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**SOCIAL MEDIA USE INFLUENCE ON GRADUATENESS
SKILLS AND EMPLOYABILITY: THE CASE OF HISTORICALLY
DISADVANTAGED INSTITUTIONS**

by

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SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE ON GRADUATENESS SKILLS AND EMPLOYABILITY: THE CASE OF HISTORICALLY DISADVANTAGED INSTITUTIONS

by

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Co-Supervisor: Prof Willie Chinyamurindi

Abstract

Orientation: The graduate labour force is increasing as more students are graduating from historically disadvantaged institutions (HDIs). The lack of graduateness attributes amongst final year students has in part contributed to the high rate of graduate unemployment in South Africa. Social media have been identified as a solution as more than 95% of young adults enrolled at historically disadvantaged institutions in South Africa are using mobile technology.

Research Purpose: The purpose of the study was to develop a model to enhance graduateness skills and employability through the use of social media amongst final year students at HDIs in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa.

Motivation for the study: The study is of utmost importance as it has developed an artefact that investigated the influence of social media use on graduateness skills and employability amongst students at HDIs in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. Additionally, students at HDIs are an interesting theoretical sample due to them being an under-researched sample. The HDIs context has received scant focus and attention. In theory, the link between psychological constructs (such as graduateness skills and employability) with a technology dimension especially within our South African context and internationally remains unexplored.

Research approach/design and method: Social Media Integration and Career EDGE models were used as a theoretical foundation in this study. This study adopted design science as a research method, where a mixed-method technique was used to collect data from final year students and human resource practitioners. The sequential exploratory design was chosen as it offers an iterative process of developing an artefact that can be tested within a larger population. The questionnaire for interviews and the survey were developed after a thorough literature review and pilot study had been conducted. The questionnaire was distributed to all the participants, of which 411 responded, resulting in a response rate of 93%; and 15 interviews were conducted. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data and correlations test were used to determine associations between variables.

Main findings: The study found that there is a significant direct effect of social media use on graduateness skills; there is a significant direct effect of graduateness skills on perceived employability. Graduateness skills have a significant mediating effect on the relationship between social media use and perceived employability. The results also revealed that the direct effect of social media use on perceived employability does not exist.

Practical/managerial implications: The study shows that there is a need for the government to devise policies that set guidelines for HR practitioners to follow when recruiting and selecting graduates.

Contribution/value-add: The research study contributes to the growing body of research as it utilised a mixed-method approach to explore lived experiences. The Graduate Employability Social Media Model (GESM Model) is the main contribution made by this study to the body of knowledge in both the fields of Information Systems and Business Management.

Keywords: Social media, historically Black institution, graduates, human resource management, higher education, youth unemployment

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the Almighty, for the gift of wisdom, life as well as health, my parents, my wife, and to my families, as without their encouragement, this thesis could not have been completed.



Declarations

I, the undersigned, Murire Obrain Tinashe (201101379), hereby declare that this thesis is my original work. This dissertation has not previously been submitted in full or partial fulfilment of the requirements for an equivalent or higher qualification at any other recognised educational institution.

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Ethical clearance declaration

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Publications

Conference output relevant to this thesis

O. Murire, W. Chinyamurindi and L. Cilliers, "Challenges faced by employers when using social media for recruitment and selection purposes," *2020 Conference on Information Communications Technology and Society (ICTAS)*, Durban, South Africa, 2020, pp. 1-8, DOI: 10.1109/ICTAS47918.2020.233997



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Acronyms

AGFI	adjusted goodness of fit index
CFA	confirmatory factor analysis
CFI	comparative fit index
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DSTI	Department of Science, Technology & Innovation
EFA	exploratory factor analysis
GESM Model	Graduate Employability Social Media Model
GFI	goodness-of-fit index
HDI	historically disadvantaged institutions
HR	human resources
HWIs	historically white institutions
ICT	information and communication technologies
IFI	incremental fit index
IS	information systems
IT	information technology
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
ML	maximum likelihood
NFI	normed fit index
NNF	non-normed fit index
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
NQF	National Qualification Framework
PGFI	parsimony goodness-of-fit index
PNFI	parsimony normed fit index
RFI	relative fit index
RMSEA	root mean square error of approximation
RMSR	root mean square residual
SEM	structural equation modelling
SMIM	Social Media Integration Model
SNS	social networking sites
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UFH	University of Fort Hare
USEM (model)	understanding, skills, efficacy beliefs and metacognition (model)
WSU	Walter Sisulu University

