transiting to the labour market. Several factors contribute to these difficulties, common among them being the lack of work-integrated learning, poor marketing of qualifications, and poor collaboration between the universities and the corporate sector. Against this backdrop, this study sought to enhance the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates in the University of Limpopo, relying on these graduates as a case study data collection and an evaluation of the factors that contribute to the non-employability of graduates in lieu of the needs of the labour market. This study aimed to investigate the employability of graduates from the University of Limpopo.

A normative and evaluation research design was used in the study. For primary and secondary data collection, the study used questionnaires, interview schedules, and a literature review. The study included 49 participants and 4 key informants. It was found that the integration of work-integrated learning into the university curriculum, proper marketing of the degree programme, and collaborative efforts between HEIs and the corporate sector can enhance the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates.

In conclusion, the study highlights that HEIs must incorporate work-integrated learning into curricula and establish collaborative efforts between HEIs and the labour market, in order to effectively respond to the evolution of attributes and abilities that the economy and corporate world demand. Therefore, the study recommends that universities must align their degree programmes with the demands of the corporate world, strengthen collaborations with the corporate sector, promote work-integrated learning, and involve the corporate sector in curriculum designs and reviews to assure that university curriculum respond to the expectations of the corporate world.

**Keywords:** Graduate Employability; Unemployment; Graduates; Corporate Sector; Development in Planning and Management

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>Item Description</b>	<b>Pages</b>
<b>Declaration</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Dedication</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Acronyms</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>List of Figures</b>	<b>xv</b>

### **CHAPTER ONE**

#### **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

<b>1.1. Introduction and Background</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.2. Statement of the Research Problem</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.3. Aim and Objectives</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.3.1. Aim of the Study</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.3.2. Research Objectives</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.4. Research Questions</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.5. Definition of Concepts</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.6. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1.6.1. Research Design</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1.6.2 Study Area</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1.6.3 Kinds of Data Required</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1.6.4 Target Population</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1.6.5 Sampling Procedures</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1.6.6 Data Collection Methods</b>	<b>8</b>
1.6.6.1. Questionnaires	<b>8</b>
1.6.6.2. Interview Schedules	<b>9</b>
1.6.6.3. Review of Existing Documents	<b>9</b>
<b>1.6.7 Data Analysis Techniques</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1.6.8 Validity and Reliability</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1.7. Structure of Dissertation</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1.8. Significance of the Study</b>	<b>11</b>

<b>1.9. Ethical Considerations</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>1.9.1. Informed Consent</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>1.9.2. Confidentiality</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>1.9.3. Anonymity</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>1.9.4. Respect and Dignity</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>1.9.5. Risk, Benefit and Harm</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>1.10. Limitations of the Study</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>1.11. Summary of the Chapter</b>	<b>14</b>

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW: AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

<b>2.1. Introduction</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>2.2. Theoretical Literature</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>2.2.1. Humanistic or People Centred Theory</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>2.2.2. Signalling Theory</b>	<b>16</b>
2.2.2.1. The Shortcoming of the Signalling Theory	17
<b>2.2.3. Human Capital Theory</b>	<b>18</b>
2.2.3.1. The Shortcoming of the Human Capital Theory	19
<b>2.2.4. The Comparison of Signalling Theory and Human Capital Theory</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>2.3. An International Empirical Literature Review on the Employability of Graduates</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>2.3.1. The Origin and Evolution of Employability</b>	<b>21</b>
2.3.1.1. Employability	21
a. <i>Dichotomic employability</i>	22
b. <i>Socio-medical employability</i>	22
c. <i>Manpower policy employability</i>	22
d. <i>Flow employability</i>	23
e. <i>Labour market performance employability</i>	23
f. <i>Initiative employability</i>	23
g. <i>Interactive employability</i>	24
<b>2.3.2. Overview of the Employability of Graduates, a Global Perspective</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>2.3.3. The Factors Affecting the Employability of Graduates</b>	<b>27</b>
2.3.3.1. Absence of Curriculum Capacity to Support the Training	28



2.3.3.2. Poor Linkages between the HEIs and the Corporate Sector	28
2.3.3.3. Low Competence of Lecturers and Instructors	28
<b>2.3.4. The Models of Enhancing the Employability of Graduates</b>	<b>29</b>
2.3.4.1. Career-EDGE Model	29
<i>a. Degree Subject Knowledge, Understanding Skills</i>	29
<i>b. Generic Skills</i>	30
<i>c. Emotional Intelligence</i>	30
<i>d. Career Development Learning</i>	30
<i>e. Experience (work and life)</i>	31
<i>f. Reflection and Evaluation</i>	31
<i>g. Self-efficacy, Self-confidence, and Self-esteem</i>	31
2.3.4.2. Model of Graduate Employment Enhancement	33
<i>a. Academic Skills</i>	33
<i>b. Generic Skills</i>	33
<i>c. Career Education Activities</i>	33
<i>d. Work Experience</i>	34
<i>e. Participation in Extra-curriculum Activities</i>	34
<i>f. Reflection and Assessment</i>	35
<i>g. Emotional Intelligence</i>	35
<i>h. Self-awareness</i>	35
<i>i. Self-belief</i>	36
<i>j. Enabling Environment</i>	36
2.3.4.3. The USEM Model	37
2.3.4.4. Work-Integrated Learning Model	38
<b>2.3.5. The Roles of HEIs in Preparing Graduates for Corporate World</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>2.4. Summary of the Chapter</b>	<b>44</b>

## CHAPTER 3

### LITERATURE REVIEW: A SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

<b>3.1. Introduction</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>3.2. Overview of the Employability of Graduates, South African Perspective</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>3.3. Challenges Confronting the Employability of Graduates</b>	<b>48</b>
3.3.1. Curriculum Issues	49

<b>3.3.2. Poor Education System</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>3.3.3. Poor Socio-economic Status</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>3.3.4. The Choice of HEIs</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>3.3.5. Social Connections</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>3.4. Mechanisms of Improving the Employability of Graduates</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>3.4.1. Coetzee’s Psychological Career Resource Model</b>	<b>51</b>
3.4.1.1. Career Choice and Ethics	<b>52</b>
3.4.1.2. Career Enablers	<b>52</b>
3.4.1.3. Career Drivers	<b>52</b>
3.4.1.4. Career Harmonisers	<b>53</b>
<b>3.4.2. Bezuidenhout’s Graduate Employability Model</b>	<b>53</b>
3.4.2.1. Career Self-management Drive	<b>54</b>
3.4.2.2. Cultural Competence	<b>54</b>
3.4.2.3. Personal Dispositions	<b>55</b>
<i>a. Career-related Core Self-evaluation</i>	<b>55</b>
<i>b. Entrepreneurial Orientation</i>	<b>55</b>
<i>c. Sociability</i>	<b>56</b>
<i>d. Career Resilience</i>	<b>56</b>
<i>e. Proactivity</i>	<b>56</b>
<i>f. Openness to Change</i>	<b>57</b>
<b>3.4.3. Legislative Frameworks that Seek to Enhance the Employability         of Graduates</b>	<b>58</b>
3.4.3.1. The Skills Development Act 97 of 1998	<b>58</b>
<i>a. The NSA</i>	<b>58</b>
<i>b. The NSF</i>	<b>58</b>
<i>c. The SETAs</i>	<b>59</b>
3.4.3.2. The Continuing Education and Training Act 16 of 2006	<b>59</b>
3.4.3.3. The National Qualifications Framework Act 67 Of 2008	<b>59</b>
3.4.3.4. The National Skills Development Plan 2030	<b>59</b>
3.4.3.5. The NSDs	<b>60</b>
<b>3.5. The Significance and Purpose of HEIs in Preparing Graduates for the     World of Work</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>3.5.1. The Purpose of South African HEIs</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>3.5.2. The Significance of HEIs, South African Perspective</b>	<b>62</b>

<b>3.6. Summary of the Chapter</b>	<b>63</b>
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## **CHAPTER 4**

### **DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

<b>4.1. Introduction</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>4.2. Findings from the Questionnaires</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>4.2.1. Biographic Profile</b>	<b>64</b>
4.2.1.1. Gender	64
4.2.1.2. Age Group	66
4.2.1.3. Educational Status	67
4.2.1.4. Employment Status	68
<b>4.2.2. The Employability of Development in Planning and Management Graduates</b>	<b>69</b>
4.2.2.1. Influencers for choice of study	69
4.2.2.2. Sponsors of study	70
4.2.2.3. Employability	72
4.2.2.4. Basic skills	73
4.2.2.5. Indication of help to acquire skills	74
4.2.2.6. Knowledge and Competencies	75
4.2.2.7. Incorporation of Work-integrated learning	76
4.2.2.8. Factors affecting employability	78
<b>4.2.3. Practical Approaches to Enhance the Employability of Graduates</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>4.3. Presentation of Findings from Qualitative Interview</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>4.3.1. The Organisational or Institutional Needs from the Degree programme of Development in Planning</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>4.3.2. Qualities looked from prospective graduates</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>4.3.3. The quality of Development in Planning and Management graduates from the University of Limpopo</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>4.3.4. Planning and management specialisation of the degree programme meet the needs of your department or organisation</b>	<b>83</b>

4.3.5. Skills, knowledge, and competence that Development in Planning and Management graduates lack or need to improve on	84
4.3.6. The collaboration of the department with HEIs to ensure that graduates are maximally prepared for the corporate world	85
4.3.7. The involvement of the department in the formulation and designing of the curriculum of Development in Planning and Management	87
4.3.8. What HEIs needs to do to improve the employability of graduates	88
4.4. Summary of the Chapter	89

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.1. Introduction	91
5.2. Summary of the Chapters	91
5.3. Summary of key findings	93
5.3.1. The Factors Affecting the Employability of Graduates	93
5.3.2. Skills, Knowledge, and Competencies	93
5.3.3. Indication of Help to Acquire Skills	93
5.3.4. Planning and Management Specialisation of the degree Programme meet the needs of the Department or Organisation	94
5.3.5. Sponsorship	94
5.3.6. Qualities Employers look for in Prospective Graduates	94
5.3.7. Incorporation of Work-Integrated Learning	95
5.3.8. The Involvement of the Department in the Formulation and Designing of the Curriculum of Development in Planning and Management	95
5.3.9. What HEIs need to do to Improve the Employability of Graduates	95
5.3.10. The Collaboration of the Department with HEIs to Ensure Graduates are Maximally prepared for the Corporate World	96
5.3.11. Approaches to Enhance the Employability of Graduates	96
5.4. Conclusion	97
5.5. Recommendations	99
5.6. Limitations of the study and suggestion for further research	100

<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>Annexure A: Questionnaire Survey for Development in Planning and Management Graduates</b>	<b>123</b>
<b>Annexure A.1: Translated Questionnaire Survey for Development in Planning and Management Graduates</b>	<b>128</b>
<b>Annexure B: Research Interview Schedule for Key informants</b>	<b>133</b>
<b>Annexure C: Request Letter to Conduct Fieldwork</b>	<b>135</b>
<b>Annexure D: Request Letter for Sample Gatekeeping Letter</b>	<b>136</b>
<b>Annexure E: Turfloop Research Committee Ethics Clearance Certificate</b>	<b>137</b>
<b>Annexure F: Gatekeeper Permission to Conduct Research</b>	<b>138</b>
<b>Annexure G: Limpopo Provincial Research Committee Approval</b>	<b>139</b>
<b>Annexure H: Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee Clearance Certificate</b>	<b>140</b>
<b>Annexure I: Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee Approval</b>	<b>141</b>
<b>Annexure J: Polokwane Local Municipality Approval Letter</b>	<b>142</b>
<b>Annexure K: Editorial Letter</b>	<b>145</b>

## **List of Figures**

<b>Figures</b>	<b>Pages</b>
Figure 4.1: Gender of the respondents	<b>66</b>
Figure 4.2: Age group of the respondents	<b>67</b>
Figure 4.3: Educational status of the respondents	<b>68</b>
Figure 4.4: Employment status of the respondents	<b>69</b>
Figure 4.5: Influencers for choice of study	<b>70</b>
Figure 4.6: Sponsors of study	<b>72</b>
Figure 4.7: Employability of the respondents	<b>73</b>
Figure 4.8: Basic skills of the respondents	<b>74</b>
Figure 4.9: Indication of help from DDPM to acquire skills	<b>76</b>
Figure 4.10: Knowledge and competencies of the respondents	<b>77</b>
Figure 4.11: Incorporation of work-integrated learning	<b>78</b>
Figure 4.12: Factors affecting the employability of the respondents	<b>79</b>

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

#### **1.1. Introduction and Background**

The extent to which Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) can produce employable graduates in the competitive 21<sup>st</sup> century world is garnering the attention of academics and policymakers all over the world (Garwe, 2014; Pitan, 2016; Mtawa, Fongwa & Wilson-Strydom, 2021). South Africa is not an exception. Graduates in South Africa face the greatest challenge of entering the competitive labour market and unemployment; hence, the high rate of their unemployment. According to Statistics South Africa (2021:13), the graduate unemployment rate rose by 0.5 percent in the first quarter of 2021 from 9.1 percent to 9.6 percent. Rapid technological advancements, globalisation, and demographic changes are reforming the labour market, requiring the HEIs to produce competitive and adaptive graduates (Fulgence, 2015; Ncube & Lekhanya, 2021). As a result, governments, the corporate sector, and parents are pressurising the HEIs to produce employable graduates who are economically active in the corporate world (Priest, 2016). The growth of student numbers in the HEIs since the 1990s and a combination of complex policy, technological, economic, and environmental factors are the reasons behind the increasing focus on employability (Heang, Mee, Ramalingam & Hoe, 2019). The need to build employable graduates enables governments to ensure that universities provide high-quality graduates and are responsible for the way in which public money is used by the HEIs (Okolie, Igwe, Nwosu, Eneje & Mlanga, 2020).

In Malaysia, HEIs are failing to align their educational programmes with the demands of the corporate sector (Yusof & Jamaluddin, 2017). The problem that Malaysia and other underdeveloped countries are faced with is the rapid increase of highly

educated students than the employment options on the market that are currently accessible. This imbalance between supply and demand in the graduate employment market has raised several issues, including the role of the HEIs and the study programmes they offer, as well as the calibre of the graduates they churn out (Bhagra & Sharma, 2018). In Nigeria, evidence from prior research shows that university graduates not only face higher unemployment due to the absence of opportunities, but also due to the lack of employability skills and abilities needed in the corporate world (Pitan, 2016; Nwajiuba, Igwe, Akinsola-Obatolu, Ituma & Binuomote, 2020). Therefore, HEIs must respond to the evolution of expertise and the skillsets that the economy and corporate world demand.

In South Africa, the employability of graduates is a pressing issue for the government, like in many other countries, particularly in Third World countries (Mandyoli, Iwu & Nxopo, 2017). Even though the government and private corporations have taken initiatives such as the National Skills Development Agency (NSDA) and the Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) to enhance graduate employability, graduates still face rising levels of unemployment. Currently, corporations search for graduates who are adaptive, innovative, and possess good problem-solving skills. Mandyoli *et al* (2017) posit that a qualification from an HEI no more secures employment for South African graduates as many of them battle to get employment. Graduate unemployment is caused by the multifaceted nature of the corporate environment, with corporations looking for graduates with competitive skills and distinctive attributes for their fundamental business (Moleke, 2010; Mandyoli *et al*, 2017).

It is against this backdrop, this research study used Development in Planning and Management graduates from the University of Limpopo as a case study to gather relevant data about the factors influencing the employability of graduates in view of labour market needs. This degree programme under investigation here is not well known to secondary school learners and potential employers in the corporate sector as it is a new programme of study. Given that, the study puts forward an argument that the lack of work-integrated learning, poor collaboration with the corporate sector, and poor marketing of the degree programme of Development in Planning and



Management are the causes of both the unemployment and un-employability of the graduates in question.

## **1.2. Statement of the Research Problem**

The South African unemployment rate is astonishingly high (at 55.6%) and graduate unemployment rate was at 9.6% in first quarter of 2021 (Statistics South Africa, 2021). According to Zakaria and Nair (2019:13), the status of the economy, quantity of graduates compared to the number of vacant posts, and employment preferences are both contributory factors to graduate unemployment, and to the lack of desirable skills and abilities required by the corporate world. According to Ndlovu and Ndebele (2019:93), most South African graduates who obtained their tertiary qualifications from previously disadvantaged HEIs are perceived as lacking the necessary competencies. Like any other graduate in South Africa, Development Planning and Management graduates from the University of Limpopo are confronted with difficulties of transiting into the labour market. The difficulties emanate from the lack of work-integrated learning, poor marketing of the qualifications, and poor collaboration between the HEIs and the corporate world. Therefore, considering these challenges, the study aimed to enhance the employability of Development graduates from HEIs.

## **1.3. Research Aim and Objectives**

This section details the research aim and objectives of the study.

### **1.3.1. Aim of the Study**

The aim of this study is to enhance the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates.

### **1.3.2. Research Objectives**

The objectives formulated from the aim were:

- To investigate the factors affecting the non-employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates.
- To examine the models of enhancing the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates.

- To find out the roles of HEIs in preparing Development in Planning and Management graduates for the labour market.

#### **1.4. Research Questions**

The general research question of the study was as follows: how employable are the Development in Planning and Management graduates? The specific research questions formulated from the general research question were as follows:

- What are the factors contributing to the non-employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates?
- What are the models of enhancing the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates?
- What is the role of the University of Limpopo in preparing Development in Planning and Management graduates for the labour market?

#### **1.5. Definition of Concepts**

This section defines the concepts that the study adopted and used frequently in this study:

- **Employability**

Bhagra and Sharma (2018:9) define employability as a compilation of attainments in terms of abilities, knowledge, and personality traits helping graduates land a job and prosper in their chosen profession, benefiting them, the workforce, and the job market. For Mandyoli *et al* (2017: 66), employability is a proactive job behaviours and aptitudes that enable people to find work by maximising the use of work-related and career meta-competencies. The former definition of employability, however, is the one that best suits the study, where employability is described as the traits, qualification and capabilities that an individual possesses, which are work related and required for a certain profession (Bhagra & Sharma, 2018).

- **Bachelor of Development in Planning and Management**

According to Opschoor, Forster, Jolly, and Monks (2016:4), Bachelor of Development Studies is a multidisciplinary and inter-disciplinary field of study aimed at comprehending the political, social, technological, cultural, and economic factors of societal development, particularly in developing nations. On the other hand, Bachelor of Development Studies is defined as a three-year degree programme with 360 total credits, the qualification provides students with knowledge and skills (Development facilitation, Strategic management planning, project design and administration, social development, and research) in a variety of ideas, practices, and activities that are helpful in facilitating holistic and integrated development (Madzivhandila, 2013). However, the definition that best suits the study is the one that purports Bachelor of Development in Planning and Management as a three-year degree programme with 368 total credits; an advanced programme originating from Bachelor of Development studies with added modules like Strategic Planning and Management and Spatial Development Planning; the qualification imparts and equips students with knowledge and skills in a variety of philosophies, practices, and activities that are helpful in facilitating a holistic and cohesive development.

- **Graduate**

Wickramaratne (2018: 13) defines a graduate as any college or university student who is enrolled in the course's final year. According to Pazil and Razak (2019: 2398), a graduate is a student who has passed and accomplished his or her studies at the end of their academic period. However, from both the definitions of a graduate, the common definition is the one that best suits the study, in which a graduate is a person who has successfully finished a programme of learning or practice from a recognised and accredited HEI over a period, especially someone who has received an undergraduate or first academic qualification (Wickramaratne, 2018; Pazil & Razak, 2019).

## **1.6. Research Design and Methodology**

According to Ma (2015: 567), research methodology is “a comprehensive research strategy that outlines the procedures to be used and describes how a research project will be conducted out”. Moreover, it is the plan intended to analyse data, to make it more measurable and clearer. The study involved qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The research design, study area, kinds of analysis required, target population, sampling procedures, data collection methods, data analysis techniques, and study’s validity and reliability were the approaches employed under this subsection. These aspects are discussed below.

### **1.6.1. Research Design**

The study was carried out using a normative research design. The normative research design is operationalised by an evaluation form of a research study, to investigate the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates. The study adopted the mixed method approach, which is a combination of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The quantitative approach was used to acquire factual data about the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates. The qualitative approach, on the other hand, was used to provide sound reasons about the roles of HEIs in preparing Development in Planning and Management graduates for the labour market.

### **1.6.2. Study Area**

The study was based in the DDPM under Faculty of Management and Law within the University of Limpopo. The University of Limpopo is situated in Mankweng Township within the Polokwane Local Municipality under the Capricorn District in the Limpopo Province. The University of Limpopo is located 33.4 kilometres (Km) away from Polokwane city via R71. Polokwane is the capital city of the Limpopo Province, and all provincial departments have their head offices in Polokwane City. Polokwane is also the economic hub of the Limpopo Province where many graduates search for employment.

### **1.6.3. Kinds of Data Required**

Primary and secondary data were collected for the study. Primary data is the actual data, facts, and views of community members that are gathered using survey and

interview methods (Merwe & Maia, 2019). The raw information, facts and opinions provide the researcher with information about the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates to help answer the research questions. Secondary data is collected by reviewing the available literature, including journal articles, government documents, online sources, and books. Furthermore, secondary data helped to validate the study's aim towards enhancing the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates.

#### **1.6.4. Target Population**

Merwe and Maia (2019) define target population as a subset of a population that a study focuses on, solicits information from and generally draws conclusions from. The DDPM enrolled a total of 245 students at honours level at the University of Limpopo from the year 2013 till 2020, with an average of 30 honours students per academic year. Hence, the target population of this study consisted of four groups: all Development in Planning and Management students (245 students) enrolled at Honours level from the year 2013 until 2020 academic year at the University of Limpopo, and officials from public institutions in Limpopo Province (Limpopo Office of the Premier, Polokwane Local Municipality, Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, and Limpopo Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure).

#### **1.6.5. Sampling Procedures**

Sampling procedures are defined as the process of choosing a subset of people from whom a statistical sample is created in order to project aspects of the total population (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000). The two main types of sampling processes are probability and non-probability sampling. With non-probability sampling, only a selected part of the population is afforded the right to take part in the study, whereas probability sampling gives every population group a fair probability of forming part of the sample (Harwell, 2011). The research adopted purposive sampling under the non-probability sampling to select officials from government institutions in the Limpopo Province to take part in this research project. One official from the following public institutions (Limpopo Office of the Premier, Polokwane Local Municipality, Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, and Limpopo Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure) were selected to participate

in the study. Accordingly, the investigator consulted with government institutions selected to recommend key informants with knowledge and experience about the procedure followed to employ graduates in their institutions. Given the broad focus in public institutions, it would have been quite challenging to select a sample size.

The study used a snowball sampling under a non-probability sampling technique to select students and graduates that participated in this research study. Out of a total of 245 students enrolled at honours level with the DDPM from the year 2013 till 2020, 49 students were selected through snowball sampling for a quantitative survey. The 49 participants were selected by means of listing the student numbers of the participants numerically and assigning the student numbers with numbers from 1 until 245, where after every 4 participants, the 5<sup>th</sup> participant was selected continually. The data of students who enrolled at honours level with the DDPM helped locate the participants, thereafter, the selected participants helped in locating or referring the researcher to other possible participants. The reason behind the selection of 49 students is that they are more qualified to be employed with their honours degrees and mainly due to the inadequacy and constraints with regards to time and resources. The selected graduates provided information about the challenges they encountered when looking for employment with the degree programme of Development in Planning and Management. The selected participants provided information about what motivated them to pursue their postgraduate education. Continually, to find out whether the lack of work-integrated learning in the degree programme, poor marketing of the degree programme, and poor collaboration with the corporate sector compromise their chances of getting employment.

