

UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND



**THE PERCEPTIONS OF SELECTED EMPLOYERS ON THE EMPLOYABILITY
OF UNIZULU GRADUATES: A CASE STUDY OF UMHLATHUZE LOCAL
MUNICIPALITY**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION**

**in the department of
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

**in the faculty of
COMMERCE, ADMINISTRATION AND LAW**

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April 2021

DECLARATION

STUDENT NUMBER: 20012533

I, Phakamile Pamela Mbatha, declare that the dissertation entitled: *The perception of local employers on the employability of UniZulu graduates: A case study of uMhlathuze Local Municipality*, is my work and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. It has been submitted for the degree of Master of Public Administration at the University of Zululand. It has not been submitted for any degree in any other university.

CANDIDATE SIGNATURE

Date: April 2021

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude and warm appreciation to the following people who greatly contributed and assisted me in this research.

To my Sovereign God, the Almighty Father who gave me life, strength and courage to pursue this study.

To my supervisor, Dr N.N. Jili, for her guidance, patience, constructive criticism and inspirational supervision throughout the period of my research. Her confidence in me gave me courage and enabled me to complete this study, I am truly grateful.

To all participants in the study who sacrificed their time in the interviews. This work would not have been fruitful without their contribution during the data collection process.

To my colleagues, Mr. L.J. Khathi, Mr. H.H. Janse van Vuuren, and Mr. L.N Mapatagane, for their encouragement and support throughout my degree, many thanks.

To my friend, Nokubonga Dlamini, and my little sister, Slindile Khumalo, for their inspiration and support throughout my study journey.

Many thanks to my lovely family, Clement, Mawande, Nkosenhle and Nongcebo for their exceptional understanding and patience during my study. Their love and support did not go unnoticed.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved family, my mom, Mrs Millicent N. Mlambo, my husband, Clement, my beloved sons, Mawande and Nkosenhle, and to my beloved daughter, Nongcebo for their support and prayers throughout this journey. May this be the reminder of my love to them, and that learning never ends.

ABSTRACT

Graduate unemployment is a growing problem in South Africa, and one reason is that there is a gap between higher education and the world of work. To close this gap, it is important to get the voice of the employers to understand what their needs are. Yearly, the university is doing its best to prepare its graduates for the working world. The employers' views will inform the policy makers of the university on how to improve the university and best prepare its graduates for employment. The study explored the perceptions of local employers on the employability of University of Zululand (UniZulu) graduates.

The study is a work of qualitative research which intends to make meaning of and recognise patterns among words so as to come up with a meaningful picture without compromising its importance and dimensionality (De Vos et al., 2011), (Leung, 2015). Data were collected using semi-structured interviews (which are the most commonly used interviews for data collection in the field of social science (Evans, 2018), with employers of different selected local companies in the uMhlathuze Local Municipality. 14 participants were interviewed from five companies, including uMhlathuze local municipality, Tronox South Africa, the Premier Hotel (Richards Bay), and two schools: uNgoye High School and Mantshangula Primary School. Data were transcribed, categorised and presented as themes with verbatim quotes from participants. Pseudonyms were used to protect participants' identity and to ensure confidentiality.

Findings of the study reveal that UniZulu graduates are employable, but there are some challenges that might hinder other employers from employing more graduates. Findings suggest that there is a disconnection between the university and the world of work. Employers also aired their views about more students choosing the same programmes of study while there is a shortage of graduates in other specialisations like maths, science and technology. Amongst others, the attitude of graduates; practical exposure and the university's image were identified as hindrances to UniZulu graduates' employability. Recommendations from the findings were to build or strengthen partnership between the university and industry to bridge the gap. A suggestion for designing a curriculum that meets employers' needs was made. Findings indicate that graduates must make

themselves visible to employers by volunteering for work, in-service training and other activities to enhance their employability.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
CHAPTER ONE	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY	1
1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT	3
1.4 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES	4
1.4.1 Research objectives	4
1.4.2 Research questions	4
1.5 DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA	4
1.6 CONTRIBUTION TO THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE	5
1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	5
1.7.1 Purposive sampling	5
1.7.2 Research design and data collection	6
1.7.3 Data analysis	7
1.8 ETHICAL AND SAFELY ISSUES	7
1.9 DATA QUALITY CONTROL	7
1.9.1 Content Validity	7
1.9.2 Credibility	7
1.9.3 External Reliability	8
1.10 RESOURCES	8
1.11 FEASIBILITY	8
1.12 KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION	8
1.13 CHAPTER OUTLINES	9
CHAPTER TWO	10
LITERATURE REVIEW	10
2.1 INTRODUCTION	10
2.2 Definition of terms	11
2.2.1 Employability	11
2.2.2 Graduate	12
2.2.3 Graduate employment	12
	vi

2.2.4 Unemployed person	12
2.3 INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION	12
2.6 EMPLOYABILITY OF GRADUATES IN THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION	14
2.7 EMPLOYABILITY: EMPLOYER’S VS HIGHER INSTITUTION RESPONSIBILITY	15
2.8 FACTORS PROMOTING EMPLOYABILITY OF GRADUATES	16
2.8.1 Partnership with industry	16
2.8.2 Curriculum that meets employers’ needs	16
2.8.4 Mentorship	18
2.10 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO GRADUATE UNEMPLOYMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA	20
2.10.1 Work readiness	21
2.10.2 Graduate choosiness	22
2.10.3 Institutional image	22
2.10.4 Skills mismatch	23
2.11 GRADUATES SKILLS TRANSITION	24
2.12 STRATEGY FOR ATTRACTING GRADUATES	25
2.12.1 Social networking site (SNS)	25
2.13.3 Employer demand versus university supply	26
2.13 EMPLOYERS’ PERCEPTIONS ON EMPLOYABILITY OF GRADUATES	28
2.14 TRANSITION FROM UNIVERSITY TO WORLD OF WORK	30
2.16 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	31
2.17 SUMMARY	33
CHAPTER THREE	34
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	34
3.1 INTRODUCTION	34
3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM	34
3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN	35
3.4 RESEARCH SITE/STUDY AREA	36
3.5 TARGET POPULATION AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES	36
Target population	38
3.6 DESCRIPTION OF DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS AND PROCEDURES	38
3.6.1 Semi-structured interviews	38
3.6.2 Telephonic and face-to-face interviews	39
3.7 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION	39

3.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS AND CREDIBILITY	40
3.8.1 Credibility	40
3.8.2 Transferability	41
3.8.3 Confirmability	41
3.8.4 Dependability	41
3.8.5 Validity	42
3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION AND PROCEDURES	42
3.10 LIMITATIONS	43
CHAPTER FOUR	45
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION	45
4.1 INTRODUCTION	45
4.2 DATA ANALYSIS	47
4.3 THEME 1 - EMPLOYABILITY OF UNIZULU GRADUATES	49
4.3.1 Employers/ perceptions on employability	51
4.3.3 Program choice	52
4.3.4 Attitude of graduates	53
4.4 THEME 2. CHALLENGES THAT HINDER EMPLOYABILITY OF UNIZULU GRADUATES	53
4.4.1 Limited curriculum	54
4.4.2 Financial challenges	55
4.4.3 Partnership with the employment industry	55
4.4.4 Practical exposure	57
4.4.5 Institutional image	58
4.5 THEME 3 - EMPLOYMENT STRATEGIES	59
4.5.1 Database	59
4.5.2 In-service training and training programmes	60
4.6 THEME 4 - POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO MAKE UNIZULU GRADUATES EMPLOYABLE	62
4.6.1 Improve image of the institution	63
4.6.2 University should sell itself	64
4.6.3 Working relationship between the Institution and industry	65
4.6.4 Practical experience	66
4.6.5 Improve curriculum to suit the needs of the employer	67
4.6.6 Skills gap	68
4.6.7 Closing the gap between the university and the working world	69
4.7.3 Self-employment	73

4.7.4 Change of attitude	73
CHAPTER FIVE	75
SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	75
5.1 INTRODUCTION	75
5.2 SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS	75
5.2.1 To assess the perceptions of employers on the employability of UNIZULU graduates	75
• Curriculum	76
• Attitude	76
5.2.2 To identify challenges that hinder employers from employing more UniZulu graduates	77
• Financial challenge	77
• Partnership with companies	77
• Institutional location	78
5.2.3 To identify strategies used by employers to attract more UniZulu graduates	78
5.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY	79
5.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	80
5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH	81
5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS	82
5.7 CONCLUSION	84
ANNEXURE B – REQUEST TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH	95
ANNEXURE C – PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH (uMHLATHUZE)	97
ANNEXURE D – REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH (DoE)	98
ANNEXURE E – PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH (DoE)	103
ANNEXURE F – PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH – TRONOX SOUTH AFRICA	104
APPENDIX G – APPLICATION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH (THE PREMIER)	105
ANNEXURE I – INFORMED CONSENT (RESEARCHER)	108
ANNEXURE J – INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION (PARTICIPANT)	109
ANNEXURE K - INTERVIEW SCHEDULE	111

List of Tables

Source: Table 1 -Sampling	38
Table 2 - presentation of objectives (themes and sub-themes)	46
Table 3 - Participants companies and thier Pseudonyms	47

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Graduate unemployment is a rising issue in South Africa, and it's one of the issues that higher education researchers are currently addressing (Hwang, 2017). One cause of this issue is that there is a disconnect between higher education and the workplace. To close this gap, it is important to get the employers to understand what their needs are. Every year the universities are doing their best to prepare their graduates for the working world. The employers' views will inform the policy makers of the universities on how to improve the universities and best prepare their graduates for employment. This study explored the perception of local employers on the employability of UniZulu graduates.

Unemployment is a crisis that affects some countries, but the rate in South Africa, in the past few years has been growing noticeably, and is a serious concern, (Baldry, 2016; Vinichenko et al., 2016). Even those holding a qualification are affected by unemployment, hence the attention to graduate unemployment that has been on the rise has drawn some scholars attention (du Toit et al., 2014; Sin and Amaral, 2017a). While graduate unemployment in South Africa is estimated to be low when compared to youth unemployment, it still exhibits unfavorable trends (Baldry, 2016). Graduates are the hope for uplifting the economy of the country, and therefore it is important to dig deeper on working towards enhancing the employability of graduates. The purpose of education is broad, but employers are the important stakeholders in the universities' product and therefore it is important to get their opinion on the employability of graduates (Baldry, 2016).

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Sumanarishi et al.,(2015) and Sin and Neave (2016) point out that for students, employability is the core reason for pursuing higher education. Universities, according to Harry et al. (2018), are often viewed as a way of raising society out of poverty, and are thus important for economic and social growth, as well as meeting the needs of the knowledge economy. The rate of graduate unemployment is rising as more graduates obtain their qualifications from

universities yearly with limited jobs in the market. Statistics South Africa (2019) reported that the expanded unemployment rate increased by 0,5 of a percentage, rising from 38,0% in Q1 2019 to 38,5% in Q2 2019, and when compared to Q2: 2018, the expanded unemployment rate increased by 0,1 % in Q3 2018, a rise to 37,3%. The report also mentioned that young graduates are normally more than twice as likely to be unemployed (11,9%) than South African adult graduates (4,4%). According to Statistics South Africa (2019), the unemployment rate is the proportion of the labour force, while employed persons are those aged between 15–64 years who did any work for at least one hour, or had a job or business.

The above graph shows that of those graduates who are unemployed, only 2% are graduates. There are different reasons for individuals to go to university: for some it is because they love education, or it is the interest they have in the subject that they intend to study, while others are motivated by friends or family members; but for young South Africans, it is because they want to get a proper job and earn an appreciable income.

Employability is defined by Dhanawade et al. (2012) as the individual's ability to understand how to gain the personal attributes to attain employability according to what employers demand. Universities are expected to enhance the employability of their graduates by providing them with skills and knowledge that employers value and reward (Harry et al., 2018). They are increasingly in charge of generating employable graduates who can contribute indirectly to a knowledge-based economy (Archer & Chetty, 2013). A disconnect between the university and the world of work is the problem that affects the employability of graduates, and therefore, is it important for both stakeholders to consider working together.

Employers are important stakeholders for the universities and graduates. Employers, according to Sin and Neave (2016), are a group of stakeholders at the receiving end of the educational process who have no control over the universities' internal operations but are assertive in terms of jobs. Local employers' disclosure on employability of UniZulu graduates will provide important information that can advise the institution on their policies and strategic decisions.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to the Statistics South Africa (2018) survey, youth unemployment is a significant issue, regardless of educational level. The problem of unemployment continues to be an issue for the institutions and the country at large. In South Africa, graduate unemployment has been reported by many writers (Oluwajodu et al., 2015; Baldry, 2016; Finch et al., 2016; Mncayi, 2016; Menon et al., 2018) as a crisis that affects more and more people. The Statistics South Africa report of the first quarter of 2019 reported that 33.5% of youth graduates and non-graduates were unemployed. Although a university degree is often seen as a way of lifting graduates and communities out of poverty, an increase in the unemployment rate has led many graduates to lose confidence that they will be able to find jobs after graduation (Chris, 2015).

The perception of employers on the employability of graduates has very limited literature in South Africa, and there was no literature found looking at the perception of employers on the employability of UniZulu graduates. Gaining specific information around UniZulu graduates can assist the institution to make policy changes to improve the university. Getting the voice of employers is important since it will answer questions about their expectations when employing UniZulu graduates. Graduates are facing difficulty in finding jobs. However, the demand for post-secondary education is increasing (Finch et al., 2016). This highlights another reason to assess the perceptions of employers on the employability of graduates. UniZulu, like all universities, is yearly producing more graduates with the hope of contributing to the economy of the country. In the year 2019, about 4000 graduates received their qualifications during the graduation ceremonies. With the current graduate unemployment rate, this list is adding to the huge pool of unemployed graduates.

Graduate employability has moved to the forefront of higher education institutions' (HEIs) agendas, according to Sin and Neave (2016). Employability is also a top priority for students, and it is the primary reason they pursue higher education. Sin and Neave (2016) made a claim that getting a degree is no longer enough, but instead one must be an employable graduate – one must fit into the labour market.

Although a qualification is obviously important, institutions, graduates and government must look beyond it, and consider other things that will make a graduate employable.

1.4 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The main aim of this study is to explore the perceptions of potential employers towards the employability of UniZulu graduates.

1.4.1 Research objectives

To assess the perceptions of employers on the employability of UniZulu graduates.

To determine the challenges that hinder employers from employing more UniZulu graduates.

To examine the methods used by potential employers to attract UniZulu unemployed graduates.

To suggest possible solutions/recommendations to enhance the employability of graduates.

1.4.2 Research questions

How do employers perceive the employability of UniZulu graduates?

How do employers describe the challenges that might prevent employers from employing UniZulu graduates?

What are the methods used by employers to attract unemployed graduates from UniZulu?

Are there any possible solutions/recommendations to enhance the employability of graduates of UniZulu?

1.5 DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA

UMhlatuze local municipality, covers areas like Richards Bay, Empangeni, KwaDlangezwa, Esikhawini and uMhlatuze. It has the fastest growing hub in South Africa (Kato, 2017; Izagaegbe et al., 2020;). The study was conducted at the Richards Bay, Empangeni and KwaDlangezwa areas in northern KZN. These areas are assumed to have better employment opportunities because of

surrounding industries, and since UniZulu is the only university under uMhlathuze Municipality, with two campuses (Richards Bay and KwaDlangezwa).

1.6 CONTRIBUTION TO THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

Several scholars (Oluwajodu et al., 2015; Amani, 2017; Clarke, 2018; Shivoro et al., 2018), have conducted studies on graduates' employability. Scholars have researched on many areas around unemployment in South Africa but none of these studies have looked at the perception of employers on the employability of UniZulu graduates. The main aim of the study is to find suggestions or possible solutions that can assist to enhance the employability of UniZulu graduates. This study revealed the challenges that hinder employers from employing UniZulu graduates. These can relate to what is missing from graduates or what the institution is not paying attention to. It is assumed that the employer is concerned about getting the new employee to contribute to productivity. Graduates, on the other hand, assume that they are well prepared for employment. Getting the employers' views will assist a lot to ensure work-ready graduates.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.7.1 Purposive sampling

The researcher used non-probability sampling, which is defined by Etikan and Bala (2017) as a sampling method that does not provide a basis for any view of the likelihood that elements from the universe would be included in the sample under investigation. The purposeful sampling design used by the researcher in this analysis is a purposive sampling design. A purposeful sampling design is described as one that is focused on the researcher's judgment as to who is best suited to provide data for the study's goal (Etikan and Bala, 2017). Purposeful sampling, according to Palinkas et al. (2013), is a commonly used tool in qualitative research with the objective of defining and selecting information-rich cases related to the research subject. This entails locating and choosing individuals or groups of individuals who are informed or experienced about a subject of interest. Certain employers that were selected on the assumption that they had previously employed or were still to employ UniZulu graduates, and therefore would be able to provide relevant and specific information. They were

selected based on their experience. The researcher hoped that they could provide information on how are they perceived the employability of UniZulu graduates.

Every year, UniZulu graduates about 4000 students from four faculties: The Faculty of Arts, the Faculty of Commerce, Administration and Law, the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Science and Agriculture. The study intended to cover a sample of employers that employs graduates from all four faculties, and therefore employers from different selected companies and industries were interviewed (see Table 1) in the hope of finding employers that (as has been mentioned above) had employed or would employ UniZulu graduates. In this study, the selection of participants depended on a potential participant's importance, availability; experience; knowledge and willingness to participate.

1.7.2 Research design and data collection

A quantitative approach was used in this analysis, a semi-structured interview model where a one-on-one interview technique would be used. Qualitative interviews, according to Creswell (2014:294), are interviews in which a researcher gathers data face-to-face, over the phone, on the internet, or in focus groups of six or eight participants. Unstructured and open-ended questions are used in these interviews to evoke views and perspectives from the participants. This research methodology, according to Creswell, is an approach to researching and analyzing the importance that individuals or groups ascribe to a human social problem. The analysis strategy involves a fluid set of questions and data-gathering procedures (Creswell, 2014). The researcher conducted interviews with selected people as she believed that selected participants would have an in-depth knowledge of the employability of UniZulu graduates, and that the selected employers had previously employed or would employ UniZulu graduates. For this study, specific and general themes were developed for data analysis. The potential employers for this study were Mantshangula Primary School, uMhlathuze local municipality, Ngoye High School, the Premier Hotel (Richards Bay) and Tronox South Africa.

1.7.3 Data analysis

Qualitative data were collected through in-depth interview, audio recording were taken during interviews, and transcripts were made thereafter. Copies of the transcript were verified with the participants before the report was taken back to the participants for verification of data captured. Before the report was compiled, content analysis was used to analyse data. NVIVO 12 Plus Software data analysis was used for coding, interpreting and retrieving data. Themes and subthemes were created, and the report was written from them.

1.8 ETHICAL AND SAFELY ISSUES

The University of Zululand Ethics Committee approved the researcher's application for ethical clearance. Researcher got permissions from the relevant authorities that permit research data collection at the employers' site. Permission would be required before data collection phase. Participants were given a chance to declare their consent to participate in the study. Participation was voluntarily and the responses were anonymous, individual names were not used but Pseudo codes were used by doing that the researcher was making sure that participants' identification was protected. The study had no harm to human, animals and the environment.

1.9 DATA QUALITY CONTROL

1.9.1 Content Validity

To ensure the validity of this research, the research instrument was subjected to the review of experts in the field of study, and particularly the research supervisor. This expert review and scrutiny ensured that the right questions would be directed at respondents to elicit only relevant data sufficient to answer the questions set out in this study and achieve the research objectives (Guba, Egong and Lincoln, (1994).