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Chapter 7 Summary, Discussion, Limitations, Contributions, Future Research, Recommendations and Conclusions	1.6 Research design and methodology
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and background to the problem

The unemployment rate in South Africa has escalated from 30.8 % to 32.5 % (Vanek, 2021). According to statistics, 31% of the graduates below the age of 24 years are unemployed in South Africa (Bangani, 2019). The reasons for the high rate of graduate unemployment in South Africa are associated with a range of aspects that may include: youth's lack of graduateness skills and employability attributes (Coetzee et al., 2012; Benson et al., 2014; Harry et al., 2018). Thus, there is a misalignment between the skills of the students that are graduating from university and the needs of the labour market and companies seeking employees (Walker & Fongwa, 2017a). Zwane (2015) stated that graduates need to acquire the necessary digital skills as employers require highly skilled workers. However, the government expects higher education institutions to contribute towards citizen empowerment through inventiveness that hastens trade and industry growth and supply of scarce skills (Walker & Fongwa, 2017b).



Historically disadvantaged institutions (HDIs) comprise of all structures of higher educational institutions that provide education after the matric level in South Africa and serve the academic needs of its citizens who had no access to tertiary education as a result of the apartheid policy that was previously in place (Green, 2004; Higher Education Monitor, 2009). HDIs comprised the focus of the study and are discussed in Section 4.2.1 in Chapter 4.

The literature revealed that 97% of young adults enrolled at HDIs in South Africa are using mobile technology (Shava, Chinyamurindi, & Somdyala, 2016; Cilliers, Viljoen, & Chinyamurindi, 2017) to access emerging technologies such Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter for better communication with their lecturers (Digital Statistics in South Africa, 2018). In the same vein, Changqing, Jibao, Wei, Xuesong and Jun (2016) added that graduates use mobile phones for various functions such as text messaging and the Internet. Albal (2018) asserted that with the acceptance of mobile technology amongst youth, there is a perspective of social media use to enhance graduate employability in South Africa. Technology is an expedient tool to increase graduateness skills and employability (Benson et al., 2014; Albal, 2018). This could be the case especially at HDIs in South Africa as the role of technology is being seen as a transformative tool with an influence in changing labour markets characterised by inequality (Benson et al., 2014; Tanser, 2017).

Maltby (2011) defined employability as the capacity to find initial employment, endure that employment and find new work opportunities if needed. Similarly, Singh and Singh (2017, p. 20), described employability as “the ability of an individual to gain employment suitable to his/her educational standard”. These definitions indicate that employability is about ensuring that graduates possess all the abilities and skills required for them to deliver in the workplace (Rothwell et al., 2009). Thus, graduate employability is determined by individual traits including knowledge and skills, as well as attitudes offered to potential employers. However, Mncayi (2016) asserted that employability does not only include an individual’s abilities but takes into account several factors, for instance, race, obtainability of job opportunities, curriculum issues, poor socioeconomic status, the choice of tertiary education institution, a poor education system as well as social connections of graduates.

The transition from a graduate to an employee is stressful and is exacerbated by a lack of gradueness skills as part of the transition (Walker et al., 2015). Jackson (2013) described gradueness skills as the degree to which a final year student has the characteristics and attributes that prepare them for triumph in the workplace. In the same vein, Coetzee (2012) described graduates’ skills as the attributes that make final year students capable of attaining and keeping fulfilling work. Thus, graduates need to equip themselves with all the skills that are required by employers (Walker & Fongwa, 2017; Zwane, 2015). In this research study, final year students refer to students that are less than one year from completing their first degree.

Graduates expect to secure suitable employment after they have graduated (Harry et al., 2018). However, media headlines show an escalation in graduate unemployment in the South African economy (Artess et al., 2017). Fox et al. (2016) stated that numerous graduates in developing countries with post-graduate degrees are not employed after graduating, while it is expected that after acquiring higher education qualifications this should increase their opportunities to acquire employment. Furthermore, Levinsohn (2014) found that youth are not employed when compared to the older generations working today. Similarly, Harry et al. (2018) revealed that graduates in South Africa are facing a high unemployment rate as equated to the ageing generations in the world.