#### **1.6.6. Data Collection Methods**

Different data gathering strategies were used to acquire both primary and secondary data. As a result, this was done to gather the relevant and essential data for the research project. The subsequent data collection methods were used for the research project.

##### **1.6.6.1. Questionnaire**

A questionnaire is a type of data gathering tool that comprises of a list of questions intended to gather data from respondents (Watkins & Gioia, 2015). Primary data is gathered by survey methods such as closed-ended and open-ended surveys. In the closed-ended surveys, participants were only able to answer or choose from the options presented in the closed-ended questions. On the contrary side, the open-ended questions allowed participants to freely express their thoughts about the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates.

#### 1.6.6.2. Interview Schedules

Semi-structured and structured interviews are two types of interview schedules. The semi-structured interview is a common data collection approach that includes a set of questions that must be answered correctly (Makalela, 2019). A semi-structured interview also includes open-ended questions that permit for the introduction of fresh ideas during the interview process, but a structured interview does not. A semi-structured interview schedule was employed to gather information from the officials from public institutions in the Limpopo Province for this study. Additionally, the inputs of the officials provided qualitative and quantitative information about the mechanisms that their department initiates to enhance the employability of graduates.

#### 1.6.6.3. Review of existing documents

Review of existing documents is a secondary source of information that supplements an existing literature review on a subject (Makalela, 2019). Secondary data was gathered utilising a literature overview to gather information on the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates from articles, books, and journals. The review of existing documents provided insights into the factors affecting the employability of Development in Planning and Management, models of enhancing the employability of graduates, and the roles of HEIs in preparing graduates for the labour market.

#### **1.6.7. Data Analysis Techniques**

The data for the study was analysed using mixed method approaches, which contain both qualitative and quantitative data. As a result, thematic analysis was used to examine the qualitative data. The study also used thematic analysis to discover,

probe, and record trends within data, as well as delving into the details and immersing itself in the material acquired from surveys and interviews. The information was then coded in order to interpret and clarify it. Quantitative data was analysed using coefficient analysis in this case. In this regard, graphs and tables were created using the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) to assess the progress of graduates' employability. The SPSS and Microsoft Word and Excel provided the use of graphs and charts to analyse quantitative data.

#### **1.6.8. Validity and Reliability**

Validity is the degree to which the generated results adhere to all the standards set forth by scientific research methodologies and are made publicly available, whereas reliability is a measure of how precisely the results obtained correspond to the entire population studied in the research (Golafshari, 2003; Makalela, 2019). To guarantee that the data acquired for the study is accurate, the literature was thoroughly evaluated, and the major purpose, goals, and objectives of the study were explained to the participants in as much a straightforward manner as possible. Participants were informed of their anonymity and confidentiality in order to encourage openness and honesty during the interviews. The validity of the tools required to gather the data were used in a pre-test to examine its performance. Heale and Twycross (2015: 66) define reliability "as the consistency of a measure". Piloting was undertaken to test the draft questionnaires and interview schedule to guarantee validity and reliability.

#### **1.7. Structure of the Dissertation**

The dissertation comprises five chapters and each chapter is structured as follows:

**Chapter 1:** briefly introduces the background of the study. It contains a description of the research motivation or purpose, reasons, and the procedural approach used in the study. Also, the significance of the study was elucidated, and ethical considerations were adhered to.

**Chapter 2:** presented the empirical literature review on investigating the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates with specific reference to the factors affecting the employability of Development in Planning and



Management graduates, models of enhancing the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates, and role of HEIs in preparing Development in Planning and Management graduates for the labour market. Also, theoretical literature about the employability of graduates was discussed.

**Chapter 3:** reflects and extensively review mechanisms and South African government legislative frameworks meant to enhance the employability of graduates in the South African context. The chapter commences at the provincial level, Limpopo Province, and concludes with the University of Limpopo as the study area.

**Chapter 4:** provides the analysis and interpretation of scientific evidence obtained from the research area. This chapter analyses data based on what respondents said on enhancing the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates. Additionally, the graphic data, together with the findings made are also recorded in this chapter.

**Chapter 5:** entails the conclusion and recommendations derived after analysing the information gathered from respondents. This chapter includes suggestions for potential actions that could enhance the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates.

### **1.8. Significance of the Study**

The study attempts to contribute to the body of knowledge about the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates. Furthermore, the study also provides the frameworks of graduate employability and roles of HEIs in enhancing the employability of graduates. The fundamentals of the study were targeted at analysing the contributions of HEIs in enhancing the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates. The other contribution of the study is that after the employment of Development in Planning and Management graduates, the level of unemployment of Development in Planning and Management graduates will be reduced. The significance of the study is to help determine factors obstructing smooth access into the labour market for Development in Planning and Management graduates and come up with possible solutions to those obstructing factors. Above all, the study will act as a reference point for various role players such as HEIs, policy and decision makers, and potential employers in formulating practical and

clear implementable mechanisms that could be applied to enhance the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates.

### **1.9. Ethical Considerations**

The principles that underpin research ethics are significant and meaningful concerns such as permission to conduct the study, confidentiality, honesty, and respect for individual rights (Connelly, 2014). Walliman (2011: 183) states that ethics refers to complying with the standards of conduct of a given profession or group. Working with human participants in a research study always raises ethical issues which should always be taken into consideration (Walliman, 2011). The study completely conformed and adhered to the ethical standards outlined in the UL's code of ethics. Consequently, the study was guided by all the ethical obligations associated with professional integrity, intellectual property, and honesty. When obtaining information, the study took into account the expectations of various participants. The respondents were assured that the information acquired would be maintained purely secret and utilised only for the purposes of the study. In this regard, the study does not disclose any participant's information without their prior approval and consent. The research abided to the UL's plagiarism policy. As a result, the study offers proper credit or acknowledges the work of researchers whose works were consulted. The study made use of quotation marks to denote direct quotes and words from other scholars and academics. Informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, respect and dignity, and risk, benefit, and harm, as important aspects of ethical considerations, are explained below:

#### **1.9.1. Informed Consent**

The researcher followed the ethical code of conduct for postgraduate research at the University of Limpopo. The researcher made certain that the surveys were complemented by a permission letter whereby participants were made aware of the objectives of the research. Ethical considerations were employed to foster trust, mutual respect, and fairness toward the participants. The study employed ethical considerations to prevent creating, manipulating, and misrepresenting the study's data.

#### **1.9.2. Confidentiality**

The participants were not compelled to disclose information on questions to which they were unable or chose not to respond. Participants received assurances regarding the researcher's respect for their rights, privacy, and secrecy. In addition, participants were informed that they would not incur any bodily harm due to the nature of the study or psychological harm as a result of the investigation. The participants were also permitted to take part willingly. Also, the participants were assured that the study was not going to result into any discrimination against all forms of social, ethnic, age, racial, and sexual groups.

### **1.9.3. Anonymity**

The study ensured the participants' anonymity by keeping their identities hidden. Participants engaged on a voluntary basis and were given an option to decline or withdraw at any time. Before proceeding to collect data, many permits were required for the study to be completed successfully. Prior to starting a field study, the study needed participants' agreement, an ethical clearance letter from the Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC), and letter of request to conduct the fieldwork.

### **1.9.4. Respect and Dignity**

Participants were treated with dignity and respect in the study. Before visiting the participants, the researcher scheduled appointments in advance. The researcher respected participants' space in cases where they preferred being interviewed at their offices. The study respected the participants' dignity by ensuring anonymity, confidentiality, and privacy. Participants only engaged on a voluntary basis and were given an option to withdraw at any moment as well as accept or decline the interview. The participants were shown an ethical clearance letter from TREC and a permission letter from the DDPM.

### **1.9.5. Risk, Benefit, and Harm**

The researcher went to the participants' offices to collect data, which raised the possibility of encountering uncooperative individuals. There was a risk of squandering time and resources on participants who were not keen to take the interviews seriously in comparison to others. However, the benefit of working with participants served the advantage of getting reliable data. The study will aid the DDPM to develop future plans to enhance the employability of their graduates, as

well as market the degree programme in the corporate world. The results of the study will be provided to the DDPM to help with strategies to align the degree program with the requirements of the corporate sector. Also, the findings and recommendations of the study will help to establish a working relationship between HEIs and the corporate sector. The answers of the participants were not used against them for any reason other than for research purposes. The study prioritised the participants' safety and did not subject them to any harmful or unpleasant situations during or after the research investigation.

### **1.10. Limitations of the Study**

The study is confined to the graduates of Development in Planning and Management only, and does not extend beyond the scope of its argument. The study is also constrained to its target population and the study area of DDPM under the Faculty of Management and Law within the University of Limpopo. To avoid generalisation and misinterpretation, these limitations were kept in mind throughout the research process.

### **1.11. Summary of the Chapter**

Probes into the possibilities of enhancing the employability of graduates is necessary, especially considering the unprecedented and rapidly increasing graduate unemployment challenge. Hence, the intention of the research was to enhance the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates and to recommend potential measures that could be implemented to enhance the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates as a comprehensible mechanism. The study used both qualitative and quantitative research approaches for data collection and analysis. Moreover, the study adopted both purposive sampling and snowball sampling under the non-probability sampling methods. This research project will be used as a guideline for various role players such as HEIs, policy and decision makers, and potential employers in formulating practical and clear implementable mechanisms that could be applied to enhance the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates. The succeeding chapter will provide the theoretical and empirical literature review of the employability of graduates from a global perspective.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW: AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

This chapter broadly reviews the existing literature about the employability of graduates from HEIs. There is a continuing debate globally regarding the employability of graduates from HEIs by different scholars. Many scholars assert that the adopted educational systems in HEIs and the expectations of the corporate sector are the cause of the increase in the graduates' unemployment rate (Cai, 2012; Bryan & Clegg, 2019; Mgaiwa, 2021a). The chapter details the theoretical literature which serves as the grounding for the study. Additionally, it emphasises the following themes, which undergirded the primary focus of the literature review: firstly, the factors affecting the employability of graduates; secondly, the models of enhancing the employability of graduates, and lastly, the roles of HEIs in preparing graduates for the labour market. These themes were used to investigate the employability of graduates from HEIs. Therefore, the following subsection provides the theoretical framework from which the study draws tentative insights.

#### **2.2. Theoretical Literature**

The theoretical literature is the reasoning from which all information for a research study is derived, as well as the framework and strength for the study's basis (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). Most importantly, it outlines how the study as a whole might be addressed epistemologically, philosophically, pedagogically, and analytically (Eisenhart, 1991; Grant & Osanloo, 2014). The selected theory that informs the reasoning on how to comprehend and design the research investigation is included in the theoretical literature. So, the theories that the study draws tentative grounds from are the Humanistic or People Centred, the Signalling, and the Human Capital

(HC) theories. The above-mentioned theories are explained below and subsequently, the theory that best complements the study is adopted.

### **2.2.1. Humanistic or People Centred Theory**

Humanistic or People Centred Theory, which puts the interests and needs of the people at the forefront (Davids, Theron & Maphunye, 2009). Korten and Carner (1984: 201) assert that the People Centred Theory “is an approach to development that looks at the creativity and initiative of people as the primary development resources and to their material and spiritual wellbeing as the end that development process serves”. The Humanistic theory embraces the five interrelated freedoms, namely; economic opportunities, political, social, and transparency, as well as safety and security (Makalela, 2019). Furthermore, it aims to give people better choices for a secure livelihood by emphasising the worth of people. The following are the fundamental principles of the People Centred Theory, as expressed over its building blocks: public engagement, social learning, empowerment, and sustainability (David *et al*, 2009). Consequently, graduates should be provided with education and abilities that are relative to the corporate sector and access to the world of work or employment opportunities (Mseleku, 2021).

### **2.2.2. Signalling Theory**

According to McGirr (2020), the seminal writings of the economist, Michael Spence, gave rise to Signalling Theory in the early 1973 and 1974. Spencer’s work and that of other scholars who have drew inspiration from his work are deemed useful in explaining Signalling Theory’s significance in establishing employability and understanding who gets employed and for what, especially in the competitive corporate world (Stiglitz, 1975). The Signalling Theory proposes that graduates send signals to employers about their skills level by obtaining such educational qualifications, and that employers assess employment applications based on the signs that these qualifications convey (Spence, 1973; Shivorais, Shalyefu & Kadhilaho, 2017). As a result, academic credentials are frequently used as a surrogate for quality or competency. Under this viewpoint, education is merely a means for employment searchers to demonstrate their innate abilities to potential employers (Stiglitz, 1975). Consequently, higher education is an instrument for graduates to signal their essential abilities to potential employers. The achievement

of a university qualification sends a clear signal to the corporate sector, positioning university graduates as highly competent and thus increasing their initial and eventual efficiency through work-related learning (Spence, 1978; Shivorois *et al*, 2017).

According to Signalling Theory, job adverts inform candidates about the company's stance on giving opportunity for young people to increase their employability (Spence, 1973; Moore & Khan, 2020). Also, it is founded on the idea that recruiting is an investment choice for businesses (Spence, 1978; Cai, 2012). Potential employers must make recruitment decisions in the face of ambiguity. As such, employers consider indications such as educational levels when making selections. One of the most important signals is education (Spence, 1981; Hung & Ramsden, 2021). Employers would gather trustworthy data or signals that typically advise job candidates to the employment levels. The signalling model states that the longer it takes for people to adapt to the institutionalised educational system, including some who fail to gain educational qualifications in disciplines associated to the professions they apply for, quite probable they are to be favoured in the job market (Spence, 1973; Martin, 2019). Therefore, people are more likely to have the characteristics that employers need, such as conformity, motivation, and adequate intelligence.

According to the Signalling Theory, higher education identifies high-productivity individuals without necessarily increasing their future productivity (Spence, 1973; Williams, Steele & Randall, 2016). To further theoretical depth regarding what influences recruitment processes and ultimate employment attainment, it can be claimed that a person's signalling ability appears to be a crucial employability determinant. Formal qualifications are seen of as one form of signal that employment aspirants can obtain, while qualification issuers can be viewed as a signal transmitter (Spence, 1978; Hung & Ramsden, 2021). Work experience could be viewed as a signal in and of itself, or as a social network and mechanism for employment prospects to communicate with prospective employers (Martin, 2019). Spence cited in McGirr (2020) believes that employment aspirants invest in obtaining a post-secondary qualification since it is viewed by employers as a reliable indicator of employment aptitude and because it can be applied to convince companies to employ over and under-qualified candidates in dynamic labour market.

### 2.2.2.1. The Shortcomings of the Signalling Theory

The Signalling Theory has a flaw in that it implies educational signals reflect a basic appraisal of people's labour or professional capabilities (Hung & Ramsden, 2021). Nonetheless, contemporary employers may stress on non-educational factors when hiring graduates and job hopefuls. A comprehensive assessment of job applicants' eligibility and potential based solely on their educational background risks overlooking non-educational attributes and characteristics (Fongwa, 2018). Miscalculation can lead to mismatches in the employment market, when unqualified people are employed to do jobs that they are ineffective and inefficient on. Furthermore, the theory assumes that employment aspirants attempt to maximise the financial benefits of their educational investments by looking for the highest financially advantageous positions based on their educational and expertise levels (McGirr, 2020). Nevertheless, educational attainment is not solely an economic indicator, and people may pursue career advancement for reasons other than financial gain. As a result, stressing too much about rational and economic decision making devalues how graduates and employment aspirants behave in the corporate world (Hung & Ramsden, 2021).

### 2.2.3. Human Capital Theory

The Human Capital (HC) Theory is the one that the research study draws tentative grounds from. Adam Smith first proposed the concept in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and Becker popularised it afterwards (Becker, 1962). Hung and Ramsden (2021) are of the view that the HC theory was founded by University of Chicago economists headed by Schultz (1962-1963) and Becker (1962) from the 1960s. According to HC theory, all social events are triggered by human actions, and people construct HC by behaving in their personal desires (Adam, 1776; Williams *et al*, 2016). Notable researchers study the linkage among education and additional facets in the development of knowledge and skills that can be used to boost labour productivity (Cai, 2012; Fongwa, 2018; Hung & Ramsden, 2021).

The HC theory views higher education as an investment in corporate competitiveness (Adam, 1778; Fongwa, 2018). The HC theory reintroduces the principle of advancing people in order to improve their self-worth and effectiveness.



The basic assumption of this theory is that people invest in themselves to broaden their future endeavours. It is believed that through capacity building in people, the quality of work advances, and employment opportunities increase (Adam, 1776; Skoyles, Bullock, & Neville, 2019). Additionally, individuals who hold high educational qualifications can adapt easily to work environments than the ones with less education. Higher education provides people with marketable skills and abilities that are essential for job success, and the more trained a person is, the more successful and competitive they will be in the corporate world.

The HC theory has had a significant impact on policy thinking and practice in the secondary and higher education sectors (McGirr, 2020). It has frequently been mentioned in educational policy discussions as a core aspect of the justification for governments to invest heavily in secondary and higher education and training, and for focusing on qualification achievements by way of a hypothesised measure of human capital attainment and enhanced ultimate employment prospects (Schultz, 1962; Martin, 2019). For instance, policymakers investing in education want to increase the beneficiaries' projected income brackets by allowing them to transform their academic qualifications into employment prospects (Hung & Ramsden, 2021).

Cai (2012) on HC theory contends that through education, people boost their productivity, which ultimately improves work performance. As a result, education imparts competitive skills and attributes importance to employee productivity, and the higher a person's education, the more prosperous they will be in the corporate sector in terms of income and job prospects. The HC theory is premised on flawless foreknowledge and implies that employers may evaluate employees' or jobseekers' skills logically and objectively (Adam, 1789; Suleman, 2018). However, job market conditions are frequently coupled with ambiguities, such as a lack of information about individual characteristics, ambiguity about the quality of education, and a lack of knowledge about future macroeconomic variables (Cai, 2012). Assessing employability through the perspective of HC as a theoretical model, regular university curriculum evaluations, development of skills through collaborations between universities and the industry, improved quality control measures, and aligning higher education with national development plans are all crucial elements in moulding and enhancing an individual's employability (Adam, 1776; Mgaiwa, 2021a). The reason for the adoption of this theory is because it embraces the need for work-integrated

learning, university-industry alliance, and stronger quality assurance mechanisms to enhance the employability of graduates and reduce unemployment. Also, it fortifies and complements the argument of the study.

#### 2.2.3.1. The Shortcomings of Human Capital Theory

The HC theory has significant drawbacks. For instance, the theory is overly economic and views the fundamental benefits of HC accumulation as an increase in efficiency and income levels (Hung & Ramsden, 2021). This constraint ignores the cultural, social, and other non-material components of existence. The theory requires researchers to be completely or partially economically centred, for them to be able to debate on how the attainment of HC would increase the collection of cultural, social, political benefits, linguistic, and possibly more capital with a signal of how obtaining such a list of resources improves labour efficiency and probability of professional job entry. The second drawback of HC theory is that this kind of a theory postulates that individuals make reasonable decisions all the time (Fongwa, 2018). According to HC philosophers, people can only spend in education if the marginal gains outweigh or equal the marginal costs (Cai, 2012). This implies that people will guesstimate the prospective benefits and costs of increasing their HC investment and make reasonable decisions about whether to make the investment in the first place. Another critique of HC theory in terms of education level is that it frequently measures quantity rather than quality of education (Martin, 2019). Psacharopoulos and Patrinos (2008) cited Hung and Ramsden (2021) assert that the level of one's education has a large influence over one's income.

#### 2.2.4. The Comparison of Signalling Theory and Human Capital Theory

Shivorois *et al* (2017) indicate that the argument of HC against signalling hypotheses had never been truly settled. The authors' emphasis further shows how difficult it is to come up with factual analyses that could reliably distinguish amongst them. That is not to say that there is not much of a distinction between the two. Rospigliosi, Greener, Bourner and Sheehan (2014) highlight the significance of examining these two theories for three vital reasons. Firstly, it is significant to the government since it tries to improve the population's socioeconomic well-being by aggressively investing in higher education; significant for HEIs since these theories have diverse

ramifications for funds and the curriculum, such as the importance of assessments, topic balance, and employability in the education system; and is crucial to students since it influences what they should do in order to achieve their goals.

The HC theory claims that higher education enhances student productivity. It reveals, among other things, why graduates receive higher income than non-graduates. Signalling Theory, on the other hand, avers that higher education detects candidates with great efficiency without certainly augmenting their prospective usefulness to employers (Donald, Baruch, & Ashleigh, 2019). This also reveals why graduates make more money than non-graduates in general. The reasons as to why employers seem to pay a price for education contrast amongst the hypotheses. According to Signalling Theory, the young individuals will assume that additional graduates may force them lower in the career hierarchy, raising their motivation to enrol in HEIs (Rospigliosi *et al*, 2014). In contrast, HC theory states that a surge in the proportion of graduates will reduce the graduate value, reducing the motivation and probability of enrolling in HEIs. Additionally, the HC theory stresses the need of having well-developed skills in order to find work (Mgaiwa, 2021a). On the other hand, Signalling Theory stresses and discusses the importance of attaining recognition by prospective employers at first sight, as well as persuading employers' preference of one as a potential employee, and the potential need to stand out among many qualified individuals in the dynamic corporate world (Hung & Ramsden, 2021).

### **2.3. An International Empirical Literature Review on the Employability of Graduates**

This subsection of the research presents a brief overview of the literature on the origins and evolution of employability. It details the factors impacting the employability of graduates and provides models of improving the employability of graduates. It also explains the roles of HEIs in preparing graduates for the labour market.

#### **2.3.1. The Origin and Evolution of Employability**

This subsection provides the historical overview of employability and graduate employability.

### 2.3.1.1. Employability

The concept of employability has gained increasing attention in recent years; however, it was first introduced in the 1900s (Gazier, 2001; Misra & Khurana, 2017; Kiley, 2020). Employability has shifted significantly over time, due to the evolving global economic conditions and government policies. Sharma (2020) outlines the evolution of employability, claiming that employability has progressed through the seven operational stages outlined below:

#### *a. Dichotomic employability*

The notion of dichotomic employability originated in the United States of America and the United Kingdom in the early 1900s, where it was differentiated amongst those who were unemployable, such as the elderly, and those who were actively looking for employment (Gazier, 2001; Misra & Khurana, 2017). The reasoning behind this approach was to distinguish between those that could be employed and those individuals in need of relief (Li & Sun, 2019). The elderly, disabled, and those with childcare duties fall into the latter category. This approach was concentrating on the two extremes of employability and un-employability. This approach is criticised for categorising individuals as either employable or unemployable, with no alternative options or consideration of the labour market circumstances (Kiley, 2020).

#### *b. Socio-medical employability*

This approach originated from the mid-1950s, when the labour market's attention shifted to the poor in terms of physical and socioeconomic situations (Sharma, 2020). Because of the post-war shortage of trained labour, a lot of attention was paid to these poor or disadvantaged people. As a result of this approach, individuals were categorised as more or less employable, with actions taken to increase general employability or compensate those who were deemed less employable (Aziza, Razab & Aldeehanic, 2020).

#### *c. Manpower policy employability*

The 1950s and 1960s saw the emergence of the employability operational stage, which was largely relevant in the United States (Gazier, 2001; Taze & Karayol,

2020). Given that employment was one of the government's top goals at the time, the focus of this approach switched to an individual's ability to find employment. The manpower policy, on the other hand, is a continuation of the socio-medical approach, which focuses on the disparity between job needs and employee qualities such as individual knowledge, values, and abilities affecting a larger population of disadvantaged people (Taze & Karayol, 2020). Social, physical, mobility, and presentation were among the disadvantages. The goal was to help people improve their attitude toward work and their self-confidence in order to support them in their job search and placement (Sharma, 2020). At this point, promoting employability was solely for macroeconomic reasons. Prior to the 1970s, when the idea of flow employability first appeared, this approach was the most generally accepted and adopted.