1.9.2 Credibility

Refers to the truth of data and how it was interpreted and represented by the researcher (Cope, 2014). To ensure the credibility of this research, the research instrument was subjected to discussion with and approval from the supervisor, Department and Faculty (Egong G Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

1.9.3 External Reliability

External validity is based on the question of whether the findings of the initial study would be the same if it were repeated. To ensure external validity, the researcher followed Mustapha's (2013) advice of clarifying the researcher's status and role in relation to the respondents. In addition, the researcher must identify the respondents' social circumstances and environments in terms of their backgrounds and skills.

1.10 RESOURCES

Data were collected around the Richards Bay, Empangeni and KwaDlangezwa. Travelling was done during data collecting, and in-depth interviews were conducted. Audio transcription to electronic copy for data analysis was done, the final report printed and distributed to relevant stakeholders.

1.11 FEASIBILITY

There was a need for funding when the researcher went to collect data, but the researcher intended to fund the research, if necessary, from her own pocket. Nothing would stop the research from taking place as there was a crucial need for such research in the institution.

1.12 KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION

This study was intended to contribute to the body of knowledge for the University of Zululand and many other institutions. It would be available at the University Library and the Faculty of Commerce and Law, and would be shared among various institutional bodies, so that the institution would have a complete picture about what local employers perceived on the employability of its graduates. The study would also be disseminated to the participants for feedback purposes. This would possibly generate new ideas about the perception of the selected local employers on the employability of UniZulu graduates. The work in this study would also be presented at relevant conferences and published in accredited academic journal.

1.13 CHAPTER OUTLINES

The following chapters make up this research study: introduction, literature review, research methodology, data presentation, examination and interpretation, and discussion of observations, conclusions, and recommendations.

Chapter One [Orientation of the study]

This chapter gives a broad overview of the project, focusing on the problem statement, goals, research issues, inspiration for the study, its meaning, and the description of key concepts, among other things.

Chapter Two [Literature review]

This chapter discusses previous and relevant research studies on graduate employability, as well as the study's theoretical context. The role of an institution of higher learning, the employability of graduates, factors promoting employability, graduate skills transition, and a strategy to attract unemployed graduates were outlined.

Chapter Three [Research methodology]

The study's research methodology is presented in this chapter. The chosen paradigm and architecture, as well as sampling, data collection methods, data interpretation, and ethical considerations, are all included.

Chapter Four [Data presentation, analysis and Interpretation]

This chapter addresses the study's main findings, which are grouped by the study's objectives. It focuses on data presentation, data analysis and data interpretation.

Chapter Five [Summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations]

The results of the study are presented in this chapter in accordance with the study's goals. Following a thorough examination of the data, relevant conclusions and recommendations are drawn.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews related studies on the employability of graduates in South Africa. The researcher reviewed the literature to identify gaps in the above-mentioned sources. By doing so she was able to fill the gaps identified in the literature, and the weaknesses of previous scholarly studies were attended to. This chapter will review relevant literature for the study-focusing on the factors that promote employability, the challenges faced by employers when employing graduates, the employment strategies, and different perceptions of employers on graduates' employability.

Data indicate that, as compared to the fourth quarter of each year, youth unemployment rises in the first quarter of each year. This is most popular among newcomers to the labor market. In the first quarter of 2019, the majority (85,7%) of young unemployed graduates between the ages of 15 and 24 were found to be new entrants into the labor market. The others have either lost their former work, quit their previous employer, or were reapplying for the job, making them re-entrants (StatsSA, 2019). Such challenges of unemployment are affecting more young graduates. Mncayi (2016), indicates that unemployment is a serious threat to long-term economic growth. UniZulu, like all universities, is yearly producing more graduates in the hope of contributing to the economy of the country. In the year 2019, about 4000 graduates received their degrees, and this list is adding to the huge pool of unemployed graduates.

Graduate employability, according to Sin and Neave (2016), has become a top priority for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Employability is also a significant motivator for students to pursue higher education. They claim that being just a graduate is no longer enough, but instead one must be an employable graduate. This shows that although a qualification is important, institutions, graduates and

government must look beyond it, and consider things that will make a graduate employable.

A huge rise in graduate unemployment from 1996 and 2005, as well as the extent to which new graduates entering the labour market hold different skills than those demanded by the employers (van Broekhuizen, (2016), are considered to be basic challenges that are contributing in the unemployment of young graduates. This poses a challenge to the curriculum that might need to adjust to the current economic challenge.

2.2 Definition of terms

2.2.1 Employability

According to (Harvey, 2001; Hillage and Plland, 1998; and Kinash et al., 2015), employability is the ability to find and keep satisfying work; it is the ability to travel independently within the labor market in order to realize capacity through long-term jobs. Qualifications, expertise, experience, and personal qualities are some of these capabilities needed to keep a job and switch between jobs within the same specialization. Employability was described by Tran (2016a) as the types of skills, expertise, attributes, and understanding required for graduates to enter the labor market, obtain and retain jobs, and advance in their careers.

Employers, according to Amani (2017), are looking for people who can demonstrate a variety of applicable knowledge and skills, as well as adaptive behaviors that will allow them to succeed in a new and often challenging work environment. In his definition, Dhanawade (2012) added that employability skills can be applied across different types of job and in the context of life. Such skills can be learned from paid jobs and from formal education such as that at universities. They are used in the job itself to support socially situated activities such as recreation and learning. Dhanawade (2012) advocates the acquisition and development of employability skills throughout their professional and life-long lessons. Skills, personal characteristics, essential skills, key competencies, required skills, and transferable skills – these abilities are referred to as skills, core skills, life skills, generic, personal, essential skills, key competencies, necessary

skills, and transferable skills. Employability, according to Sarkar et al. (2016), is defined as the ability to find, secure, and retain jobs. He defines it as something that enables companies to be able to improve and ensure productivity and income-earning prospects.

2.2.2 Graduate

Graduate is defined by Oluwajodu et al., (2015); van Broekhuizen and van der Berg (2015) as someone who has a bachelor's degree from a higher educational institution. For this study, the researcher only looked at employers that have employed or will employ graduates that have studied and graduated at UniZulu.

2.2.3 Graduate employment

Kinash et al. (2015) define graduate employability as the means that shows that higher education alumni have gained the capacity to obtain and/or create work. They defined graduate employability as having the knowledge, skills, and personality traits required to perform well in a graduate-level job, not only for themselves but also for the benefit of the labor force, the nation, and the economy.

2.2.4 Unemployed person

In this study, unemployed person refers to someone who is without work, who is currently available for work, and is seeking to work (Barker,1999).

2.3 INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The nature of the principle of graduate employability shows a belief that higher education should create people who are ready for the workforce (Sin and Amaral, 2017a). Jackson and Bridgstock (2020) stated that universities are the brokers of job opportunities. Graduates that higher education produces must be able to understand and respond to the demands of the working world. According to Sin and Amaral (2017a), this should be addressed by making changes in some activities like curriculum and other measures within study programmes. Higher education must be aware of what the countries challenges are and how to respond to them. Msila (2007), defines education as a device for transformation that empowers learners for effective citizenship and individual enrichment. Education is referred as the core responsibility of HEI's. HEIs are expected to help these

enquiring minds to gain the skills, knowledge and attributes that they will need when they take up their careers (Bennett et al.,2015). Governments, according to Ndebele and Ndlovu (2019), have placed pressure on higher education institutions to increase human capital by improving graduate employability. HEIs are also expected to respond to the societal needs of the country. They have a mission to foster young inquiring minds, feed them with the knowledge to change the world to a better place (Cameron Roslyn, 2018; Mittelman, 2016), with this in mind, HEIs cannot operate in isolation; employers, government and HEIs must work together.

Employers are the recipients from the HEIs. According to Roslyn-Cameron (2018), employer's and HEIs are the two main stakeholders in preparing job-ready graduates. Employer programs require involvement in activities carried out by higher education institutions aimed at easing students' adjustment to the labor market, as the needs of society must be addressed. Research on graduate outcomes has recently gained noteworthy attention from the national government, university management, employers and students themselves (Fongwa, 2018). As mentioned above, all stakeholders are expected to play a role to prepare graduates for employment, Tran (2016). Graduates are the hope for the future of the country; they are also expected by all stakeholders, including government, employers, and society to bring light, hope and change to the economy, while for families, they are expected to alleviate poverty (Higgins and Porcaro (2013).

2.4 EMPLOYABILITY OF GRADUATES IN SOUTH AFRICA

According to the *World Economic Forum Human Capital Report* (Schwab, (2015), South Africa is ranked 114th for its ease of seeking eligible workers. Graduate unemployment in South Africa is also found not to be distinct from other nations when one looks at various variables such as ethnicity, gender, social class, etc.

According to Statistics South Africa (2019), jobs in South Africa increased by 0.2% (25 000) in comparison to the previous year, while unemployment increased by 9.4%. (573 000). In the third quarter of 2019 unemployment increased by 1,4%, taking unemployment from 39,0% to 40,4%, Statistics South Africa (2019) defines unemployed persons as those between the ages of 15 and 64 who are: not currently employed, but actively looking for work, or have been trying to start a business or get a job in the past four weeks.

2.5 SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT

The Government in South Africa has in many ways tried to deal with economic challenges of the country. The National Economic Development and Labour Council was established in 1994 terms of the National Economic Development and Labour Council Act and operates in terms of its own constitution. The Act requires organized labor, organized business, community-based organizations, and the government to work together to promote economic growth, participate in economic decision-making, and promote social equity. It also requires them to seek consensus and reach agreements on social and economic policy issues, as well as to consider all proposed labor legislation relating to labor market policy on social economic matters (South Africa. Department of Employment and Labour, 2021).

Graduates unemployment and job loss in South Africa put a lot of economic pressure to the government. Instead of an individual to contribute to the economy, the person ends up relying on the funding from the government to live. The South Africa labour Law gives a person who is no longer employed a right to claim for a living from the government, (South Africa, 2002).

2.6 EMPLOYABILITY OF GRADUATES IN THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

South Africa is no different from what the working world globally demands. Graduates are expected to come out of HEIs ready to adapt to fast-changing and growing technology. It is true that the recent growth in the use of the internet has significantly changed the way people do things – think, interact with each other, conduct businesses, seek employment, make relationships, find partners, do their shopping and so much more.

Despite the growth of the graduate labor force, graduate unemployment in South Africa appears to be increasing in lockstep with the overall unemployment rate, according to Oluwajodu (2015). According to Statistics South Africa (2019), the country's unemployment rate dropped by 1% in the fourth quarter of 2017. According to the survey, youth unemployment is higher regardless of their

educational level. Graduate unemployment was 33.5% for those between the ages of 15 and 24, and 10.2% for those between the ages of 25 and 34. (Statistics South Africa, 2018). This level of unemployment affects the country as a whole, especially graduates.

2.7 EMPLOYABILITY: EMPLOYER'S VS HIGHER INSTITUTION RESPONSIBILITY

The nature of the principle of graduate employability shows a belief that higher education should create workers who are ready to work (Sin and Amaral, 2017a). According to Mittelman (2016) and Chadha and Toner (2017), HEIs have got a responsibility to ensure that they take into account the employability of their students, as a core performance indicator for the institution, (Chadha and Toner, 2017; Mittelman, 2016). They view universities as important to the world since they are responsible for the transmission of civilizational values from generation to generation. Universities play a crucial role as repositories of cumulative knowledge and transmitters of new knowledge (Chadha and Toner, 2017; Mittelman, 2016) These scholars mentioned that Inasmuch as universities are expected to play such an important role in the world, they cannot be disconnected from the working world to address the employability of graduates. Universities' purpose and mission has to be aligned to what the working world requires. Various stakeholders are expected to play a role in contributing to graduates' employability (Chadha and Toner, 2017). According to Sin and Amaral (2017a), though all are expected to play a role in the growth of student employability, higher education stands out as the primary driver. Employers and academics argue in a survey conducted by Sin and Amaral (2017b) that it is the duty of higher education to train students, and that they should assume a high level of accountability in the jobs of graduates. Their findings revealed that there is a need to improve the level of cooperation between HEIs and employers. They point out that higher education bears a significant amount of responsibility for producing employable graduates, while employers are less dedicated to employability imperatives and less interested at the program level (internships and visits to institutions).

2.8 FACTORS PROMOTING EMPLOYABILITY OF GRADUATES

2.8.1 Partnership with industry

According to Tran (2016a), a relationship between universities and industry is crucial to 'bring the labour market' into the teaching space. He mentions that if graduate employability is assessed and debated without input from and partnership with industry, universities are less able to strengthen their vocational operation of training and preparing students for the world of work. Cai (2013) acknowledges that universities and employers have different interests and motives, as a result, the process of communication and relationship formation cannot be simple at first.

For the relationship to succeed, policymakers and leaders on both sides will need to recognize the critical position of employers' opinions on educational outcomes, as well as an appreciation of the processes that underpin the production of employers' opinions. Moore and Morton (2017) mention that a relationship between the universities and industrial enterprises is new to some universities, yet it is still developing in others. They highlight that the partnership, if substantial, will help in shaping universities curricula. Research by Beretu (2018) also acknowledges that there is a need for industries and HEIs to come to an agreement as to what will be required by industries in terms of employing graduates so that universities can train graduates accordingly. Employers are assumed to know about the skills needed in the workplace. They are the ones who understand the work environment and its demands better than other stakeholders like students and government. As a result, it is critical for higher education institutions to include prospective employers as guest speakers, facilitators, and consultants in academic leadership courses. Such opportunities will enable students to link course content to the real world while still at university, as well as provide opportunities to network with employers and learn early about the importance of employable skills in the workplace (Arensdorf, 2009).

2.8.2 Curriculum that meets employers' needs

A university curriculum, according to Mthembu (2019), needs to be reviewed regularly in order to keep up with the job market developments and demands, which will be achieved by producing well-equipped and highly competent

graduates. Harry, Chinyamurindi and Mjoli (2018) also highlight that curriculum is a major factor that leads to graduates work readiness.

Jackson and Bridgstock (2020) further the argument by discussing the embedded practices related to employability as those practices incorporated into curricula as components of the learning of students that may form part of their evaluation. Normally the university facilitates co-curricular activities, but sits outside the formal course of study of the students, which is mostly planned and delivered by central resources, such as career provision. According to Teng (2019), it is important for universities to incorporate soft skills into their curricula in order to improve graduate student readiness. In his results, Cai (2013) states that it is the duty of universities to inform employers about their curriculum, students, and the quality of education they offer. He suggests that this can be done by inviting employers to participate in reviewing curricula, and in their subsequent development, and by securing internship places for the students (Cai, 2013). Prabhu (2011) suggests that employability skills need to be embedded in the curriculum, not only in one or few modules. This will help prepare graduates to experience the working world while at university.

Kraak (2010) states that the system of South African higher education allows some professional and nonprofessional programmes or degrees to offer work placement and practical experience. Usually these programmes are embedded as an integral part of the institutional curriculum, and undertaken before graduation. Findings from Mthembu (2019) show that there is an imbalance between theory and practice in offered curricula. He highlights that not all learners in these programmes are sponsored by their prospective employer, but some are, and will continue to work for that employer after obtaining their qualification (Kraak, 2010). Some employers feel unnoticed by HEIs, and those who serve on university committees believe that their input on curriculum development is overlooked (Lowden et al., 2011).

2.8.3 Career guidance

One of the challenges that students have when they approach HEIs for studying is the shortage of information on the career they are aiming for. Technological

advances brought changes in human life style, new careers requiring new skills and attitudes are always developing that require career counselling to keep abreast of such changes so that it remain relevant, (Maree, 2010). Baldry (2016) mentions that if career guidance is done taking into account the needed of graduates, it can influence employment prospects of graduates. They get to university without a clear understanding of what to study, then they end up taking anything they will be admitted for, (Aungamuthu and Vigar-Ellis, 2017). This becomes a problem for graduates when they are looking for employment. Some graduates do not really know why they studied what they studied. There are degree programmes which very few students know what they are enrolling for; example, Education, Nursing and Law. Career guidance is important – it serves as a link between the HEI and potential employers in terms of graduates' employment. According to Lowden et al. (2011), the careers service across the HEIs covered by this research acts as the main driver in the institutions concerning efforts to liaise with employers. If careers are encouraged, it will promote periodic input from employers and their graduate recruiters, particularly in providing careers information and advice on campus and at careers events (Lowden et al., (2011). According to Cai (2013), universities' career services activities should be geared not only toward students but also toward employers.

2.8.4 Mentorship

Mentorship is perceived to be one of the most needed but neglected factors that promote employability of graduates. the mentor/mentee relationship is identified as one of the predictors of the success of graduate (Ratajack, (2020). In mentorship, the student is given a chance to meet people who have walked the journey and can support and guide in terms of experience and knowledge that they have gained in the job. Mentorship, according to Jackson, Milos, and Kerr (2019), helps students develop their soft skills by providing them with an appreciation of business and professions outside of academia.

2.9 EMPLOYERS DEMAND VS GRADUATE SUPPLY

2.9.1 Competencies

Employers place a greater emphasis on job security, interesting work material, opportunities for advancement, and a comfortable working atmosphere, according to Hsuan (2015). Students want good pay, good benefits, and job reputation, while employers place a greater emphasis on job security, interesting work content, opportunities for advancement, and a comfortable working environment. Hsuan argues that this is one of the differences that can lead to most graduates being unemployed. Employers are mostly interested in graduates who have built the capacity to integrate key resources and to reuse them. This is shown by the focus employers place on demonstrating that through pre-application integration activities, such as internship or co-op experiences, students have started improving these skills (Finch et al., 2016).

According to Weligamage and Siengthai (2003) employers have their expectation of new employees, the list of skills needed by employers from a new employee are listed below:

1. Time management: The ability to manage several tasks at once, to set priorities and allocate time effectively in order to meet multiple deadlines.
2. Self-understanding: The ability to know about strengths and personal characteristics.
3. Learning skills: The ability to learn effectively from a wide range of sources including competencies such as learning what matters, organising information and critical thinking.
4. Teamwork skills: The ability to work effectively as a member of a team, and to understand the dynamics that make teams successful.
5. Leadership skills: The ability to lead, influence and motivate others.
6. Problem solving: The ability to identify, prioritise and solve problems. The ability to ask the right questions, sort out the many facets of the problem and determine possible solutions.

7. Working with diversity: The ability to respect and tolerate different points of view, values and philosophies of life, and deal constructively with people who differ from yourself.
8. Career planning: The ability to manage your career in a constantly changing world of work.
9. Understanding workplace: The ability to grasp the underlying values of the workplace, its dynamics and expectations.
10. Risk assessment management: The ability to assess alternative courses of action in terms of their consequences and associated risks, and to identify alternative ways to reduce inherent risk.

2.10 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO GRADUATE UNEMPLOYMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

According to Baldry (2016), some predictive variables such as race, socioeconomic status, financial support received, and year of graduation contribute to the high rate of unemployment, while level of study, area of study, average final year marks, and career guidance received during higher education contribute to the low rate of unemployment. The type of higher education institution attended do not make a significant contribution to unemployment. Baldry mentioned that race was found be the strongest predictor of unemployment, with Coloured, Indian/Asian and White graduates being five times more likely to be employed than Black African graduates (Baldry, 2016).

Socioeconomic status is the second most powerful indicator, with those in the top three or four socioeconomic groups being more than four times as likely to be working than those in the bottom three or four socioeconomic groups. South Africa is known for its severe deprivation, apartheid's long legacy, and the resulting connection between education and wealth; poorer students in South Africa perform worse academically. Despite the fact that racial segregation has been abolished for 25 years, schools that served primarily white learners during apartheid are still operational today, even though we are now racially mixed, whilst the vast majority of schools that served black learners are still dysfunctional and unable to impart the requisite numeracy and literacy skills to students (Reynolds and Rogan, 2015).