Joosten (2012) described social media as diverse means of electronic communication used by prospective employers, recruitment companies and graduates to build online communities so that information and ideas can be shared. Similarly, Changqing et al. (2016, p 2) described

social media as “websites and applications which allows end-users (graduates, managers and people) to make a profile, facilitates collaboration and sharing of information in the virtual social world”. Tess (2013) add that social media is changing the ways that graduates and prospective employers communicate and collaborate. Furthermore, Garcia (2011) mentioned that social media offers a platform where the two-sided communiqué is represented in four components: exposure, connecting, sharing and feedback. Thus, information flows from both the employers and recruitment companies to graduates and vice versa. On the other hand, there are issues connected with social media use by graduates. These include security issues while online, data cost, and social media experience, and thus they have inadequate expertise necessary to successfully use social media as an employability tool (Bingimlas, 2009; Albal, 2018). For this research study, LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube were explored in detail, and are discussed in Chapter 3, as they assist students to learn about employment opportunities and help the graduates to enhance their gradueness skills, thereby increasing their chances to be employed.

The majority of research projects hitherto have been attentive to the role of social media in teaching and learning and businesses (specifically marketing) in developed and developing countries (e.g. Higher Education Monitor, 2009; Lin & Lu, 2011; Joosten, 2012; Murire & Cilliers, 2017). However, few studies exist that explore the influence of social media amongst final year students, particularly the influence on gradueness skills and employability (Benson & Morgan, 2013; Albal, 2018; Koch et al., 2018). Furthermore, Benson et al. (2014) asserted that it is worth examining the influence of social media on gradueness skills and employability of final year students because there has been little empirical focus on this topic area. Therefore, the present research explored the influence of social media use on gradueness skills as well as employability. From this perspective, this research contributes to the knowledge base of the role played by social media in gradueness skills and employability amongst final year students at HDIs in South Africa.

This chapter is structured as follows; the first section provides the research problem for the study. The following section details significance of the study. The next section provides the empirical literature review. The following section describes the research design and methodology employed in the study. The next section details the delimitations of the study. The following section describes ethical considerations. The chapter concludes with the outline of chapters. The succeeding section present the problem statement.

1.2 Research problem

The graduate labour force is increasing as more students are graduating from HDIs (Rogan & Reynolds, 2016). Regardless of this growth, graduate unemployment is escalating with the general unemployment rate in South Africa (Jackson, 2013). A reason for this is that it is not enough to finish the degree programme to secure a job, graduates must attain additional characteristics referred to as graduateness skills (Tomlinson, 2012; Coetzee, 2014). The lack of graduateness attributes amongst final year students has in part contributed to the escalating rate of graduate unemployment in South Africa (Coetzee et al., 2012; Benson et al., 2014). Coetzee (2014) stated that employability is affected by a student's graduateness skills. Thus, it has become a challenge for most of the graduates holding a degree to secure employment after graduation (Tymon, 2013, Altman et al., 2014; Harry et al., 2018). For this reason, there is a need to investigate the influence of social media on graduateness skills and employability because it is a tool that can be used by final year students to enhance employability through connecting and showcasing, on social platforms, the skills they possess before and after graduating. Additionally, it is a tool whereby students could self-learn to enrich their graduateness skills, thereby expanding the chances of getting employed.

Students are actively using social media (Benson & Morgan, 2013; Albal, 2018; Beavon, 2019). The acceptance of social media has led many graduates to access information on these platforms (Changqing et al., 2016). Graduates employ their analytical thinking and decision-making skills to gather the information useful to them, thereby showcasing the skills they pose to employers. Social networking sites play the role of an operator who connects employers and graduate students (Almeshal, 2015). Through connecting/sharing information on social media, students will be showcasing the interactive and communication skills they have. Social media could be used by prospective employers to obtain feedback on those graduate students who might have showcased their skills and talents on the company and discussion forums (Ibrahim, Rosidah, & Ainul, 2016).