#### *d. Flow employability*

This approach to employability was primarily established in France, and it differed significantly from prior techniques. In this perspective, the individual's awareness was increased, with a focus on occupation-related information and abilities (McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005; Clarke, 2018). Knowing one's own potential, understanding one's status in the labour market, and having a better understanding of the state of the labour market in general were added to the strategy. The approach was also unique in that it concentrated on the demand side of employability and, as a result, the simplicity with which people might find work in local and national economies. At the end of the 1970s, employers and researchers realised the importance of being marketable or appealing in the general labour market required more than simply occupational skills (Suleman, 2018). Gazier (2001) cited in Kiley (2020) asserts that Hoyt came up with the term transferable skills in 1978 to emphasise the necessity of gaining the ability to transfer abilities to a variety of job situations, keeping workers less susceptible during an economic decline. These transferrable abilities include social and relational abilities, which can help an individual not just find work, but also keep their current job or find new work in the future.

#### *e. Labour market performance employability*

A global recession ravaged the 1970s, leading to the international establishment of labour market performance and employability (Suleman, 2018). During this era,

finding and keeping employment became significantly more difficult. This strategy focused on quantifiable labour market outcomes based on an individual's human capital, which often involved the likelihood of finding work, the duration of work, and expected incomes (Clarke, 2018).

#### *f. Initiative employability*

In the late 1980s, a new paradigm of employment began. Employability evolved into a meta-characteristic of employees required by employers to deal with gradual changes in products, assistance programmes, as well as practices (Small, Shacklock & Marchant, 2018). The focus moved to career development abilities and perceptions that would ensure career success, as well as confidence to seek new employment with other institutions (Bhagra & Sharma, 2018). It is evident from this perspective that employability has evolved into a fascinating concept that applies to all phases of a person's career.

#### *g. Interactive employability*

This viewpoint, which first appeared in the 1990s, proposes that a person's employability is partially influenced by other people's employability in the employment market (Baukens, 2017). This method incorporates both demand and supply perspectives, considering regional and global needs while also taking into account the rules and institutions that regulate the employment market. This demonstrates the institutional component of employability, in which all contributing elements in the labour market are mobilised, with a fine line among individual and group accountability (Gazier, 2017).

### **2.3.2. Overview of Graduate Employability from a Global Perspective**

Over time, the conception of graduate employability has changed, and academics have defined from different viewpoints. The focus has moved away from the relation among education and labour mobility to the correlation between one's own skills and knowledge and likelihood of finding employment. According to Shivorais *et al* (2017:250), there are three constructs of graduate employability that detail the evolution of the employability of graduate. The very first component pertains to the employability of graduates as demonstrated by them finding employment. Employability and employment are contrasted in this concept, implying that a

graduate is considered employable simply because he or she has obtained a job. The second construct of graduate employability focuses on a student's development as a result of his or her higher education experience, which includes a curriculum and possibly extra-curricular activities. This viewpoint suggests that the academic experience of students from HEIs is perfectly adequate for improved employability. Mgaiwa (2021a) contends that academic experience does not purely ensure that a student is learning the varying basic requirements for success in employment, such as practical, social, and cognitive experience. The curriculum process may enhance the development of job-related basic requirements, but it does not assure employment (Suarta, Suwintana, Sudhana, & Hariyanti, 2018). As a result, it is erroneous to believe that graduates are more employable purely based on the curriculum offered. The third component perceives the employability of graduates in accordance with the applicable accomplishments. This demonstrates that employability is dependent upon the type of employment. A variety of characteristics and accomplishments may be valuable in general, but they may be insufficient in certain circumstances (Suarta *et al*, 2018). However, these constructs are very ambiguous and have missed the significance of employability skills needed in the contemporary labour market (Shivorois *et al*, 2017).

The technological developments have shifted the certainty of students' graduates securing lifelong employment to being sceptical about job security (Symington, 2012; Wickramaratne, 2018). There are those scholars who contend that employability has become the latest buzzword such that the current *status quo* brings in a shift in employability and career development, making job seekers to invest and continuously develop their careers (Verhaar & Smulders, 1999; Clarke, 2008; Bhagra & Sharma, 2018). Symington (2012: 1) asserts that "HEIs churn out the nation's future talent and serve as a fertile ground for employability skills, with the corporate sector turning to HEIs to secure knowledgeable individuals with all the required attributes for employment". Therefore, with the increasing unemployment rates, it is questionable where the employers in the corporate sector are searching in order to secure knowledgeable individuals with all the required traits in the labour market.

The demand to churn out employable graduates is a problem in almost all emerging and developed countries (Jenkins & Lane, 2019; Metcalfe, Fourie & Myburgh, 2020;

Mgaiwa, 2021a). The demand on HEIs to produce well-trained and employable graduates is a fine example of this. The argument over graduate employability in the United Kingdom has resulted in legislative adjustments, exemplified by a teaching excellence model that concentrates primarily on whether or not HEIs churn out employable graduates who suit the evolving corporate world (Pool, 2017; Clarke, 2018; Pool, 2020). There has been a myriad of programmes within higher education aimed at enhancing the employability of graduates ever since the Dearing Report in 1997, which specifically advocated higher education to explicitly boost the employability abilities of graduates (Tomlinson & Holmes, 2016; Winterton & Turner, 2019). Since then, this has been mentioned in the majority of significant government reports in the United Kingdom on higher education, usually in conjunction with a strong reference to the economic role of universities.

University career services are increasingly redefining themselves as employability and career units in order to create institutional policies that improve the job prospects of their graduates (Tang, 2019). Winterton and Turner (2019) indicate that the shift toward a supposedly high-skilled, knowledge-driven economy and the changing nature of labour might be seen as having a substantial economic impact on graduate employability. Graduates are typically perceived as knowledge workers who will bring significant economic value through the use of their enhanced skills and knowledge because they have acquired higher knowledge and training (Nghia, Pham, Tomlinson, Medica & Thompson, 2020). Since initiatives that can increase graduates' economic value and the degree-level credentials they possess are receiving more attention, graduate employability has a substantial political component. As the political discourse continues to depict higher education as a driver of economic growth and a critical component of nation states' skill development plans, higher education institutions have been scrutinised for what they do to increase graduates' economic potential following graduation (Osmani, Weerakkody, Hindi & Eldabi, 2019).

In many Third World countries, graduates' unemployment rate is higher than in first world countries (Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015). Graduates' unemployment remains a pressing issue to governments across the globe and there is a need to put in place policies that will ensure that the corporate sector is able to create quality jobs and



reduce graduate unemployment rate (Pheko & Molefhe, 2017). Formal qualifications, skills and personal abilities are the most significant factors that determine an individual's employability. Young graduates find it difficult to secure their first employment and a high number of graduates end up pursuing jobs that are not in line with their acquired qualifications (Heang *et al*, 2019). In the past twenty years, the increased access to HEIs has resulted in a high number of students in various disciplines graduating. With the increase in higher education access, a greater focus must be directed to the labour market forecasts since differences may be created between the HEIs and the labour market demand (Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015).

Kessy (2020) asserts that in Tanzania, the employability of graduates from HEIs has become a major source of worry for students, universities, parents, the public, and the government. Tanzania has seen a tremendous development of higher education, raising widespread worry that graduates may encounter significant challenges in finding work. Mutalemwa (2021) highlights that, graduates endure undesirable early jobs and may be considered a lost generation in the long term. Therefore, in order to promote societal welfare and economic prosperity, HEIs are required to provide their students with the greatest possible education (Kalufya & Mwakajinga, 2016). The HEIs have been accused of churning out graduates who are unprepared for the workforce. However, Mgaiwa (2021a) point out that, Tanzania is working to guarantee that it has a sufficient number of educated citizenries with employable skills in order to combat unemployment and achieve the expected skill needs of its future industry-led economy, as outlined in its Vision 2025.

In Botswana, only the minority of graduates are faced with difficulties of employability and unemployment unlike those in many other developing countries (Essilfie, 2014; Tshukudu, 2019). Botswana is a politically stable country attributable to its multi-party democratic principles; the mining industry is the country's main source of revenue (Essilfie, 2014). Consequently, the economy of a country does as well contribute immensely to the creation of employment opportunities. The HEIs are considered as sources of knowledge and skills needed for socio-economic development (Morse, 2019). Through learning, research and internship programmes offered in partnership with the public and private sector, the internationalisation of the curriculum and students' flexibility, the HEIs can produce more employable

graduates (Tshukudu, 2019). In Botswana, graduate unemployment rate is so low, because the corporate sector provides funds to assist training institutions to develop more work-related skills (Moswela, 2015). The corporate sector is involved in curriculum development and this helps to strengthen the relationship between the HEIs and the corporate sector.

### **2.3.3. The Factors Affecting the Employability of Graduates**

This section entails the factors affecting the graduates' employability. Several factors have been mentioned in the literature as being influential towards producing employable graduates. Some of these factors are the absence of curriculum capacity to support the training, poor linkages between the HEIs and the corporate sector, and low competence of lecturers and instructors. These factors are explained below:

#### **2.3.3.1. Absence of Curriculum Capacity to Support the Training**

Nwosu and Chukwudi (2018:191) identify the lack of a curriculum guide to inform practical learning in the approach of higher education as a key shortcoming in the system. It has also been stated that the current university curriculum framework includes a start-up challenge for education (Okolie *et al*, 2020). Lack of involvement of the potential employers in the curriculum design results in the HEIs developing courses that do not meet the demands of the labour market. Pitan (2016:4) asserts that the curricula of many programmes offered by HEIs in developing countries are purely theoretical, overcrowded, and lacking in content and quality, and do not adhere to the requirements of the present corporate sector. The corporate sector must be engaged in the formulation and application of the curriculum of degree programmes to guarantee that graduates meet the changing needs of the labour market.

#### **2.3.3.2. Poor Linkages between the HEIs and the Corporate Sector**

When learning content is relevant, contemporary, and applicable, universities are seen to be of higher quality (Ferns, Dawson & Howitt, 2019). However, the HEIs are criticised for failing to meet the demands of the corporate world, due to their unwillingness to contact and maintain a continual interaction with the corporate world (Priest, 2016; Ferns *et al*, 2019; Okolie *et al*, 2020). Learning encompasses an individual's academic, practical, and personal development, all of which are

incorporated into a learning package. A student is stimulated by an inclusive education because it takes a unified approach to their learning, enhancing relevance, and inculcating a lifelong approach (Priest, 2016). However, the HEIs do not have the necessary skills or resources to accomplish this goal on their own (Mtawa *et al*, 2021). Stronger interconnections between the HEIs and the corporate sector are needed so that all parties understand the importance of producing high-quality and successful graduates. This could help graduates to be more employable in the long run.

#### 2.3.3.3. Low Competence of Lecturers and Instructors

The low quality of delivery has been blamed on the lecturers and instructors who underpin degree courses at most HEIs. There are few professors and instructors with corporate experience in various fields of studies (Nwosu & Chukwudi, 2018). Aside from teachers' lack of credentials, a lack of practical field awareness has been identified as a barrier to the excellent delivery of education at universities. Corporate experience should be one of the requirements for lecturers and instructors to be employed by HEIs, so that they can inculcate corporate knowledge and skills to students. This will help in enhancing the employability of graduates.

### **2.3.4. The Models of Enhancing the Employability of Graduates**

This subsection explains the models of improving the employability of graduates. The structure of the models reflects on the crucial components that enhance the employability of graduates and one missing element will reduce a graduates' employability. Pool (2020: 52) proclaims that "the models of employability of graduates introduce a straightforward and practical explanation of the concept and a strategy for collaborating with students to improve their employability". The models that improve the employability of graduates are Career-EDGE framework, model of Graduate Employment Enhancement, and Understanding, Skills, Efficacy beliefs, and Metacognition (USEM) model. These Models are explained below:

#### 2.3.4.1. Career-EDGE Model

This is a bottom-up model of improving the employability of graduates in the United Kingdom (Pool, 2020). The model comprise of the following components: degree subject knowledge, understanding and skills; general attributes, career development

learning; emotional intelligence; experience; reflection and evaluation; and self-efficacy, self-confidence, and self-esteem (Pool & Sewell, 2007; Pool, 2020). This model encapsulates all the main elements of the USEM model and of other employability models, as well details, clarifies and simplifies the term employability. The Career-EDGE model gives out a practical and simple synopsis of the important elements in the process of employability. The abovementioned components are explained below:

*a. Degree subject knowledge, understanding and skills*

A degree's subject knowledge, understanding and skills are presented as the first and central components of the model; it motivates that entering higher education is generally alleged to be specific to a particular discipline for the purposes of acquiring a higher qualification (Johnes, 2006; Pool, 2017). It is crucial to note that employers usually evaluate graduates depending on how well they completed their degree programme. This determines whether or not they are joining a profession related to their degree; therefore, it is critical to understand the fundamental significance of this graduate employability component (Krouwel, van Luijn & Zweekhorst, 2019). Although having understanding of the subject, expertise, and abilities is essential, it cannot guarantee graduates a job they will be happy and excellent at (Pool & Sewell, 2007; Pool, 2020).

*b. Generic skills*

Employers need graduates with pertinent subject-specific skills, knowledge and understanding, and additionally, they are looking for fine developed generic skills in many areas (Pool & Sewell, 2007; Krouwel *et al*, 2019). The required generic skills include innovation; versatility; desire to develop; teamwork; ability to manage stress; strong oral and writing ability; basic literacy; time management; planning, coordinating and organising ability; attention to detail; assumption of responsibility; capability of using modern technologies; managerial strengths; and independent working (Soares, Dias, Monteiro & Proença, 2017). Therefore, a developed graduate ought to possess these skills as expected by employers.

*c. Emotional Intelligence*

As with other elements of the model, for the purpose of achieving their true employability potential, it will be essential for graduates to possess well developed emotional intelligence capabilities (Anas & Hamzah, 2017). Emotional intelligence as an element of employability is part of their personal qualities. Individuals with superior echelons of emotional intelligence persuade themselves and others to accomplish more (Pool, 2017). The HEIs have the potential to successfully teach emotional intelligence, as it is not fixed genetically, and it is seemly one of the things that people can learn. The application of emotional intelligence theories and exercise in HEIs will help develop experienced graduates.

#### *d. Career Development Learning*

This part of the curriculum comprises exercises that help students become more self-aware, help them think about what they enjoy doing, and match their personalities (Soares *et al*, 2017). Again, students need to learn how best to search for available opportunities in the labour market and how to present themselves to prospective companies and how to make wise career selections. Most significantly, after they have attained their degrees, they will need assistance and guidance on how to appropriately describe personal achievements to potential employer in job applications, Curriculum Vitae (CV) and interview assessments (Mayangsari, Hermawan & Juwono, 2019).

#### *e. Experience (work and life)*

Potential employers looking to hire graduates place a high priority on job experience. Collaborations between HEIs and employers are therefore critical in supporting work-based learning and cultivating such quality and quantity of experience in graduates (Pool & Sewell, 2007; Krouwel *et al*, 2019). As such, it is quite difficult for graduates without work experience to attain employment opportunities and those with work experience are likely to secure employment opportunities. The model proposes that there is a need for universities to couple coursework with work-based experience to enhance students' employability levels, which can be gained through voluntary or part-time work (Soares *et al*, 2017).

#### *f. Reflection and Evaluation*

As much as is vital to offer students with prospects to acquire necessary knowledge, skills, comprehension, and attributes, it is also vital to give possibilities for introspection and assessment of the educational procedures used (Pool, 2017). Therefore, it is challenging to students to determine the extent they have reached in building their employability attributes and what they should do to improve. The best method for reflection and evaluation is personal development planning, which should be fully utilised to enhance employability. It helps graduates in making sensible and acceptable career prospects, planning, recording, and reflecting on their experiences, and understanding how their transferred abilities may be beneficial in other contexts; and assess their employment readiness and capacity for managing future career changes (Anas & Hamzah, 2017).

*g. Self-efficacy, self-confidence, and self-esteem*

This component provides a vital connection amongst knowledge, understanding, skills, experience and personal qualities, and employability (Mayangsari *et al*, 2019). Self-efficacy can be realised through the provision of mastery experiences and social influence, after which it promotes a reflection and an assessment of these encounters. A graduate that believes they can do whatever is essential is at a more advantageous position to attain an occupation and be prosperous in whatever positions they chose. Self-confidence can be regarded as a characteristic that is relevant to certain circumstances (Wujema, Rasdi, Samah, Abdullah & Aziz, 2021). Students can increase and develop their self-confidence through education exercises and be stable after a period. All the activities that students would have undertaken during their stay at university impact greatly on their self-esteem and it is through a high self-esteem that employability is realised (Pool, 2017).

The model is not only valuable in curriculum planning, but may also be used in the future to explain to the employers the important role of HEIs and that employers and HEIs can contribute to enhanced employability, benefiting all stakeholders concerned (Pool, 2020). It also puts emphasis on the development of self-confidence and self-esteem for the realisation of career progression. The model further highlights the relevance of graduates to develop reflection and evaluation skills, for one to examine what is needed to thrive and for one to do a self-introspection of what they are good at and what areas they need to improve (Pool, 2017). This skill

enables one to apply their theoretical understandings in the practical environment. Individuals who possess the skill of reflection and evaluation can evaluate their own flaws and take proactive steps to acquire the essential competences to adapt to dynamic work environments and create a career success. The Career-EDGE model is totally comprehensible and simple to communicate to others and put into practice. However, the model is criticised for being too simple (Tourish, 2019). Pool (2020) defends the Career-EDGE model with a question that “why does it have to be complicated?” The author goes on to suggest that complicated does not always mean excellent, and that it can often conceal some extremely confusing thinking. The model assists in preparing students and graduates to satisfy the demands of an evolving corporate sector and to prosper in the face of changing corporate difficulties. Kiley (2020) contends that the model fails to address critical employability skills such as recognising acceptable workplace practices, gathering, organising, and analysing data, and recognising the influence of workplace politics.

#### 2.3.4.2. Model of Graduate Employment Enhancement

Pitan (2016:5) proposes a model that could be used in Nigeria, to aid as a template for students, parents, instructors, career counsellors, and HEIs to enhance the employability of graduates. The main objective of the model is to improve students' and graduates' employability. The basic components of the model are explained below:

##### *a. Academic skills*

Academic skills are required for students to complete their education, establish a career, and be prepared for continuous learning and employment (Muller, 2021). Academic skills give graduates an advantage in the labour market, and employers seek graduates who can use these skills in a real-world situation. One of the purposes of a university is to award formal qualifications to students upon completion, which gives the recipients a competitive edge in the corporate sector. The HEIs should consider the requirements of the corporate sector while imparting these skills in order to offer students with not only theoretical education, but also relevant skills (Soos & Jones, 2015; Winterton & Turner, 2019).

##### *b. Generic skills*

Generic skills, often known as critical skills or essential capabilities, are widely employed in today's culture, workplace, and educational settings (Okolie *et al*, 2020). Okunuga and Ajeyalemi (2018) indicate that employers in the labour market seek for generic skills like communication, teamwork, leadership, problem solving, and critical thinking when making hiring decisions. As a result of the rapid technological developments and increasing competition among companies, companies are seeking for graduates with technical skills. Generic skills include interaction, analytical, interpersonal, organising, the capacity to put concepts into practice and knowledge of information technology (Pitan & Atiku, 2017).

### *c. Career education activities*

The model proposes initiatives that give students pertinent career assistance, recommendations, and information (Winterton & Turner, 2019). This component is crucial because it teaches students the best methods for researching the labour market, identifying opportunities, learning how to promote oneself to potential employers, and making sound career decisions (Pitan, 2017). Therefore, institutions ought to make sure that these significant services are available to students, and it is the responsibility of institutions to orientate the students on the importance of career education. Winterton and Turner (2019) highlight that students must learn how to best navigate the labour market to locate probable prospects, how to present themselves to potential employers in the corporate sector, and how to make logical career selections, all of which need career education activities. Helens-Hart (2019) proffers that career education initiatives assist students enhance their social capital and the promotion of their overall versatility by encouraging them to remain positive and optimistic in their job hunting and career exploration.

### *d. Work experience*

It is vital to expose students to work experience throughout the degree programme, which will help students to create a solid connection between theory and practice (Pitan & Muller, 2020). Work experiences assist graduates with a better understanding of the roles of their professions and enhance confidence. However, for students to attain work experience, there must be some form of partnership between universities and the industry, which will enable employers to be involved in the development of curricula. Pitan (2016:6) concurs that the appointments and



participation of employers in curriculum development, design and delivery are the most effective aspects of these programmes. Tuononen (2019) asserts that many students work during their education to gain job experience that can help them find work after graduation and improve their employability in the future.

#### *e. Participation in extra-curriculum activities*

Many researchers point out that through participation in extra-curriculum exercises, like student formation structures, sports, religious and charity organisations, students are likely to develop many of the generic skills (Lau, Hsu, Acosta & Hsu, 2014; Kinash, Crane, Judd, Knight & Dowling, 2015; Pitan, 2016). Additionally, extracurricular activities are anticipated to improve students' experiences, strengthen students' soft skills, assist them in stressful situations, and empower them to increase their employability (Al-Ansari, Al-Harbi, AbdelAziz, AbdelSalam, El Tantawi & ElRefae, 2016). Therefore, active participation by students in these activities helps them to develop leadership and teamwork abilities, which in turn greatly contribute to their self-awareness and self-esteem.

#### *f. Reflection and assessment*

During the degree programme, students should be able to reflect on their weaknesses, failures, improve and learn from them (Pitan, & Atiku, 2017). They need to identify areas in which they face challenges and try to improve, while capitalising on areas where they are good at. It is vital to assess the acquired learning experiences in order to improve performance (Pitan & Muller, 2020). As a result of reflection and assessment, Husam and Abraham (2019) believe that students will be able to develop technical competence that is supported by research and scholarship. Moreover, this would also help students to improve their capacity to evaluate and analyse themselves, develop problem-solving skills, and overcome difficulties. Without assessments, students might not be able to identify their weakness on employability skills.

#### *g. Emotional Intelligence*

Emotional intelligence is the capacity to comprehend our own and others' emotions, encourage ourselves, and effectively control emotions in ourselves and our interactions (Pitan, 2016). Graduates who understand other people's emotions and

can limit their emotions, are more likely to succeed in interviews and in establishing mutually productive occupational relations. Moreover, Coetzee and Beukes (2010) point out that high levels of emotional intelligence help in developing more confidence as well as in showing employability skills and behaviours. Pool (2017) states that the importance of emotional intelligence in career development and learning cannot be overstated. Emotional intelligence helps graduates to answer interview questions and make informed decisions about their career endeavours. Therefore, it is safe to assert that the level of emotional intelligence serves as an indicator of a graduates' employability.

#### *h. Self-awareness*

Self-awareness requires assessing a person's current and potential strengths in terms of personal traits, qualities, practical skills, and physical ability (Winterton & Turner, 2019). Continually, it should involve the realisation of oneself through an inclusive analysis and thoughtful of one's own interests and motivation, psychological traits and lifestyle preferences and strengths and weaknesses. Lisa, Hannelova and Newman (2019) postulate that students should be assisted in boosting their self-awareness and finding their own potential through university career guidance centres. Pitan (2016) avers that those students who are involved in appropriate self-exploration tend to receive more job interview calls, get more jobs and are more effective in job performance.