As a result of inequalities from the apartheid system, some schools in rural communities had limited or no access to some subject choices, like Social Science, Engineering, technical subjects, business subjects and others. UniZulu also had limited programmes. Choices were limited to some professional ones like Education, Nursing, Social Work, Psychology, Sociology, Criminal Studies and very few others. In the eyes of the apartheid government, the education system was used to promote and perpetuate the apartheid system (Harber, 2001). The apartheid system of education was supported by the segregation of communities, and in that system of government education was expensive and not easily accessible. Owing to that system, the number of black graduates entering into the world of work was very low compared to white graduates. As a result, schooling outcomes for black children were poor, and that resulted in a high rate of unemployment for black people (Mccowan et al., 2016).

2.10.1 Work readiness

Cameron et al., (2018), define graduate work-readiness, or job readiness, as one of many attributes that are required for graduates to access employment. The term also suggests that the nature of these attributes is embodied in the jobs that graduates seek, and that the formal process of education as an instrument for preparing graduates to transition into work has to consider what attributes or competencies can be accessed through the formal education process. To build sustainable communities and a strong economy, the key is to understand how graduates are transiting from education to employment (Cameron et al., (2018). Work-readiness suggests that graduation is itself a sufficient enabler of the transition, but unfortunately it is not enough on its own to enter into employment (Tran, 2016a).

Tran (2016a) emphasises that a degree cannot guarantee employment, cannot give assurance if graduates are really ready to work or not. If not, are stakeholders aware of the level of readiness required from graduates and role which they as stakeholders can play to prepare graduates for employment? Cai (2013), believes that it is the responsibility of the university to provide support for their students' preparation for the world of work, this can be done by paying special attention to

the relevance of their education programmes to the labour market's needs and the quality of the graduates.

2.10.2 Graduate choosiness

Government and HEIs are all concerned about graduate unemployment, and they put great effort into making means for new graduates to enter into employment soon after graduation. The efforts from these stakeholders are sometimes wasted because graduates tend to be too selective in terms of employment. Even though universities equip graduates with competencies needed in the job, because of their choosiness some of them remain unemployed. While graduates are entitled to seek for work they like and that meets their expectations, there must be a limit to their level of choosiness. If employers perceive the level of choosiness to be too high, the chances of graduates' employability becomes too low (Jayasingam Fujiwara and Thurasamy, (2018).

2.10.3 Institutional image

An image of the institution or company is sometimes referred by others as a brand. Purnomo (2020) describes a brand as something that can be seen, as an image that is owned by the institution represented by the brand. According to Ivy (2001), the HEI image is a function of the techniques used by HEIs, how they are implemented, and how the public perceives them. Tkalac and Sin (2018) mention that because an image is dependent on individuals' interpretation, it is inherently subjective. They explain it as a detailed experience with an entity that a certain stakeholder community has (Tkalac and Sin, 2018). Image is one factor that can promote or hinder the employability of graduates. In this study, an image is seen as one that is important to be considered by both graduates and employers. The institutional reputation has leverage among employers. A survey conducted in the USA suggested that employers themselves weight the brand reputation of the HEI when assessing potential employees (Maguire Associates, 2012).

Kotler and Fox (1995), cited by Alcaide-Pulido, Alves and Gutiérrez-Villar (2017) define image as a person's views, thoughts, and perceptions of an object. Universities are facing diverse demands from different stakeholders, and with all these demands they are also competing for the same students within the

community. It is therefore important to understand that an HEI's image should be moulded in such a way that it attracts the best stakeholders, improves the employability of its graduates, and draws up strategies to improve university management. The image of a HEI is relative to the images transmitted by other HEIs, according to (Alcaide-Pulido et al., 2017). It depends on how HEIs use and execute tactics, as well as how their stakeholders view them. If the institutional image is good; it tends to positively affect other stakeholders; it can hinder or enhance the employability of its graduates.

2.10.4 Skills mismatch

Amani (2017) regards mismatched job skills as one of many causes of high graduate unemployment. This mismatch is a gap between what the university is offering and what is needed by the employer (Amani, 2017; Beretu, 2018; Shivoru, Shalyefu and Kadhila, 2018). A question that maybe is not being addressed when looking at graduate unemployment is whether graduates are ready for work as they exit the formal learning environment. It is assumed that after obtaining a university degree, employment is guaranteed, yet job requirements versus individual skills, capabilities, knowledge and qualifications do not match, and that is assumed to be one of the causes of graduate unemployment. Amani (2017) states that job mismatch has been highlighted by other countries in Africa, such as Nigeria. Another important contributor to graduate unemployment is that more graduates are competing for the same positions, this is because a number of graduates have obtained same qualification, while qualifications that are in demand like Maths, Science and Technology have fewer graduates and therefore, few graduates competing for scarce jobs.

Without the necessary skills, more graduates find themselves facing the challenge of unemployment. Cameron (2018) states that skills requirements and skills content are constantly changing. That means that at any given time, the skills provision will always lag behind the skills requirement. This is because of the unanticipated changes in trade, work environment and technology that are required to do the job. This means that as time goes on and technology improves, quicker and more innovative ways of doing business will be required. Universities

also need to try to update their curricula according to the demands of the working world.

When entering employment, graduates from time to time need to strengthen the skills required to accomplish tasks of a different nature. These skills are normally called “soft skills”, or “people/generic skills”. Soft skills are useful in a situation where human beings interact and communicate with each other. These skills are sometimes inherent soft skills, but some are acquired through learning and exposure. Employers will be unable to hire graduates unless they demonstrate these abilities (Sharma, 2018). The soft skills that recruiters look for in a candidate include a positive attitude, assertive communication, critical and logical thought, presentation skills, understanding group dynamics, conflict resolution, and leadership skills (Sharma, 2018). Bridgstock (2009) investigates and questions various interpretations of attractive graduate characteristics. In his paper, he argues that generic skill growth is insufficient in addressing graduate employability and improving graduate results in the short and long term. He emphasises that universities should be responsible for the promotion of students’ career management skills.

According to Baldry (2016), unemployment is caused by a skills gap or mismatch between higher education supply and labor market demand. There is more than one indicator that shows a mismatch between what work requires and what the individual holds. According to Sutherland (2012), a qualification is only one possible measure that can be used to evaluate the degree to which there is a mismatch between the work and the individual. Skills are another potential indicator, albeit more troublesome. Measuring ability is seen as an ability to calculate subjective practice, not least because many of the abilities of a person are learned informally on the job informally, sometimes by an osmosis process, and are rarely certified (Sutherland, 2012).

2.11 GRADUATES SKILLS TRANSITION

Fynn and Janse van Vuuren (2017) and Prabhu (2011) comment that universities need to develop soft skills in programmes in order to produce graduates who are able to adapt to an ever-changing labour market. . There is a common claim that

unemployment is attributable to a shortage of skills or a mismatch of skills between the availability of higher education and what the labour market demands, Baldry (2016) contends that educational factors play little role in deciding graduates' unemployment status, and he refutes the widely held belief in South Africa that unemployment is caused by a skills deficit or mismatch between higher education supply and labor market demands. According to Finch et al. (2016), about 40 percent of employers in the United States claim there is a major skills disparity between graduates and entry-level requirements.

2.12 STRATEGY FOR ATTRACTING GRADUATES

It is normal for employers to want to attract the best graduate employees, and so they use different ways to attract them to their organisation. Below are the strategies that are used by some employers when attracting unemployed graduates.

2.12.1 Social networking site (SNS)

Social networking is defined by Coxois (2010) and McDonald and Thompson (2016) as profiling that appears to be a general employer practice in many countries. An SNS is typically used to create public and semi-profiles within a bounded system, compile a list of other users who use the same link, and display and traverse their list of connections as well as those created by others within the same system, according to Coxios (2010). According to Hurrell, Scholarios and Richards (2017), a number of employers are using SNSs like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and other social networks to monitor current and potential employees. The use of SNSs by employers remains controversial ethically, legally and efficaciously, and Hurrell mentions that it is not well received by many current and prospective employees. Most take the use of it as a prejudiced way of selecting potential employees, but employers are keen to experiment with the use of SNSs as a means of recruitment (Hurrell et al., 2017). Employers can use SNSs to choose from someone who does not meet defined requirements, according to McCowan, Oanda, and Oketch (2018). They agree that using these platforms for online background checks is a good idea for recruiting because it allows them to get a fast picture of the applicant's personality (McCowan et al., 2018).

Hurrell, Scholarios and Richards (2017) state that the reason most employers use SNSs is to make sure that a decision to employ carries limited risks, and that there are chances of selecting the right employees while avoiding negligent hiring. In their conclusion, Hurrell, Scholarios and Richards (2017) assert that for more job seekers, the use of SNSs creates a fear of discrimination and mistrust of employers because some might misuse them. Their use remains controversial, with no clear policy protecting employees and prospective employees. Unfortunately, using SNSs can easily make young, desperate job seekers take their life on social media to avoid being discriminated against. McDonald and Thompson's (2016) recent review of SNSs in employment presents several areas of tension created by employers' attempts to profile potential employees and monitor current ones. Some well-educated graduates leave the country to get better employment in other countries. That leaves the country with limited resources. Despite the fact that many employers in Taiwan have ambitiously increased pay to recruit the most talented elites, the brain-drain pattern continues to worsen each year, according to Hsuan (2015).

2.12.2 Talent management and profiling

According to Kinash Crane and Judd (2016), profiling involves use of an online platform or any website that allows people to communicate, usually for a social purpose. Thompson (2016:541) agrees with Kinash, Crane and Judd when he defines profiling as an online platform, but he mentions that it comprises the collection and use of online information about prospective and current employees to evaluate their fitness for and in the job.(2016:541). Other methods used by employers in attracting graduate employees are talent management (TM) and profiling. Talent management is defined by Davies and Davies (2010:419) as "a systematic and dynamic process of discovering, developing and sustaining talent."

2.13.3 Employer demand versus university supply

According to the literature, there is a significant disparity between what the labour market demands and the supply from HEIs. When one undergoes formal education, no one is really aware which part of formal learning will be applicable to the workplace context and what challenges one will face in the working world. Therefore; it is important for the two stakeholders (employer and university) to

work together. The transition, according to Jackson (2016), is the skills transfer in graduates as they move from university to the workplace, this is putting into practice what has been learnt at university.

HEIs have been tied by all stakeholders to the needs of the economy and society (Tran, 2016b). They are expected to produce ready to work graduates (Prabhu, 2011). Research shows that there is a gap between the university knowledge and what is demanded by the working world. There is a call to make university education to what the employer requires – that is, more relevant to the workplace (Tran, 2016b). Graduate entrants to the job market who are up to the challenge their entry job demands are considered to have made a successful transition from HEIs to the workplace. For both employers and job seekers, this transition success is crucially important. Other stakeholders like government, parents and sponsors also have an interest in this desirable outcome (Cheong et al., (2018).

A big challenge with the working world is that it demands ready to work graduates (Cameron Roslyn, 2018). Companies are not interested in success at schoolwork, but in the ability to perform according to the job's demands. Companies do not care about how a graduate passed at high school and or university, even if he/she gained only distinctions. Companies are interested in productivity, pleasing the customer, and having good working relationships with colleagues (Becker, 1993). Transition of university-gained knowledge to skills demanded by the job is of utmost importance.

For a student crossing that boundary, it can be really difficult. (Mutwarasibo, Ruterana, and Andersson, 2014; Cheong, Hill, and Leong, 2018) state that the transition from the world of education, especially higher education, to the world of work is crucial for all stakeholders. Through the provision of technical innovation and professional human resources, the higher education sector plays a critical role in the transition to knowledge-based economies (Jackson, 2016). Although Cheong, Hill, and Leong (2018) emphasize that employers expect graduates to be, if not instantly job-ready, at the very least, possess the generic skills needed in the workplace and be able to apply what they have learned. Despite the fact that graduate employability tends to dominate higher education agendas, the

problem of transferring university-acquired skills is not without its difficulties. A successful transition is important and desired by all stakeholders – the job seekers (unemployed graduates), employers, parents of the students, the institutions of higher learning responsible for educating and training students, and the government, which supports these institutions and some students through scholarships.

According to Jackson (2016), graduate employers would maximize their investment return on recruited graduates, which aligns with Grossman and Salas' (2011) assertion that organizations that adopt HR practices to facilitate transfer outperform those that do not. Educators will be better able to fulfill business demands for high-performing, work-ready graduates, and graduates will gain career advancement and intrinsic incentives for successfully applying their expertise and experience in the workplace by the time they graduate.

2.13 EMPLOYERS' PERCEPTIONS ON EMPLOYABILITY OF GRADUATES

Cheong, Hill and Leong (2018) define the employer as the consumer of services that should embody graduate attributes. Most employers, according to Lim et al. (2016), require new graduates to show other generic capabilities in addition to specific skills when recruiting them. In order to retain a competitive edge, employers are searching for graduates with a varied set of skills and attributes. The nature of the job a graduate is required to undertake is what shapes the employers' view of graduates' employability. Cheong, Hill and Leong (2018) emphasise that employers stress the importance of soft skills, though they overestimate the importance of language skill, while students' perceptions when looking for a job reflect what the advertisements show to be the values and skills required by employers.

The results from the case study conducted in Rwanda Boundary by Mutwarasibo, Ruretan and Anderson (2014), highlight that there is a gap in the training that is offered to students by universities. Graduates and employers agreed that job placement programs needed to be given further priority. Mutwarasibo, Ruterana and Anderson emphasise the importance of creating partnerships or reinforcing

those between the universities and the world of work (Mutwarasibo, Ruterana and Anderson (2014). Tran (2016b) States that the employers' decision to hire a graduate relies on qualities and abilities over and above his/her discipline-specific knowledge and skills, though some researchers still make claims that some stakeholders, such as employers, say that graduates usually lack some attributes that are essential for employment or the workplace (Shivoro Shalyefu and Khadila, 2018). In a study by Mutwarasibo, Ruterana and Anderson (2014), employers and graduates were asked if there was any gap between academic courses and employment requirements, 79% of graduate employees felt that there was something that they should have obtained from the university that the working world required, while only 15% expressed their satisfaction with the knowledge they gained from the university. When voicing their opinions in the report, all of the employers who responded to their survey wanted their workers to have an advanced degree showing that they had relevant expertise. Oral and written assessments were also used in new staff selection processes. When asked about competencies they thought were most often found lacking in new graduate employees; most employers hardly mentioned theoretical knowledge, but most of them mentioned practical experience in their field. For this study it will be wise not to assume that all employers are satisfied with the knowledge a graduate holds from university, but assessing their perceptions will help to inform the decisions being made by the university. A study by Lowden et al. (2011) indicates that some employers feel ignored by HEIs. There are few links between universities and employer's feet that their views on course design are not considered. Even those few that serve on the university Board feel that their views are disregarded.

Employers choose graduates from certain institution for various reasons. According to Cheong, Hill, and Leong (2018), most employers do not care which university a candidate attended; what matters is how well they perform in interviews and how well they blend into their company's culture. Two key sources of pressure to provide proof of the importance and feasibility of tertiary education have been governments and employer groups. Clarke (2018) concluded his study by indicating that in Malaysia, most employers tend to favour the degrees on offer at the student's institution of choice, and the choice of institution provided easier access to finding a job. Sin et al., (2016) describe the perception of employability

among various stakeholders as a burden that should be shared equally by higher education stakeholders and students.

According to *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and American Public Media's Marketplace survey outcome, recent graduates are unprepared or very unprepared for their work quest, other employers indicated difficulty in finding qualified candidates for job openings. When it comes to the skills most needed by employers, job candidates are lacking most in written and oral communication skills, adaptability and managing multiple priorities, and making decisions and problem solving (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, n.d.).

2.14 TRANSITION FROM UNIVERSITY TO WORLD OF WORK

According to Cameron (2018) the transitioning from graduation to work is becoming a bigger challenge when it comes to profound organisational changes occurring that impact on work. They mention that the criteria for skills and the skill content of employment are constantly changing as time evolves. This ensures that the provision of skills will lag behind the demand for skills at any one time. In trade, workplaces and technology, there will be ongoing and unanticipated developments that will produce changes in the skills needed to perform a job (Cameron Roslyn, 2018).

Graduates face many challenges as they make the transition from university to the workforce. "Employers see inexperience as an obstacle to jobs, and training costs as unjustifiable investments," Cameron says (2018, p. 3). There is a disparity in HEIs that remains an obstacle to combining the full benefits of increased participation in higher education. That the absorption rates associated with some universities were notably lower for most NSFAS graduates who were enrolled in those HEIs than for those considered to be from the "highly rated" South African universities remains a concern. This finding of persistent inequality in labor market outcomes corresponding to a hierarchy among South African higher learning institutions suggests that the number of HEIs is growing. However, Wildschut Rogan and Mncwango (2020) show that graduates eventually find jobs, even if it takes time.

2.15 UNEMPLOYMENT CHALLENGES INTERNATIONALLY

Studies from other countries reveal that the challenge that UniZulu is facing is not a unique problem. A study in Italy by Succi and Canovi (2020), concludes that employers must actively participate in the development of students' and graduates' soft skills; on the other hand, academia and industry must form stronger alliances and collaborate effectively to ensure graduates who are ready for work. Finally, students and recent graduates must be made aware of their personal responsibility for developing soft skills and taking proactive steps to improve their employability. In Australia, Key stakeholder, i.e. employers, graduates and Universities agreed that there is a need for graduates to gain relevant experience to enhance their employability. The study concludes that embedded learning activities were perceived as broadly useful for skill development, gaining relevant experience and networking, in varying ways. Activities did not, however, report to always lead to improved career outcomes and their perceived relative lack of impact on networking opportunities prompts further review given the strong links between social capital and employment. Also that internships and extra-curricular activities were considered important for enhancing employability yet differing participation among student groups emphasises the value of universities embedding or at least facilitating activities in ways that cater for all students (Jackson and Bridgstock, 2020).

2.16 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework is a structure that is most used to justify the significance of the work (Lederman and Lederman, 2015). The theoretical framework that underpins this study is the human capital theory. According to Marginson (2019), the theory of human capital implies that schooling influences the marginal output of labour, and this determines income (Tomlinson, 2017). Human capital comprises the skills and capacities that belong to individuals and are put to productive usage (Schwab, 2015). The most significant investments in human resources, according to Becker (1993:17), are education and training, hence when the university educates a student, the university is investing by preparing the human capital. Education that is offered to graduates by universities is aimed at building human capital that will contribute to the needs of the country. Families

are relying on the same graduate human capital for their survival. Parents as well are looking forward to their children alleviating poverty. The employers have the expectation from graduates that because an individual is qualified he/she should be productive. Olaniyan and Okemakinde, (2008) and Cai, (2013) note that formal education is seen as a positive investment in human resources.

Human capital theory proponents, according to Fongwa (2018), see education as an investment that can improve graduate job outcomes while raising employer expectations. Education is explained by Olaniyan and Okemakinde (2008) as a good capital investment that develops the human resources needed for economic and social transformation, and these are called human capital, while (Eldeen et al., 2018) consider education as a key to every nation's prosperity and strength.

When an individual is educated, the value of investment in education is seen by the lifetime earnings of educated labour, which means that human capital has been developed. By producing graduates, HEIs are more or less prompts for private enrichment, career accomplishment and national economic growth. Knight and Yorke (2002) see human capital theory as the key to economic success in the education of the workforce, and therefore the development of employability in graduates is a major expectation in governments around the world.

It is therefore widely accepted that education is indeed necessary to improve workers' efficiency and people's lives, and then uplift the standard of living. Schooling, according to Becker (1993), improves earnings and efficiency by offering information, skills, and a method of problem analysis. He perceived education as investment, while Cheong, Hill and Leong (2018) looked at human capital as the discourse of economic growth.