Social networking sites provide room for continuous learning to students. Yet, several final year students are not using social media to showcase graduate skills and contacting future employees because of security issues while online, data cost and lack of social media experience to use social media as an employability tool (Almeshal, 2015; Hu & Zhang, 2016; Albal, 2018). For that reason, this research project pursued to develop a model to enhance graduateness skills and employability through the use of social media amongst final year

students to increase graduate-employer interaction, chances of career opportunities, thereby assisting to reduce the high unemployment rate in the economy. Some models looked at social media usage, employability and gradueness attribute separately (Coetzee, 2014), however, the researcher could not find a model that addresses the three constructs together, specifically in the South African context. Thus, a study of this nature has not been conducted in South Africa before. The primary objective is presented in the succeeding section.

1.2.1 Primary objective

The primary research objective was to develop a model to enhance gradueness skills and employability through the use of social media amongst final year students at HDIs in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa.

1.2.2 Secondary objectives

This section outlines the secondary objectives of the research project. There are four main secondary objectives the study explored and which were derived from the conceptual model illustrated in Figure 1. The objectives were as follows:

- To determine the influence that social media has on employability amongst final year students at HDIs.
- To determine the influence that social media has on gradueness skills amongst final year students at HDIs.
- To determine the influence that gradueness skills has on employability amongst final year students at HDIs.
- To determine the mediating effect that gradueness skills has on the relationship between social media use and employability amongst final year students at HDIs.

The research project objectives contributed to the development of hypotheses outlined in the next section.

1.2.3 Hypotheses

H1₀: Social media does not significantly influence employability amongst final year students at HDIs.

H1₁: Social media significantly influences employability amongst final year students at HDIs.

H2₀: Social media does not significantly influence gradueness skills amongst final year students at HDIs.

H2₁: Social media significantly influences graduateness skills amongst final year students at HDIs.

H3₀: Graduateness skills do not significantly influence employability amongst final year students at HDIs.

H3₁: Graduateness skills significantly influence employability amongst final year students at HDIs.

H4₀: Graduateness skills do not significantly mediate the relationship between social media use and employability amongst final year students at HDIs.

H4₁: Graduateness skills significantly mediate the relationship between social media use and employability amongst final year students at HDIs.

1.3 Significance of the study

The study is of utmost importance as it has developed an artefact that investigated the influence of social media on graduateness skills and employability amongst students at HDIs in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. The study has also contributed to the literature. Additionally, students at HDIs are an interesting theoretical sample due to them being an under-researched sample. The HDIs context has received scant focus and attention. In theory, the link between psychological constructs (such as graduateness skills and employability) with a technology dimension especially within our South African context and internationally remains unexplored. The majority of studies have focused on how social media supports marketing as well as teaching and learning (Lin & Lu, 2011; Joosten, 2012; Murire & Cilliers, 2017). Yet, no research has been carried out investigating the influence of social media on graduateness skills and employability amongst graduate students. There is a need to examine the influence of social media on graduateness skills and employability in this digital world. Furthermore, this study adds significantly to the knowledge base of the role played by social media on graduateness skills and employability amongst final year students at tertiary institutions in South Africa as well as Africa at large. The next section is the preliminary literature review.

1.4 Empirical literature review

Social media have become essential in daily life for many young adults (Abdu & Siudikiene, 2016; Sangeeta & Ahlawat, 2018). Studies (e.g. Swan, 2012; Benson & Morgan, 2013; Albal, 2018; Piveca & Maček, 2019) have found that young graduates are using social media for employability. Changqing et al. (2016) found that social networking tools, for instance, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter have become significant social platform for better

communiqué as well as sharing information regarding job opportunities. Through social media, employers and recruiting companies can advertise job postings and internship programmes (Manchester Metropolitan University, 2018). Thus, social media can act as an enabler for employers and graduates to share information about job openings and internships.

The use of social media in this digital era is generally pertinent to graduates who are gathering information about organisations to pursue employment (Fletcher, 2016; Wang et al., 2020). Albal (2018) added that social media allows graduates to gather information about organisations of interest. Additionally, social media enables graduates to discover useful information about their prospective employers (Benson et al., 2014).

Social media, for instance, a blog, allows graduates to participate in an online discussion (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Through participating in the discussion forums, graduates can showcase their critical thinking and decision-making skills. Additionally, blogs stimulate interaction between graduates and recruitment companies locally or abroad (Kagohara et al., 2013). Therefore, social media provides features that promote graduate-employer interaction.