#### *i. Self-belief*

Self-belief refers to an individual's belief in his or her capabilities and abilities; it is also one of the aspects that develop one's employability (Pitan, 2017). Self-efficacy, self-confidence, and self-esteem are the three forming elements of self-belief. The university and guardians should help students in enhancing a positive self-belief through oral support that will aid them to overcome self-doubt and focus on improving their self-belief (Pitan, 2016). Hollis-Turner (2015) asserts that a curriculum that is designed to give students consistent and timely accomplishment in finishing an activity with continuous and immediate response leaves opportunities for self-belief enhancements.

#### *j. Enabling environment*

The government, firms, high schools, career counsellors and universities have a propelling responsibility to create an enabling environment for students and graduates to attain employability. Moreover, this shared responsibility is mainly because employability is not an output of skills, subject-specific knowledge, and experience of students alone, but also a function of a curriculum in the university systems and of the prospective employers (Pitan & Atiku, 2017). Nwajiuba *et al* (2020) stress that the collaboration of all stakeholders is significant in providing an enabling environment for HEIs to work effectively. Therefore, it is important that students are provided with enabling environments, for students to learn properly and develop employability abilities. The enabling environments include libraries, laboratories, access to career guidance, and access to practice in firms (Pitan, 2017).

This model assumes that students' participation with each of its elements (academic skills; generic skills; emotional intelligence; work experience; career education; and extracurricular activities) will result in increased employability. However, the effectiveness of the model is questionable since it is a new model and there is not enough literature critiquing its grounds. The model covers most of the elements deemed significant in other graduate employability models. This model has regard for the skills such as leadership and teamwork which can be inculcated through extra-curriculum activities.

#### 2.3.4.3. The USEM Model

The USEM model was developed by Knight and Yorke in 2003. This model was adopted in many countries, including Namibia (Shivorois *et al*, 2017). The model is generally regarded as an improvement within the study of employability ever since employability was conceptualised on the basis of different concepts such as skills, meta-cognition, topic knowledge, and personal characteristics (Sumanasiri *et al*, 2015). However, Pool (2020) argues that the USEM model is too theoretical and lacks empirical evidence and its intricacy makes it difficult to explain employability to students and parents. The USEM model comprises five factors of employability which are believed to aid a graduate to get a job through its skilful career planning and interview techniques. This model to employability proposes that employability is a mixture of understanding a subject discipline; apprehension and applicability; skilful

practices in context; subject specific and generic abilities; efficacy beliefs and metacognition (Shivorois *et al*, 2017).

The higher education sector's perceived subject of understanding is the main aspect of employability (Pitan, & Atiku, 2017). There was regularly an influence of skills, usually developed through giving workshop presentations, but skills did not play an important role. The innovativeness in higher education initiative gave skills a curricular boost, and because of research on student learning, metacognition started to tiptoe into curricula. Comprehension, capabilities, and metacognition can all be mutually beneficial and progressive. Acquisition of several important skills facilitates subject comprehension and the subject's teaching techniques assist students in developing skills and metacognition (Pool, 2020). The link across the subject and the abilities is reciprocal, and the incorporation of individual traits is a valuable antidote to the central explanations of employability based on skills.

This model encourages continuous learning which can be realised through work-integrated learning. However, Namutuwa (2020) contends that the model does not account for other important variables that are thought to influence graduate employability, such as human capital, career self-management, emotional intelligence, and social capital, many of which are mentioned in the related academic literature as essential factors to consider when assessing graduate employability. The author further asserts that the model takes no account of social context, it is primarily mechanical in the context that it is technical, and it does not define employability in non-technical terms.

#### 2.3.4.4. Work-integrated Learning Model

According to Ponikwer and Patel (2021), there are five approaches through the employability of graduates that can be enhanced. First, employability is emphasised throughout the curriculum, with individual students expected to showcase a level of proficiency in specific abilities in a progressive manner (Tentama & Nur, 2021). Usually, this approach is a year-long and leads to a lack of inclusivity which can result in students' varying experience. Second, employability in the core curriculum, in which a university designates one or two modules as mechanisms for improving employability qualities (Nimmi, Zakkariya & Rahul, 2021). However, Ponikwer and

Patel (2021) argue that this approach is unproductive as it distracts students' subject development. Third, there are employability-related curriculum modules in which students are obliged to take theoretical employability courses at the start of an undergraduate degree (Nimmi *et al*, 2021). Fourth, work-based or work-related learning that occurs concurrently with the curriculum, in which students work part-time while studying. However, this approach is time constrained and does not provide sufficient and authentic experiences of employment. Lastly, work-based learning is intermixed consistently with the curriculum, this strategy includes apprenticeships and internships (Tentama & Nur, 2021). This approach provides students with an exposure to the corporate world and inculcates practical experience. The last approach which is work-based learning throughout the curriculum is most preferred and encouraged by most of HEIs, which is popularly known as work-integrated learning.

The idea of work-integrated learning is gaining traction in HEIs all around the world (Jackson, 2015; Smith, Bell, Bennett & McAlpine, 2018; Tentama & Nur, 2021). Ponikwer and Patel (2021) define work-integrated learning as a process of mixing conventional academic education combined with student experience to the corporate environment in their desired field; its primary goal is to adequately prepare students to enter the labour pool. Berndtsson, Dahlborg and Pennbrant (2020) assert that work-integrated learning differs from other words like internships and placements in that it emphasises the merging of subject study and field experience. This indicates that the curriculum is intrinsically related to the goal and technique of work-integrated learning. Smith *et al* (2018) point out that with placements and internships, there is no emphasis on putting what has been taught into practice in the workplace.

Graduates, HEIs, and the corporate sector all benefit from the work-integrated learning model. Work-integrated learning serves as an instrument of enhancing the employability of graduates and helps with building students' confidence in their chosen field of work (Shovorois *et al*, 2017). Furthermore, Berndtsson *et al* (2020) add that the model helps to offer education that meets the current and future demands, as well as learning that is beneficial to society rather than just a supplement to students' discipline to their level of knowledge. Khampirat, Pop and Bandaranaike (2019) postulate that this model gives graduates the skills necessary

to interact with people successfully, collaborate effectively in teams, come up with innovative solutions to issues, do research, read and understand information. Work-integrated learning benefits HEIs by increasing their participation in the community through alliances with multiple sectors and civic groups, as well as producing more economically productive and industry-ready graduates. Moreover, Khampirat *et al* (2019) indicate that, a curriculum integrated with work-based learning leads to a more improved curriculum that addresses skills and qualities that potential employers look for in a graduate. It can be alluded that graduates who took part in a work-integrated learning during their higher education have an advantage during recruitment due to the work-related learning experience.

### **2.3.5. The Roles of HEIs in Preparing Graduates for the Corporate Sector**

This subsection explains the roles of HEIs in preparing graduates for the corporate sector from an international perspective. The HEIs focus on more than just training symbolic analysts. It can support economic growth in a variety of ways and prepare graduates for careers in adjacent fields. The role of higher education and university has been a point of contention for some time. One viewpoint presumes that graduates' educational backgrounds and the jobs they occupy, such as matching and meeting workplace standards, are compatible (Shivorois *et al*, 2017; Bhagra & Sharma, 2018).

The focus of policy debate on the employability of graduates has been on improving employability traits in order to react largely to employer expectations. The HEIs are coming under more and more neoliberal pressure to show that they are efficiently and effectively offering meaningful education in order to churn out graduates who meet the requirements of the twenty-first-century employment market (Mandyoli *et al*, 2017). The HEIs should provide dedicated programmes or internships to provide graduates with the skills that the labour market requires. Higher education curricula design should consider employers' perceptions on students' readiness, according to experts (Shivorois *et al*, 2017).

The HEIs in the United Kingdom have traditionally helped and continue to help regulate the flow of skills, professional and managerial workers. Moreover, they facilitate the economic needs of both organisations and people, effectively preparing

graduates for their future employment (Bryan & Clegg, 2019). The HEIs are providing a positive platform from which graduates integrate successfully into the economic cycle, as well as contributing to the economy actively. The core roles of HEIs are to impart knowledge and skills to graduates and which in return, feed back into the labour market; issue and legitimise credentials that serve as signifiers to potential corporate sector and enable the screening of prospective future employees and help in building personal and cultural attributes (Bryan & Clegg, 2019). The HEIs foster an alignment with the labour market in order to develop forms of innovation that will greatly contribute to the economy; be it through research or graduates. The agenda of HEIs is the provision of formal qualifications and guarantee that graduates are well provided with education and fit for purpose.

In Slovenia, HEIs prepare future professionals to relate changing situations and be knowledgeable in fields that are relevant to particular circumstances and be able to solve pertinent problems (Smith *et al*, 2018). Herbert, Rothwell, Glover and Lambert (2020) assert that HEIs develop a more productive workforce and greater salaries. However, the productivity of the workforce depends greatly on a certain job than on acquired capabilities. According to the Signal Theory, HEIs only serve to show students' potential for competence development (Shivorois *et al*, 2017). However, the Credential Theory contends that HEI systems' primary function is to control accessibility to labour market. Whatever theoretical assumption we consider, surveys by Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) points out that years in education in general positively affect labour market outcomes (OECD, 2017; Maina, Guardia, Mancini, & Lopez, 2022). Smith *et al* (2018) point out that in order to understand the complexities of HEIs' broader function in training graduates for employment, the following distinctions and parallels must be carefully considered: firstly, understanding what professional knowledge is and how it differs between disciplines; secondly, the determinants of graduates' job performance through study fields or professional domains (for example previous academic and professional experiences, the nature of HEI qualifications and research, educational features, teaching and learning methods, international experiences, and academic achievement); and lastly, components of career success (for example, reputation, compatibility between ability and qualification, independence, inventiveness, and

fulfilment are only a few examples). These differences and similarities are thoroughly explained below:

- Professional Knowledge and its disciplinary specificities

Herbert *et al* (2020) point out that often, policy discussions on the implementation of HEI structures and developments overlook the diversity of study fields and professional domains. The HEIs are regarded as single institutions that produce equally active professional workers. Professional preparation and work, on the other hand, often appear in relation to problem-solving as a human experience and existing social structure (Artess, Mellors-Bourne & Hooley, 2017). Technical education and employment frequently include resolving actual difficulties that arise from human experience and the current social order. When graduates make the transition from school to work, they join a practice community. A community of practice is a collective of individuals who regular get together to exchange ideas and advance their knowledge in a certain field and share a collection of problems, or a hobby (Smith *et al*, 2018). When expressing the essence of specialised knowledge, it is imperative to comprehend the movement of philosophical and pragmatic knowledge. This can be distinguished from two viewpoints, namely; the human and system levels. Internationalisation is a term that describes the processes of information transfers between explicit knowledge at the individual level. At the systems level, a linear to a dynamic information cycle is described. In the first instance, knowledge is churned out in a research centre, distributed in educational settings, and utilized in the workplace, which is applicable to industrial-like societies (Romgens, Scoupe & Beausaert, 2020). Information is developed, disseminated, and employed in all three institutional settings in the second case of contemporary societies (Artess *et al*, 2017). However, it is crucial to remember that every concurrent process of knowledge generation, distribution, and application is unique depending on the context, Implicit occupational knowledge at work differs greatly from formalised clear academic knowledge, as shown in numerous types of educational programmes.

- The Determinants of graduates' Job Performance through study fields

Pavlin (2014: 579) describes the typologies that can be used to group similar study topics together across institutions and nations as well as classify various research



fields. Pavlin (2014) also differentiated three types, including the blank initiation, which describes a situation in which higher education institutions generate new qualifications for graduates without considering how the graduates will integrate into the labour market. In this situation, HEIs have the option of developing or not developing professional standards that differentiate new graduates from competitive graduates. The second type transformational initiation involves adapting current educational programmes. Due to the wide range of competencies, the educational system does not wish or is unable to handle the production of actual or situational forms of certain job contexts (Artess *et al*, 2017). However, the link to the world of work is more of a visual one. Third, there is the professional establishment, which is the most visible form of collaboration between academia and the workplace. In such circumstances, a much more oriented type of professional knowledge transfer may occur due to good protection of the professional field (Romgens *et al*, 2020).

- Components of Career Success

Ma'dan, Ismail and Daud (2020) assert that the greatest method to ensure that graduates flourish in their careers is to customise study programs to the needs of the labour market. But some contend that rather than providing sophisticated instruction, HEIs should focus on providing generic and accessible knowledge (Romgens *et al*, 2020). The HEIs should focus on training learners for continuous learning skills instead of particular expertise, as well as building stakeholder partnerships and improving meaningful work and problem-based learning. Practical training is a crucial approach for differentiating between learner-centred and content-focused courses, as well as an effective tool for developing soft skills. Thus, support activities that emphasise the importance of internationalising services and lifelong learning are advocated (Smith *et al*, 2018).

The ideal role of HEIs in preparing youth for the labour market in Nigeria, traditionally has been the training of potential workers for public administration, the professions, and corporate needs (Adeogun, Oyebade & Osifila, 2009; Epila, 2018). The HEIs create and instil the right values necessary for an individual's existence and the survival of society, as well as the intellectual capacity of people to recognise and comprehend their internal and external environments (Epila, 2018). Fostering the development of people's physical and cognitive capacities will help them become

independent and valuable to society, also promote, and encourage scholarship and community service (VanLeeuwen, Weeks & Guo-Brennan, 2017). Therefore, from the stated roles, it is safe to assert that university education is designed to, through its programmes, lead to national development and to pave the way for graduates to the corporate sector. It can also be acceptable to state that the high number of unemployed graduates is because of their inability to apply their acquired skills to be autonomous and beneficial to society. The HEIs have the best impacts on national growth by expanding and broadening their programmes for the development of highly skilled labour in accordance with economic demands. Moreover, HEIs conduct research to help the national government with the formulation of policies such as economic policies on how to grow the economy and create employment. Nwajiuba *et al* (2020) indicate that the purpose of HEIs is to raise the level of higher education, diffusion of knowledge, conduct research in accordance with the curriculum design and application. Dhingra and Kundu (2021) indicate that HEIs must provide an atmosphere that allows students to adapt, study, and thrive. These can come at a cost of providing working, well-equipped libraries, and digital platforms.

In Tanzania, HEIs perform a vital role in addressing graduate unemployment by guaranteeing the employability of their graduates with good strategies such as curriculum development, internship opportunities, and work-integrated learning based on input from key stakeholders (Clarke, 2018). The HEIs are critical in guaranteeing that their graduates are employable. Mgaiwa (2021a) contends that HEIs should align their degree programmes with the market prerequisites assessments, good quality assurance mechanisms, and productive HEIs-corporate sector alliances and collaborations. Tandika and Ndijuye (2021) note that, in addition to training students for jobs, HEIs should also focus on helping them establish their careers. In the broader public, HEIs perform a variety of responsibilities, one of which is to produce a workforce that satisfies the needs of stakeholders (Guardia, Mancini, Jacobetty & Maina, 2021). The HEIs in particular, must be fostering employability by offering a learning environment that promotes the acquisition of talents, skills, competencies, and values that are necessary for society's improved socioeconomic well-being.

#### **2.4. Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter explored the employability of graduates at a global level. It has stressed the theoretical literature, which entails the theories that inspire different thoughts to the research study and later adopted the HC theory as the principle that guided how to understand and construct the research investigation. Additionally, factors affecting the employability of graduates, models of enhancing the employability of graduates, and role of HEIs in preparing graduates for the labour market were highlighted. Models of graduate employability as strategic tools for providing straightforward and practical explanations of the concept and a plan for helping students improve their employability attributes was shown to be more theoretical, lacking practical grounding, and not embracing the modern technologies. The factors affecting the employability of graduates serve as impediments and obstruct the effortless shift of graduates from HEIs to the corporate sector. The next chapter addresses the pragmatic viewpoint of the employability of graduates in the South African setting.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW: A SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

The enhancement of the employability of graduates has not been the task that HEIs in South Africa have undertaken alone, but the task has required a collective approach across many government sectors and society (Ramnund-Mansingh & Reddy, 2021). Initiatives have been devoted to enhancing the quality of higher education to both improve the chance of personal life and contribute to larger social growth, promote innovation, and build citizenship and democracy. Ndlovu (2017) indicates that in South Africa, the numbers of university graduates have increased rapidly, however, these graduates are not always employable because their qualifications mismatch with the labour market's requirements, with excess supplies in areas where labour demands are less critical. Since the Apartheid Regime, Ramchander (2019) contends the South African labour market has seen an alarming increase in unemployment among university graduates. As a result, the employability

of graduates becomes an essential element of institutional and educational planning because HEIs, employers, and graduates stand to benefit by grasping a better understanding of the variables that lead to unemployment among graduates (Nzozzo, 2017). This chapter, therefore, aimed to extensively review literature about the employability of graduates in the South African context.

### **3.2. Overview of the Employability of Graduates: A South African Perspective**

The soaring rate of unemployment among persons with university degrees has developed into a worrying pattern in the South African post-apartheid labour market (Ramchander, 2019). The HEIs in South Africa, along with many other nations, are under duress to churn out marketable graduates in response to widespread unhappiness with graduates' failure to satisfy employers' expectations (Mtawa *et al*, 2021). The HEIs throughout the world are employing a multitude of techniques to improve the employability of their graduates. Prior research has revealed that there may be a decline in the recognised significant advantages of higher education for the employment market (Nzozzo, 2017; Timothy, 2018; Ramchander, 2019). Modern graduates may be contributing to a fall in the benefits of higher education that are acknowledged by society by lacking employability skills (Timothy, 2018).

Although graduates are anticipated to have the required employability skills, some of them still face a risk of unemployment despite having such skills. Timothy (2018) indicates that this challenge is as a result of skills misalignment. Mtawa *et al* (2021) indicate that the mismatch between what HEIs churn out and what the labour market demands is a predicament, with HEIs under duress to narrow the mismatch. Pheko and Molefhe (2017) argue that one of the main purposes of HEIs is to churn out graduates who have necessary skills and competencies to meet both employer and modern-day world demands. However, it has been generally noted that education and training systems fall short of producing graduates who can fulfil the demands of the labour market (Brits, 2018). Making investments into the restructuring of the higher education systems, has been recommended in order to enhance the employability of graduates (Ohei & Brink, 2019).

Timothy (2018) indicates that graduates lack the necessary skills and understanding of the realities of the labour market, especially undergraduates. Due to these skills gap, many graduates, mainly those from traditionally underprivileged universities,

continue to be unemployed. Martinez-Vargas, Walker and Mkwanzani (2020) reveal that graduates from previously marginalised universities have much worse employment possibilities than those from previously privileged universities, both with regards to entry jobs and the prevalence of unemployment in the long run. This might be driven by the perception of employers that graduates from previously disadvantaged universities are typically less effective and incompetent (Ndlovu & Ndebele, 2019). As a result, most Black and Coloured graduates experience high unemployment rates than graduates of other races, because a majority of them enrol in previously disadvantaged universities (Harry & Chinyamurindi, 2021). Employers consider that one factor contributing to graduate unemployment between Black graduates is a dearth of employability skills. Martinez *et al* (2020) found that racial groups substantially influenced the employability of graduates and unemployment. Additionally, Timothy's (2018) findings suggest that in the context of South Africa, the employability of graduates is greatly influenced by race.

There is a general expectation that investments in higher education will produce considerable economic benefits on both the corporate and societal levels (Tomlinson, 2017). Ndlovu and Ndebele (2019) indicate that the need for skilled labour in South Africa is exceptionally high due to the widespread employability skills shortage. According to a report by Statistics South Africa (2022), the first quarter of 2022 had unemployment graduates aged between 15 and 24, which decreased from 40,3 per cent to 32,6 per cent, whereas it raised by 6.9 to 22,4 per cent for those aged between 25 to 34. This dramatic increase was also triggered by a global calamity called Coronavirus Diseases 2019 (Covid-19), which severely impacted not only the South African economy, but also the global economy. However, graduates in South Africa struggle to find employment despite the skills shortage. The need for employability skills stems from the fact that a person's employability is determined by their skills rather than their level of education (Ohei & Brink, 2019).

In light of changes to the labour market on a global scale, the employment situation in South Africa, and the demand for extremely competent graduates with suitable skillsets, it is evident that higher education quality needs addressing (Tinashe, & Chinyamurindi, 2019). Currently, the high unemployment rate in South Africa is one of the main issues the country is facing (Yende & Mugovhani, 2021). Graduate

labour force continues to increase as a result of expanded accessibility into HEIs. Yet, graduate unemployment continues to spike up along with the overall South African unemployment rate, notwithstanding the growth in the graduate labour force (Ohei & Brink, 2019). Therefore, graduate unemployment could harm the economy; so, research on graduate unemployment and employability is essential. Continued graduate unemployment could lead to obsolete and deteriorated employability skills among graduates, which would ultimately have a hard, negative impact on the economy. Hence, it is essential to examine potential roots of the employability of graduates in order to grow the economy (Timothy, 2018). It is necessary to examine the employability of graduates because one of the problems is a dearth of employability skills.

The South African labour market is also plagued by serious issues, including a competency sector amid a skills deficit, high rates of unemployment for women, and a lack of graduate employment opportunities in rural areas (Pitan & Muller, 2020). Timothy (2018) indicates that to some extent the effects of Apartheid are to blame for the skills shortage that South Africa is currently experiencing. The author further asserts that the corporate sector is hesitant to recruit recent graduates because they believe they lack the skills required for start-up positions. Consequently, South Africa's poor educational system is at the core of graduate unemployment (Yende & Mugovhani, 2021). Education is major role player for the employability of graduates; nonetheless, there are other factors at play concerning the employability of graduates' crisis in South Africa (Case, Mogashana, Marshall, & McKenna, 2018). Numerous more factors, including race, field of study, and socioeconomic background, affect how graduates succeed on the employment market. Timothy (2018) reveals that certain employers openly complained about the poor quality of new graduates' education, while others argued that more graduates would be employed if education standards were enhanced.

According to Winterton and Turner (2019), to increase their employability possibilities, graduates must possess both communication abilities and soft skills. The graduates keep failing at the selection stage due to a lack of these skills. Lack of soft skills, including communication skills, among graduates of traditionally disadvantaged universities, was a major issue that employers emphasised (Plant,

Barac & Sarens, 2019). Shivoro, Shalyefu and Kadhila (2018) highlight the necessity for graduates to possess interpersonal and soft skills to enhance their employability prospects. Hence, having the necessary generic skills, like communication, is essential for graduates to succeed on the labour market (Winterton & Turner, 2019). Recruiters noted that while interviewing new workers for the labour market, they search for general skills (Plant *et al*, 2019). Formerly, it was generally believed that people with stronger tertiary credentials would have an advantage over those with lower educational credentials, when vying for employment (Timothy, 2018). However, many graduates may not necessarily gain from the alleged benefit since there are discrepancies among the demands of the corporate sector and the abilities of graduates (Shivoro *et al*, 2018). Although a qualification is crucial, graduates may find it challenging to get employment if they lack employability skills.

### **3.3. Challenges Confronting the Employability of graduates**

This subsection describes the challenges confronting the employability of graduates in South Africa. Based on literature, there are six challenges confronting the employability of graduates, namely: curriculum issues, poor education system, poor socio-economic status, the choice of HEIs, and the social networks the students belong to (Harry, Chinyamurindi, & Mjoli, 2018). These challenges are explained below:

#### **3.3.1. Curriculum issues**

Studies reveal that curriculum design has both positive and negative impacts on the employability of graduates (Harry *et al*, 2018; Aleryani & AlMunifi, 2019; Ngulube, 2020). It is essential that curriculum design is carefully planned and properly implemented in order to achieve educational reform and enable graduates to be employable. Misni, Mahmood and Jamil (2020) assert that the method in which the higher education syllabus of many programmes in South Africa are formulated does not enable students and graduates to compete in the labour market. This claim is backed by Harry *et al* (2018) who state that most curricula concentrate primarily on the theoretical part of the qualifications, disregarding the hands-on side. The absence of practical experience makes it hard for graduates to secure employment or enter the competitive corporate sector as it is prerequisite. Ngulube (2020)

indicates that due to the absence of practical education, graduates turn to other university courses, normally a Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE).