According to Becker (1993), the human capital principle states that schooling increases individual efficiency, which enhances job performance. It offers marketable skills and abilities that are important to job results, and as a result, the more trained people are, the more competitive they will be in terms of both income and job opportunities in the labor market. For this study, when employing graduates because of their qualifications, the human capital that university

produced is being valued by employers. Education is indeed meant to assist individuals to alleviate poverty and uplift the standard of living.

The importance of human capital is determined by an employer's ability to make an objective and reasonable assessment of an employee's or job-ability. However, it should be noted that labor markets are often correlated with uncertainty, such as incomplete awareness of individual characteristics, educational quality, and potential demand and supply conditions (Cai, 2013).

2.17 SUMMARY

Human Capital theory underpinned this study, the theory implies a positive relationship between employability and education. The theory revealed that an investment in education is seen as an investment that improve graduates job outcomes while raising employer expectation (Fongwa 2018). The theory is perceived to be important to economic success in the education of the workforce, and therefore the development of employability of graduates is a major expectation in governments around the world. When an individual has received education from HEI, the value of investment in education is seen as life-long earnings of educated labour.

In this chapter, the researcher explored employability and the role of higher education in promoting graduates' employability. Literature tells us that HEIs are expected to produce graduates that are fit for the labour market. HEIs are under pressure to respond to the societal needs of the country by preparing graduates for the working world. The chapter also looked at the role of different stakeholders in the employability of graduates; factors that promote employability of graduates in South Africa and the factors that contribute to graduate unemployment, these are work readiness, institutional image, skills mismatch, and graduate choosiness. The researcher observed that to promote graduate employability, employers, government, HEIs and graduates must work together.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to provide descriptions of research methodology adopted for the study. The chapter presents the various steps that were used to collect data, it focuses on defining and illustrating the methods and procedures used when data are obtained by the researcher. The research paradigm, research design, target population, and sampling methods are all clearly described. The chapter outlines research instruments, data collection processes, data interpretation and ethical considerations. Finally, trustworthiness, identified by factors such as integrity, transferability and confirmability, is addressed in order to clarify how these parameters have been considered and applied in this study. The main aim of this review is to provide answers to the following main research questions:

- How do employers perceive the employability of UniZulu graduates?
- How do employers describe the challenges that hinder or might hinder employers from employing UniZulu graduates?
- What are the methods used by employers to attract unemployed graduates from UniZulu?
- What are the possible solutions/recommendations that can be suggested to enhance the employability of UniZulu graduates?

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

The study paradigm is a framework for organizing beliefs and ways of thinking in order to make sense of the environment and the phenomena that it contains. The study's structure expresses the researcher's point of view or frame of reference for interpreting life, the world, and reality. Paradigms allow researchers to organise their findings and form the way in which they think about the world. They are based on perceptions and assumptions about reality, values in society, and the relationship between the researcher and the study process itself (Wilson, et al.

(2016). The research paradigm is what guides the questions posed, and shows where to find the answers.

The interpretivist model is one of the qualitative research approaches in the social sciences that are used in study. It mainly assumes that human nature is multifaceted and cannot be made single-minded by predefined probabilistic models. It depends on circumstances, and is influenced by environmental factors other than the genetic material (Creswell and Poth, 2016). As a result, interpretivists believe in the study of human behaviour in everyday life rather than in a regulated environment.

This study embraced an interpretive research framework, using a qualitative approach. The qualitative approach was used since it primarily concerns human behaviour and data obtained in natural settings (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005a; Cheong, Hill and Leong, 2018). Interpretivism thus recognises that truth is subjective and that, as a result, multiple interpretations can be apparent. In the course of the examination, therefore, interpretivists embrace the collaborative phase that the researcher and the participants are engaged in, as they influence each other to make sense of the phenomenon being examined. Mertens (2005), defines an interpretive approach as an approach that aims at discovering the nature of the world as perceived by an individual, (Mertens, 2005), interpreting acts and attitudes, learning to know why things are seen as they are.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

Cope (2014) explains qualitative research as a different approach in studying humans. The principle of qualitative research is to recognize and interpret patterns among words in order to create a realistic picture without sacrificing its significance or dimension (Leung, 2015). A research design, according to Kumar (2014), is a road map that one chooses to follow during one's research journey in order to find the answers to one's research questions in the most important, precise, and cost-effective manner possible. Mouton (Mouton et al., 2012) defines the design of the research as a plan or blueprint for how one decides or expects to conduct the research. In agreement with this view are Tustin, Lightelm, Martins and van Wyk (2005), who claim that research design is a master plan that outlines the methods and procedures for gathering and analyzing the data required, as

well as how the data will be collected and analyzed. According to Kumar (2014) the research design is a process operating plan that describes when and how various methods and procedures are to be implemented during the research process. He argues that the research design is a strategy in which the researcher determines how to communicate to other researchers how the study design is intended to be used, how information will be collected from the respondents, how the respondents will be chosen, how the information collected will be evaluated, and how the results will be communicated. The research design for this study would provide a detailed overview of how the study was performed, i.e. the research process, ethical considerations, the research site, data generation and data analysis.

3.4 RESEARCH SITE/STUDY AREA

The research was carried out in the UMhlatuze Local Municipality that covers the area around Richards Bay, Empangeni and KwaDlangezwa. Selected employers were within this municipality. It is assumed that UniZulu graduates will have high employment opportunities owing to its location, since UniZulu is the only university in the UMhlatuze municipality, with two campuses, in Richards Bay and KwaDlangezwa. This study will be assessing what local employers perceive about the employability of UniZulu graduates.

3.5 TARGET POPULATION AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES

A population is the entire group of individuals or items that share one or more characteristics from which data can be gathered (Simon and Goes, 2002). The target population in this study was comprised of school management and business managers and supervisors in different categories, and the municipal employers.

3.5.1 Sampling

Creswell (2014) and Kumar (2014) assert that several techniques and procedures are to be taken into consideration before the selection of samples for a study is finalised. The sampling techniques, sample frame and sample size adopted in the qualitative study are discussed in this section. Kumar defines the sample as a subgroup of the larger group (the population) in which the researcher is interested

(Kumar, 2014). He claims that the goal of qualitative research is not to choose a random or impartial sample, but rather one that can provide the researcher with as much detailed, accurate, and complete information as possible, allowing him to carefully consider all of these factors in his decision. Kumar (2014) and Strydom (2011), pointed out that the main aim to use sampling techniques in qualitative data is to be able to gather the richest data, i.e. to obtain a broad and diverse set of data gathered over a reasonably long period of time. Purposive sampling was used by the researcher to explicitly select two schools, UNgoye High School and Mantshangula Primary School, Tronox South Africa Business, the Premier Hotel and UMhlatuze local municipality.

The reason for selecting the population was that these were companies from the research area, which they have employed graduates from UniZulu. These targeted sample was based on the number of employers on that specific company, eg schools have a limited number of SMT members and those were the only one targeted since the researcher is using a purposive sampling for selecting a sample size. The selected employers were the ones with specific, accurate, information needed for the study. The population targeted for this study and sampling is presented in table 1 below.

Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental, selective or subjective sampling, is a form of non-probability sampling technique adopted in this research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The reason for the particular selection of this method is that the selection of the participants relies on the opinion of the researcher, who helped address the research questions and more appropriately accomplish the research objectives in the study. Purposive selection was also used to ensure that key actors from a number of schools and business backgrounds were involved (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The key reason for selecting this sampling was that the researcher assumed that the selected stakeholders from a variety of geographical backgrounds and environments would have different perspectives on the issue of employability of graduates in different sectors.

Target population

Participants' companies	Population	Sample
Ongoye high school management team	4	2
Mantshangula primary school management team	4	3
Municipality management team	6	3
Tronox South Africa managers	4	2
Premier Hotel management team	5	4
Total Number of participants	23	14

Source: Table 1 -Sampling

3.6 DESCRIPTION OF DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS AND PROCEDURES

3.6.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi structured interviews are interviews combined of both unstructured and structured interviews. According to Evans (2018), semi-structured interviews are one of the most common methods of data collection. They are useful because they allow researchers to examine subjective points of view and collect in-depth accounts of the experiences of people. An interview schedule is usually used, which allows the interviewer to address a given subject while allowing the respondent to respond in their own terms and discuss issues and topics related to them (Evans, 2018).

According to Kumar (2014), it is essential and imperative that before the researcher starts collecting data from potential respondents or participants, he/she considers the following aspects:

- Motivation to share necessary data: It is critical that participants be able to share data with the researcher. The researcher should make every effort to inspire them by describing the study's goals and significance in straightforward and simple terms.
- Participants must have a clear understanding of what is expected of them when answering the questions. If the participants do not fully comprehend a question, the answer given can be incorrect, irrelevant, or incomprehensible.

- Participants must be in possession of the requested information as a condition of participation. When the researcher is looking for accurate or technical details, this is especially important. It is self-evident that if the participants lack the necessary knowledge, they would be unable to provide it. (Kumar, 2014).

In order to meet these prerequisites, the researcher contacted all targeted schools and companies to negotiate with the heads, directors, managers and supervisors. While contacting them, she highlighted the purpose of the research study, and gave a brief overview of the questions to be asked, the outcomes envisaged at the completion of the study. and relevant documents (the research tool, the ethical clearance from UniZulu, and the research objectives) needed by the head of the school or company so that they could give permission to enter their premises to collect data.

3.6.2 Telephonic and face-to-face interviews

In this study, the researcher used both face-to-face and telephonic interviews. The use of telephonic interviews was a result of the Covid-19 social distancing rule whereby contact was to be avoided. Also, some participants were uncomfortable and not interested in meeting the researcher face-to-face because of that rule. The researcher managed to conduct face-to-face interview with only two schools.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

Qualitative data analysis is about how we shift from data to understanding and describing the phenomenon in question, but it is not a straightforward analysis Susan (2016). As Paiton (2002) points out, while qualitative data analysis converts data into findings, there is no clear formula or recipe for this. In this study, the data collected were transcribed verbatim. The transcription was then edited, and a list of ideas was registered on a computer programme called NVIVO 12 Plus.

Evans (2018), explains thematic analysis as the method of finding patterns and themes within the collected data. The initial stage of thematic analysis is the collection of data, and it continues during the data transcription, reading and re-reading, evaluating and interpreting process. This helps the researcher to recall the research questions while reading and rereading the transcripts, hence the research questions direct the thinking about the data and what themes to consider.

Having transcribed the recorded interviews, the researcher analysed data according to the suggestions made by Gay and Airasian (2000), in which the process of data analysis focuses on: writing down tape-recorded data (transcribing), familiarizing yourself with the data and finding the key themes (reading). Analyzing the data thoroughly in order to provide accurate explanations of the environment, participants, and activities (describing); interpreting and synthesising the organized data into general conclusions or understandings; categorizing and coding pieces of data and grouping them into themes (classifying); and categorizing and coding pieces of data and grouping them into themes (classifying) (interpreting).

3.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS AND CREDIBILITY

The level of confidence in the results, analysis, and methods used to ensure the quality of a study is referred to as trustworthiness or rigour (Polit and Beck, 2014). Researchers should define protocols and procedures for each analysis in order for it to be considered worthy of readers' attention (Amankwaa, 2016). While experts agree that trustworthiness is essential, the literature has debated what constitutes trustworthiness (Leung, 2015).

Qualitative researchers acknowledge Guba and Lincoln's (1985) criteria, which will be the subject of this portion. Credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability are among the criteria; authenticity was later added (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Each of these parameters, as well as the most commonly used methods, will be discussed.

3.8.1 Credibility

The researcher's understanding and representation of the data, as well as the truth of the data or the participants' opinions, are referred to as credibility (Polit and Beck, 2014). The researcher's credibility is strengthened by explaining his or her experiences as a researcher and having the participants validate the study results. If the explanations of human experience are instantly recognized by people who have had similar experiences, a qualitative study is considered reliable (Sandelowski, 1986). From the viewpoint of the study participants, credibility entails determining if the results of the qualitative research sample are

trustworthy (Trochim and Lehman 2007). From the viewpoint of the research project participants, credibility entails determining whether the findings of the qualitative study sample are reliable or credible (Trochim and Lehman, 2007).

In order to check the credibility of this study, the researcher analysed the perspectives, feelings and expectations of the participants from the sampled groups in two schools, a municipality and business sectors about the issue of employability of university graduates. Polit and Beck (2014) argue that the reliability of the analysis, or trust in the reality of the research and hence the results, is the most critical criterion for determining the importance of the study and its results.

3.8.2 Transferability

Findings that can be generalized to different environments or classes are referred to as transferability ((Polit and Beck, 2014); Houghton and Keynes, 2012). (2013). If the results of a qualitative analysis have significance for people who aren't interested in it, and readers may connect the findings to their own experiences, the study has met this criterion. Researchers should provide enough information about the informants and the research background for the reader to judge whether the results are "fit" or transferable.

3.8.3 Confirmability

The researcher's ability to show that the data reflect the participants' answers rather than the researcher's prejudices or viewpoints is referred to as confirmability (Tobin and Begley, 2004; (Polit and Beck, 2014)). Through explaining how conclusions and interpretations were arrived at, and demonstrating that the results were drawn directly from the evidence, the researcher may demonstrate confirmability. This can be demonstrated in qualitative research reporting by using rich quotes from participants that represent each evolving theme ((Polit and Beck, 2014); Tobin, G. A., & Begley, 2004).

3.8.4 Dependability

Data consistency under similar conditions is referred to as dependability (Tobin and Begley, 2004; Polit and Beck, 2010). If another researcher agrees with the

decision trails at each point of the research process, this can be accomplished. A study would be considered reliable if the results were repeated with similar participants in similar circumstances using the researcher's process and explanations (Koch, 2006). The researcher in this study found data to be similar to other studies like (Cameron Roslyn, 2018; Jackson and Bridgstock, 2020; Mthembu, 2019; Sin and Amaral, 2017b), (Jackson and Bridgstock, 2020) and others.

3.8.5 Validity

According to Leung (2015), validity in qualitative research refers to the appropriateness of the methods, procedures, and data. It examines whether the research question is appropriate for the intent, whether the methodology chosen is appropriate to answer the research question, whether the design is appropriate for the methodology, whether the sampling and data analysis are appropriate, and whether the findings and conclusions are appropriate for the sample and context (Leung, 2015).

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION AND PROCEDURES

The researcher was issued an ethical clearance certificate after the University Ethics Committee accepted the research proposal and gave her permission to perform the study.

The researcher made certain that she followed the ethical guidelines of confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy, and that she would not intentionally reveal or discuss details obtained from the interviews. To ensure this, the researcher created pseudonyms for the participants to be used during data collection; for example, names like TM1 (T for the teacher, M for the name of the school, and 1 as the number of the participant in that particular school or company). For companies, the researcher used the first letter of the company, E for employer, and a number for the participant: for example, TE1, i.e. Tronox Employer1.

The researcher ensured that the study was conducted with careful consideration for the ethics guidelines of the University of Zululand.

The measures that were taken were as follows:

- (i) A letter was sent to the Head of the Department of Education in KwaZulu Natal, seeking permission to conduct research.
- (ii) A letter was sent to the UMhlatuze Municipality's Chief Executive, seeking permission to perform research in the municipality.
- (iii) A letter was forwarded to the Head of Tronox South Africa, requesting permission to conduct a study at Tronox.
- (iv) A letter was also forwarded to the Head of the Premier Hotel, Richards Bay, requesting permission to conduct a study at the hotel.
- (v) Follow-up calls were made to the Heads of Department for explaining and clarifying all the uncertainties, and to make appointments for data collection.
- (vi) After the Head of Basic Education circulated the request letter to the relevant people, a list of people who agreed to participate was given to the researcher.
- (vii) Since the researcher was going to be a one-on-one interviewer, she made appointments with names on the lists for interviews.

The researcher ensured that she complied with all ethical principles of research such as honesty, accountability, privacy and confidentiality. During data collection, participants were given assurance of confidentiality. Throughout the report, no names were mentioned, only pseudonyms.

3.10 LIMITATIONS

The government declared a national lockdown in an attempt to protect South Africans from the rare Coronavirus. Since the researcher was unable to arrange and perform face-to-face interviews with the participants, the industries were forced to close, resulting in a pause in data collection. Even at the easing of lockdown rules, there were still rules that defined how people should behave to avoid spreading the Coronavirus. One rule was social distance, that gave the researcher a huge challenge in terms of meeting the participants that were targeted in the study. She ended up doing telephonic interviews with many employers. Some employers who were selected for the study were not available for interviews owing to their age and chronic health conditions. Two employers

opted for writing answers instead of being interviewed due to time constraints on their side and tight schedules at their work place. As a result, the researcher could not make follow-up on their contributions.

Funding was also a limitation the researcher encountered while conducting a study, that resulted in the self-funding and in some part the researcher had to do transcripts herself which led into a delay in the research process. Another obstacle was that the literature review revealed a gap in the literature on employers' perceptions of graduates' employability in South Africa.

3.11 SUMMARY

The researcher went through the study design, sample and sampling procedures, data collection instruments and procedures, data analysis, and presentation in this chapter. In terms of the research subject, intent, questions, and objectivity of the analysis, the researcher also justified her choices in terms of research instruments and strategies. The study's instrument reliability and ethical considerations were observed and justified.

Limitations of the study observed were the lockdown, which resulted in delays, and the non-availability of other target populations. Another constraint was a lack of funds for the study, which the researcher was unable to obtain. The next chapter will focus on the analysis and presentation of data.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The researcher introduced the study's research design and methodology in the previous chapter. This included the paradigm, ethical considerations, and the validity of the data collection techniques and procedures used to answer the report's research questions. It also gave a detailed description of the target population and sampling procedures. Testing tools, data collection methods and data interpretation have been explained.

This chapter examines the findings of the study. It summarises the findings, the themes and subthemes that emerged from the study, and their implications for unemployment. The research objectives, themes and sub-themes are tabulated in Table 2. These main themes, and the subthemes indicated in the table, will be addressed in the following paragraphs, accompanied by direct quotations from the participants. The aim of this chapter is to examine and discuss the qualitative data gathered through semi-structured interviews with two school administrations. (a primary school and a high school), employers from different companies and one municipality. Pseudonyms were created to ensure confidentiality and anonymity, and used for verbatim quotes in the elaboration of data used.

Table:4.2 Presentation of research objectives, theme and sub-themes

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE	THEMES and SUB-THEMES
<p>1. To assess the perceptions of employers on the employability of UniZulu graduates.</p>	<p>Employability of UniZulu graduates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Employers' perceptions of employment of UniZulu graduates ● Positive perceptions ● Programme choice ● Attitude
<p>2. Challenges that hinder employers from employing UniZulu graduates.</p>	<p>Challenges that hinder employability of UniZulu graduates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shortage of skills/subject gap ● Financial challenges ● Partnership with local employers ● Practical experience ● Institutional location ● No hindrances
<p>3. To examine the methods used by potential employers to attract unemployed UniZulu graduates.</p>	<p>Employment strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Database ● In-service training ● Advertisements
<p>4. 4.1 To suggest possible solutions/recommendations on the employability of UniZulu graduates.</p>	<p>Possible solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● University should sell itself ● Working relationship with employers ● Improve curriculum ● Skills gap ● Closing gap between university and world of work
<p>4.2 To suggest possible solutions/recommendations for the employability of UniZulu graduates</p>	<p>Graduates attempt to enhance their employability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Networking ● Sell yourself ● Self-employment ● Change of attitude

Table 2 - presentation of objectives (themes and sub-themes)

Table 4.3: Participants' companies and their Pseudonyms

Participants' companies	Pseudonyms	Number of participants
Ongoye school management team	OT1 - OT2	2
Mantshangula school management team	TM1 - TM3	3
Municipality management team	ME1 - ME3	3
Tronox South Africa managers	TE1 - TE2	2
Premier Hotel management team	PE1 - PE4	4
Total Number of participants		14

Table 3 - Participants companies and their Pseudonyms

ME stands for municipal employer, and three employers were interviewed, they were named ME1 to ME3.