Piveca and Maček (2019) asserted that social media has changed the way students associate with one another. However, characteristics of students on a social network determine diverse benefits graduates lure from social media (Albal, 2018). Melao and Reis (2020) stated that the advent of emerging technologies has made it even more influential, employers are researching social media backgrounds of job applicants, potential employees and conduct talent searches. Swan (2012) mentioned that students need to know how to behave when using social media as it has an impact on their online presence.

Additionally, Nakamaru (2011) stated that students face hurdles when using social media to enhance their gradueness skills and employability and these barriers include graduate attitudes towards social media, security issues while online, data cost and social media experience to employ social media as an employability tool in this digital world (Almeshal, 2015; Albal, 2018). It can thus be problematic for students to use social media towards enhancing their gradueness skills and employability (Hu & Zhang, 2016).

1.4.1 Gradueness and Employability

Gradueness and employability are difficult concepts to define (Lowden et al., 2011). Researchers argue that gradueness and employability are closely related. Some researchers mentioned that gradueness being a product of traditional education while employability a product of vocational & professional education (Harvey, 2004). Employability focuses on

immediate competence in the workplace, being empowered, professional, productive, employment-ready, as well as being a resource for economic growth (Andrews & Higson, 2008). Employability focus on practice (Harwood, 2010). Additionally, employability consists of academic knowledge and skills which yield productivity. Employability also encompasses human dispositions and qualities including personality traits and learned behaviour where as graduateness involves individual growth and transformation (Harwood, 2010; Hazelkorn, 2013). Steur et al. (2012) stated that graduateness encompasses broad academic cultivation with a focus on adaptability. Graduateness skills are achieved through scholarship through research, reading and inquiry (Coetzee, 2014). Through scholarship, youth can develop skills to learn better and can construct knowledge (Ashworth et al., 2004). Graduateness involves the transformation of individual qualities, ontological dispositions and intellectual development (Barnett, 2004; Steur et al., 2012).

Several studies (e.g. Bridgstock, 2009; Coetzee et al. 2012; Jackson, 2013; Tsitskaria et al. 2017) have stated that a graduateness skills set consists of eight main skills which are grouped into three areas of individual growth which are scholarship, global and moral citizenship, and lifelong learning.



Scholarship, the first domain, illustrates graduates' attitude towards knowledge. Problem-solving, decision-making skills, analytical thinking as well as enterprising skills constitute three sets of scholarship domain (Coetzee, 2012). The second domain is global and moral citizenship which illustrates graduates' approach to the world and their societies. This domain looks at ethical and responsible behaviour, how the graduates present and apply information skills, as well as how graduates interact with the world (Coetzee, 2012). The third domain is lifelong learning which illustrates graduates' attitude towards continuous learning to further their knowledge in this digital world. Lifelong learning is made up of two sets of skills, namely goal-directed behaviour and continuous learning orientation.

Coetzee (2012) postulated that graduateness skills increase the capacity to exhibit individual attributes related to career-related employability. Archer and Chetty (2013) added that graduates' opinion regarding their graduateness skills is significantly related to their self-perceived employability. For that reason, students' graduateness skills are a significant predictor of their employability.

The proposed model is made up of three variables, namely social media, graduateness skills and employability. These variables are informed by the Social Media Integration Model and

Career EDGE Model which formed the theoretical basis for this research. These constructs were adopted from the studies conducted by Rothwell et al. (2009); Changqing et al. (2016); Coetzee (2014) and Tsitskaria et al. (2017).