### **3.3.2. Poor education system**

According to Mgaiwa (2021a) asserts that most HEIs in African are greatly reflected and still reflects to colonial education system. The author further states that even after political independence most African countries continue to use higher education systems of their former colonizers with regard to academic structure, curriculum, language, institutional governance, and instructional methods. Mgaiwa (2021b) argues that the colonial educational system is not relevant in the context of the contemporary free Africa. The emerging body of research on African higher education has highlighted that the mismatch between HEIs and the corporate sector requirements is attributed by the colonial educational system which is not fit for purpose in the contemporary Africa (Mkude, Cooksey, & Levey, 2003; Mohamedbhai, 2014). Mgaiwa and Ishengoma (2017) indicate that graduate unemployment is a result of poor education, which is attributed by weak quality assurance systems.

### **3.3.3. Poor socio-economic status**

According to Harry *et al* (2018), the socio-economic backgrounds of students and graduates play a critical role towards their choices of education and career paths. Most rural families expect graduates to change their socio-economic conditions (Mngomezulu, 2020). These family expectations from grandaunts to address their socio-economic status quo at home pressurises them on the prospects of securing employment. However, because the history of narrowed access to HEIs for Black communities, most families are not aware of the corporate market conditions or realities. Mseleku (2019) indicates that majority of graduates who grew up in rural areas are exposed to poor educational systems as a result of their previously disadvantaged backgrounds.

### **3.3.4. The choice of HEIs**



The HEIs that graduates attended is a key factor in South Africa in defining how a graduate is perceived in the corporate sector (Harry *et al*, 2018). An investigation done by Harry *et al* (2018) indicates that graduates from previously disadvantaged or rural based universities are often disadvantaged when coming to job opportunities as compared to those from affluent universities, as their levels of knowledge differ. Subsequently, these graduates are often undermined in the corporate sector because they obtained their qualifications from disadvantaged institutions (Mngomezulu, 2020). Additionally, the location of the university is perceived as a deterring factor to the employability of prospects for graduates. Also, lack of career counselling and guidance services at certain rural based universities affect the employability of graduates (Mseleku, 2019). As a result, graduates apply for qualifications without receiving the necessary advice and information about the qualifications. The major challenge lies with the educational systems in HEIs. Although many policy changes have been made in HEIs, there still exists a division among the advantaged and disadvantaged universities (Kirstein, 2016). Rogan and Reynolds (2016) claim that because certain graduates originate from low socioeconomic backgrounds, graduates are frequently subjected to poor educational quality. Additionally, they are disadvantaged in the labour market because of the history of the universities they studied at. Consequently, the inadequate educational system undesirably impacts the employability prospects of graduates.

### **3.3.5. Social connections**

Harry *et al* (2018) highlight that social connections are major role players in the world of work. However, majority of graduates do not have those connections to aid them with employability. Lack of social connections disadvantage graduates from navigating the corporate world. Based on research done by the Council on Higher Education (2016), White graduates have better social connections than Black students. Graduates without social networks often struggle to access the labour market (Harry *et al*, 2018). The inability to connect to important social networks may result in a lack of knowledge about the labour market, joblessness, and unemployment. Graduates who lack these social contacts will find it difficult to advance in their career developments. Consequently, social networks affect the employability of graduates.

### **3.4. Mechanisms of Improving the Employability of Graduates**

Mechanisms of improving the employability of graduates provide a logical framework for the gradual development of attributes (Ohei, Brink & Abiodun, 2019). Therefore, this subsection offers a synopsis of the mechanisms and South African government legislative frameworks meant to support and improve the employability of graduates.

#### **3.4.1. Coetzee's psychological career resources model**

The psychological career resources model is particularly relevant to this research because it was established for people in the South African setting (Coetzee, Ferreira & Shunmugum, 2017). According to Kiley (2020), individuals are seen as "competency traders" in today's labour market, and their employability is influenced by their knowledge, transferrable abilities, distinguishing characteristics, expertise, and accomplishments. According to this model, employability is perceived as the capability to acquire access to, conform to, and be effective in a work environment (Coetzee *et al*, 2017). This model suggests that individuals make use of their meta-competencies, to adapt to the changing work and career landscapes and achieve career success. Also, this model includes an interconnected career paradigm to give a comprehensive view of a person's professional success factors such as career drivers, career harmonisers, career enablers, career choice, and ethics, all of which may be related to a person's concrete or intangible long-term professional experience that leads to career progress (Kiley, 2020). These success factors are thoroughly explained below:

##### **3.4.1.1. Career choice, and ethics**

Career choices and ethics denote a continuous cognitive blueprint of the career opportunities that a person believes to be intriguing and important (Coetzee & Bester, 2019). Despite the fact that career values and career preferences are inextricably linked, they are clearly different from one another. Career choices are the behaviours or practices that drive long and successful career advancement and orientation, whereas career ethics are intellectual manifestations of a person's major beliefs, needs, or ideologies (Jackson & Tomlinson, 2020). As a result, a person's values may impact his or her preferences; so, it is important to grasp the concept of value before grasping the concept of preference. Coetzee *et al* (2017) identify four career preferences from Coetzee's psychological career resources model as

expertise, managerial, creativity and self-sufficiency and two significant values which are development and influence.

#### 3.4.1.2. Career enablers

Coetzee *et al* (2017) perceive career enablers as people's transferable abilities and skills that can be applied in a number of scenarios to assist individuals in succeeding in their employment. In addition to being positively correlated with one's impression of their work as meaningful, practical and creative intelligence is thought to have an impact on the realization of realistic career plans and opportunities (Coetzee, 2018). Practical or creative skills are required to carry out career choices in unique and creative ways; goal setting, problem-solving, innovative thinking, management, and creativity and change-related abilities are a few examples. Self-reflection and good interpersonal communication require additional abilities that are typically linked to emotional intelligence; for example, self-management, empathy, and self-awareness (Namuwa, 2020).

#### 3.4.1.3. Career drivers

Nomutuwa (2020) defines career drivers as the driving forces that encourage and invigorate students to be conscious of their career-related prospects. The career directedness, career purpose, and career venturing of an individual are the three main career drivers. These career drivers invigorate people to pursue and explore different career opportunities (Coetzee, 2018). Career drivers have an impact on a person's job fulfilment, whenever they are in equilibrium, the degree of comfort stays high (Jackson & Tomlinson, 2020). Also, they motivate individuals to explore other career possibilities from different professions.

#### 3.4.1.4. Career harmonisers

Coetzee and Bester (2019) refer to career harmonisers as a set of essential positive psychosocial career characteristics that assist the assertive strategies that people use to improve their sense of psychological career well-being. The main factors that underpin career harmonisers are a person's emotional literacy and social connectedness (Nomutuwa, 2020). The ability to recognise, express, comprehend, manage, and use emotions is referred to as emotional intelligence, while the ability to build mutually rewarding relationships with people to further one's career goals is

referred to as social connectedness (Kotsou, Mikolajczak, Heeren, Grégoire & Leys, 2019). Additionally, they depend on the career drivers, ensuring that people do not tire while practicing and redefining their occupations. There is not enough research output connecting “emotional intelligence and social connectedness” as factors that underpin the idea of career harmonisers.

Nomutuwa (2020) argues that the model does not indicate whether university students would be selected for work-integrated learning or if participating in work-integrated learning would improve their employability, as indicated by the increase in the model scores. This model emphasises competencies that can be acquired to improve employability, as opposed to other graduate employability models such as the Career-Edge Model, which focuses on personal traits such as the abilities required to be employable. The model focuses on individual meta-competencies rather than graduate and individual qualities. The model does not fully embrace the significance of generic skills, whereas when it pertains to graduate employability, generic skills are deemed a necessity (Alie, Aigbavboa & Thwala, 2021).

### **3.4.2. Bezuidenhout’s Graduate Employability Model**

According to Bezuidenhout cited in Kiley (2020), graduate employability denotes proactive adaptability, which assists a graduate in identifying and realising employment prospects in a changing corporate sector. Hence, the framework is rooted solely on the notion of adaptability (Bezuidenhout, 2011; Ohei *et al*, 2019). Additionally, the framework highlights the idea that employability cannot be considered from the expectations of the complex and difficult evolving work environment. The framework includes two employability aspects: cultural competence and career self-management drive, both of which play a vital role to six personal employability dispositions: sociability, openness, proactivity, emotional literacy, entrepreneurial orientation, career resilience, and career-related self-evaluations (Kiley, 2020). All these dimensions comprehend adaptability in their underlying meaning.

#### **3.4.2.1. Career self-management drive**

The notion that in the contemporary workplace people must be in charge of their own development is known as the career self-management drive (Kiley, 2020). This

transition directly correlates to the new career styles that include edgeless and adaptive careers (Ohei *et al*, 2019). The next sections will investigate these new job patterns in more detail, but it is crucial to highlight that both focus on adaptability and career self-management. According to the study conducted by Kiley (2020) on the protean attitude and career success, in terms of work productivity, career self-management actually has a significant impact. Career self-management requires creating possibilities, setting objectives, and constantly seeking out new information, all of which contribute to an employable individual's flexible behaviour (Bezuidenhout, 2011; Kiley, 2020).

Career self-management promotes career planning, goal setting, exploration, and decision-making easier (Breedt, 2018). Additionally, it serves as either a motivational drive for individuals to engage in activities that improve their marketable abilities, create personal goals, and build strong professional networks in order to achieve their goals and dreams. Engelbrecht (2019a) indicates that an individual's employability, flexibility, and professional resilience may improve as a result of proactive career self-management behaviour, which may boost self-efficacy in achieving psychological career success.

#### 3.4.2.2. Cultural competence

Cultural competence pertains to an individual's ability to use a set of skills, knowledge, and individual characteristics to comprehend and excellently collaborate with team members from many cultures (Smith, 2019). The knowledge aspect involves information about culture, language, morals, standards of communication, cultural diversity, traditions, and the history of multiple cultural groups. Additionally, it conveys an understanding of the value structure of a cultural group and how principles are mirrored in people's actions, as well as greater understanding of appropriate behaviour, in order to appropriately assign people's behaviour in a certain culture. On the other hand, the skills aspect involves the ability to adapt to the behavioural customs of a varied cultural setting, as well as conflict resolution and other abilities (Engelbrecht, 2019a). Personal qualities including self-efficacy, adaptability, and perseverance as well as ingrained cultural norms, standards, and values make up the personal trait's component (Namuwa, 2020).

#### 3.4.2.3. Personal dispositions

According to this model, employability includes a variety of personal characteristics that work together to create adaptability. Kiley (2020) indicates that a disposition is an individual's steady and permanent tendency to exhibit specified patterns of behaviour in a variety of contexts. These traits can also be categorised as entrepreneurial orientation, sociability, professional resilience, proactivity, openness to change, and career-related self-evaluation. Breedt (2018) contends that the confluence of these qualities and other traits can lead to an increase in overall employability and even career success. These dispositions are further explained below:

##### *a. Career-related core self-evaluations*

Career-related core self-evaluations are in-depth assessments of one's own self-worth (Smith, 2019). Individuals with a higher career-related core self-evaluations level are more likely to see greater levels of enthusiasm when circumstances are favourable and are more confident in their ability to positively change the environment around them. Career-related core self-evaluations refer to self-esteem, sphere of influence, generalised self-efficacy, and high emotional stability (Namuwa, 2020). Within the context of employability, core self-evaluation is a helpful construct.

##### *b. Entrepreneurial orientation*

The entrepreneurial orientation suggests that individuals can create employment by capitalising on their own relationships and skills, which might also increase their employability (Engelbrecht, 2019a). It also relates to five constructs, namely: a need for autonomy, sphere of influence, self-efficacy, tendency to take risks, and a need for achievement. As a result, these elements are essential for raising person's employability as well as person's entrepreneurial attitude.

##### *c. Sociability*

Sociability is defined as the ability to network as well as be open to social contacts (Breedt, 2018). As a result, social capital a concept referring to networks of relationships that give people support and information, is a component of sociability. Social capital relates to the size and quality of a person's support network, which

they are able to organise and capitalise on, thus increasing their employability. Engelbrecht (2019b) points out that social capital is extremely crucial for graduates because they must seek out and capitalise on numerous formal and informal connections, in order to learn more about a particular career, company, or employment opportunity. Graduates with relevant contacts are also more likely to learn about numerous possibilities that will improve their marketability to organisations.

#### *d. Career resilience*

Resilience is defined as the ability to quickly recover from hardship and to tolerate continued adversity in any way feasible (Engelbrecht, 2019a). Bezuidenhout (2011) argues that this capacity to recover from setbacks is very important in today's rapidly changing work climate. Individuals who are resilient have positive self-perceptions, are confident, have faith in their ability to overcome obstacles, and have optimistic aspirations for the future (Smith, 2019). Moreover, individuals who are resilient can also deal with career interruptions in an unstable setting. Breedt (2018) reveals that extremely resilient people in their workplace are well-equipped to adapt to and even benefit from change, particularly in the modern workplace. Career resilience plays a key role in career self-management, which is an important facet of employability.

#### *e. Proactivity*

Pre-emptive behaviours that individuals participate in have an impact on their surroundings or themselves and are referred to as proactive behaviour (Engelbrecht, 2019a). Breedt (2018) suggests that proactive employees take an effective strategy to their work and create favourable conditions for themselves, instead of spending time waiting for new possibilities to come their way. Additionally, individuals that are proactive are very effective in looking for better ways to do things in the workplace, such as suggesting new approaches to meet goals and improve performance. The proactive personality was found to be favourably associated with employability, networking, and career planning, firmly embedding the construct within the career and employability framework (Smith, 2019). Bezuidenhout (2011) submits that employable people look for knowledge relevant to their job and career, and that being proactive in doing so can help them find and explore work prospects. As a result, it is critical for graduates and individuals in general to be proactive in

managing their careers in the contemporary workplace in order to ensure that they will be employable and flexible in the ever-changing workplace.

*f. Openness to change*

Openness refers to the eagerness to seek out new experiences on purpose, as well as the desire to discover new ideas (Engelbrecht, 2019a). Within the Graduate Employability framework, this aspect pertains to the degree to which people endeavour to find out new opportunities and are willing to embrace new ideas (Smith, 2019). Engelbrecht (2019b) points out that the unpredictability of the job market necessitates the constant development of new skills as well as an openness to new and often innovative ideas. Individuals might more quickly discover potential in their environment because of their enthusiasm about new experiences. Individuals who are open to change and new experiences are better equipped to learn and gather information on a constant basis, allowing them to discover and pursue professional prospects (Engelbrecht, 2019b). As a result, such people are more adaptive to evolving work conditions, which improves their employability. It is imperative for graduates to be open to change and new experience for their career success.

According to Namutuwa (2020: 28), the model's conceptuality of adaptation makes it particularly appropriate in the modern work setting. However, Kiley (2020) indicates that the model puts all obligation to develop employability in the hands of the individual, with the fundamental premise being that the individual embodies agency, such as the ability to choose how to advance their qualities and abilities within an ever more unstable modern workplace.

### **3.4.3. Legislative Frameworks that seek to enhance the Employability of Graduates**

This subsection focuses on the three essential employability or skills legislative frameworks or Acts, in order to extensively review and identify barriers that could be impeding HEIs from achieving skills development or employability objectives, thus preventing South Africa from achieving its development goals of reducing unemployment, inequality, and poverty.



#### 3.4.3.1. The Skills Development Act 97 of 1998

The purpose of the Skills Development Act is to establish an institutional blueprint for developing and implementing national, sectoral, and workplace initiatives to improve and develop the skills of the labour force (Skills Development Act, 1998). The Act promotes the development of skills for the South African labour force in order to increase workers' quality of life, job opportunities, and economic mobility, as well as workplace productivity. The Act continually aims to encourage potential employers to provide employment prospects for youth applicants to acquire practical experience and to employ young people who are facing difficulty in finding work. The National Skills Authority (NSA), National Skills Fund (NSF), SETAs, and skills development institutes are all named in the Act as institutions and financial frameworks that can help achieve the purposes of the Act.

##### *a. The NSA*

The NSA is a statutory body that provides national skills development policy instruments. It analyses the legal framework for skill development to facilitate the incorporation of education and training with the government's national priorities (Skills Development Act, 1998).

##### *b. The NSF*

The NSF is a strategic fund, allowing the government to advance critical skills policies while also meeting the training requirements of unemployed people, NGOs, community organisations, non-levy paying cooperatives, and disadvantaged people (Skills Development Act, 1998).

##### *c. The SETAs*

The SETAs are primarily responsible for developing sector skill strategies. The SETAs are designed to make it easier to offer sector-specific skills initiatives that contribute to the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) III's goals, meet employer demands, and produce outcomes (Skills Development Act, 1998).

#### 3.4.3.2. The Continuing Education and Training Act 16 of 2006

The Continuing Education and Training Act, 2006 was promulgated to, amid other purposes to provide students with the knowledge, useful skills, and applicable technical and professional competence they require. Furthermore, it aims to provide them with the skills needed for employment and admission to an institution of higher education. Both state universities and colleges in South Africa are influenced by Chapter 6A of the Act, which lays out the goals, determinations, and directive principles of national education policy. Section 41C (b and c) mandates that public institutions offer an enabling environment for further education and training to support every student's overall career development as well as the nation's moral, social, cultural, political, and economic growth. To provide equal access to education and to cultivate the skills, disciplines, and talents required for capacity building.

#### 3.4.3.3. The National Qualifications Framework Act 67 of 2008

The National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008, can be viewed as a comprehensive Act that governs all aspects of education and training in the country. This Act regulates education programmes that lead to qualifications offered by educational institutions and skill development organisations in the country. The Act's aim is to enhance a coherent, comprehensive national framework for learning outcomes, improve education and training quality, and make education, training, and career endeavours more accessible and progressive. The Act's regulatory and transformative goals included ensuring that the educational system promotes lifelong learning.

#### 3.4.3.4. The National Skills Development Plan 2030

The National Skills Development Plan 2030 was promulgated by the former minister of Higher Education and Training, Honourable Grace Naledi Mandisa Pandor. This plan intends to advance skills improvement in accordance with section 9(4) of the Skills Development Act, 1998. Moreover, to increase access to high-demand jobs and importance skills in order to assist social development, employment creation, and economic growth while also addressing structural issues. Notwithstanding the South African governments and a number of corporate sector partners' efforts to tackle skill disparities, the OECD (2017) Report on Getting Skills Right in South Africa highlighted that some issues remain. Furthermore, the report recommends that the public education system be enhanced, especially in terms of building

essential and professional abilities, with an emphasis on previously marginalised groups.

#### 3.4.3.5. The NSDS

The NSDS was launched in 1997 with the goal of addressing post-apartheid South Africa's skills development obstacles. This strategy was divided into three categories, respectfully: the NSDS I, NSDS II, and NSDS III. Although the NSDS I and II did not achieve the expected goals, they did lay the groundwork for the NSDS III. The NSDS III was launched in 2011, and its goal strategy is to develop a trained and competent workforce that benefits from and contributes to a more equitable growth path. The strategy aims to address the issues that those involved in education and training encounter as they carry out their duties to encourage employment and economic growth. The purpose of the NSDS III stating that "The NSDS III aims to smooth people's transition from school, college, or university, or even from periods of unemployment, to sustained employment and in-work growth, also actively supports the integration of workplace training with theoretical learning" relates to the argument of the research study.

The employability of graduates and graduate unemployment in South Africa are still a concern despite numerous government and private sector initiatives (Mandyoli *et al*, 2017). Twenty-seven years into democracy, Apartheid-era issues and new developing challenges continue to have an impact on South African higher education. Timothy (2018) highlights that notwithstanding these interventions and numerous policy discussions since 1990, the youth of this country have not seen a significant improvement in their situation, as they continue to face difficulties and unfairness in the education and labour market. For instance, graduates from previously disadvantaged universities still face challenges of transitioning into the labour market. It is anticipated that if things do not change, young people and graduates will become more frustrated and agitated to challenge the status quo like the fees-must-fall campaign, and democratic victories will be in danger, if nothing is done. According to the National Development Plan 2030, the government must find measures to lower the alarmingly high rates of youth and graduate unemployment and give young graduates more opportunities (Timothy, 2018). The first NSDS and the National Skills Development Plan 2030 have set lofty targets to improve skills,

develop new ones, and reskill workforce, to match the demands of an expanding economy and labour market. The NSF, however, had a minor impact on the accomplishment of these objectives because much of its funding went toward programmes promoting social development. In contrast to the SETAs, which have a clear mandate to enhance graduate skills and competences and promote workplace-based training, the Skills Development Act of 1998 and Skills Development Levies Act of 2000 offer significantly less guidance to the NSF than they do to the SETAs, despite the NSF being expected to fund training for those who are unemployed.

### **3.5. The Significance and Purposes of HEIs in Preparing Graduates for the World of Work**

This section details the significance of HEIs in preparing graduates for the corporate world from a South African perspective. Certain researchers suggest that HEIs play an essential part in preparing graduates for the workplace, whereas others say that it is not HEIs' responsibility to prepare graduates for the world of work. In order to thoroughly detail the significance of HEIs in preparing graduates for the corporate world, it is imperative to provide a comprehensive detail of the purposes of HEIs from a South African viewpoint. Therefore, the following subsection details the purposes of South Africa HEIs.

#### **3.5.1. The Purposes of South African HEIs**

Kiley (2020) contends that HEIs exist in the contemporary age to provide a larger community service and more importantly to improve the world. This assertion is in line with the Higher Education Act 101 of 2007, which states that HEIs in South Africa must broaden their teaching and research duties to include the communities they serve. Furthermore, the Act outlines numerous objectives for HEIs, notably remedying past injustices, fostering democratic principles, promoting educational success, and retorting to South Africa's socioeconomic, human capital and developmental needs, as well as the interests of the wider community. These stated objectives are primarily concerned with the development of freedom and agency through HEIs. Netshakhuma (2019) argues that historically, South African HEIs have not established ties with communities to accomplish its objectives. Kiley (2020) asserts that a higher education is nearly a necessity of fully articulated citizenship in today's world. The present notable debates in South African HEIs include problems

such as equity, reparation of historical atrocities, qualification quality, and economic progress (Du Preez, Simmonds & Chetty, 2017). Though HEIs in South Africa have a number of wide and comprehensive purposes targeted at improving personal autonomy while building a better, more equitable, and democratic nation, employment and employability, are frequently ignored.

### **3.5.2. The Significance of HEIs: A South African Perspective**

The HEIs in South Africa are well-known for serving as a direct conduit to the labour market, fundamentally identifying talents by placing students in educational courses and programmes that are right for them and supporting talent development through pertinent training and development programs (Pheko & Molefhe, 2017; Mtawa *et al*, 2021). The authors further state that HEIs play an important role in shaping society's future by preparing prospective employees with critical skills, producing new knowledge and guaranteeing that it can be implemented in the economic cycle (Pheko & Molefhe, 2017; Swartz, Ivancheva, Czerniewicz & Morris, 2019). However, the recent employability challenges show the importance of altering the education curriculum to close the gap in graduates' unemployment. The HEIs' outputs and the knowledge developed benefit people, potential employers in the corporate sector and generally the economy. Enhancing student employability is one of the main goals of HEIs (Botha, 2021). As a result, they have chosen to incorporate employability skills within the graduate program. Nonetheless, Harry *et al* (2018) believe that it is difficult for universities to ascertain and carry out what companies want in a professional manner because these requirements change over time and vary by career path and corporate environment.