TE is Tronox South Africa managers, two management team were interviewed, named TE1 and TE2.

TM is for teacher Mantshangula Primary school; three school management team members were interviewed.

OT is Ongoye High School teachers; two school management team members were interviewed.

PE is for Protea Hotel employer, and four management team were interviewed. From the above mentioned institutions, a total 14 participants were interviewed.

4.2 DATA ANALYSIS

After the researcher transcribed all the interviews, the themes were created. The responses obtained from all the participants were independently sorted by the researcher in the analysis of the results using the NVIVO 12 Plus software. When sorting the answers, the statements projecting similar ideas were grouped together. The sorting process was accompanied by an initial cross-check of common areas of agreement. However, disparities were expected. In an attempt to find a consensus, the researcher addressed the disparities. Indeed, consensus was reached in most cases, and the differences were eventually classified. A number of batches, each reflecting a related group of statements, arose from

classifications. As a result of this process, the following distinct themes were identified and discussed:

- Employability of UniZulu graduates
- Challenges that hinder the employability of UniZulu graduates
- Employment strategies
- Possible solutions
- Graduates' attempts to enhance their employability

The researcher used a deductive approach to coding, whereby using, sampling, and recording take place in the deduction portion of a content analysis before coding starts (Mckibbon, et al., 2020). The researcher looked back at her data from the themes to determine if more evidence could support each theme or whether there was need to gather more information. There were cases where the researcher could not find enough evident to support a theme. Deductive thinking plays an important role as the analysis proceeds (Creswell, 2014).

Qualitative data analysis is more concerned with transforming raw data by searching, evaluating, recognising, coding, mapping, exploring and describing patterns, trends, themes and categories in the raw data, in order to interpret them and provide their underlying meanings (Ngulube, 2015). There are different strategies that researchers use to analysis qualitative data. This involve sorting, organizing, and reducing the data to more manageable chunks, as well as figuring out how to bring them together. As mentioned above, data analysis was done using the NVIVO 12 Plus software. Data were collected using interviews (telephonic and face-to-face). The researcher did transcripts of all the interviews and exported them to NVIVO 12 Plus software for coding and analysis.

The study is concerned with the perceptions of local employers with respect to existing and potential employees graduated from the University of Zululand. The focus is on the gap between employers' expectations and the realities in the graduates they employ, and the remedies they suggest should be attempted in the face of this gap, or gaps. The concept of employability rests on who makes that particular conclusion, and is largely subject to the situation in which the decision is made. In most cases, it is the employer's decision that matters, and employers' decisions are based on the work that workers are supposed to do,

which are usually not known to employees beforehand. What defines employability often varies according to the type of work that must be done. The views of employability of higher education institutions as providers of graduates who make up the human capital base, as well as graduates themselves, cannot be the same as those of employers and their workers (Cheong, et al., 2016). It is therefore important to note that this study is concerned about the opinions of the normally silent players on the concept of employability. When there is a scream about the high rate of unemployment, the blame normally goes to the government, which is expected to make the means to create job opportunities. The question whether graduates are employable is normally not asked directly of employers, who are the recipients of the human capital from the university.

The following are the themes that are presented and discussed:

4.3 THEME 1 - EMPLOYABILITY OF UNIZULU GRADUATES

This theme is meant to respond to the question whether employers find UniZulu graduates employable or not. A question, “How often do you employ UniZulu graduates?” was asked. The researcher needed to ensure that the right persons who have employed UniZulu graduate were being interviewed. The completion of the study is completely dependent on getting the right information from the right people, as participants were selected using a purposive sampling method; hence only persons with specific information were interviewed. The theme reflects on the employability of UniZulu graduates. Although some participants could not clearly answer the question, all those who were interviewed from different organisations such as Tronox South Africa, the Municipality and others indicated that they do employ UniZulu graduates and they seem to be happy with the ones they have employed so far. *“Most definitely, if I can count currently in my section alone, there are more than six UniZulu graduates, which gives us ninety percent of staff members”* ME1.

PE1, TE1 and TM3 indicated that even though they do employ UniZulu graduates, there are many other institutions, so they do not choose graduates just because they are from UniZulu, if the vacancy is available, it is open to everyone. *“I will say*

it is not really often, maybe just happening twice, but depending on the vacancy there are those wanting somebody to public administration, marketing, or reception” PE1. “Normally positions that we advertise for permanent employees are open to everyone, without eyeing any specific institution” ME1.

Participant OT2, ME1 and OT1 all agreed that where they work, the majority of staff members are from UniZulu. *“We have quite a number of guys who are from the University of Zululand, although I don’t remember how many there are. But there are colleagues who are from the University of Zululand with B Com (Accounting). Even in other departments, such as legal services, most employees there are from UniZulu with their LLBs. They are definitely employable” ME1.*

Participants PE2 and PE5 confirmed that they do employ UniZulu graduates, as did ME1, ME2, ME3, TM1 and MT3, but they mentioned that they only hire when there is a post. Here are some comments: *“On that one, the first thing I would like to highlight is that it depends on the availability of vacancies first, and in which field. Basically as and when we require the graduates depends on the enrolment” TM1.* This can mean that required members to employ depends on the demand. Some posit that it depends on the post-provisioning norm (PPN). This acronym is common in schools, and often mean a formula-driven model that is primarily used to allocate educators, as human capital, to public schools based on learner enrolment numbers (Ntuli, 2012).

Participants PE4 and TE2 also confirmed that they do employ UniZulu graduates, though they could not tell exactly how many. One participant said: *“In this company I don’t know how many UniZulu graduates are employed but in my department in the previous years we used to employ graduates from UniZulu and from all other institutions, all technikons” TE2.* While TM2 was reluctant to answer the question since she is the HoD, *“I am not sure if I am the right person to answer that question. I think it is something that has to do with the government body” TM2.* TM2 claimed that *“All graduates must be given equal opportunity. Whether you are a FUNDZA or NSFSA, you must also be employable.”* This might indicate that this participant was not happy that graduates are not treated equally in terms of opportunities. The participant thought that Fundza Lushaka graduates are treated different – they are being given first preference in terms of

employment. Salmon and Sayed (2016) mention that Fundza Lushaka's interventions are mainly for the equity, seeking to mitigate inequities in the employment of teachers. Responses from the participants seemed to indicate that the programme is not achieving its main objective.

4.3.1 Employers/ perceptions on employability

The code names show the reader the employability of UniZulu graduates. They give a clear picture of how local employers, specifically, those that have previously employed UniZulu graduates, perceive their employability. All participants shared positive perceptions on the employability of UniZulu graduates. Most shared their experiences on working with or supervising them. They all seemed happy to work with UniZulu graduates, and confirmed that the graduates are employable.

Participants shared some positive sentiments about the employability of UniZulu graduates. They stated that they are employable, and their performance is good when they are given a chance to work. PE2 stated: *"There is a huge difference between UniZulu graduates and other students. You can tell UniZulu students are top students. To be quite honest you can tell by the way they speak to you, and by the knowledge you already have"* PE2.

ME1 mentioned that they are good, but following this, he highlighted that for them to excel they need more experience to guide them: *"But to get into the excellence, part of it is that you also need a good mentor. So for me, the ones with whom I have worked, I will be lying if I say they are not good. They are indeed good. As said, in most cases when it comes to the situation like the issues of employment, it comes back to the individual, but the ones I have worked with, in most cases, were all good"* ME1. Likewise, PE2 emphasised how good UniZulu graduates are by saying: *'Wooooo! They are so very professional, very polite, well-groomed and friendly, hard workers, I couldn't believe it when I saw them, when they came to my department to do rooms. They were so willing to do their work with all their hearts, working as a team.'*

TE2 stressed positive perception, saying: *"So I'm glad that they listen, and they are willing to do everything I tell them. So far, the people that I have interacted with are good students."* Likewise, PE1 ME1, TM2, TE1, TE2, OT1, OT2, PE2, PE5 all agreed that UniZulu graduates are good and employable candidates. Here

are some of the comments. **PE5** said: *“They are well-spoken compared to other students.”* Subsequently, **TM2** confirmed the view, but went further, stresses that he himself was a graduate of UniZulu., He put it like this: *“They are employable, most of them. Most of our educators have been students of the University of Zululand. The majority in our school are from the University of Zululand.”* **OT2** went further to mention the level of professionalism and energy: *“Well, the ones we have right now, they are good people. They do their work, they are very productive and professional, very energetic teachers. They are always there when they are needed.”* **ME1** stated: *“We rate UniZulu graduates highly, especially those with their B. Com (Accounting) degree, because we know that it’s actually a good programme the University is offering.”*

These comments reveal that graduates that are produced by UniZulu are fit for the labour market, in accordance with the concept of graduate employability that should produce individuals who are suitable for the labour market (Sin and Amaral, 2017b). Employers see value in UniZulu graduates. By employing them they show that the human capital that was invested UniZulu in its graduates is noticed by employers.

4.3.3 Program choice

Although most participants shared positive stories about the employability of UniZulu graduates, there were some that considered that there is still more work to be done for graduate preparedness. Issues around the programme choice and the availability of teachers with science and maths subjects were highlighted. Participants **TM3** and **TM1**’s pointed out that the shortage of teachers with science subjects are normally the ones that they worried about. **TM1** said: *“We normally have problem with majors. Most of them major in subjects like Life Skills and isiZulu. We find that we need somebody who is good at maths and technology, only to find that person was sponsored by FUNDZA (who always get the first chance of employment), and they say because it’s a primary school, they can teach all the subjects. But it is not like that in primary school. That is our problem – we need somebody with specialisation in maths. There is a gap with majors in maths at the Intermediate and Senior phases, and there is no one specialising at primary school”*. **TE2** agreed that UniZulu graduates are employable, but said that for undergraduate students, there is still more work to be done. *“I think the people*

with a BSc or other degree, there's quite a lot of improvement that is needed. But with Honours and Master's who have done their research and had a wide exposure when it comes to laboratory instruments; those whom I have interacted with, they are employable."

Amani (2017) reported choice of field of study as one of the barriers to employment. He believes that in addressing this barrier, a serious effort from relevant stakeholders is needed. Fizer (2013), quoted by Ahmed, Sharif and Ahmad. (2017), argued that a huge majority of students enrolled for university majors find themselves lacking the intellectual ability that is required for certain elective courses. Students end up registering for what they regard as courses that will not require too much hard work or easy to pass. Further research is required as to how UniZulu students make career choices.

4.3.4 Attitude of graduates

PE4 and TE2 shared views about how they perceived UniZulu graduates. They mentioned that they are good, but sometimes they have got attitude because of their qualification. *"They are fine, even though when they first get here they are big-headed: 'I have a degree, I have come from the university! But as they get along, and they understand the hospitality industry, they blend in.'* PE4. TM3 and ME2 shared a neutral view about graduates when they mentioned that not everyone is the same. An institution can do its best training students, but it depends on the individual. ME2 went further to give an example about a parent who guides and nurtures a child, but if the child is not behaving well, the fault is not the parent's, but the child's. The same applies to the institution. It is about the individual student, and not the institution. Cameron (2018:3) asserts that employers viewed "a raft of attitudinal issues around the commitment and behaviour of graduates" as a barrier to unemployment.

4.4 THEME 2. CHALLENGES THAT HINDER EMPLOYABILITY OF UNIZULU GRADUATES

In the study, the challenges are the limitations that prevent or might prevent employers from appointing UniZulu graduates. Participants in this theme were expected to list the challenges that they come across when they employ UniZulu graduates. The general assumption is that when one has experienced employing

graduates, who behave badly, one end up saying that all graduates of that particular institution are like that.

Participants mentioned a few things that hinder the employability of graduates. One mentioned was that owing to the Corona pandemic, which affects not only UniZulu graduates, they are unable to employ anyone. *“Well, this year, because we’ve been under Covid-19, that has brought our business to a halt, and we are not on level 2, and companies are still trying to make ends meet, but I think as we grow and have much more business, we might have people to employ”* PE1. The participant from the Department of Basic Education mentioned that finances are the challenge that the cause government to be unable to employ more UniZulu graduates.

4.4.1 Limited curriculum

Participants reported limited curriculum as the challenge that might hinder other employers to employ more UniZulu graduates. They mentioned that there are training programmes that the university does not have that are needed by the companies to employ more graduates. This claim was confirmed by participant **TM1**, who said: *“It’s just the subjects, nothing else it’s the same problem at other universities.”* While TM1 and ME2 confirmed the assertion from ME1, **ME2** said: *“You see, currently, there is something that we have been trying to push for a long time. You have UniZulu, you have the municipality, you have your industrial areas, but when you look at the programmes offered by the university, there is no Engineering Department, but you have engineering companies here, or we have industries that require engineers. In most case they take people from outside uMhlathuze or people from uMfolozi, so that is another challenge. You don’t have what the world is looking for. You don’t have Town Planning courses.”* He specified other courses that the university might consider offering in the future. *“We get so many requests from the university or students from UniZulu who have completed their Development Planning or Environmental Planning courses, looking for jobs. Some even relocate to do their master’s degree at UKZN, and then come back to be town planners. They are competing with those courses which are not for a master’s degree, so I think this is something that the university should look at.”*

But TM3 disputes the sentiments from TM1 and ME2 that the challenge is from the university. Instead he posited that it is the choice of subject by the student that might prevent other employers from employing more UniZulu graduates. He highlighted that when one subject has been chosen by more students than others, it leads to a surplus in one major and a shortage of others. Most employers are looking for scarce skills in subjects like maths, science and technology, and these are offered by UniZulu, but students will choose subjects without looking at the demand and supply in the market. TM3 confirmed his statement by saying: *“The challenge that some people might have is not necessarily that these are UniZulu graduates. It might be the challenge of how they are choosing their majors. We find that this person is completing his degree in Zulu this year, but we already have 20 who are doing Zulu here in the school. I am looking for maths teachers”*.

It is important that the university understand the needs of local business and industry in terms of the skills demanded, and work to provide curriculum that will address the gap, Teng (2019) mentions that there is a disparity between university training and the skill sets needed by employers. The ability standards required are not expressed in most university curricula.

4.4.2 Financial challenges

Participant OT2 point out that while there are many other challenges that might hinder employers from employing more UniZulu graduates, a financial challenge on the part of the employer cannot be totally ignored. He alleged that there are no other challenges except the system that is used by the Department of Basic Education to control the intake of teachers in the schools. The challenge is not with the university, but with the Department of Basic Education, which can only employ more staff if guided by the post provision norm (PPN), as it the policy that determines how many staff members the particular school must have.

4.4.3 Partnership with the employment industry

Some participants highlighted that the university and the working world are not connected. They believed that if UniZulu could open up to building a partnership with the employers in the local industries to benefits graduates. *“What I can add is that even the institution itself need to make sure that it builds relations with the companies, so that they can approach companies and ask for sponsorships so*

that they can buy equipment” TE1. ME2 agreed: “I think the biggest challenge we have is UniZulu. We have the municipality, we have various industries in Empangeni and Richards Bay, particularly in Richards Bay, and the biggest challenge that hinders the employment of UniZulu graduates is the lack of relationship among the institutions. There should be that communication or agreement amongst the institutions just to ensure that if we say that this year at UniZulu we will have 10 graduates looking for in-service training at the municipality or IBZ or at South 32, then every institution can prepare for that. But what normally happen, once they are done with their degrees, they have to look out for themselves, like anyone else that has completed the degree. I am saying this because I have been to institutions where they have a very good relationship the municipalities where students come from. but here we still have a challenge. If we can work on that, I promise you a lot of students can be assisted not only with the public sector, even the private sector as well.”.

The assertions from participants agree with Sin and Amaral (2017a), who mention in their findings that there is a need to improve or initiate cooperation between HEIs and employers. Also in tune with the comments from the respondents above is research by Beretu (2018) and Kinash, et al. (2016), who say that there is a need for industries and HEIs to come to agreement as to what will be required by the industries in terms of employing graduates so that universities can train graduates accordingly.

Participants suggest that there is a need to build partnerships between the university and the working world. In the same way, Cameron, Dhakal and Burgess (2018), advocates that employers and HEIs are the two main stakeholders in preparing a job-ready graduate. The comments from the respondents are in accordance with the suggestion by Mutwarasibo, Ruterana and Anderson (2014) to create partnerships and/or reinforce the existing partnerships between the universities and the employers. Concurring with him are Cai (2013) and Prabhu (2011), who advocate that the universities must make it their responsibility to let employers know more about their curriculum, their graduates and the quality of the education the institution provides by inviting employers to participate in reviewing academic programmes, in the subsequent development of curricula, and in securing internships for their students. TE1 made

an example of his institution of study, where, he attests, that kind of relationship working fruitfully. Cai (2013) emphasizes the importance of universities assisting students in their readiness for the workforce, with a particular focus on the relevance of their educational programs to the needs of the labor market. Universities are unable to meet the diverse capability requirements of tens of thousands of businesses.

Roslyn Cameron, (2018) suggests that because it might be difficult for the university to work with each individual company to understand what employers are looking when employing a graduate, a peak business groups could identify and communicate the core skill and competence requirements of their constituencies to universities. These business associations are critical connections between the institutions of higher learning and companies employing graduates. One way to take business perspectives into account is through formal ties between advisory boards and committees, but other more informal relationships, including reference groups, industry forums and workshops, are important ways of promoting knowledge transfer and learning. O'Leary (2013) points out that the collaboration with employers in some universities abroad has been taking place as part of the academic programme.

4.4.4 Practical exposure

Participants ME1, ME2, posited that practical experience also hinders other employer from employing more UNIZULU graduates. *“think it is a practical exposure”, ME1.* Likewise, TE2 agrees that there is a gap in practical knowledge saying: *“also you know not just only sit in class; invite them and go to the lab and then have a feeling of the instrument because it is different when you are sitting in class and the person will tell you about these different materials and show you a picture, but it's always nice to go there, have a physical look to you know how does it look like, How does it work, Here what can I say? I have been in university, I have been a student also, the lecturers, they don't give, eh, much attention in terms of, you know, giving practical exposure. Let me make just one example, and there is instruments at schools, but at university, even you know, get exposure to analyse samples etc. But when I was at the working industry, I attended a course that is specifically for that instrument”.*

The participants shared similar idea to Smith's (2009) who claim that job experiences, placements, and internships will help students learn industry skills as well as soft skills like teamwork and professionalism (Smith, 2009). Dhanawade (2012) agrees with Smith, claiming that graduates joining the workforce would be more employable if they are equipped with the additional skill set to target their existing expertise. Clarke (2018), attest that a skills-based learning outcome embedded into degree programs have been adopted by other universities. There is a claim that these skills are expected to give rise to graduate employability and consequently improve graduate employment outcomes.

4.4.5 Institutional location

Participant ME1 stated that performance of UniZulu graduates is good, but the location of the university can hinder some employers from employing more graduates. Though it is not clear how this is possible, he confirmed this claim, saying: *“My personal view would probably the location or the status of the University. It is classified as, a rural area, so an organization will say, ‘Ah, no, the quality is there but ...’ I don’t see why they should doubt the quality of UniZulu graduates. As I said, from our side, the performance is good.”*

When ME1 was asked what he thought could be done to address this challenge, he gave his reply indicating that there is nothing anyone can do to address the challenge of the location of the Institution. *“Well, nothing can be done, as much as the location of the university can be classified as rural. But from my side, that shouldn’t hinder the students from being employed.”*

Although Harry, Chinyamurindi and Mjoli (2018). state that location can disadvantage graduation in terms of employment opportunities, the location of the institution can be an advantage because in the area the university can offer degrees in Agriculture, Botany, Zoology and other subjects that a city university might not. Ashwin and Case (2018) agree that graduates’ social background and geographical location does have a significant impact when entering employment.