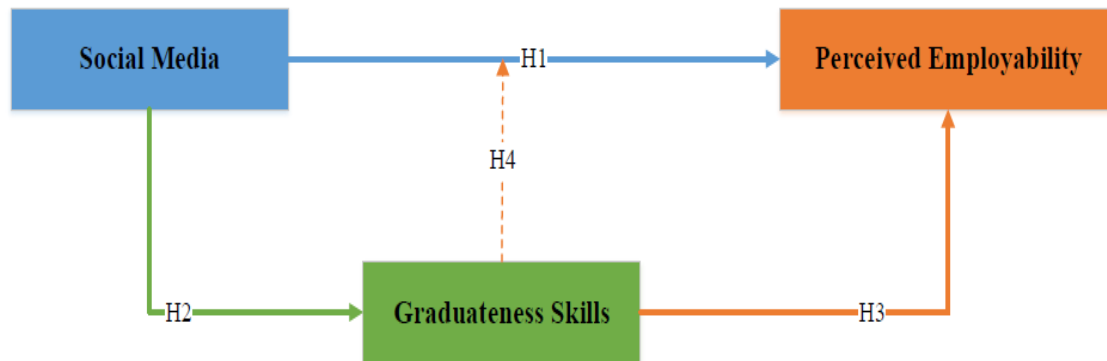


Figure 1: The Conceptual Model for Social Media influence on gradueness skills and employability

To attain better knowledge regarding graduate employability in the digital world, this research project employed a mixed-method methodology examining the influence of social media on gradueness skills and employability. The theoretical literature review is presented in the succeeding section.

1.5 Theoretical literature review

The Social Media Integration Model and Career EDGE Model formed the theoretical basis for this research. Several studies have employed these two models. The following section discusses the Social Media Integration Model.

1.5.1 Social Media Integration Model

The Social Media Integration Model was originally proposed by Garcia (2011). Garcia (2011) stated that social media offers a platform where two-sided communication is represented by four components: exposure, connecting, sharing and feedback. **Exposure** is the first construct of the model. Social media can be used by graduates for self-presenting (Hu & Zhang, 2016). Social media, for instance, blogs and YouTube provide graduates with a platform to expose and showcase their talent, skills, knowledge and achievements and upload presentations (Benson & Morgan, 2013; Joosten, 2012). **Connecting** is the second construct of the model (Garcia, 2011). Students can use social media to develop relationships. Social media, for

instance, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn play a significant role in connecting employers and graduate students.

Information sharing is the third construct of the model (Garcia, 2011). Social bookmarking sites, for instance, blogs or websites are used for sharing information. Thus, social media is used to spread information amongst students regarding job opportunities or internships available (Benson et al., 2014). **Feedback** is the fourth construct of the model. Social recommendations and reviews can be used to produce valuable feedback to graduates taking part in the discussion forums. Social media could be used by prospective employers to provide feedback on those graduates who may have showcased their skills and talents (Hu & Zhang, 2016). This research study employed the Social Media Integration Model depicted in Figure 6 Chapter 3.

The information flow does not only circulate from the employers to employees but even the other way around, so it causes the long-term process of exchanging information. For that reason, graduates ought to inform about the influence social media has on their graduateness skills and employability. The Social Media Integration Model has been employed in numerous research studies (including Roučková, 2015; Valos, Habibi, Casidy, Driesener, & Maplestone, 2016; Webb & Roberts, 2016). The following section discusses the career EDGE Model.

1.5.2 Career EDGE Model

The study adopted the Career EDGE Model as its theoretical framework because it has been employed in numerous research studies on graduate employability within a South African context (Coetzee et al., 2010; Harry et al., 2018). Career EDGE is comprised of two sections: reflection and evaluation. Dacre Pool and Sewel (2007, p. 3) asserted that Career EDGE encompasses “career development learning; experience - work and life; degree subject knowledge, skills and understanding; generic skills and emotional intelligence”. Furthermore, Dacre Pool and Qualter (2013) stated that reflection, as well as evaluation, is important because it assists graduates to develop individual effectiveness, assurance and self-esteem, which are key towards graduate employability. All constructs in the model are of equal importance and greatly affect graduates’ employability (Dacre Pool & Sewel, 2007). Dacre Pool (2016) asserted that Career EDGE is an important tool for transferring knowledge amongst youth. Figure 10 in Chapter 4 illustrates the Career EDGE Model.

This research project made use of the Career EDGE and Social Media Integration models. Career EDGE Model describes the constructs that influence graduateness skills and employability of final year students whilst the Social Media Integration Model outlines the influence and benefits attained from the use of social media, for instance, exposure, connecting, sharing and feedback. Tanser (2017) asserted that graduates can showcase their skills and talents, and knowledge and when using technologies such as social media to look for prospective employers. The following section discusses the research design and methodology employed in this study.