The HEIs played a significant role as ideological factories, producing values and social validity (Kahn & Oghenetega, 2021). However, as years progressed, HEIs' principal aim shifted to the development of futuristic identities that employ future-oriented mythologies to provide a new foundation for social belonging and citizenship. Despite assertions to the contrary, HEIs continue to perform an essential function in the production and dissemination of ideology (Cloete, Maassen & Bailey, 2015; Kahn & Oghenetega, 2021). The HEIs are regarded as significant apparatus because of their role in workforce development and generation of science-based knowledge (Nyondo & Langa, 2021). This role is deemed significant to new careers

emerging in the face of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). The comparatively late creation of the German research university system, which evolved in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, is linked to the role of a university as a generator of science-based knowledge (Cloete & Maassen, 2015; Mtshali & Sooryamoorthy, 2019).

### **3.6. Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter explored the employability of graduates in the South African context. It has stressed the empirical literature which entails the overview of the employability of graduates, the challenges confronting the employability of graduates, mechanisms of enhancing the employability of graduates, and the significance of HEIs in enhancing the employability of graduates. Additionally, legislations that seek to enhance the employability of graduates and the purposes of HEIs were highlighted. The following chapter involves data analysis, interpretation, and presentation of research findings about the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

## **4.1. Introduction**

This chapter provides the analysis and interpretation of the research discoveries. It intends to analyse data in accordance with the study's aim and objectives which include a thorough grasp of the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates.

## **4.2. Findings from the Questionnaires**

The quantitative data obtained from Development in Planning and Management graduates is presented below. Questionnaire were used to collect data. The data gathered through the surveys was limited to aspects of the employability of graduates. The researcher habitually focused on the graduates because they are well aware of the employability challenges as the degree holders.

### **4.2.1. Biographic Profile**

This subsection provides the results and analysis of the findings of the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates from the University of Limpopo. There is no limit to the amount of biographical information that can be used in a research study. It is crucial since it clarifies the purposes of comprehending and using the research findings generally. In this study, the respondents' gender, age, level of education, and employment level were all elicited through the use of biographic data. Therefore, the graphs and charts are presented and interpreted to give meaning to the collected data.

#### **4.2.1.1. Gender**

Most gender roles-related views in South Africa and other developing nations are founded on the historical idea that women are less significant or of a lesser worth than males. This is supported by the undeniable reality that the majority of traditional social structures in Africa are dominated by men. The gender discrepancies were passed down to the apartheid regime, during that dark cloud, Black women were denied access to education. The South African government is making every effort to mitigate the consequences of apartheid and move past traditional hurdles by promoting employment equity, Black Economic Empowerment, and affirmative action (Jowah & Beretu, 2019). The efforts of the government to strive for an equal society are starting to see the light of the day as women and men are now presented with

equal access to education and employment opportunities. The figure below shows the gender breakdown of the respondents:

Figure 4.1: Gender of the respondents.

The figure above shows the gender composition of the respondents, where 59% of the participants were males and 41% were their female counterparts. In comparison to men, fewer women participated in the study. It is crucial to understand that the South African government issued a variety of policies and directives to tenaciously work to eliminate the gender imbalances and fragmentation inherited from the apartheid regime and to advance the welfare of women. In the modern-day context, women are starting to acquire higher education qualifications, but not more than male counterparts. As a result, most of the men in the study were discovered to be available and enthusiastic about taking part. This is attributed to the fact that women still face hurdles to acquire higher educational qualifications and employment opportunities, while their male counterparts are still ahead in terms of attainment of higher educational qualifications and employment opportunities.

#### 4.2.1.2. Age Group

The age group of participants is crucial to any scientific research study as it influences the study's validity based on the types of information needed from the chosen or quantified age group. In a study aiming to enhance and investigate the employability of graduates, it is crucial to analyse the age of the respondents. The South African National Youth Policy (1998) cited in Mseleku (2021) defines the youth as anyone who is between the ages of 15 and 35. In the context of this study, the "youth graduate" refers to young adults between the ages of 20 and 35 who have completed and attained higher education qualifications and are actively seeking employment. The degree programme of Development in Planning and Management is new, the University of Limpopo started offering this degree in the year 2010. Hence, the selection of youth aged between 20 and 35 years as the primary



participants in the study. The following chart indicates the age group of the respondents:

Figure 4.2: Age group of the respondents.

The research findings in figure 4.2 show the age group of the respondents where the majority (45%) of the respondents were aged between 20-24, whereas 41% of the respondents were between the ages of 25-29, and a mere 14% of the respondents were aged between 30-35 years. The findings reveal that the holders of the degree of Development in Planning and Management are at most the youth between the age groups of 20-24 and 25-29, respectively. This is because this degree programme is still a new qualification. Also, it can be stated that the high percentage of youth graduates participating in the study is linked to the lack of employment opportunities and high graduate unemployment rate among the degree holders of Development in Planning and Management. The following chart indicates the educational status of respondents.

#### 4.2.1.3. Educational Status

It is purely anecdotal that an educational status impacts on employability preferences. Education unequivocally leads to high employability prospects. Therefore, for the study aiming to enhance the employability of graduates, it was imperative to investigate the educational statuses of the respondents. The educational statuses of the respondents are indicated in the pie chart below:

Figure 4.3: Educational status of the respondents.

Figure 4.3 above displays that the majority (53%) of the respondents completed their studies whereas 47% of the respondents are still studying. The majority are pursuing new degree programmes, and some are pursuing master's degrees. The chart above supports the foregoing analysis by indicating that majority of the respondents in possession of a degree in Development in Planning and Management are the youth and are confronted by the hurdles of unemployment. The following chart displays the employment statuses of respondents.

#### 4.2.1.4. Employment Status

Amongst the most important factors that had to be taken into account in the scientific research questionnaires was the respondents' employment status. Depending on the structure of the study and the types of data required, the respondents' employment status can be important. For a study that sought to enhance the employability of graduates, the employment status of the respondents was crucial. The chart below indicates the employment status of respondents:

Figure 4.4: Employment Status of the respondents.

The research findings in figure 4.4 indicate the employment status of the respondents. The study found that 63% of the respondents are unemployed. This displays that the holders of this degree programme struggle to secure employment. Meanwhile, 21% of the respondents are employed, with some indicating that they were working in different career fields instead of careers in Development in Planning and Management whereas others were occupying job titles of Development in Planning and Management. Literature concurs that majority of graduates work in different fields of study and not in those for which they possess higher education qualifications. It validates the assertion that there exists a skills and qualifications mismatch in the corporate world. 10% of the respondents were self-employed due to lack of employment opportunities for Development in Planning and Management graduates. They resorted to self-employment after years of looking for employment opportunities with no luck. A mere 6% of the respondents indicated that they were formally employed, most served in two years internship programmes, and were currently struggling to secure permanent employment. The following graph shows the factors that influenced the respondents to pursue the degree programme of Development in Planning and Management.

#### **4.2.2. The Employability of Development in Planning and Management Graduates**

This subsection presents the results and analysis of the findings of the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates from the University of

Limpopo. Various factors were used to assess the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates. This was done in order to gather factual data about the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates from the University of Limpopo. Therefore, the graphs and charts are presented and interpreted to give meaning to the collected data.

#### 4.2.2.1. Influencers for choice of study

The degree programme of Development in Planning and Management is not well-known since it is a new programme. It is imperative to analyse the factors that influenced the choice of study among the respondents. The following graph shows the percentages of the possible factors that influenced the choice of study of respondents:

Figure 4.5: Influencers for choice of study

The graph above indicates that 55% of the respondents agreed that lack of space in other degree programmes influenced their choice to study the degree programme of Development in Planning and Management whereas 45% of the respondents indicated that they were not influenced by lack of space in other degree programmes. This implies that the degree programme of Development in Planning and Management was not a first choice of study for the many of the participants. Meanwhile, 39% of the respondents indicated that it was their own choice to pursue the degree programme of Development in Planning and Management, with 61% of the respondents opposing the idea or question. However, 29% of the respondents indicated that they were influenced by low percentages of their grade 12 results or Admission Point Score (APS) to pursue the degree programme, with 71% of the respondents opposing the question. Out of the total number of the respondents that participated in the study, only 14% indicated that government sponsorship influenced their choice to study the degree programme of Development in Planning and Management, with 86 per cent of the respondents disagreeing. 6% of the respondents highlighted that they were influenced by their friends to pursue the degree programme and 94% opposed the question.

4% of the respondents indicated that they were influenced by career guiders to pursue the degree programme of Development in Planning and Management at the University of Limpopo, and 98% of the respondents disagreed. 2% of the respondents indicated that their choice of study was influenced by labour market's demand of the degree holders of Development in Planning and Management, whereas the majority (98%) strongly opposed the question. 2% of the respondents indicated that their choice of study was influenced by teachers and career guiders at school, with 98% of the respondents disagreeing with the question. This implies that the degree of Development in Planning and Management is not well-known in secondary schools and labour market due to the poor marketing of the qualification.

#### 4.2.2.2. Sponsors of study

Educational sponsors provide any kind of assistance towards education. Help students with books, food allowances, tuition fees, accommodation, equipment, and others in effort to provide better education. Majority of educational sponsors aid students pursuing courses or degree programme in high demand in the corporate world and neglect students from historically disadvantaged universities. Private businesses establish foundations with the aim of providing educational sponsorship for corporate social responsibility. Most educational sponsors offer students employment opportunities after their successful completion of studies or afford students with experiential learning in their organisations. As a result, this contributes to the employability of graduates. The following graph shows the percentages of the respondents' sponsors for their studies.

Figure 4.6: Sponsors of study

Figure 4.6 above depicts the percentages of the sponsors that covered the tuition fees, learning materials, accommodation, meal allowance and living allowance for the successful completion of the respondents' degree in Development in Planning and Management. The graph indicates that 92% of the respondents were sponsored by the government. 6% of the respondents indicated that they were sponsored by private sponsors and 2% of the respondents that they were sponsored by other sponsors. This shows that majority of Development in Planning and Management

students and graduates rely heavily on the government for sponsorships. Some of the respondents pointed out that most private sponsors, sponsor degree programmes that they perceive as offering rare skills and knowledge and are competitive. Others pointed out that this might be because of the degree being new or poor marketing of the degree programme. The following chart depicts the thought of employability from Development in Planning and Management graduates.

#### 4.2.2.3. Employability

Mtawa *et al* (2021) indicate that employability is a set of achievements, abilities, expertise, and personality traits that significantly raise graduates' likelihood of obtaining work and succeeding in their desired fields. The ability to find employment and improve socio-economic mobility for graduates is one of the main purposes of universities and training institutions. Therefore, students should have confidence to indicate they are employable after the successful completion of their studies. The following chart depicts the level of employability of the respondents:

Figure 4.7: Employability of the respondents

The figure above illustrates that the majority (47%) of the respondents indicated that they were employable. This implies that majority of the respondent have confidence in their acquired skills and knowledge, although they are not presented with employment opportunities. Wujema *et al* (2021) assert that self-confidence can be regarded as a characteristic that is relevant to certain circumstances. Furthermore, the authors state that a graduate that believes can do whatever is essential and is far more likely to attain an occupation and be prosperous in whatever positions they chose. 43% of the respondents indicated that they were not sure, and 10% of the respondents indicated that they are not employable. Some pointed out that their uncertainty is influenced by lack of employment opportunities and that they neither attended nor received job interview invitations. This reveals that there is a lack of opportunities for this degree programme. The following graph depicts the basic skills of the respondents.

#### 4.2.2.4. Basic skills

Nearly one third of all occupations have a basic skills screening as part of the hiring process (Siddoo, Sawattawee, Janchai & Yodmongkol, 2017). Therefore, it is imperative for graduates to possess basic skills. Siddoo *et al* (2017) posit that most graduates need to strengthen their basic skills. The following graph depicts the basic skills of the respondents:

Figure 4.8: Basic skills of the respondents.

The figure above depicts that 92% of the respondents have collaboration and teamwork skills, 4% indicated that they do not have collaboration and teamwork skills, and 4% were not sure if they possessed the skills. Equally, 92% of the respondents indicated that they possess critical thinking and problem-solving skills, while 6% specified that they are not sure, and 2% indicated that they did not have the skills. 89% of the respondents indicated that they had writing and communication skills, 8% indicated that they were not sure, and 2% indicated that they did not have the skills. A total of 88% of the respondents indicated that they had the ability to find and access information, while 12% indicated that they did not have the capacity to search and gather information. Also, 88% of the respondents indicated that they possessed oral presentation skills, 8% of the respondents indicated that they do not have the skill and 4% indicated that they did not have the skill.

A total of 76% of the respondents indicated that they possessed creativity and innovation skills, while 14% indicated that they were not sure, and 10% of the respondents indicated that they did not possess the skill. 65% of the respondents specified that they possessed computer literacy skills, 23% of the respondents indicated that they did not have the skill, and 12% indicated that they were not sure if they had the skill. This implies that majority of the respondents possess the basic skills depicted in the figure above and are employable. This analysis validates the assertion made by the respondents that they are employable. Krouwel *et al* (2019) assert that employers are looking for graduates with fine and developed basic skills in many areas. Basic skills are widely employed in today's culture, workplace, and educational settings (Okolie *et al*, 2020). As a result of the rapid technological

developments and increasing competition among companies, employers are looking for graduates with basic and technical skills.

#### 4.2.2.5. Indication of help to acquire skills

The following chart depicts the indication of the graduates if the DDPM helped them to acquire the skills in figure 4.8. The HEIs play a vital role in preparing graduates with critical skills, developing new knowledge, and ensuring that the new knowledge developed can be applied in the economic cycle (Swartz *et al*, 2019).

Figure 4.9: Indication of help from DDPM to acquire skills.

The figure above indicates that 90% of the respondents agreed that the DDPM helped them to acquire basic skills presented in figure 4.8 above. 10% of the respondents stated that the DDPM did not help them to acquire basic skills. This implies that the DDPM has the capacity to produce well-prepared graduates for the labour market. Also, this denotes that the DDPM embraces and implements Section 41C (b and c) of the Continuing Education and Training Act, which mandates public institutions to offer an enabling environment for further education and training to support every student's overall career development (Continuing Education and Training Act, 2006).

#### 4.2.2.6. Knowledge and Competencies

A graduate's employability is mostly determined by their academic knowledge and competencies. Additionally, they are a critical contributor to the academic resume and a cornerstone of the hiring process. Mandyoli *et al* (2017) postulate that employability is a proactive job behaviours and aptitudes that enable people to find work by maximising the use of work-related knowledge and career meta-competencies. Universities must shift their usual emphasis and put extra effort into assisting students in acquiring the knowledge and competencies that best promote employment. Graduates who are more likely to find work are those who have been successful in gaining the necessary knowledge and competencies. In this study, to determine the employability of Development in Planning and Management

graduates, several knowledge and competency factors were used. The following graph shows the knowledge and competencies of the respondents:

Figure 4.10: Knowledge and competencies of the respondents

The figure above indicates the level of some of the vital knowledge and competency factors that the respondents ought to possess for them to be regarded as employable. A total of 63% of the respondents indicated that they regarded their ability to follow and construct logical arguments as strong, 21 per cent (21%) indicated that they regarded their knowledge and competency on this factor as very strong, and 16% indicated that they regarded their ability to follow and construct logical arguments as weak. Also, 63% of the participants showed that they regarded their general knowledge of development related issues as strong, 35% indicated that they regarded their ability to follow and construct logical arguments as very strong, and 2% indicated their ability as weak. In terms of research skills, 61% of the respondents indicated that they regarded their level of knowledge and competence as strong, 25% indicated that they regarded their level of knowledge as very strong, and 14% indicated that they regarded their level of knowledge as weak. 57% of the respondents indicated that their level to critique and analysing government development policies is strong, 33% indicated that their level to critique and analyse government development policies is very strong, and 10% indicated that their level of knowledge is weak.

Out of 100% of the population surveyed, 55% of the respondents indicated that their level of knowledge and competence in terms of the conceptualisation of development issues is strong, 29% regarded their level as very strong, and 16% regarded it as weak. 51% of the respondents referred to their level of knowledge and competence in relations to the understanding of development studies basic theories and processes as strong, 45% of the respondents referred to it as very strong, and 4% regarded it as weak. Regarding the ability to identify and propose solutions to development problems, 49% of the respondents specified that their level of knowledge and competence is strong, 41% specified it as very strong, and 10% specified it as weak. This signifies that majority of the respondents are employable and should they be provided with employment opportunities, they are likely to



succeed in the hiring processes. Also, this denotes that the DDPM managed to develop graduates with knowledge and competencies necessary for the labour market.

#### 4.2.2.7. Incorporation of Work-integrated learning

Shovorois *et al* (2017) indicate that work-integrated learning helps students to develop their confidence in their preferred field of work and serves as a tool to improve graduates' employability. Also, Berndtsson *et al* (2020) add that work-integrated learning helps to deliver education that satisfies both present and future needs as well as learning that benefits society rather than serving as a mere complement to students' academic performance. The chart below depicts the view of the respondents on the incorporation of work-integrated learning into the degree programme of Development in Planning and Management.

Figure 4.11: Incorporation of work-integrated learning

The figure above indicates that majority of the respondents (92%) indicated that work-integrated learning should be incorporated, 4% of the respondents indicated that it should not be incorporated, and 4% indicated that they were not sure if it should be incorporated into the degree programme of Development in Planning and Management. This implies that majority of the respondents saw the importance of incorporating work-integrated learning as the best strategy to enhance the employability of graduates. The goal of work-integrated learning is to give students realistic learning opportunities in suitable educational facilities, with an emphasis on integrating theory with practical situations (Fleming & Hay, 2021).

#### 4.2.2.8. Factors affecting employability

Many people believe that higher education is an effective way to improve one's employability (Harry *et al*, 2018). However, the author further state that is not an absolute guarantee of employment, but it does improve employability prospects. There are factors that affects employability prospects of graduates. Therefore, the chart below shows the views of the respondents on the factors affecting the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates.

Figure 4.12: Factors affecting the employability of the respondents

The figure above indicates that 41% of the respondents mentioned absence of curriculum to support work learning affects their employability, 41% of the respondents indicated that poor linkages between HEIs and the corporate sector affect their employability, and 18% of the respondents indicated that poor marketing of the degree programme affects their employability. This denotes that the respondents regard the absence of curriculum to support work-integrated learning and poor linkages between HEIs and corporate sector as the major factors that affect their employability.

#### **4.2.3. Practical Approaches to Enhance the Employability of Graduates**

Through an open-ended question, the participants were asked about the practical approaches to enhance the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates from the University of Limpopo. Graduates shared their views about what needs to be done to enhance the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates. As such, one participant stressed that the enhancement of the employability of graduates must be a collective effort, and that HEIs should collaborate with other stakeholders in order to enhance the employability of graduates. The participant indicated that:

*“The HEIs must work with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Community Based Organisations (CBOs), and other potential employers that aim to uplift the standards of living in Communities through developmental programmes and projects, because that’s where Development in Planning and Management graduates should be employed”. (Participant No. 49)*

The latter participant is substantiated by participant No. 8 who indicated that:

*“I strongly believe and think that the proper marketing of the degree programme and proper connection and/ linkages between the higher education institutions and the corporate sector might enhance the employability of the graduates”.*

While work-integrated learning can equip students with relevant skills when incorporated in the curriculum, the participants also highlighted that another strategy of enhancing the employability of graduates is through the incorporation of work-integrated learning in the curriculum, as indicated by participant No. 7:

*“I think incorporation of work-integrated learning into the degree programme will enhance the employability of the graduates as it will lead to graduates with increased level of competency. Also, the proper marketing of the degree programme might enhance the employability of the development in planning & Management graduates”. (Participant No. 7)*

Work-integrated learning is vital as it enables students to gain work experience while gaining theoretical understandings. Some participants stressed the significance of volunteerism in enhancing the employability of graduates. Therefore, graduates should consider job volunteerism with the aim to broaden their employment prospects. One participant indicated:

*“Signing up as a volunteer might enhance the employability of graduates, because volunteering sounds great on a resume and provides wonderful examples to utilize during interview process”. (Participant No. 11)*

The latter participant is supported by participant No. 38 who said:

*“Initiate a volunteer approach wherein students volunteer at certain workplaces to gain knowledge/experience, as that will enhance their chances of being employed because with most workplaces, experience is a requirement”.*

The volunteer approach helps one to gain skills that one could get in the formal work setting, including time management, stakeholder management, leadership, and communication skills. One participant highlighted that corporate experience should be made a prerequisite in the hiring process of lecturers or facilitators. This could enhance the employability of graduates as it will enable lecturers or facilitators to inspire students to aspire for careers outside academic. Also, it will give practical examples and assessments, which will help students get a practical understanding of the modules and glimpse of the corporate world.

*“All lecturers and facilitators ought to have corporate experience in order to give real life examples or relate their lessons with societal problems. It must be a prerequisite when hiring lectures, that at least they must have 2 years of corporate experience”.*  
(Participant No. 35)

The graduates stated that a variety of strategies may be devised and put into place to enhance the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates from the University of Limpopo. These practical strategies include volunteer approach, collaboration of HEIs with NGOs, CBOs and other potential employers, incorporation of work-integrated learning in the degree programme, proper marketing of the degree programme, and establishment of linkages or connections between HEIs and the corporate sector.

### **4.3. Presentation of Findings from the Qualitative Interview**

This subsection outlines the presentation of qualitative interviews that comprises the data gathered from the key informants. The data included the factors of employability. The municipal and provincial government officials participated in a face-to-face interview. Their motivation stems from their understanding of the employability of graduates.

#### **4.3.1. The Organisational or Institutional Needs from the Degree programme of Development in Planning and Management.**

Respondent 2 said the following:

*“It really meets the needs, because usually when making selections for internships we do go through their academic transcripts, to check the modules they have done, so their modules really align with the needs of our department. But it really depends on the graduates how well they understand whatever they were taught, because we look for candidates with thorough understanding.”*

Respondent 4 said:

*“Our department has different directorates, so in other directorates it really meets the needs.”*

Respondent 3 said:

*‘It does meet the needs, but it depends on the graduates on how they present themselves.’*

Respondent 1 said:

*“Yeah, I can say so, it meets the needs of our department.”*

According to the assertions of the respondents, the degree programme meets the needs of government departments. Respondent 1 stated that the modules of the degree really align with the needs of the department; however, much emphasis is based on the content understanding of the modules, that graduates should have a thorough understanding of the module’s contents.

#### **4.3.2. Qualities looked from prospective graduates**

Respondent 2 indicated the following:

*“Graduates must have critical thinking attributes for enhanced job performance and also I think interpersonal attributes are vital for job performance, Graduates must be able to communicate and present their views”.*

Respondent 3 highlighted the following:

*“For Development in Planning and Managements graduates is very important for them to have Management attributes which means it’s their specialisation, but most importantly they must be willing to learn good work ethics.”*

Respondent 4 indicated the following:

*“Well, an open-minded graduate and eagerness to learn is among the most crucial qualities to look for in a graduate. These qualities are frequently natural, even though they can be fostered through appropriate involvement. Also, it is important to pay attention to someone's level of focus. Do they pay close attention to what is being said, process it, and then put it into practice? Being open-minded involves a graduate's readiness to shift their way of thinking, gain knowledge, and value their team members' different points of view”.*

Respondent 1 stated the following:

*“We look for a flexible, independent and graduate who is not afraid to take accountability. Being responsible for your choices, productivity, and actions or behaviours is important. As newly hired employees will quickly learn, deadlines are not just for studying. The best way to notice this quality during interviews, is by asking them to give their experience of such”.*

The research findings reveal that the qualities that potential employers look for in graduates differ from employer to employer. But a good communication skill is one of the leading qualities that most employers expect graduates to possess, mainly because work environments are diverse. It is safe to conclude that there are no specific qualities that are required in the labour market as they differ from one employer to the other.