4.4.5 Institutional image

ME3 highlighted the issue of qualifications and the image of the institution as hindrances that the institution might need to look at. *“Some do not have authentic*

qualifications. So much is being said about them in the papers etc.” The participant believed that the things said in the media about the authenticity of some qualifications from UniZulu can be a hindrance to some employers to employ more UniZulu graduates. It is important to mention that ME3 refused to be interviewed, but wrote down her comment. As a result, no follow-up was made on it.

4.5 THEME 3 - EMPLOYMENT STRATEGIES

Participants were asked about the strategies that are used by their organisations to attract unemployed UniZulu graduates. Although the account of UniZulu graduates on how they look for employment do not appear in this study, it was important for the researcher to know how the participants catered for unemployed UniZulu graduates. How do they advertise their positions? What programmes do they have to attract unemployed graduates? The researcher noted that some employers did answer this question, but others did not understand the question even when it was followed up. Those who answered highlighted different methods they used. A number of employers use in-service training to attract unemployed graduates.

4.5.1 Database

In response to the question as to how their companies attracted unemployed UniZulu graduates? Participants from the Department of Basic Education (OT1, TM1, TM2 and TM3) cited that the Department used the database system. Graduates put their names on the database; that is how they will be called for interview. *“We don’t employ directly. We report to the district office if there is a teacher that is about to retire in six months’ time, and tell them that there is a post in six months’ time, and these are the subjects. Then the Department goes to the database to look for the teacher. We are no longer allowed to take volunteers. There is no means as the school to employ; Only the Department can employ”*
TM1.

Although the department uses this method, some of the employers do not. **TM2** aired her dissatisfaction on the strategy of using a database. *“Sometimes it is not fair because they just say they must just appear on the database first. The people that are normally easily employed are FUNDZA; those are the people who benefit. Others without FUNDZA just stay at home because FUNDZA students just get the*

job. Even if there was someone who had been at the school in a temporal post, when a FUNDZA student applies, he gets the job first.”

4.5.2 In-service training and training programmes

Some participants listed in-service training as one of the methods their organisations use to attract unemployed graduates. Thompson (1995) defines in-service training as an activity that is intended to engage those that are already in the profession concerned. In-service training is a well-known strategy that companies use to attract unemployed graduates.

Participant **PE2** disclosed that they do train graduates and if after training, graduate prove that they are employable, they would employ him. *“I can train them according to my policies and procedures, and I can grow them, and yes, I will definitely employ them if they possess the skills and qualities required.”* **TE2** agreed that he does offer graduates an opportunity for training/ *“Although we are not allowed to promise them, most of them we tend to absorb because actually it becomes a waste of time train someone and let that person go. The learner that we employed three years ago is already permanent now, and I’m just praying that the current learners that we have will also get a permanent job because they are also well doing well.”*

Equally, **TE1**, **PE1**, **PE2**, **PE4**, **OT1**, and **ME2** agreed that training is the means that companies use to attract unemployed graduates. **ME1** indicated that they do have training programmes that are targeting young people from local communities. These programmes are mainly intended to attract unemployed graduates. *“We place the advert for a training programme in the local newspapers, specifically, because our main aim is targeting local communities. Of course, you will find that, as I mentioned earlier, the bulk of applications are coming from the University of Zululand, because now our main focus is local communities. It’s more than an internship. They get incentivised because they get a good stipend. Apart from the training they get a good package as well.”*

TE2 mentioned the programme they are using is the ‘Professional in Training (PIT)’. This is a training programme for those who are without experience: *“There are programmes for graduates from universities, and we’ve got another Sone which is called ‘Professional in Training’, and that one is for learners from*

technikons who have finished their expo, so that is for their practical experience so that they can graduate". It was clear from PE2 that companies (though not all of them) consider training programmes to attract unemployed graduates. In concurrence, ME3 confirmed that there is a need for this training when she said: *"Students must be assisted with on-the-job training."* While ME3 commended the environment of her organisation as good for training, she did not specifically explain how the organisation attract unemployed graduates. *"Our organisation has many departments; it is the ideal training environment for students."* She opted to write down what she had to say rather than to be interviewed because of time.

Employers appear to use different methods to attract all students, with the assumption that they give graduates equal chances to secure employment (Baldry, 2016).

4.5.3 Job advertisement

Participant **TE1** mentioned that his company uses the traditional way of advertising to attract unemployed graduates, although he indicated that the posts they advertise attracts graduates from all universities, they do not specifically select graduates from UniZulu: *"Yes, we do have students from different universities that come and serve for about two years, and if there is a permanent post, they get appointed permanently, but I am not sure how that gets advertised, I have not seen any advert being shown externally. I only see them internally."*

Some employers mentioned that if there is a position, they advertise the post in the local newspaper without targeting anyone. **ME1**: *"The response we get from the day we place an advert shows that there is so much demand from graduates Even if we say we want four we 'll most probably be sitting with boxes with almost one hundred applications which you need to zoom, and get our best four from them."*

4.5.5 To what extent do you think the methods that are used by your organisation attract unemployed graduates?

The question was a follow-up question after participants were asked about the strategy that is used by the company to attract unemployed graduates. The researcher needed to know if the methods used by companies to attract

unemployed graduates succeed in attracting them. From participants' comments, it came out that some do not know the methods being used by their organisation to attract unemployed graduates. Some indicated that different methods used by different companies do attract unemployed graduates. All the employers who answered this question affirmed that the method they used did help to attract unemployed graduates: *"It really helps them because they are now in the field, knowing what is going on exactly in this industry instead of just sitting at a desk, learning from the book. Now they will see the hardships and the easiest way of choosing the right career, because they get to be taken to all the different departments to know the difference. it is effective, because as we speak we have a lot of students from different schools getting the experience to complete their degree. Most of them for now are from TVET and UniZulu. From UniZulu they come for reception or public administration, for the hotel or even marketing."* **PE1**.

PE2 went further to affirm that graduates they previously attracted, are now in high position in permanent employment: *"Once they have done the in-service training with me, I see their calibre, and if I like it and the attitude and can see them within the organisation, they will have a fair chance of being appointed."* **PE4** said that those graduates that were trained by the company do get recognised when there is a position in it. *"Even if they leave, you still remember them. A position came out, and this student I knew, he was not here, he had finished his training at the hotel, but they were like 'Hayi bo, do you remember so and so? He was a good person, bring him in, let us do an interview. Find out what he is doing now. Maybe we can take him.' And then he was employed."* **PE1** concurred with him: *"Looking at unemployed graduates and how many we have employed so far, even if it's not just UniZulu (kuphela), most of the young employees we see working at the hotels were our graduates' trainees, or were graduates that came here to study. The method does help graduates."*

4.6 THEME 4 - POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO MAKE UNIZULU GRADUATES EMPLOYABLE

This question links with the previous question where participants were asked to identify challenges that hinder or might hinder other employers from employing more UniZulu graduates. The researcher wanted to know from the participants, after they mentioned the hindrance/s, what they thought could be done to address

them. Although not all participants were able to identify the challenges, those who did suggested a few things that could be worked upon to overcome them.

4.6.1 Improve image of the institution

Participants mentioned that the image of the institution plays a vital role in terms of its graduates' employment. They looked at the image as the bad publicity that is normally a result of the students' behaviour, and sometimes a malpractices in the university. **OT2** looked at students' poor performance. He specifically mentioned that there is a problem with the PGCE graduates, highlighting that some employers (HoD's) are not happy with the PGCE group's performance in schools. *"Bad publicity resulted from the behaviour of the students, because if the child is doing something bad, you refer that child to the parent, as it reflects the behaviour of the family. But in one case we found the father in the family was a pastor, who had done everything he could. It was a unique case, but it damaged the image of the university."* OT2 mentioned PGCE as the programme that because of graduates not doing well in the job, affected the who image of the institution: *"I am not sure if I should say they must stop this thing of PGCE, but you can't say that, because even with those in the database, some of the principals, sometimes say, 'We are not happy with those teachers. They are not productive, they can't teach, they cannot give good results at the end of the day or the end of the year, they cannot teach matric, they only want to teach (GET) Grades 8 and 9. When you take him to FET Grade 10, 11 and 12 there are no results, no product at all. So those are the problems that I think make people reluctant about UniZulu and other graduates, even other PGCE graduates. As far as I know it is UniZulu that has a lot of PGECs. I am not sure about other institutions."*

The comments above are an indication that when graduates leave the university for the world of work, they become the ambassadors of their institution; they carry the university's name with them. The group after them can benefit or suffer depending on how have painted the university picture. Purnomo (2020) look at a brand as something that can be seen, an image that is owned by the institution represented. That image cannot always be seen in the institution itself, but can be viewed by others in its results or end product. Some participants mentioned that while at UniZulu, students must behave themselves in a way that portrays a good

image and sells the university, both on campus and after they leave. According to ME2, nothing much has been done to improve the image of the institution. Some participants mentioned that bad publicity destroys the image of the university, which affects the chances of graduates' getting employment. Kaur and Singh (2008) show that employers prefer to hire graduates from public universities as they perceive that they possess the necessary academic qualifications. A university can work towards promoting the product that it is selling to employers, that is, its graduates. When selling graduates to employers, having a good name is really important. In agreement with (Purnomo, 2020) are Aungamuthu and Vigar-Ellis (2017) and Alcaide-Pulido, Alves and Gutiérrez-Villar, (2017), who state that promoters of the universities must work towards building, promoting and maintaining a positive image of their university. According to employers, an "employment brand" matters. If an institution is not known to employers, graduates of that institution who are seeking employment suffer the consequences, (Maguire Associates, 2012).

4.6.2 University should sell itself

The comments from the participants hypothesized that if the university can sell itself to the working world, employers will know about its students and what they can do. This statement is confirmed by PE2 when saying: "*UniZulu faculties need to go and sell themselves to these companies.*" ME3 furthered the argument by relooking at the university's selling its marketing strategies as a whole. UZ needs to work on improving their marketing strategies." OT1 suggested that the university can inform the schools about its graduates, sell its graduates, by giving the schools a list of graduates who have just graduated, so that when the school wants a maths teacher, instead of going to the database they have the list, and can give the name to the Department to employ: "*They can email their names to schools, because they cannot just email them to the Department. We don't usually contact the Department, but they are here at UniZulu, so they can come to schools, KwaDlangezwa, Ngoye, Qhakaza and other schools; that will be easy for us. We have been asking UniZulu to do this for us to be able to know which students graduated from them so that it can be easy for us to get them.*" ME2 confirmed the statement that UniZulu graduates are employable, but raised the concern that they are not known well by employers. "*What needs to happen then*

is to make sure that everyone knows that UniZulu is producing quality graduates. I know about them because I sometimes who used to go there and ask for them, and I can already see that those worked with are working in different fields in different organisations. They are indeed employable.”

In the same way, **OT2** agreed with the statement, but he further mentioned that it is not just about the university selling itself, but UniZulu can do more to promote its graduates, this will help to address a bad publicity in the university name: *“Maybe even the university itself must work hard to promote its graduates, because now people say bad things about the university.”* **ME1** stated that there are programmes at UniZulu that are highly recognised, and if they are publicised, it will help in selling the institution well. *“If I can give an example: I know the Law programming at the university is highly recognised, so you must just put effort into having all other programmes highly recognised and accredited and marketing themselves. Put them out there.”*

4.6.3 Working relationship between the Institution and industry

When asked to suggest what can be done to address the challenges that hinder employers from employing more UniZulu graduates, some respondents brought up the need for building the relationship between the university and local industry. **ME2** said: *“If there can be communication or agreement amongst the institutions just to ensure that if we say that this year, we will have 10 graduates looking for in-service training at the municipality or IBZ or South 32, then every institution will prepare for that. But what normally happens is that once the students are done with their degrees, they see for themselves, like anyone else that has completed their degrees, what is on offer in the municipalities where they come from or where they are located. But here we still have a challenge, and if we can work on that, I promise you a lot of the students can be assisted not only with the public sector, but even the private sector as well.”* **TE1** and **ME3** agreed with **ME2** that there is a need for strategic partnerships with giant local companies, but **ME2** went further to state that the institution can use the opportunity of a working relationship to ask for sponsorships from employers to buy the equipment to use in the laboratories. Mentioning the Department of Chemistry as an example, he said: *“The institution itself needs to make sure that it builds relationships with the companies, so that it can approach companies and ask for sponsorships so that it can buy equipment.”*

You find that a lot of your studies are theoretical: you cannot even operate a mere magnetometer, but you are a graduate of Hydrology.” ME1 confirmed the assertion: “Build relationships with the outside world, including industry or the employers per se, because they do assist a lot in how the municipality responds on what is out there. TM2 agreed, but left the responsibility of building a partnership with the top management of the university. “I think those that are in higher positions should support the departments as far as employing students is concerned, in every area, not only in Education, because students are really suffering, not only teachers.”

While TE2 agreed, but he further looked at another benefit of collaborating with industry. He speculated that sometimes the university cannot afford to buy all the equipment / instruments that students must be exposed to, but the university can send its students to companies with these instruments for practicals so that they can have the exposure. *“The university should try to invest in technology, and even if they don’t have it they can collaborate with companies that do. If a student could come here for a month or even two or three weeks, having that theory; he or she could learn a lot that is impossible to find all the instruments for.*

Furthermore, TM3 showed willingness to make himself and maybe other employers (principals) available to come to university and advise students in their first year of study on what is to be expected of them when they leave for employment. *“We are here, available to help if we can help, I don’t know how you structure your course in the university, whether there are slots where students need to be taken for motivation or development, but those can be created, I think I am one of those who can avail herself”.*

4.6.4 Practical experience

Participants mentioned that practical experience should be embedded in the curriculum. PE4 and ME2 agreed. ME2 said: *“I think that is the part that we always look at, if it not there, and it must be structured to the point where we say, we need 12 months and these 12 months will have a programme of what you will be doing within those 12 months. In most cases that is what causes a problem. If you check the CV, you see that the person has completed a degree but he only worked maybe at a grocery shop just to be a parker. There is no proper training, but I think*

if that can happen, it will solve a lot of problems. I studied in an institution where I had to go and do in-service training for 12 months as a compulsory part of my qualification.” ME1 agreed with ME2 but went further and mentioned that the university might need to do research about the type of graduates a local industry is looking for, “In terms of programmes, maybe the University should look at the status of the industry that are classified as employers and see what is in the market, meaning what are they looking for in the graduate market, because I think the market has evolved a little bit. Here in Richards Bay we have got dynamic enterprises now – mining, civil service, law firms.... The university should engage with employers to see what they expect from the university and its graduates. Then the university can respond on to the demands of the job market”.

While ME1 and ME2 advocated practical experience as a solution to address the challenges of graduate employability, TE2 suggested that lecturers as well need this practical exposure, and specifically to the instruments that they are using in the laboratories to which even lecturers are not well exposed. TE2 said: *“Lecturers must attend the course that is specifically designed for people who want to be expert in that instrument. Then when they come back, they must create training materials specifically for each instrument, and then train people, take them to the lab and take the students through each step, not try to cover up everything, because you end up knowing nothing.”* TE1 shared the view of exposing students to practical experience, but went a bit further, suggesting that the university needs to keep contact with their former students as they themselves become employers: *“I think it’s good if they keep in contact with their former students by getting to know what their former students are doing, where they are doing it, and what role their senior students can play, even if they only come and observe machines working onsite. By doing that I think the university will make sure that even its senior students get to know their potential employers and what is happening in the field. There is that gap between the former students of the university and the university, but I think if it can be bridged it can have lot of positive results.”*

4.6.5 Improve curriculum to suit the needs of the employer

Participants mentioned that academic programmes at the institution must be improved to be in line with the demands of the corporate world. ME1 suggested that the university should align itself with specific programmes as per the needs

of the employers. He advised that these programmes would need to be advertised: *“What the institution could do to give itself an edge is to have specific programmes so that they would definitely be on a par with other municipalities.”* ME1 and OT1 suggested specific subjects for specialisation. **ME1** took the argument further by pressing for the incorporation of a compulsory practical component in academic programmes, that would help graduates to leave the university with at least some experience. He suggested that this practical component be embedded as part of the programme: *“Maybe have a system – I know that even your T-vets are doing the same thing – have a system of incorporating a practical component in the course structure, maybe saying ‘We’ve got this programme, this B.Com, for three years, then we will try and stick to the academic part for two and a half years, and then have six months when learners will be sent to a big accounting firm, a big finance corporation, where they can gain valuable experience which will form part of their qualification.’”*

The comments from the participants are an indication that practical experience are an important contributor to employability of graduates. Mthembu (2019) asserts that there is an imbalance between theory and practice in offered curricula. Prabhu (2011) and Harry (2018) suggest that there is a need for the institution to embed employability skills in the curriculum, and not only in one or two modules. According to Aungamuntu and Vigar-Ellis (2017), to ensure the employability of graduates, modules and programmes offered by the university must be up to date, and that access systems are designed to meet the needs of the employer.

4.6.6 Skills gap

Participant TM1 mentioned that most university graduate teachers lack chalkboard skills, and they need to be developed while at university. She said you can tell that a person has come from the university because she/he cannot write well on the board: *“Chalkboard is very problematic; we can see if this graduate was at the college or at university because the university does not pay attention to the chalkboard, yet the college does pay attention to it. Challenges are the chalkboard and the subjects; otherwise, all is good, yet a child must grab handwriting at an early age.* OT1 suggested that the university should train a lot of maths and science teachers: *They should train a lot of science educators who*

can teach at a high school, because I don't think there are many of those graduates. Even now there are some high schools who are looking for teachers. We even use sms's and WhatsApp so that we can get those teachers."

A skills gap exists between what the graduate possesses and what the employer requires. Sharma (2018) states that technical knowledge acquired from universities alone is not a base for stepping up the success ladder in the job. A degree certificate does not guarantee one a job. When a graduate enters the professional and business world, they have to prove that they possess the skills the job requires.

4.7.7 Mentorship

Participants TM3 and ME2 mentioned that to enhance graduate employability it is important to have a mentor. According to Jackson, Milos and Kerr (2019), through the expertise and encouragement of others, mentoring helps learners to efficiently control their own learning, build skills, and maximize their potential. Mann et al., (2018), who believes that with mentorship, a graduate can get transferrable skills and be able to land in the world of work with ease.

4.6.7 Closing the gap between the university and the working world

When asked to suggest what can be worked upon to enhance the employability of UniZulu graduates, some participants brought up the gap that exists between the university and the working world. They claimed that when a student graduates from university, he or she has very little information about the working world. They suggested that the gap could be closed by taking students to companies to experience the working environment. This assertion was confirmed by **ME3**: *"When they do their final year, they must be inducted into what is expected of them from employers. Various HR managers from different companies around Richards Bay could be invited."* **TE2** concurred with him, saying: *"And if you have been there before, you know how things are done in other parts of the world, and it's going to be easier for you to be employed and adapt to the environment. So I think in their final year the university must organise field trips for students, so that when they become graduates, at least they will have seen other parts of the working environment. Maybe if you're in your final year doing a certain project and there's a company which is doing the same thing, the department should organise*

with the company so that you go there and learn most of the things that are related to what you're doing."

According to Mann et al. (2018), engaging employers in their education would benefit graduates, by:

- enhancing understanding of jobs and careers;
- providing the knowledge and skills demanded by the contemporary labour market;
- providing the knowledge and skills demanded for successful school-to-work transitions; and
- enriching education and underpinning student attainment.

The above comments from the participants are confirmed by Umar (2015) who indicates that there are gaps that exist between the two major employability stakeholders, that is, institutions of higher learning that prepare graduates and the potential consumers of graduates that are the employers of human capital. He mentions the major problem that militates against the development of employability skills. The finding from the participants above clearly indicate that both stakeholders worked or operated in isolation, independent of one another. The comments are also affirmed by Tymon (2017) who asserts that universities and employers must collaborate to align incentives and supports on the path to learning and jobs, both before and after graduates enter the workforce. Bridging this gap, it is assumed, will play a vital role in enhancing the employability of UniZulu graduates, and promote human capital.