1.6 Research design and methodology

A methodology is explained as “an approach to the process of the research encompassing a body of methods” (Collis and Hussey 2013, p. 19). Hofstee (2006) mentioned that research methodology provides a clear roadmap of how the researcher develops their conclusion. A defined roadmap of the research design in any research project serves to make clear to the reader the application of the methodology used for the study (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2009). This section provides a summary plan used for conducting the research study. The research paradigm, research methods and data gathering and analysis techniques are presented in this section. A research paradigm is presented in the next section.



1.6.1 Research paradigm

The study employed pragmatism which states that the research question drives what ‘works’ (Creswell, 2014). The justification of the selection of the pragmatic paradigm was based on the objective of the research project, the sequential exploratory design of data collection, data analysis, and data validation of the final artefact. The main goal of the research was to create a model to enhance graduateness skills and employability employing social media amongst students who are in their final year at HDIs in the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa.

Pragmatism is associated with the mixed-methods approach that was employed for data collection and analysis in this study. Thus, pragmatism supports the design science methodology for addressing the research problem with the development of an artefact, which in this case was to develop and produce a model to enhance graduateness skills and employability through the use of social media amongst students in the final year at HDIs in the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa. The exploratory design method was used to collect quantitative and qualitative data to attain a thorough understanding of the problem. The research method is presented in the next section.

1.6.2 Research method

This research adopted the design science research method. Peffers et al. (2008) stated that design science is progressively being used in information systems (IS) research projects as a methodology that aids in the development of artefacts that can be utilised to address ‘real-life’ challenges. Design science research methodology has been widely applied in IS studies (Peffers et al., 2008; Olaitan, 2018). Design science produces knowledge and artefacts which can be generalised across a broad spectrum of real-life problems in the area under examination (Gregor & Hevner, 2013). Design science was considered as the most appropriate method for examining every element of this study and offers processes that could aid in the development of a solution to enhance graduate employability in South Africa. The design science method is made up of seven guiding principles that ought to be followed when conducting, assessing and presenting the study. The design science guidelines and its applicability to this research project are summarised in Table 3 in Chapter 2.

1.6.3 Validity and reliability

The validity and reliability of the scales were confirmed after a pilot study had been carried out to test the research instruments. Bryman and Bell (2015) described validity as the degree to which the interpretations drawn from the research project are correct, while Pallant (2013) described reliability as the dependability obtained from the instrument when measuring the target attribute. The Cronbach alpha coefficient alpha scores were used to compute each subscale to test the reliability and dependability of the instrument. Table 1 presents the scale that was used in this study.

Table 1: Research project scales

Research Scales	Cronbach Alpha Coefficient (α)	Source Adapted From:
Social media usage	0.935	(Changqing et al., 2016)
Student self-perceived employability	0.84	(Rothwell et al., 2008)
Graduateness skills		
Interactive skills	0.96	(Coetzee, 2014)
Problem and decision-making skills	0.89	
Presenting and applying information skills	0.96	
Continuous learning orientation	0.89	
Goal-directed behaviour	0.79	
Enterprising skills	0.88	
Analytical thinking skills	0.80	
Ethical and responsible behaviour	0.80	

Source: (Adapted from Changqing et al., 2016, Rothwell et al., 2008, Coetzee, 2014)

Table 1 illustrates Cronbach's alpha coefficient with the factor items in a scale that guided the study in scaling the elements that addressed the problem (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The following section discusses the data collection method and analysis.

1.6.4 Data collection method and analysis

This research project employed a mixed-methods technique. Oates (2006, p. 11) explained a mixed-methods technique as “the approach that encompasses both qualitative and quantitative data gathering methods used to complement each method”. In the same vein, Greene (2008) added that a mixed method is an approach that investigates the social world and is made up of more than a singular method, to acquire a knowledge of the phenomenon being examined. Therefore, this research project used primary data, in the form of a questionnaire and interviews, to answer the problem of the study. Of six mixed methods research designs outlined in Creswell and Clark (2011), this study employed a sequential exploratory design. Creswell (2014) stated that sequential exploratory design is suitable for an iterative process of developing an artefact that can be tested within a larger population. Sequential exploratory design and application employed in this study are illustrated in Figure 5 Chapter 2.