#### **4.3.3. The quality of Development in Planning and Management graduates from the University of Limpopo.**

Respondent 1 indicated the following:

*“We are pleased with the degree of fundamental abilities that University of Limpopo DDPM graduates possess, but we also desire graduates who possess the qualities that the department is seeking. In addition, if someone lacks the additional qualities*

*that can promote the organisation in addition to only having the necessary qualifications, their basic talents are of little use to the department.”*

Respondent 2 said the following:

*“I think graduates differ, it really depends on how hungry the individual is for success, but some graduates behave like they do us a favour.*

Respondent 3 indicated the following:

*“I think they are good, but there is always that one that will not want to take instructions.”*

Respondent 4 stated the following:

*“I think they are affected by the work environment many of them and that why they struggle, some lack self-confidence. But generally, I can say they good because we take graduate programmes as part of their learning curve.”*

#### **4.3.4. Whether Planning and management specialisation of the degree programme meet the needs of employers’ department or organisation.**

Respondent 2 indicated the following:

*“Yes, the specialisation of the degree is very relevant in the municipality, we do have a unit that deals mainly with planning and management. But the unit is composed of different sub-units and the unit plays an important role in rolling our municipal plans. I think the units that degree fit in is the Local Economic Development unit and the Strategic Planning and IDP unit. But I think as you have mentioned that this is a new programme maybe the units are not aware of it hence they not employing many of the graduates.”*

Respondent 3 said:

*“Of course, the specialisation meets needs of many organisations because planning and management is very important in any organisation, I think the only thing lacking from specialisation of the degree is organisations have moved faster. Yeah, I believe in industry, we’ve moved way faster than academia does.”*

Respondent 4 indicated the following:

*“It does meet the needs; I mean planning cut across many units in our department.”*

Respondent 1 stated the following:

*“Yes, it does, here the planning and management department is still new, I think they saw the need of it in the organisational structure.”*

The inputs of the respondents indicate that the specialisation of planning and management does meet the needs of their departments. Based on the inputs of the respondents, it can be alluded that the specialisation of the degree, Development in Planning and Management, is relevant and meets the needs of the labour market.

#### **4.3.5. Skills, knowledge, and competence that Development in Planning and Management graduates lack or need to improve on.**

Respondent 2 proffered the following:

*“Graduates must be provided with all the knowledge, abilities, and qualities necessary for professional success, because I don’t think a university graduate should be lacking when it comes to abilities and qualities needed in the corporate world, for instance Development studies graduates should be able to analyse the socio-economic status quo of the country. I think the way in which labour market is so diverse a graduate who’s not all rounded won’t make it”.*

Respondent 1 said:

*“The university should equip students with the skills. Research skills for example, when someone comes here having done a research module, I expect them to know how to conduct research or at least know basics. Yes, that I expect them to know. Now with me is to teach them to apply that to the real world. I don’t want to start teaching you everything, you just have to know this is what you need to do, I don’t want to do that”.*

Respondent 4 said:

*“For graduates, communication skills are essential. We interact with a lot of different people; I mean some of the Graduates can’t speak English properly or at all. Since English is the language of instruction at universities, I find it strange to have a*



*graduate who cannot communicate in English. How did they cope the whole three years at varsity?"*

Respondent 3 said:

*"I think a good problem solver and ability to learn from mistakes, graduates who can effectively solve problems, show their ability to learn from mistakes, and identify areas for improvement have a far better chance of being successful. But it is difficult to measure this type of skill".*

The respondents stated some of the crucial skills, knowledge, and competence that graduates need to have in order for them to be productive in the workplace. The respondents stressed the importance of communication skills, problem-solving skills, and research skills that graduates should not lack. Furthermore, the respondents indicated the significance of the eagerness of graduates to learn more and from their mistakes for their career growth. Respondent 2 indicated that graduates should not be lacking when it comes to skills, knowledge, and competencies related to their respective fields of study. Also, the respondent highlighted that an all-rounded graduate always finds an edge of success in the corporate world. Therefore, it can be alluded that graduates in the programme of Development in Planning and Management need to improve on the aforementioned skills for them to be competitive and successful in the labour market.

#### **4.3.6. The collaboration of the department with HEIs to ensure that graduates are maximally prepared for the corporate world.**

Respondent 2 indicated the following:

*"Well, we are not directly in collaboration with HEIs, but as the potential employers we expect HEIs to produce graduates with theoretical understandings then our part is to equip them with experiential learning through our internship and learnership programmes, to ensure that they acquire skills and experience in their respective professions".*

Respondent 3 said the following:

*“No, we don’t collaborate, but I believe there should be an effort where we communicate and approach things from both sides. The University of Limpopo can vouch for students who are enthusiastic about conducting research in the field of development planning. The institute or department should be able to say, you know, we are submitting these four areas for research, and the university should be free to reply, yes, we are going to have two students researching in this field, how can the department help University of Limpopo? I believe you are aware that a collaborative effort entails reciprocal cooperation and the development of some sort of understanding as both parties benefit from having students who have done in-depth research on issues related to service delivery. The student may eventually work for us as an employee and complete the project”.*

Respondent 1 indicated the following:

*“I can’t say the department does that, but the Office does sponsor students with bursaries of which it’s a way of making sure that people get access to higher education, and for one to be employable must be in possession of higher education qualification. So yeah, the Office does that”*

Respondent 4 said:

*“I am not sure, but what I know is they do give students bursaries apart from that I don’t know”*

The respondents’ assertions highlight that government departments do not collaborate with HEIs to enhance the employability of graduates. They stressed the provision of bursaries to students as their collaborative effort towards the enhancement of the employability of graduates. However, this collaboration effort only benefits the selected few based on good academic results.

#### **4.3.7. The involvement of the department in the formulation and designing of the curriculum of Development in Planning and Management.**

Respondent 1 said:

*“We are not involved whatsoever. Our sole responsibility is to assist them for the little time they are here for internships, unfortunately we don't even accept accountability. When someone joins us here, we don't even stop to ask, "Modimo," Is there any change since they arrived like this? The reason I am saying we don't have any role; we don't prepare them because from there I am not saying Development in Planning and Management I want those back. If you've prepared someone, you already know they can deliver at this standard and do work of this caliber”.*

Respondent 2 said:

*“I am not quite sure about that one, because if there was some sort of involvement, I think there was going to be maybe a unit that deals specifically with that or delegates I think.”*

Respondent 3 said:

*“No, we are not involved in their curriculum design, it is a sole responsibility of Universities and Department of Higher Education and Training.”*

Respondent 4 indicated the following:

*“The Department of Higher Education and Training is accountable for that.”*

The respondents' inputs reveal that their departments are not involved and do not approach the Department of Higher Education and Training to offer inputs or recommend what the DDPM should incorporate in the curriculum. One respondent was not sure. This indicates that there is also a lack of industry motivation to address the problems they are encountering with graduates or the workforce. The gap between what the graduates are learning and what the industry needs is not given necessary attention and there is no effort to address it.

#### **4.3.8. The role of HEIs to improve the employability of graduates**

Respondent 1 indicated the following:

*“Well, I think what universities need to do is to work hand in hand with potential employers or industries so that students can gain a lot of practical experience because there must be a fair balance between theory and practice. This is very important, many graduates come with good grades and lot of theory but fail to apply their theoretical learning into real life situations”.*

*“Specifically strengthen certain areas of the qualification or program's content and delivery. Like promoting reduced class sizes, ensuring the use of the most up-to-date teaching technology, lecturers need to change their approach to lessons, and HEIs need to ensure that lecturers are appropriately educated and experienced”.*

Respondent 3 indicated the following:

*“Universities can address this in many ways, universities don't need to solely rely on the corporate sector in their programme equipping students with work-based skills, they can equally work with communities where they identify developmental problems and allow students to try find amicable development solutions to those problems”.*

*“Universities should connect students with external practices, communities, and debates that will open up their minds, so they can learn from practices and be able to critically think”.*

Respondent 2 said:

*“University should involve the corporate sector in the formulation of curriculums, also the industry must make the university understand Development in Planning and Management from their industry view, then find a way to integrate that into the university curriculum. So, that graduates can meet the industry demands”.*

Respondent 4 said:

*“Well, lecturers or facilitators ought to have corporate experience in order to be able to give real life examples or relate their teachings with societal problems. It must be a requirement in the hiring of lecturers that need to have*

*at least 2 years of corporate experience. Their lack of practical experience channel their sessions to be solely theoretical”.*

One of the respondents (29) further indicated that:

*“It is no surprise why these graduates don’t have practical understanding, it’s because they are taught by lecturers who are clueless about what is really happening in the corporate world and worst, they don’t even bother to attend government workshops”.*

It can be alluded that even employers expect graduates to possess both theoretical and practical experience when they enter the corporate world. This can be highlighted as another challenge of graduates failing to secure their entry jobs, because of the expectations of potential employers. It is suggested that universities can create a conducive environment for Development in Planning and Management graduates to apply what was learned in class, not only in the corporate sector, but also in communities where developmental challenges are experienced. Respondent 4 highlighted the significance of lecturers having corporate experience, which should be made a prerequisite upon appointments or hiring processes.

#### **4.4. Summary of the Chapter**

The objective of this chapter was to provide the survey and interview findings in a clear and concise manner and to further analyse them. A biographical summary of the respondents was presented in the preliminary sections of this chapter. The chapter also included correlations between various study percentages and the findings of the thematic analysis. The views were solicited through questionnaires and interview schedules to investigate the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates from the University of Limpopo. The data comprised the views and understandings of the selected key respondents about the employability of graduates. The findings revealed that Development in Planning and Management graduates lack practical experience and that work-integrated learning must be incorporated into the curriculum. It was noted that lack of work-integrated learning in university curricula, lack of collaboration between HEIs and the labour market, and poor marketing of the degree of Development in Planning and Management are among the leading impediments to and affect the employability of Development in

Planning and Management graduates. Furthermore, the findings reveal that Development in Planning and Management graduates have the confidence that they are fit and employable, possessing the required skills and knowledge. The analysed and interpreted data evidently shows that the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates can be enhanced with good collaborative efforts between HEIs and the labour market, curricula that incorporate work-integrated learning, and proper marketing of the degree programme. Hence, it is safe to deduce from the findings and interpretations that, Development in Planning and Management graduates are facing unemployment challenges mainly because of lack of practical experience and the degree programme being less known in the corporate world, among other factors. The following chapter provides a summary of the findings, recommendations and conclusions of the study.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

The preceding chapter presented the analysis and interpretation of data gathered from the questionnaires and interview schedules. The data gathered through the questionnaires and interview schedules only covered the aspects of the employability of graduates. This chapter provides the summary, conclusion, and recommendations of the study based on the research themes. Section 5.2 of this chapter entails the summary of the chapters, which comprises the important components of the research study. The section is followed by Section 5.3, which is a summary of the major results in line with the research objectives. Section 5.4 encompasses the conclusion on the empirical and theoretical literature and the study's discoveries. In concluding the study, recommendations are presented based on how the University of Limpopo can enhance the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates. The recommendations were made in hopes that other universities could infer on how they could review their curricula to enhance the employability of their graduates. Also, the recommendations will help future researchers.

#### **5.2. Summary of the Chapters**

**Chapter one** presented the introduction and background of the study. It described the study purpose, validation and the approach used to operationalise the research study. Also, the significance of the study and ethical considerations were emphasised in this chapter. Furthermore, the chapter provided further detail on the key concepts that undergirded the study's literature review and theoretical framework in particular and the study in general.

**Chapter two** investigated and discussed the employability of graduates from a global perspective. It commenced by outlining the theoretical literature and historical evolution of the employability of graduates, to emphasise the context in which this study was grounded on. It also explained the factors that affect the employability of

graduates, and the models of enhancing their employability. Additionally, the chapter thoroughly outlined the roles of HEIs in preparing graduates for the labour market.

**Chapter three** described the employability of graduates from a South African perspective. The purpose was to use literature to explore how the employability of graduates could be enhanced. Moreover, the chapter outlined the mechanisms and legislation frameworks meant to improve the employability of graduates from South African HEIs, challenges confronting the employability of graduates, the significance and purposes of HEIs in preparing graduates for the corporate sector.

**Chapter four** focused on the analysis and interpretation of the empirical data that was gathered using questionnaires and interview schedules. It analysed the inputs and perceptions of the respondents regarding the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates. Additionally, it revealed that the incorporation of work-integrated learning into the university curricula, proper marketing of the degree programme, and collaborative efforts between HEIs and the corporate sector can enhance the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates.

The aim of this study was to enhance the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates. Moreover, the objectives of the research study were:

- To explore the factors affecting the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates.
- To examine the models of enhancing the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates.
- To discover the roles of the HEIs in preparing Development in Planning and Management graduates for the labour market.
- To recommend possible measures that could enhance the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates.



### **5.3. Summary of key findings**

**Objective 1:** To explore the factors affecting the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates.

#### **5.3.1. The Factors Affecting the Employability of Graduates**

- 41% of the respondents indicated that the absence of curriculum to support work learning affects their employability, and equally, another 41% of the respondents pointed out that poor linkages between HEIs and the corporate sector affect their employability. 18% of the respondents indicated that poor marketing of the degree programme affects their employability. The respondents recommended strategies that can be implemented to address the factors affecting the employability of graduates. The recommended strategies included volunteer approach, collaborations between HEIs with NGOs, CBOs and other potential employers, incorporations of work-integrated learning in the degree programme, proper marketing of the degree programme, and establishment of linkages or connections between HEIs and the corporate sector.

#### **5.3.2. Skills, Knowledge, and Competencies**

- According to the respondents, graduates must be provided with all of the relevant knowledge, skills, and competences because these affect their professional success.
- The results revealed that the DDPM is doing well in terms of providing students with the required skills, knowledge, and competences for the job market.
- Also, the results revealed that Development in Planning and Management graduates possess good basic skills that make them eligible for employment.

#### **5.3.3. Indication of help to Acquire Skills**

- The results revealed that DDPM does assist students and assisted graduates to acquire basic skills.

- The findings discovered that the DDPM has the capacity to produce well-rounded graduates for the labour market. Also, that DDPM embrace and implement Section 41C (b and c) of the Continuing Education and Training Act.

#### **5.3.4. Planning and Management Specialisation of the degree Programme meet the needs of your Department or Organisation.**

- The participants specified that the specialisation of the degree is very relevant, but since it is a new programme of study, most employers do not know of it and as a result, are not employing many of the graduates.
- The specialisation of the degree programme meets the needs of many organisations' planning and management. Consequently, it is very important in any organisation. However, the only lacking aspect is the pace at which the university upgrades the curriculum is very slow compared to the pace of the corporate sector.
- The findings from the respondents indicated that planning and management specialisation cut across many sectors, hence; the programme is relevant.

#### **5.3.5. Sponsorship**

- 92% of the graduates were funded by the government, 6% of the respondents were sponsored by private sponsors and 2% of the graduates were sponsored by other sponsors. The respondents pointed out that lack of private sponsorships is one of the reasons why Development in Planning and Management graduates struggle to transit into the labour market.

#### **5.3.6. Qualities Employers look for in Prospective Graduates**

- The key informants revealed the qualities employers look for among the graduates as prospective employees. The indicated qualities included: management attribute, critical thinking and interpersonal attributes, willingness to learn, good work ethics, open-minded, flexibility, independence and accountable for their own actions.

**Objective 2:** To examine the models of enhancing the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates.

### **5.3.7. Incorporation of Work-integrated learning**

- 92% of the respondents indicated that work-integrated learning should be incorporated into the curriculum to enhance the employability of graduates, 4% of the respondents indicated that it should not be incorporated, and 4% indicated that they are not sure if it should be incorporated into the degree programme of Development in Planning and Management. From the results, the graduates deem work-integrated learning as the best model to enhance the employability of graduates.

### **5.3.8. The Involvement of the Department in the Formulation and Designing of the Curriculum of Development in Planning and Management.**

- The findings from one respondent revealed that their department is not involved in the formulation and designing of the curriculum of the Development in Planning and Management degree programme. The respondent highlighted that it is the sole responsibility of Universities and Department of Higher Education and Training.
- The findings reveal that there is lack of industry motivation to address the problems they are encountering with graduates or the workforce. Also, the gap between what the graduates are learning and what the industry needs is not given necessary attention and there is no effort to address it.

**Objective 3:** To discover the roles of HEIs in preparing Development in Planning and Management graduates for the labour market.

### **5.3.9. The HEIs' strategies to improve the Employability of Graduates**

- The finding from the respondent revealed that HEIs need to ensure that lecturers and facilitators are appropriately educated and experienced to deliver relevant module content.
- The finding from the respondent revealed that HEIs need to establish a working relationship with potential employers or the corporate industry so that

the students can get exposure to work environments and gain practical experience.

- The results from the interview indicated that universities should involve the corporate sector in the formulation of curriculums.
- The finding from the respondent indicated that universities should employ lecturers and facilitators with corporate experience in order to give real life examples or relate their teachings with real life situations.

#### **5.3.10. The Collaboration of the Department with HEIs to ensure that Graduates are Maximally Prepared for the Corporate World**

- The finding from the key informant revealed that the corporate sector is not directly in collaboration with HEIs, but expects HEIs to produce graduates with theoretical understandings. Their part is to equip the graduates with experiential learning through internship and learnership programmes.
- The finding from the key informant revealed that HEIs can vouch for students who are enthusiastic and academically excelling to get experiential learning.
- The corporate sector offers sponsorship to students with bursaries, which is a way of ensuring that students get access to HEIs which will ultimately make them employable.
- The collaborative effort of offering bursaries by private institutions only benefits the selected few.

**Objective 4:** To recommend possible measures that could enhance the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates.

#### **5.3.11. Practical Approaches to Enhance the Employability of Graduates**

The participants in an open-ended question on the surveys indicated the possible practical approaches that can be implemented to enhance the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates. The following are the

recommended measures to enhance the employability of Development in Planning and Management:

- Incorporation of work-integrated learning in the curriculum of the degree programme of Development in Planning and Management.
- Formulation and implementation of good marketing strategies of the degree programme of Development in Planning and Management can help enhance the employability of graduates.
- Proper linkages and cooperation between HEIs and the corporate sector.
- Implementation of volunteer approach to expose students to the corporate environments.
- Making corporate experience a prerequisite for all lecturers and facilitators.
- Establish good working relationships between HEIs and NGOs, community-based organisations, and communities.
- Involving the corporate sector in the process of formulating of curricula.

#### **5.4. Conclusion**

Interventions that seek to enhance the employability of graduates should be supported, particularly when they incorporate strong work-related features and are integrated into the curriculum. From the results, it can be inferred that the DDPM have not effectively embedded work-related learning in the curriculum, collaborated with the labour market, and properly marketed the degree programme of Development in Planning and Management with the sole purpose of enhancing the employability of graduates. Therefore, the following conclusions are made in light of the results:

The findings revealed that the Development in Planning and Management graduates are employable. The employability of graduates is determined by a graduate's acquired education and employability skills and abilities needed in the labour market. However, literature reveals factors that affect the employability of graduates as including the choice of institution, work experience, labour market outcomes, and relationship between HEIs and the labour market (Tomlinson, 2017; Ndlovu & Ndebele, 2019; Pitan & Muller, 2020). Several studies have highlighted the latter

factors. According to a study by Mertinez-Vargas *et al* (2020), graduates from previously marginalised universities have minimal employment opportunities than those from previously privileged universities, both with regards to entry job and the prevalence of unemployment in the long run. It can be concluded that Development in Planning and Management graduates are facing challenges in transitioning into the labour market since the University of Limpopo is a historically disadvantaged institution. But the study highlights lack of work-integrated learning in university curriculums, lack of collaboration between HEIs and the labour market, and poor marketing of the degree programme of Development in Planning and Management as the direct impediments to the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates. The findings reveal that work-integrated learning will lead to graduates with increased level of competency.

Another finding shows that the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates can be enhanced through an incorporation of work-integrated learning into higher education curriculum. This is supported by Shovorois *et al* (2017) who assert that work-integrated learning increases graduates' employability by fostering students' confidence in their chosen fields of study and employment. About how the work-integrated learning strategy can be implemented, the respondents highlighted that volunteer approach should be adopted and universities need to align and collaborate with the corporate sector. However, the respondents from the corporate sector highlighted that they are not involved in the course of the study of students. Hence, Development in Planning and Management graduates struggle to transition into the corporate sector because they are only equipped with the theoretical understanding. Effective collaborative efforts among HEIs and the corporate sector can respond to the evolution of the knowledge and skills that the economy and corporate world demand.

Additionally, the study discovered that Development in Planning and Management graduates believe they are fit and employable with the knowledge and skills they have gained. Also, the findings reveal that the DDPM managed to develop graduates with knowledge and competencies necessary for the labour market. Ayodele, Oladokun and Kajimo-Shakantu (2020) state that potential employers are looking for graduates who are well-rounded, possess high academic achievements and soft

skills such as problem-solving, communication, interpersonal, and adaptability abilities and have self-confidence. Tymon, Harrison and Batistic (2020) highlight that self-confidence enables graduates to make specific verbal and nonverbal behaviour comments while expressing accomplishments and attributes that boost their employability allure in recruitment interviews. It can be concluded that should Development in Planning and Management graduates be provided with employment opportunities; they will likely succeed in hiring processes.

### **5.5. Recommendations**

The following recommendations are put forth by this research based on the survey from the field and the literature.

#### *Absence of curriculum to support work learning:*

- The DDPM should incorporate work-integrated learning into the curriculum.
- The DDPM should initiate the volunteer approach for students to volunteer in different organisations during recess.
- The HEIs should involve various stakeholders such as the corporate sector in the formulation of higher institutions curricula.
- The HEIs curricula should be made more flexible, to ensure that HEI curricula are flexible enough to change and evolve to meet the corporate needs.
- The DDPM should introduce a fourth year that will only be for experiential learning or technical experience.
- The DDPM should make two years of corporate experience a prerequisite when hiring or recruiting lecturers or facilitators.
- The DDPM should strengthen certain areas of the qualification or degree programmes' content and delivery.
- Every university should have an operational career service departments.

#### *Poor linkages between HEIs and the corporate sector:*

- The HEIs should continuously assess the opinions and demands of the corporate world.

- The DDPM should establish collaborations and partnerships with the corporate sector.
- There should be a formation of a statutory professional body that all Development in Planning and Management graduates are required to affiliate with. The benefits of the statutory body would be the implementation of continuous professional development programmes, such as those used by the human resources and medical sectors, which promotes professional development. In addition to enhancing graduate employability, the employability of the field as whole will be boosted. The corporate sector, government institutions, and HEIs should work together. Importantly, the professional association would thus offer the industry a forum to start a campaign to actively participate in the design of the higher education curriculum in the interest of Development in Planning and Management graduates.

*Poor marketing of the degree programme:*

- The DDPM should improve marketing strategies of the degree programme in the corporate sector and high schools.
- The DDPM should initiate workshops and seminars and invite various stakeholders to participate particularly the corporate sector and media houses.