4.7 THEME 5: GRADUATES' ATTEMPTS TO IMPROVE THEIR EMPLOYABILITY

Participants were asked to share their opinions on what they think graduates can do to make themselves employable. This theme was intended to get advice from the employers on things that UniZulu graduates can do to increase their chances of employment. It is a general view and expectation that if many young people are not getting employed, the government must do something to create job opportunities. While that cannot always be true, graduates themselves, after being equipped with knowledge from the university, should be able to do something.

Different participants had different views on how graduates could improve their chances of employment.

Participant **TE2** believed that knowledge is power. He advised graduates to always read, to keep their notes from the university because they might come in handy when they needed to apply on the job what was learned at varsity. *“So, one thing I would say is that sometimes I know the lecturer won’t have enough time to cover everything, but even when after you know you’ve graduated, just don’t throw away your notes. Keep your study material and go back, just update yourself. I’ve still got my notes from when I graduated 10 years ago.”* **ME1** emphasised the need to do well in their studies: *“Only one thing: they just need to excel in their studies.”* But **TM3** had a different view when he suggested that it was important for graduates to have a mentor who would assist them to bridge the gap between varsity and world of work.

Participants **TM1** and **TM2** shared the view that graduates cannot make themselves employable since the power to employ lies in the hands of the Department of Basic Education, participant **TM1** said: *“They cannot make themselves employable. Just now at our school we need a male teacher. We’ve got only three males and more than 20 female teachers, so each time we have a post it depends on the Department to fill it.”* **PE5** thought graduate themselves could do better if they showed willingness to do more. *“Willingness to work shifts, weekends, public holidays, etc.”*

4.7.1 Networking

TE1 also commented on the employability of UniZulu graduates. He believed that networking while at varsity is the way to get to know people in your industry, get to know your potential employers and build relations with them. *“Students tend to study from first year up to the very last year, but you find that they don’t know people who have studied at the University of Zululand in the same field, so I think they need to search for information, like ‘Who came out of Hydrology Department and where is that person working now?’, Then you start building relationships with those people. In our days, to get employed you need to know the people around.”*

TE1 continued his argument, sharing his experience as a former student of UniZulu, saying that final-year students should be taken to forums, workshops and conferences, where they would find a way to meet their potential employers. *“I think when students get to their final year, they should be taken out as often as possible to conferences. In my field we have biannual water conferences, we have different forums, uMhlathuze water forums, and the national Department of Water Affairs has got different management forum meetings. We used to be taken out to those when I was still at the University of Zululand. I am not sure if that is still being done. By doing that we got to know potential employers, we got to meet and discuss issues with them.”*

4.7.2 Sell yourself

When participants were asked to suggest to UniZulu graduates what they could do to make themselves employable, while some participants advised the university to sell itself to employers, participant **OT1** advised graduates to sell themselves by working hard and being at their best behaviour when given an opportunity to work while they are still at varsity. *“Once again they need to sell themselves and show that they are willing to work. If they are not willing to work, if they are lazy, I will not appoint them. They must sell themselves by showing their knowledge. All they need, basically, especially UniZulu graduates, is in-service training, and to sell themselves. To be honest with you, they are good graduates.”* While **PE5** pointed out that there are opportunities that graduates do not like to take, this might be because they are too low for their qualification. They think they are too educated to take some tasks or opportunities: *“Students must seize every opportunity that comes their way.”* **ME2** asserted that graduates must be the ambassadors for their institution. *“Make sure that the proper training that they receive while they are within the institution will then send them to the employers. When they send their CVs, when we interview them, they will indicate that they have been well trained by this lecturer or that professor, so when they leave the university, they become the ambassadors of that University.”*

ME2 believed that if graduate were to work hard and not relax, job opportunities would come their way, he suggested that graduates should take any opportunity, even to volunteer to exposed themselves to the world of employment. *“Their job*

is not to sleep. When I say not to sleep, I mean they must always be on their toes while they are still at the university. If during the breaks there are no assignments to do, they must bestir themselves to go and get training. If school recess is three weeks, use those three weeks to go to any company to say, "Listen, I am on recess, I have three weeks to get training."

4.7.3 Self-employment

Although not many participants viewed self-employment as the way to go when looking for a job, **PE1** , stated: *"I think we should teach them not to dwell on being employees, but on being employers, because when looking at our industry as a hotel, there is a lot that the students can start learning: where to get their soups? How can we make them? Where do they get their linen? How can we find out how to supply the hospitality? There is quite a lot to learn because today technology is starting to take over, and robots will be running the hotels. Our students must start learning, broaden their minds, not just dwell on being employees."*

4.7.4 Change of attitude

Some respondents perceived attitude as something that limits chances of graduate employment. When graduates show a positive attitude, they sell themselves well, and vice versa. *"I think it is the mindset – that is all. They just need to understand why they are here, what they are going to get out of it. The attitude that says 'I am just here to get my training, and then I am leaving, and then probably I am just going to go back and do my PhD – that is what you will hear them saying sometimes.'" PE4 and PE2* advised that graduates must sell themselves with a positive attitude, an attitude that shows willingness to work.

4.8. SUMMARY

In this chapter, collected data were analysed and presented. Findings from the participants on the perception of employers on the employability of UniZulu graduates were systematically summarised. This study aimed assess the perceptions of employers on the employability of UniZulu graduates; to determine the challenges that hinder employers from employing more UniZulu graduates and to examine the methods used by potential employers to attract UniZulu unemployed graduates. Data were collected from 14 employers through one on

one semi-structured interviews. Responses were analysed and compared to determine the similarities and differences in their responses.

Themes were generated from the transcriptions, presented and discussed according to the research questions for the study.

The findings revealed that UniZulu graduates are employable but there are areas that were identified by participants as hindrances so some employers. Such hindrances identified were limited curriculum, shortage of financial challenges, partnership with industry, practical exposure and institutional image. Suggestions to improve curriculum, build strategic partnership with industry, expose graduate to practical experience, improve UniZulu image, create self-employment opportunities, close skills gap and for the university to advertise itself were made. Respondents were asked about the employment that are used by employers to UniZulu graduates. Some mentioned company database and in-service training as the strategies used by their employers to attract unemployed UniZulu graduates. The next chapter provides the summary and findings of the study, and recommendations for improving employability of UniZulu graduates.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The principal aim of the study was to explore the perceptions of local employers on the employability of UniZulu graduates with reference to uMhlathuze local municipalities. Areas covered were Richards Bay, Empangeni and KwaDlangezwa. The findings of the study are presented under each of the research objectives outlined below. The objectives of the study were as follows:

To assess the perceptions of employers on the employability of UniZulu graduates.

To determine the challenges that hinders employers from employing more UniZulu graduates.

To examine the methods used by potential employers to attract unemployed graduates.

To suggest possible solutions/recommendations on the employability of graduates.

The study was underpinned by the qualitative paradigm in carrying out this research, specifically through semi-structured interviews. Through purposive sampling, the study included a total of 14 who participated from five different companies, as was specified in Chapter 3, on the research methodology of this study.

5.2 SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

5.2.1 To assess the perceptions of employers on the employability of UNIZULU graduates

To address this objective, the question “How often do you employ UniZulu graduates?” was asked, followed by the participants’ perceptions about the employability of UniZulu graduates. A number of participants said that UniZulu graduates are employable. A human capital theory by Becker (1993), states that

the investment in education adds value to graduates. He cited that a person cannot be separated from his or her knowledge, skills, capabilities, etc., so when employers employ graduates, they also employ the skills, knowledge and abilities that have been invested as capital in that individual. If graduates are recognised by employers, that means the human capital invested is paying back. Findings revealed that employers do employ UniZulu graduates.

However, although UniZulu graduates are employable, findings from the study showed that there are issues that need to be attended to enhance their employability. Issues around curriculum and attitude are addressed below.

- ***Curriculum***

The University of Zululand still needs to produce more programmes that meet employers needs and expectations. Results show that there are programmes that are needed by employers, but not offered by the university. Employers claim that if the university can add programmes like engineering, graduate employability can be enhanced. According to Prabhu (2011), the tertiary education institutions are under pressure to deliver programmes according to the new requirements of the employers. These include not only updated accurate knowledge and technology-driven skills in their curriculum design, but also closely linking those programmes to the industry, and maintaining strong links with practitioners from the respective fields. It is important to note that from 2021 UniZulu will start offering the engineering programme.

- ***Attitude***

Findings revealed that when looking for employment, graduates tend to show an attitude that is unwelcome to employers. Some UniZulu graduates do not like to do tasks that they feel are beneath their qualification. Employability chances are reduced if employers find a candidate's choosiness to be excessive. Although the negative consequences are less pronounced among highly qualified graduates, they should not be ignored. If our graduates stay unemployed as a result of their selective mindset, it will be a waste of their professional development (Jayasingam Fujiwara and Thurasamy, 2018).

5.2.2 To identify challenges that hinder employers from employing more UniZulu graduates

Participants were asked about the challenges that employers face or might face when employing UniZulu graduates. The aim of this question was to disclose from the employers' side, what is unknown by other role players like graduates, students and institutions that hinders the employability of UniZulu graduates.

- ***Skills shortage / subject gap***

Participants highlighted the skills and/or subject gaps as another hindrance to UniZulu graduates' employability. These were subjects like maths, science and technology. Some participants mentioned that there are instances where a school is looking for a maths and technology teacher, only to find that most students majored in Life Orientation and a language. There had been an appeal to the university to produce more teachers in maths, science and technology. Some participants referred to specialised programmes or qualifications that are needed by local industry, but not offered by the institution – programmes like Engineering, Town Planning, etc., which UniZulu might consider adding to its more specialised programmes. Although Alcaide-Pulido, Alves and Gutiérrez-Villar (2017) have argued that owing to the high percentage of people with tertiary educational qualifications, the demand for graduate employees is low, the demand for graduates with certain maths and technology subjects will remain high. Some jobs demand science and technology subjects more than other specialisations.

- ***Financial challenge***

Findings indicated that lack of funds can hinder employers from employing graduates, though not specifically UniZulu graduates. For example, with their Covid-19 challenges, many employers were forced to retrench, since they could not afford to pay salaries. Participants mentioned that if the employer has no money to pay salaries, there will be no employment of graduates.

- ***Partnership with companies***

Findings showed that there is a disconnect between the cooperate world and the institution. This lack of partnership between UniZulu and local companies was stated as one of the challenges that hinder employers from employing UniZulu graduates. It is assumed that if there was this partnership, the employability of graduates would be enhanced (Newton et al., (2005); Kinash at al., 2016; Sin and Amaral, (2017a) and Beretu, 2018. It is believed that this partnership would

benefit graduates in many ways, like in-service training, part-time jobs, practical experience, employment, sponsorships, etc. Employers benefit from the collaboration as well. According to Tran (2016a), collaboration between universities and businesses to link theory and practice helps to increase sector productivity, development, and quality, as well as the economy's overall competitiveness in the international market.

- ***Practical exposure***

Results from the study show that practical exposure is one of the hindrances to UniZulu graduate employability. Participants suggested that practical experience be made compulsory and embedded on the curriculum so that when graduates leave UniZulu they do at least have work experience. This practical exposure can take place while studying for the improvement of both soft and hard skills as well as their knowledge of field work (Mthembu, 2019). The challenge identified was with other degree programmes that do not have practical experience as there is in the BEd degree, the BSc (Nursing), and the BA in Social Work.

- ***Institutional location***

One participant stated that UniZulu's location can hinder some employers from employing more UniZulu graduates. Harry (2018), states that graduates from the urban universities are taken more seriously than those from the rural ones. However, although the participant said the university's location as a hindrance, it cannot always be the case. UniZulu is surrounded by forests, rivers and game reserves, so the graduates in agriculture, botany, geography and other subjects benefit greatly from the rural location.

5.2.3 To identify strategies used by employers to attract more UniZulu graduates

Participants were asked about strategies that their companies are using to attract unemployed UniZulu graduates.

Database: Findings indicate that employers use the database, whereby a candidate registers on the database and waits for the employer to call for an interview if there is a post available

- **In-service training:** Some companies provide programmes like on the job training to unemployed graduates, Participants mentioned that in-service training is essential to bridge the gap between theory and practice, to get to experience what is being taught at varsity.
- **Advertisements:** Some participants mentioned that they advertise in the local newspapers and through billboards, but they do not have specific programmes to attract unemployed graduates. They only advertise in local newspapers if there is a position available, without targeting UniZulu graduates.

When participants were asked if these methods do succeed in attracting unemployed UniZulu graduates, those that listed the methods they use all agreed that although the methods do not focus on attracting UniZulu graduates, but they do help.

5.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter summarises and concludes the research findings, and presents the applicable recommendations on how to improve the employability of UniZulu graduates. The objectives of the study were to assess the perceptions of employers on the employability of UniZulu graduates; to determine the challenges that hinder employers from employing more UniZulu graduates; to examine the methods used by potential employers to attract unemployed graduates, and to suggest possible solutions for/recommendations on the employability of graduates.

The key findings from the study revealed that there is a need for partnership between the University of Zululand and the industry. O'Leary (2013) states that employers' collaboration with the university can be achieved in different ways, including: guest speakers, work placements and projects of various types. This partnership will assist the University of Zululand and industry to achieve common understanding between and benefit to all role players, but will mostly enhance the employability of graduates while uplifting the economy of the country. The

employability of graduates can only be achieved if all parties (employers, university and graduates) work together.

Findings have also shown that there is a need to revise the curriculum so that it meets the employers' needs, this can be done by adding more specific courses needed by local employers. An example was adding the Engineering programme, since the university is surrounded by industries that requires employees with this type of qualification. Results revealed that programmes at the university are too theoretical, graduates walk out of the university without practical knowledge of the industry. Suggestions to add practical experience in the curriculum were made, this is necessary to allow students to gain experience while at university, and thus enhance their chances of employability. Findings also reveal that university graduates can improve their employability by engaging in activities like networking and volunteering for jobs. Recommendations were made for graduates to create job opportunities, then to look for employment.

5.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study was limited to 14 employers from five companies in uMhlatuze Local Municipality, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The rate of graduate unemployment remains high, and the reasons are not yet known; therefore, more studies are needed in an extended area on the perceptions of employers on the employability of graduates. It is important to hear the voices of employers to know how the universities can best prepare its graduates for the corporate world, and how best the graduates can prepare themselves. A study on the voices of employed graduates from different study areas is important to advise current students and the university on what the corporate world demands from them. A study on building partnerships with industry is also important because stakeholders have different goals to missions and visions.

Further studies on the perception of employers on the employability of graduates that covers other suburbs or rural areas of the province or the country at large would complement this study and serve as evidence of practice across the cities and outside. More in-depth studies are necessary to look into the unemployment of UniZulu graduates from various study areas or specialisations, especially the

degrees whose students are most highly unemployed. Study of demand versus supply is necessary to know what it is that the employers want that the University of Zululand does not offer.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The objectives of this study were achieved, but there were some limitations to the study. The study was limited to only 14 employers from five companies. A purposive sampling method was used to select only a small sample of participants for the interviews. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalised to all South African employers. Regardless of these limitations, the study was able to collect adequate and valid data using semi-structured one-on-one interviews with various employers.

Another limitation was that, in order to protect South African people from the rare Coronavirus, the government declared a national lockout, causing industry to shut down. The researcher was unable to arrange and perform face-to-face interviews with the participants, data collection was delayed. Even at the easing of lockdown rules, there were still rules that defined how people should behave to avoid the spreading of the Coronavirus. One rule was social distancing, which caused a challenge in terms of meeting the participants that were selected for the study. Telephonic interviews were then the only option for data collection.

Some selected employers were off sick during the data collection period, as a result, the researcher could not reach everyone in the sample. One other challenge was that it was sometimes impossible to schedule a telephonic interview as participants were too busy and short-staffed. Two of them were reluctant to be interviewed, but instead opted to down their input from the research tool, as a result, the researcher could not follow up on their contributions, which had important information for the study.

Finance was another challenge that the researcher encountered during the study. She made application for the research fund, but the university had financial challenges during the 2020 financial year, and so her application was not successful. That resulted in the researcher having to fund herself throughout the

study period and sometimes do most part of the project herself, like transcribing the scripts.

Existing research on the perception of employers on the employability of graduates indicates that there is not enough literature on the subject in South Africa; hence more research should be conducted with the aim of improving the employability of graduates.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

This study focuses on the perceptions of employers on the employability of UniZulu graduates, and from the findings some recommendations were made. These recommendations are directed to the university, employers, graduates, students and policy makers, so as to improve the employability of UniZulu graduates. The researcher believes that the following recommendations can enhance the employability of UniZulu graduates:

- Results indicated that there is a disconnect between the university and the working world. Respondents suggested that leaders from UniZulu and local industry should open up to building a strategic partnership. It is assumed that this kind of partnership would enhance the employability of graduates and offer chances for internships, practical experience, sponsorships, etc.
- This study has established that graduates have little or no experience when they leave university for the world of employment. It is recommended that students in their final year of study, be taken out to companies to attend workshops and conferences and do some experimental learning, this will help students to acquaint themselves with the corporate world. Suggestions to have memorandum of agreement between academic departments and companies to avoid exploitation of students.
- There is a need for the university to consider improving its image. Results from the study revealed that the image of the institution has been affected by bad publicity, and yet the fact is, image plays a vital role in graduates' employability. If the public view the institution as a bad institution, it's Net Promoter Score (NPS) is low, graduates suffer the consequences.

- Findings from the study reveal that a shortage of some university programmes required by local employers, hinder the employability of UniZulu graduates. UniZulu need to update its curricula by adding some specialised academic programmes that are desired by local employers, this would help to enhance the employability its graduates, an example of such programme is Engineering.
- Findings suggest that academic programmes can also be improved by incorporating practical experience as part of the work towards a degree. Participants felt that graduates would then leave the university with at least some experience to enhance their employability.
- Findings from the study suggest that UniZulu should consider improving its marketing strategy. The institution must ensure that companies are well aware of its graduates by marketing itself and its programmes. to the cooperate world.

Students and graduates

- Findings show that graduates appear to have attitude that is undesirable to employers when they enter employment, some because they are holding a degree, undermines instruction and consider some tasks as too insignificant etc., this behaviour is most observed from part-time job or training programme candidates. Employers advised graduates to change their attitude to become employable. Graduates should take every opportunity given to them and learn from their experienced colleagues as much as they can, even if they think those colleagues are not as qualified as they are. With the experience colleagues have, a newly employed graduate can learn a lot, and try not to be too selective.
- Results reveal that graduates could do more to enhance their employability. Participants encouraged graduates to involve themselves in networking, so that they get to know about various industries by meeting potential employers. Graduates can do networking while still at university in their final year of study through attending conferences and workshops; do taking

part-time employment, meeting with former students who are already employed, etc.

- Findings suggest that graduates should sell themselves to companies. Participants proposed that unemployed graduates do voluntary work to make themselves visible to employers. Participants viewed graduates as the ambassadors for their institution, in that when they are at work, they must do it for their institution. Graduates are advised to behave themselves when they are given an opportunity. By doing so, they are selling themselves and their institution.
- Findings recommend that graduates should take advantage of opportunities to share their own business. Consumer Science graduates could supply a hotel with products like bedding. Participants recommended that graduates must be involved in self-employment by looking for entrepreneurial opportunities instead of for employment.

5.7 CONCLUSION

The study's main objectives were to assess what local employers perceive on the employability of UniZulu graduates, to identify the challenges that hinder employers from employing UniZulu graduates, to ascertain how companies attract unemployed UniZulu graduates, and make recommendations for enhancing their employability. Although there is a vast literature on graduate employability, there is very little found on the perceptions of employers on the employability of graduates in South Africa, and none found to be looking at the University of Zululand.