## **5.6. Limitations of the study and suggestion for further research**

The researcher faced several challenges during the collection of data on the field. The first hurdle was the unwillingness of some local officials to participate in the study, especially the officials from the Planning and Management directorate. They genuinely had no interest in taking part in the research. Limited time and financial resources throughout the data collection procedure were other constraints that the researcher had to deal with, which resulted in a small sample size for the study in terms of the selection of government institutions. The study focused on corporate world professionals' perspectives as key informants and graduates as participants. Universities or lecturers or student organisations were not part of the research participants to share their inputs. Additionally, no research of HEI curriculum was



done to compare the alleged flaws highlighted by the professionals in the corporate world. As a result, the researcher recommends that parallel studies be carried out in other South African government institutions. To provide a thorough view of the supply and demand paradigms of the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates, the research might be undertaken from the university perspective as well. Regarding the components of the study, the researcher also proposes that studies be conducted to look into how effective and competitive Development in Planning and Management graduates in the corporate world are.

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## **Annexure A: Questionnaire for Development in Planning and Management Graduates**

Dear participants,

This research forms part of my Master's degree in Development Studies in Planning and Management at the University of Limpopo. The purpose of the research is to enhance the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates from the University of Limpopo. This questionnaire is intended to collect data for the aforementioned purpose. The results of this project will be used exclusively for academic purposes. Anonymity of the respondents is guaranteed, participants responses cannot in any way be identified by anyone else. Participation in the project will be voluntarily and respondents have the rights to withdraw from the project at any time. Your participation in this research project is highly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Mr Lebotsa, Khutso Piet

Participants' consent.

I hereby give my consent to participate in this research on condition that I will remain anonymous, and my names will not be linked to the information that I will have

provided to this research. I retain the privilege to withdraw should I feel uncomfortable with the research project.

Signed

Date

.....

.....

### **SECTION A: Demographic profile of respondents**

Please indicate your answer by crossing [X] the appropriate box.

#### 1. Gender

1. Male		2. Female	
---------	--	-----------	--

#### 2. Age (years)

1. 20-24	
2. 25-29	
3. 30-35	
4. 35 and above	

#### 3. Employment status

1. Formally employed	
2. Unemployed	
3. Self-employed	
4. Employed	

#### 4. Educational Status

1. Completed your studies	
2. Still studying	

### **SECTION B: Employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates**

1. Who influenced your choice to study Development in Planning and Management the most?



	Yes	No
1. Government sponsorship		
2. My own choice		
3. Career guidance at UL		
4. My friends		
5. Labour market demand		
6. Teachers at school		
7. Career guidance at school		
8. Less grade 12 results or APS score		
9. Lack of space in other degree programme		

8. Other, please specify .....

2. Who was sponsoring your degree programme?

1. Government	
2. Private	
3. Other	

3. Do you think you are more employable as a Development in Planning and Management graduate?

1. Yes	2. No	3. Not sure

Please explain .....

4. a. Which of these basic skills were developed during your study at University of Limpopo? Indicate your answer by ticking one column per row.

Skills	Yes	No	Not Sure
1. Oral presentation			
2. Ability to find and access information			
3. written and oral communication			

4. Computer literacy			
5. Creativity and innovation			
6. Critical thinking and problem solving			
7. Collaboration and teamwork			

b. Did the Department of Development Planning and Management help you to develop these skills?

1. Yes	2. No	3. Not Sure

5. a. How would you rate yourself in terms of the following knowledge and competencies?

Knowledge and Competencies	Very strong	Strong	Weak
1. Research skills			
2. General Knowledge of development related issues			
3. Understanding of Development studies basic theories and processes			
4. Ability to identify and propose solutions to development problems			
5. Ability to follow and construct logical arguments			
6. Conceptualisation of development issues			
7. Critique and analyse government development policies			

b. What attributes do you think employers look for in a Development in Planning and Management graduates?

.....

.....

.....

6. Do you think the Department of Development Planning and Management should incorporate work-integrated learning in the degree programme?

1. Yes	2. No	3. Not Sure

7. Based on the below table choose factors that you think affect the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates.

1. Absence of curriculum capacity to support work-related learning	
2. Poor linkages between the HEIs and the corporate sector	
3. Low competence of lecturers and facilitators	
4. Poor marketing of the degree programme	

5. Other, please specify.....

8. What are the practical approaches or mechanisms that you think might enhance the employability of Development in Planning and Management graduates.

.....

.....

.....

**Thank you for your participation in this research study**



## **Annexure A.1: Dipotšišo tša Baithuti**

Bakgathatema ba Rategang,

Nyakišišo ye e dira karolo ya degree ya Masters yaka ya Development Studies (Planning and Management) Unebesething ya Limpopo. Morero wa nyakišišo ye kego ntlhafatša go hirwa ga dialoga tša Development in Planning and Management gotšwa Unebesething ya Limpopo. Morero wa dipotšišo tse ke go kgobokanya dintlha lebakeng la morero owe o boletšweng ka godimo ga se fela. Diphetho tša morero o ditla šomishwa fela mo go kgethegilego tša thuto. Go netefatswa gore batho ba arabešitsweng dipotšišo ba ka se tsebjwe, dikarabo tša ba tšea karolo di ka se tsebe ke mang ka mang ka tsela efe kapa efe. Go tšea karolo morerong o etlaba ka boikgethelo mme ba arabešitsweng dipotšišo ba nale ditokelo tša go ikamologanya le morero o neng kapa neng. Go tšea karolo gago morerong o wa dinyakišišo go tšeelwa godimo ebile gwa thabelwa kudu.

Ya Botegago,

Mr Lebotsa Khutso Piet

Dumelelo ya Bakgathatema,

Ke fana ka tumelelo yaka ya go tšea karolo nyakišišong ge feela nka dula ke sa tsebjwe mme maina aka a ka se kgokagantswe le tshedimošo yeo ke tla beng ke fane ka yona mo dinyakišišo tše. Ke nale tokelo ya go ikamologanya ge ke kwa ke sa lokologa ka projeke ye ya dinyakišišo.

Saena

.....

Letšatši

.....

## KAROLO A: Palo ya Bakgathatema

Ka kgopelo bontšha karabo ya gago ka go thala kholomo ya maleba.

### 1. Bong

1. Monna		2. Mosadi	
----------	--	-----------	--

### 2. Mengwaga

1. 20-24	
2. 25-29	
3. 30-35	
4. 35 go ya-godimo	

### 3. Maemo a Mošomo

1. Le kile la šoma peleng	
2. Ale šome	
3. Moepereki	
4. Wa šome	

### 4. Maemo a tša dithuto

1. O feditše dithuto tša gago	
2. Osa tsena sekolo	

## KAROLO B: Go Hirwa ga Dialoga tša Development in Planning and Management

1. Ke mang ye a ileng a hlohloletša goba go tutuetša kgetho ya gao ya go ithutela Development in Planning and Management kudu?

	Ee	Aowa
--	----	------

1. Thekgo ya Mmušo		
2. Kgetho yaka		
3. Bafahloloshi/Bafa dikeletšo tša mešomo Unebesething ya Limpopo		
4. Bakgwera		
5. Nyakego ya bašomi mešomong		
6. Barutiši sekolong		
7. Bafa dikeletšo sekolong sa pele		

8. Tše dingwe, ka kgopelo laetša  
 .....

2. Ke mang ye abego a thekga dithuto tša gago ka tša mašelang?

1. Mmušo	
2. Phreabete	

3. Tše dingwe, ka kgopelo laetša  
 .....

3. Naa o nagana gore o ka hirwa go feta bjale ka sealoga sa Development in Planning and Management?

1. Ee	2. Aowa	3. Ga kena bonnete

Ka kgopelo hlalosa  
 .....

4. a. Ke bofe bokgoni bo ntlhafadišweng nakong ya dithuto tša gago Unebesething ya Limpopo? Bontšha karabo ya gago ka go thala kholomo e tee ka mothaladi.

Mabokgoni	Ee	Aowa	A kena bonnete
1. Go fa polelo ka molomo			
2. Matla ago humana le go fihlelela tshedimošo			
3. Poledišano ka molomo le go ngwala			
4. Tsebo ya dikhomphutha			
5. Tiholo le bokgoni bjwa go nyakolla mekgwa e mefsa			
6. Monagano wa lephefo le tharallo ya mathata			
7. Tirišano le mošomo wa sehlopha			

b. Naa Lefapha la Development Planning and Management le go thušitše go godiša mabokgoni a?

1. Ee	2. Aowa	3. A kena bonnete

5. a. O ka itekola bjwang go ya ka tsebo le mabokgoni a latelang?

Tsebo le mabokgoni	matla kudu	matla	fokola
1. Tsebo ya go dira dinyakišišo			
2. Tsebo ye e akaretšang mathata a Development			
3. Kwešišo ya Development studies basic theories and processes			
4. Matla a go kgetholla le go hlagiša tharollo ya mathata a Development			
5. Matla a go latela le go aga mabaka a kwagalang			
6. Kgokakganyo ya dikgopolo ka mathata a development			
7. Go lekola le go sekaseka dipholisi tša development tša mmušo			

b. Naa o nagana gore bahiri ba nyaka mabokgoni afe gotšwa go dialoga tša Development in Planning and Management?

.....

.....

.....

6. Naa o nagana gore Department of Development Planning and Management e swanetše go kgokagantšha mošomo wa matsogo le degree programme?

1. Ee	2. Aowa	3. A kena bonnete

7. Go ya ka tafola ya ka fase kgetha dintlha tšeo o naganang gore di ama mešomo ya dialoga tša Development in Planning and Management.

1. Tlhokego ya kharikhulamo ya go thekga thuto ya mošomo wa diatla	
2. Tlhokego ya kgokagano magareng ga di HEIs le mafapa a tša mešomo	
3. Bokgoni bjwa tlase bjwa mofahloši le banolofatši	
4. Papatšo e mpe ya lenaneo la degree	

5. Tše dingwe, ka kgopelo laetša

.....

8. O nagana gore ke mekgwa efe yeo e ka berekang kapa ditsela tšeo dika ntlhafatšang go hirwa ga dialoga tša Development in Planning and Management.

.....

.....

.....

**Ke leboga go tšea karolo ga lena ka gare ga nyakišišo ye!**





**Annexure B: Research Interview schedule for key informants in the corporate world (potential employers).**

Masters of Development Studies In Planning and Management

Research project titled: ***Enhancing the Employability of Development in Planning and Management Graduates, University of Limpopo.***

The information to be obtained will be solely used for the academic purpose, and your participation in the research project is voluntary. The interview schedule is structured based on the following questions:

1. To what extent is the degree programme of Development in Planning and Management offered at the University of Limpopo meet the needs of the organisation?

.....  
.....  
.....

2. What qualities do you look for in your prospective graduates (Development in Planning and Management graduates in particular)?

.....  
.....  
.....

3. What do you think about the quality of Development in Planning and Management graduates from the University of Limpopo?

.....  
.....  
.....

4. Does the area of (planning and management) specialisation of the degree programme meet the needs of your organisation?

.....  
.....

5. What skills, knowledge, and competence would you say Development in Planning and Management graduates from the University of Limpopo lack or need to improve on?

.....  
.....

6. How does your organisation work with Higher Education Institutions to ensure that graduates are maximally prepared for the corporate world?

.....  
.....

7. Does your organisation get involved in the formulation and designing of the curriculum of Development in Planning and Management degree programme? If yes, please explain the role of your organisation in that regard.

If no, please explain why your organisation does not get involved.

.....  
.....

8. What do you think Higher Education Institutions needs to do to improve the employability of graduates (Development in Planning and Management graduates in particular)?

.....  
.....  
.....



**Annexure C: University of Limpopo**  
**School of Economics and Management**  
**Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa**  
**Tel: 015 268 2261, Email: [micheal.khwela@ul.ac.za](mailto:micheal.khwela@ul.ac.za)**

**To:** Limpopo Office of the Premier; Polokwane Local Municipality; Limpopo Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure, and Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

**From:** Dr MN Khwela, Senior Lecturer, Development Planning and Management

**Date:** .....

**Subject: Request to Conduct Field Work for Masters Research Project**

The Masters degree of Development Studies in Planning and Management offered at the University of Limpopo has a Research Project (MDP 011) module wherein students are required to compile a research project using real life experiences. This research project is the prerequisite for a student to complete their qualification. We are requesting that you assist the below mentioned student by granting him permission to conduct field work in your institutions as their area of study. The field work is to be conducted from (Date) to (Date). Please note that the information collected by the student during the field work will solely be used for academic purposes.

**Student Name:** Khutso Piet Lebotsa

**Student Number:** 201622354 (Masters of Development Studies in Planning & Management Student)

**Research Title:** *Enhancing the Employability of Development in Planning and Management Graduates, University of Limpopo.*

Thank you very much

Signed.....

Stamp .....

Dr MN Khwela

Supervisor & Senior Lecturer

Department of Development Planning & Management

**Annexure D:**

P.O Box 345

Glen Cowie

1061

14 March 2022

**To:** Office of the Registrar (University of Limpopo)

**Subject Matter:** Request for Sample Gatekeeping Letter

Good Day,

I am Lebotsa Khutso Piet with student number (201622354), a Master of Development Studies in Planning and Management student, I am hereby requesting a sample gatekeeping letter.

I am proposing to conduct a research study which uses University of Limpopo students and Lecturers from the Department of Development Planning and Management as participants. The proposed research study is titled: *Enhancing the Employability of Development in Planning and Management Graduates, University of Limpopo*. Hence, i am requesting for gatekeepers' permission to use University of Limpopo student as the major participants in the proposed research study. This research study is a prerequisite for one to complete their master's qualification. I am humbly requesting that you grant me permission to conduct field work in your Institution as my area of study. Please note that the information collected from the students during the field work will solely be used for academic purposes.

I hope my request finds you well.

Respectful Regards.

Lebotsa Khutso Piet

201622354 (Master of Development Studies in Planning & Management Student)

072 559 1692



University of Limpopo  
Department of Research Administration and Development  
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa  
Tel: (015) 268 3935, Fax: (015) 268 2306, Email: anastasia.ngobee@ul.ac.za

**TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**  
**ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

MEETING: 29 March 2022

PROJECT NUMBER: TREC/59/2022: PG

**PROJECT:**

**Title:** Enhancing the Employability of Development in Planning and Management Graduates, University of Limpopo  
**Researcher:** KP Lebotsa  
**Supervisor:** Dr. MIN Khwela  
**Co-Supervisor/s:** N/A  
**School:** Economics and Management  
**Degree:** Master of Development Studies in Planning and Management

**PROF. P. MASOKO**  
**CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: REC-0310111-031

- Note:**
- i) This Ethics Clearance Certificate will be valid for one (1) year, as from the abovementioned date. Application for annual renewal (or annual review) need to be received by TREC one month before lapse of this period.
  - ii) Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee, together with the Application for Amendment form.
  - iii) PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.



University of Limpopo  
Office of the Registrar  
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa  
Tel: (015) 268 2407, Fax: (015) 268 3048, Email: [Kwena.Masha@ul.ac.za](mailto:Kwena.Masha@ul.ac.za)/[Retha.Balle@ul.ac.za](mailto:Retha.Balle@ul.ac.za)

06 April 2022

KP Lebotsa

Email: [lebotsakpl@gmail.com](mailto:lebotsakpl@gmail.com)

Dear KP Lebotsa,

**GATEKEEPER PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

**TITLE: ENHANCING THE EMPLOYABILITY OF DEVELOPMENT IN PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT GRADUATES, UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO**

**RESEARCHER: KP Lebotsa**

**SUPERVISOR: Dr. MN Khwela**

**CO-SUPERVISOR/S: N/A**

**SCHOOL: Economics and Management**

**DEGREE: Master of Development Studies in Planning and Management**

Kindly be informed that Gatekeeper permission is granted to you to conduct research at the University of Limpopo entitled: **"Enhancing the Employability of Development in Planning and Management Graduates, University of Limpopo"**.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'JK Masha'.

**PROF. JK MASHA**  
**UNIVERSITY REGISTRAR**

Cc: Prof. RJ Singh: Deputy Vice-Chancellor; Research, Innovation and Partnerships  
Prof. RN Madzhe: Deputy Vice-Chancellor; Teaching and Learning  
Dr. T Mabli: Director; Research Development and Administration  
Prof. P Masoko – Chairperson; Research and Ethics Committee  
Ms M Hlamo – Assistant; Ethics Secretariat  
Ms A Ngobe – TREC Secretariat

*Enabling solutions for Africa*

Annexure G

TO: LEBOTSA KP

FROM: DR T MABILA

CHAIRPERSON: LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL RESEARCH COMMITTEE (LPRC)

ONLINE REVIEW DATE: 21 JULY 2022

**SUBJECT: ENHANCING THE EMPLOYABILITY OF DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND  
MANAGEMENT GRADUATES, UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO  
RESEARCHERS: LEBOTSA KP**

Dear Colleague

The above researcher's research proposal served at the Limpopo Provincial Research Committee (LPRC). The committee is satisfied with the methodological soundness of the proposed study.

**Decision: The research proposal is granted approval**

Regards

Acting Chairperson: Dr T Mabila



Secretariat: Ms J Mokobi



Date: 22/07/2022

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Annexure H

**LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL RESEARCH ETHICS  
COMMITTEE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

Online Review Date: 21 July 2022

Project Number: LPREC/22/2022: PG

**SUBJECT: Enhancing the Employability of Development Planning and Management  
Graduates, University Of Limpopo**

**Researchers: Lebotsa KP**

Dr Theminkosi Mabula



Chairperson: Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee

The Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee (LPREC) is registered with National Health  
Research Council (NHREC) Registration Number REC-11513-038.

**Note:**

- i. This study is categorized as a Low Risk Level in accordance with risk level descriptors as enshrined in LPREC Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
- ii. Should there be any amendment to the approved research proposal, the researcher(s) must re-submit the proposal to the ethics committee for review prior data collection.
- iii. **The researcher(s) must provide annual reporting to the committee as well as the relevant department and also provide the department with the final report/thesis.**
- iv. The ethical clearance certificate is valid for 12 months. Should the need to extend the period for data collection arise then the researcher should renew the certificate through LPREC secretariat. **PLEASE QUOTE THE PROJECT NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.**



**TO: LEBOTSA KP**

**FROM: DR T MABILA**

**CHAIRPERSON: LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (LPREC)**

**ONLINE REVIEW DATE: 21 JULY 2022**

**SUBJECT: ENHANCING THE EMPLOYABILITY OF DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND  
MANAGEMENT GRADUATES, UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO**

**RESEARCHERS: LEBOTSA KP**

Dear Colleague

The above researcher's research proposal served at the Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee (LPRC). The committee is satisfied with the ethical soundness of the proposed study.

**Decision: The research proposal is granted approval and ethical clearance**

Regards

Acting Chairperson: Dr T Mabila



Secretariat: Ms J Mokobi



Date: 21/07/2022

**Annexure J**

REPORT CONTROL SHEET

SUBJECT: Request to conduct research (Khutsa Pet Lebatsa)  
DOCS NUMBER

SECTION A: SUBMISSION BY SBU MANAGER  
SBU: HR Training NAME (AUTHOR): Ms R.E Ramela  
SIGNATURE / SBU MANAGER: [Signature] DATE: 2022/06/28

SECTION B: AUTHORISATION / SUBMISSION BY  
DIRECTORATE: CORPORATE AND SHARED SERVICES  
SIGNATURE / DIRECTOR: [Signature] DATE: 30/06/2022

SECTION C: COMMENTS REQUIRED FROM: (TICK IN APPLICABLE BLOCK)

DIRECTOR: ENGINEERING SERVICES	<input type="checkbox"/>	SIGNATURE: _____	DATE: _____
DIRECTOR: DEVELOPMENT & ECON. PLAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	SIGNATURE: _____	DATE: _____
DIRECTOR: COMMUNITY SERVICES	<input type="checkbox"/>	SIGNATURE: _____	DATE: _____
DIRECTOR: CORP. AND SHARED SERV.	<input type="checkbox"/>	SIGNATURE: _____	DATE: _____
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER	<input type="checkbox"/>	SIGNATURE: _____	DATE: _____
DIRECTOR: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	SIGNATURE: _____	DATE: _____
DIRECTOR: STRAT PLAN. MONITOR. & EVAL	<input type="checkbox"/>	SIGNATURE: _____	DATE: _____
MAN: COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC PART.	<input type="checkbox"/>	SIGNATURE: _____	DATE: _____

SECTION D: SECRETARIAT & ADMINISTRATION  
REG. NO: \_\_\_\_\_ REG. DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ COMMITTEE CLERK: \_\_\_\_\_

SECTION E: MUNICIPAL MANAGER  
APPROVED FOR SUBMISSION: [Signature] DATE: 7/7/2022  
REMARKS: \_\_\_\_\_  
**ALLOCATION TO COMMITTEES**

FINANCE & LED	ENERGY	HOUSING	CULTURE, SPORTS, REC & SPEC. FOCUS	ADMIN & GOV.
WATER & SANITATION	COMMUNITY SAFETY	ROADS, S/WATER & TRANSPORT	WASTE & ENVIRON.	SPATIAL PLAN & DEV
LAND USE MAN.	LOCAL LABOUR FORUM	COUNCIL	MAYORAL COMMITTEE	

APPROVED ITO DELEGATED POWERS \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
MM/ NUMBER ALLOCATED BY CAO - SECRETARIAT \_\_\_\_\_ MM/ \_\_\_\_\_

APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE MAYOR IN TERMS OF DELEGATED POWERS

APPROVED ITO DELEGATED POWERS \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
EM/ NUMBER ALLOCATED BY CAO - SECRETARIAT \_\_\_\_\_ EM/ 1011-01-07

MS. R.E RAMELA (EXT 2344)

DIRECTORATE: CORPORATE AND SHARED SERVICES

ITEM:

FILE REF: # 515557

**REQUEST TO GRANT MR. KHUTSO PIET LEBOTSA PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITHIN POLOKWANE MUNICIPALITY**

**Report of the Director: Corporate and Shared Services**

**Purpose of the Report**

To request the Municipal Manager to grant Mr. Khutso Piet Lebotsa to conduct research at Polokwane Municipality.

**Background and Discussion**

Mr. Khutso Piet Lebotsa sent a letter requesting permission to conduct research at Polokwane Municipality. Research topic is title: "Investigating the employability of Development in Planning and Management Graduates, University of Limpopo"

"A copy of the letter from University of Limpopo"

**Financial Implication**

There is no financial implication.

**Recommend**

1. That approval be granted to Mr. Khutso Piet Lebotsa to conduct research within Polokwane Municipality.
2. That the findings emanating from the research study be shared with the Municipality before they are published.

**REQUEST TO GRANT MR. KHUTSO PIET LEBOTSA PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

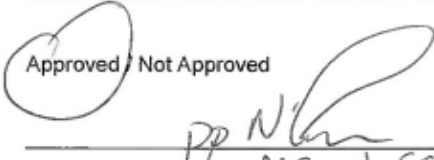
  
MR. J.L. MANYAMA  
HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGER

Recommended / Not Recommended



MRS. M.M. MATSHIVHA  
Director CORPORATE AND SHARED SERVICES

Approved / Not Approved

  
MR. N.R. SELEPE MR N ESSA  
ACTING MUNICIPAL MANAGER

REQUEST TO GRANT MR. KHUTSO PIET LEBOTSA PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

## Annexure K

### UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

Faculty: Humanities  
School: Languages and Communication Studies  
Department: Languages



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12 September 2022

#### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This letter serves to certify that I have edited a dissertation titled: **ENHANCING THE EMPLOYABILITY OF DEVELOPMENT IN PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT GRADUATES, UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO** by **Khutso Piet Lebotsa**. I am an Associate Member of the Professional Editors' Guild in South Africa.

I trust you will find the editing quality in order.

Best regards

*Sebola, M*

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MOFFAT SEBOLA