Graduate unemployment has recently received attention from numerous stakeholders, and its growth seems to be an ongoing problem. The graduate unemployment rate is one of the current issues being discussed by higher education scholars. The study assessed the perceptions of local employers on the employability of UniZulu graduates. The voices of employers are important to inform policy makers of the university for the need to change. The findings from the study highlight that UniZulu graduates are employable, and that there is no big

difference between them and graduates from other universities, UniZulu graduate just as good.

Some challenges highlighted were: The university has a limited curriculum, some courses desired by employers are not offered by UniZulu. The other challenge that was tinted as a major, is that there is no working relationship between UniZulu and local industries, and that some UniZulu graduates lack practical exposure while some graduates were found to be too selective when offered a job. Employers felt that there is a need for graduates to learn on the job, they must accept what is available and grow in the job.

Employers believed that UniZulu's public image must be improved, as it impacts on the chances of graduates getting employed. Suggestions were made to build a strategic partnership between local employers and the university, to enhance the employability of UniZulu graduates. Findings indicated that UniZulu needs to improve the curriculum by including practical experience in students' final year of study. This would assist graduates to have at least some work experience in their final year.

When participants were asked about methods used in their companies to attract unemployed UniZulu graduates, it was clear that some participants did not understand the question even if it was further explained. However, responses from some participants revealed that their companies attract unemployed graduates through training programmes, job advertisements, and some use database. Participants noted that methods used do not specifically target to attract graduates from UniZulu, they open it to all graduates, even those from other institutions. Participants assured the researcher that the methods they use, do attract graduates. Some employers do not have any specific method; they only advertise a job when it is available.

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ANNEXURE A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

**UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**
(Reg No: UZREC 171110-030)



RESEARCH & INNOVATION

Website: <http://www.unizulu.ac.za>
Private Bag X1001
KwaDlangezwa 3886
Tel: 035 902 6273
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ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Certificate Number	UZREC 171110-030 PGM 2019/96					
Project Title	The perceptions of selected employers on the employability of UNIZULU graduates: a case study of uMhlathuze Local Municipality					
Principal Researcher/ Investigator	P.P Mbatha					
Supervisor and Co-supervisor	Dr N Jili					
Department	Public Administration					
Faculty	Commerce, Administration and Law					
Type of Risk	Medium Risk – Data collection from people					
Nature of Project	Honours/4 th Year	Master's	x	Doctoral	Departmental	

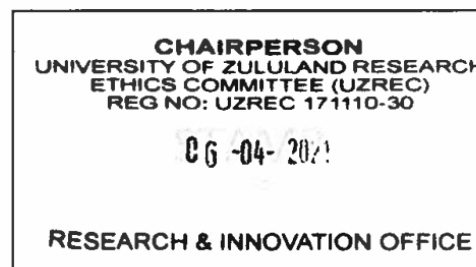
The University of Zululand's Research Ethics Committee (UZREC) hereby gives ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project. The Researcher may therefore commence with data collection as from the date of this Certificate, using the certificate number indicated above.

- Special conditions:**
- (1) This certificate is valid for 1 year from the date of issue.
 - (2) Principal researcher must provide an annual report to the UZREC in the prescribed format [due date-06 April 2022]
 - (3) Principal researcher must submit a report at the end of project in respect of ethical compliance.
 - (4) The UZREC must be informed immediately of any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the documents that were presented to the meeting.

The UZREC wishes the researcher well in conducting research.


Professor Mashupye R. Kgaphola
 University Research Ethics Committee
 Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research & Innovation

06 April 2021



ANNEXURE B – REQUEST TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH

University of Zululand
Department of Public Administration
Private Bag X1001
KwaDlangezwa
3886
31 October 2019

UMhlathuze Local Municipality
Private Bag x1004
Richards Bay
3900

Dear Sir /Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH

I am a registered Master's student in the Department of Public Administration at the University of Zululand, my supervisor is Dr N.N. Jili.

My proposed research topic is: "The perceptions of selected employers on the employability of UNIZULU graduate: a case study of uMhlathuze Local Municipality". The findings from this study will assist in informing decision makers of the University of Zululand in addressing the social challenges of graduate unemployment that is facing not only the university but the country at large.

I hereby request your permission to conduct a research in your company, data will be collected through interviewing the employers (managers, directors and supervisors that have or will work with UNIZULU graduates) in your company. Their input will assist the institution to make informed decision concerning preparing its graduate for the word of employment. The information provided will be treated with anonymity and no name of participant will be mentioned in any part of the report. Data will be collected though one on one in-depth interview and transcript will be made, if needed. I have attached a copy of the research instruments which I intend to use in conducting this research.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor.

Contact details are as follows:

Ms N.N Jili: JiliN@unizulu.ac.za / 035 902 6615

Mrs P.P Mbatha: MbathaP@unizulu.ac.za/ 081 437 6237 or 078 031 3150

Upon completion of the study, I undertake to provide you with a bound copy of the theses. I hope my request will meet your favourable consideration.

Yours Sincerely

Phakamile P. Mbatha

ANNEXURE C – PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH (uMHLATHUZE)



5 Mark Street, Civic Centre
Business District
Tlokoeng, 5000
P.O. Box 3102
City of uMhlathuze, uMhlathuze
T. 035 321 6000
F. 035 321 6444/5/6/7
Toll Free No. 0800 322 077

www.umhlathuze.gov.za

Your ref:
Contact: V SINGH

Our file ref: 1398061
In response to DMS No:
Date: 05 March 2020

ATTENTION: Ms PP MBATHA
UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND

Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Your request that was sent to the Municipality requesting permission from Council to conduct your research has reference.

You are hereby granted permission to conduct your research within the City of uMhlathuze. In order to ensure that your study can be used to improve the City of uMhlathuze overall, you may be requested to do a presentation for Council's Management Team on your findings upon conclusion of your research. For other Employer's (Respondents) you would have to seek their individual consent directly.

If you require any further information, please contact Ms GL Mthembu (Manager: Human Resources Administration) on 035- 907 5184.

I wish you all the best with your research and await a bound copy of your dissertation upon completion of your studies.

Yours faithfully

MR BV NZUZA
DEPUTY MUNICIPAL MANAGER: CORPORATE SERVICES (ACTING)
DMS 1398061

ALL CORRESPONDENCE MUST BE ADDRESSED TO THE MUNICIPAL MANAGER

ANNEXURE D – REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH (DoE)



Application for Permission to Conduct Research in KwaZulu Natal Department of Education Institutions

1. Applicants Details

Title: Ms Surname: Mbatha
Name(s) Of Applicant(s): Phakamile Pamela Email: MbathaP@unizulu.ac.za
Tel No: 035 902 6836 Fax: _____ Cell: 0814376237
Postal Address: 46 Pardy Road, ISIPINGO, 4110

2. **Proposed Research Title:** The Perception of Local Employers on the employability of UNIZULU
Graduates: A case study of selected UMhlatuze Municipality

3. Have you applied for permission to conduct this research or any other
research within the KZNDoe institutions?

x	No
---	----

If "yes", please state reference Number: _____

4. Is the proposed research part of a tertiary qualification?

Yes	x
-----	---

If "yes"

Name of tertiary institution: UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND

Faculty and or School: Faculty of Commerce, Admin and Law

Qualification: Master of Public Administration

Name of Supervisor: Dr N.N Jili Supervisors Signature 

If "no", state purpose of research: _____

5. Briefly state the Research Background: It is of serious concern for everyone in the country that unemployment is high and it is growing yearly. Statistics South Africa has given report last year that shows unemployment growing every quarter. Graduate unemployment as well is high and has drawn attention of many stakeholders like Government, Educational sector and parents. From time to time when the issue of graduate unemployment the since player who is the employer is hardly given a chance to give a voice on how they perceive the employability of graduates. This study is therefore, intending to unpack the side of the employers on how they perceive the employability of UNIZULU graduates. Since UNIZULU also has graduates who are teach in many schools, therefore, selected schools within the KZNDoE will be asked to participate in the survey. Sin and Neave (2016) viewed employers as the group of stakeholders at the receiving end of education process and hardly have influence on the universities' internal undertakings yet the assertive in terms of employment.

6. What is the main research question(s): (1) How do employers perceive the employability of Unizulu graduates?; (2) How does employers describe the challenges that hinders or might hinder employability of Unizulu graduates?; (3) What are the methods used by employers to attracts unemployed graduates from Unizulu? And (4) If any possible solutions/ recommendations on the employability of graduates of Unizulu graduates that you can suggest?

7. Methodology including sampling procedures and the people to be included in the sample: This study will employ a qualitative approach, a semi-structured interview model, where a one-on-one interview technique will be used. Interview will be conducted by using open-ended questions. The reason to conduct interview to specific group of people is because it is believed that the selected employers will have an in-depth knowledge of the employability of Unizulu graduates and that the selected employers might have or will employ graduates from the four faculties (Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Commerce, Admin and Law; Faculty of Education, Faculty of Science and Agriculture).

10. Procedure for obtaining consent of participants and where appropriate parents or guardians:

Participants will not be children and there will be given a chance to agree to participation by signing the consent form before the interview.

11. Procedure to maintain confidentiality (if applicable):

University of Zululand Research Ethics committee has issue an ethical clearance certificate (number UZREC 1711 – 030) in permitting the researcher to conduct the project. Confidentiality will be ensured and participants will not be asked to give their names.

12. Questions or issues with the potential to be intrusive, upsetting or incriminating to participants (if applicable): N/A

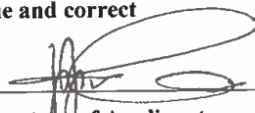
13. Additional support available to participants in the event of disturbance resulting from intrusive questions or issues (if applicable): Participation will be anonymous, no name of participants will be asked or mentioned in any part of the report, by that, confidentiality will be ensured.

14. Research Timelines: Timelines are attached.

15. Declaration

I hereby agree to comply with the relevant ethical conduct to ensure that participants' privacy and the confidentiality of records and other critical information.

I Phakamile Pamela Mbathe declare that the above information is true and correct

 _____
Signature of Applicant

_____ 13/02/20
Date

16. Agreement to provide and to grant the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education the right to publish a summary of the report.

I/We agree to provide the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education with a copy of any report or dissertation written on the basis of information gained through the research activities described in this application.

I/We grant the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education the right to publish an edited summary of this report or dissertation using the print or electronic media.

Signature of Applicant(s) **Date**

Return a completed form to:
 Sibusiso Alwar
 The Research Unit; Resource Planning; KwaZulu Natal Department of Education

Hand Delivered:
 Office G25; 188 Pietermaritz Street; Pietermaritzburg; 3201
Or
Ordinary Mail
 Private Bag X9137; Pietermaritzburg; 3200
Or
Email
sibusiso.alwar@kzndoe.gov.za

ANNEXURE E – PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH (DoE)



education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Phindile Duma/Buyi Ntuli

Tel: 033 392 1063/51

Ref.:24/8/4097

Ms Phakamile Pamela Mbatha
46 Pardy Road
ISIPINGO
4110

Dear Ms Mbatha

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"THE PERCEPTION OF LOCAL EMPLOYERS ON THE EMPLOYABILITY OF UNIZULU GRADUATES: A CASE STUDY OF SELECTED UMHLATHUZE MUNICIPALITY"**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 09 March 2020 to 10 January 2022.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma/Mrs Buyi Ntuli at the contact numbers above.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

Dr. EV Nzama
Head of Department: Education
Date: 09 March 2020

...Leading Social Compact and Economic Emancipation
Through a Revolutionary Education for all...

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Postal Address: Private Bag X9137 • Pietermaritzburg • 3200 • Republic of South Africa
Physical Address: 228 Pietermaritz Street • Ex-NED Building • Pietermaritzburg • 3201
Tel.: +27 33 3921063 • Fax: +27 033 3921203 • Email: Phindile.duma@kzndoe.gov.za • Web: www.kzndoe.gov.za
Facebook: KZNDOE... Twitter: @DBE_KZN... Instagram: kzn_education... Youtube:kzndoe

ANNEXURE F – PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH – TRONOX SOUTH AFRICA

From: Mthethwa, Sisiwe [mailto:Sisiwe.Mthethwa@tronox.com]
Sent: Thursday, August 27, 2020 3:02 PM
To: Sibindi, Mandla <Mandla.Sibindi@tronox.com>
Cc: Phakamile Pamela Mbatha <MbathaP@unizulu.ac.za>
Subject: FW: Request to conduct a research

Hi Mandla,

Would you kindly connect Phakamile with the supervisors of the following people.
I am giving clearance that she can conduct her research for her Masters studies

Pers.No.	Institution Text	Initials	Last name	Organizational Unit	Position	PS group	Lv	Qualification(Name)
<i>hidden</i>	University Of Zululand	<i>hidden</i>	<i>hidden</i>	Laboratory	Laboratory Technician	A4	1	BSc Chemistry
<i>hidden</i>	University of Zululand	<i>hidden</i>	<i>hidden</i>	KZN SHEQ Management	Environmental Lead	DM	1	BSc (Hons) Hydrohology
<i>hidden</i>	University of Zululand	<i>hidden</i>	<i>hidden</i>	Learnerships	Professional-in-Training	99	1	BSc (Hons) Chemistry

Regards

Sisiwe Dlamini-Mthethwa

Director; Human Resources

Central Processing Complex

A Division of Tronox Mineral Sands Proprietary Limited

R34 Melmoth Road | Empangeni | 3880 | KwaZulu Natal | South Africa

M: +27 79 862 2828 | O: +27 35 902 7826

E: sisiwe.mthethwa@tronox.com | W: www.tronox.com



APPENDIX G – APPLICATION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH (THE PREMIER)

University of Zululand
Department of Public Administration
Private Bag X1001
KwaDlangezwa
3886
20 February 2020

Jaco Steyn: General Manager
Mr Jaco Steyn : General Manager
The Premier Hotel Richards Bay
P O Box 10047
Richards Bay
3901

Dear Mr Steyn

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am a registered Master's student in the Department of Public Administration at the University of Zululand. My supervisor is Dr N.N. Jili. My proposed research topic is: "The Perception of selected employers on the employability of UNIZULU graduate: A case study of uMhlatuze employers".

The findings of this study will assist in informing decision makers of the University of Zululand addressing the social challenges of graduate unemployment that is faced by graduates of not only University of Zululand but of the country at large.

I hereby request your permission to conduct research in your company, data will be collected through interviewing the employers (managers, directors and supervisors that have or will work with UNIZULU graduates) in your company. Their input will assist the institution to make informed decision concerning preparing its graduate for the world of employment. The information provided will be treated with anonymity and no name of participant will be used in any part of the report. Data will be collected through one on one interview and transcript will be available if needed. I have attached a copy of the research instruments which I intend to use in conducting this research.

Final work of this study will be made available.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor.

Contact details are as follows:

Ms N.N Jili: JiliN@unizulu.ac.za / 035 902 6615

Mrs P.P Mbatha: MbathaP@unizulu.ac.za/ 081 437 6237 or 078 031 3150

Upon completion of the study, I undertake to provide you with a bound copy of the theses. I hope my request will meet your favourable consideration.

Yours Sincerely



Phakamile P Mbatha

ANNEXURE H - PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH – PREMIER HOTEL

3 Hibberd Drive, Meerensee, Richards Bay, 3901 | PO Box 18143, Quigney, 5211

Tel: +27 (0)35 753 1111 | Fax: +27 (0)35 753 2334 | E-mail: therichards@premierhotels.co.za

w w w . p r e m i e r h o t e l s . c o . z a



Date: 1 September 2020

Dear Pamela Mbatha

Re: Research Project

I hereby grant you permission to interview Premier Hotel The Richards Associates for the purpose of your research project.

Kind Regards

Jago Steyn

General Manager

Directors: V Nassimov (*Managing Director*)

Reg No. 2004/022714/07

Splendid Hotels & Lodges (Pty) Ltd trading as Premier Hotel The Richards

Central Reservations: 086 111 5555

Where guests become friends

ANNEXURE I – INFORMED CONSENT (RESEARCHER)



Researcher: Mrs PP Mbatha

Supervisor: Miss Nokukhanya N Jili

Research Dean/Officer: Prof Irrshad Kaseeram

INFORMED CONSENT

Dear Sir/Madam

You are kindly requested to participate in an interview scheduled for academic purposes, as I am doing my Masters in Public Administration. I am undertaking a study titled, **“To Assess the perception of local employers on the employability of UNIZULU graduates: A case study of uMhlatuze Local Municipality”**. You will not be required to give your name or your contact details, therefore your response will remain anonymous. This study does not intend to cause any harm now or in the future, your privacy and confidentiality will remain. You may refuse or withdraw to participate from the project at any time you want.

Your Participation in this study will be of great importance, should you have any queries you should feel free to contact myself (researcher) or my supervisor using the following contact details.

Mrs Phakamile Pamela Mbatha (Researcher)

Miss NN Jili (Supervisor)

MbathaP@unizulu.ac.za

JiliN@unizulu.ac.za

Cell Number: 081 437 6237

Office Number: 035 902 6615

ANNEXURE J – INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION (PARTICIPANT)

INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION (Participant)

Project Title: To Assess the perception of employers on the employability of UNIZULU graduates: A case study of UMhlatuze Local Municipality

Phakamile Pamela Mbatha, from the Department of Public Administration, University of Zululand has requested my permission to participate in the above-mentioned research project.

The nature and the purpose of the research project and of this informed consent declaration have been explained to me in a language that I understand.

I am aware that:

1. The purpose of the research project is to fulfil the requirements for Master in Public Administration
2. The University of Zululand has given ethical clearance to this research project and I have seen/ may request to see the clearance certificate.
3. By participating in this research project I will be contributing towards understanding the role of community participation Ward Demarcation Process.
4. I will participate in the project by responding to research questions and assisting with relevant documents needed for the study
5. My participation is entirely voluntary and should I at any stage wish to withdraw from participating further, I may do so without any negative consequences.
6. I will not be compensated for participating in the research, but my out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed.
7. There may be risks associated with my participation in the project. I am aware that
 - a. the following risks are associated with my participation: None
 - b. the following steps have been taken to prevent the risks: None
 - c. there is a 0% chance of the risk materialising
8. The researcher intends publishing the research results in the form of Masters Dissertation and Journal articles. However, confidentiality and anonymity of records will be maintained and that my name and identity will not be revealed to anyone who has not been involved in the conduct of the research.
9. Any further questions that I might have concerning the research or my

participation will be answered by Miss Nokukhanya N Jili (Supervisor) Tel: 035 902 6615 and Email: JiliN@unizulu.ac.za

10. By signing this informed consent declaration, I am not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies.
11. A copy of this informed consent declaration will be given to me, and the original will be kept on record.

I, have read the above information / confirm that the above information has been explained to me in a language that I understand and I am aware of this document's contents. I have asked all questions that I wished to ask and these have been answered to my satisfaction. I fully understand what is expected of me during the research.

I have not been pressurised in any way and I voluntarily agree to participate in the above-mentioned project.

.....

.....

Participant's signature

Date

ANNEXURE K - INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

To assess the perception of employers on the employability of UNIZULU graduates

1. How often do you employ UNIZULU graduates?
2. How would you describe your perception about UNIZULU graduates?

To determine the challenges that hinders employers to employ more UNIZULU graduates

3. Kindly identify the challenges, if any, that hinders other employers to employ -UNIZULU graduates?
4. What do you think can be done to address these challenges?

To examine the method used by potential employers to attract unemployed -UNIZULU graduates

5. How does your organisation cater for unemployed graduates?
6. To what extent do you think the method used by your organisation attract unemployed graduates?

To suggest the possible solutions/ recommendations on employability of - UNIZULU graduates.

7. What do you think should be worked upon to enhance the employability of -UNIZULU graduates?
8. What would you suggest to UNIZULU students to make themselves employable?