Version 24 of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilised to analyse and draw conclusions from the quantitative data gathered. Thus, the research project applied both descriptive as well as inferential statistics to validate the validity and reliability of the study. AMOS was applied to the study and thus structural equation modelling (SEM) was incorporated to analyse as well as draw conclusions from the data collected. The NVivo data analysis tool was employed to analyse qualitative data gathered by the means of the interviews. A thematic content analysis was applied to validate qualitative data during analysis. The subsequent section discusses the delimitations of the study.

1.7 Delimitations of the study

This study was restricted to the influence of social media on graduateness skills and employability amongst final year students at HDIs in South Africa. The research study was attentive to the students' perspective on using social media to enhance their graduateness skills. The objective of the study was to develop a model that enhances graduateness skills and employability in the South African Economy. The next section discusses ethical considerations.

1.8 Ethical considerations

An ethical clearance certificate (CIL021SMUR01) was applied for and received from the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) (See the attached Appendix A).

1.9 Outline of chapters

Chapter 1 forms an overview of the research project. The chapter defined the context of the study, problem statement, and explained the primary and secondary objectives of the research project. Additionally, the chapter gave a thorough explanation of what the researcher aimed to do and the roadmap to achieving the primary objectives of the study. The chapter also provided the significance of the study and its expected contribution to the existing body of knowledge in the subject area.

Chapter 2 presents the research approach and design. This includes the research paradigm, data gathering and analysis methods.

Chapters 3 and 4 reviews the empirical literature on information around social media, graduateness skills, and employability. This critique is done with a targeted focus on the research problem and objectives. **Chapter 3** reviews the extant literature on the correlation amongst social media, graduateness skills and employability. This chapter critiques how social media enhances graduateness skills of final year students in South Africa. **Chapter 4** reviews the extant literature on the relationship between graduateness skills and employability. This chapter sets the groundwork and presents a review and critique of the extant literature around employability and graduateness skills. The objective of this chapter is to discuss the literature relationship between graduateness skills and employability.

Chapter 5 of this thesis presents the findings of the empirical data collection. The implications of the results of the initial quantitative data are discussed in depth in this chapter. This chapter also discusses the results of the quantitative data which was analysed making use of SPSS version 25 and AMOS.

Chapter 6 presents the findings of the empirical data collection. The implications of the results of the initial qualitative data are discussed in depth in this chapter. This chapter further discusses the results of the qualitative data which was analysed by means of thematic analysis. Refinement of the model based on the findings is also presented in this chapter.

Chapter 7 presents an overview of the entire study, conclusions, reflections, limitations of the research and recommendations for future research in the domain. The chapter presents the Graduate Employability Social Media Model (GESM Model).

The following chapter presents the research methodology.



Chapter 1 Introduction	
Chapter 2 Research Methodology	Chapter 2 Research Methodology 2.1 Introduction 2.2 Research philosophy 2.3 Research paradigms 2.4 Research design 2.5 Research approach 2.6 Research strategy 2.7 Population and sample 2.8 Data gathering method 2.9 Pilot study 2.10 Data analysis for the research project 2.11 Validation and evaluation 2.12 Ethical considerations 2.13 Summary of the chapter
Chapter 3 Social Media and Employability	
Chapter 4 Graduateness Skills and Employability	
Chapter 5 Presentation of Findings from Quantitative Data	
Chapter 6 Presentation of Findings from the Qualitative Data	
Chapter 7 Summary, Discussion, Limitations, Contributions, Future Research, Recommendations and Conclusions	

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

As delineated in Chapter 1 (section 1.2.1), the main objective of the research was to produce an artefact in the form of a model to improve graduates' graduateness skills and employability through the use of social media. Chapter 1 defined the context for and explained the primary and secondary objectives of the research project. Chapter 2 describes the methodology by which the model for this research project was built, confirmed and validated. The researcher intends to provide a clear roadmap of how the study was carried out and how the results and conclusions were derived (Hofstee, 2013).

Johnson and Christensen (2014) described research as a process of exploration that is methodical, controlled and empirical. Creswell (2014) stated that research encompasses observation and argumentation and forms a connection among recently revealed as well as existing knowledge in a field of inquiry. Therefore, research can be labelled as the systematic method by which new knowledge is derived, revealed and extended in any field of inquiry.

Collis and Hussey (2013, p. 19) described methodology as “an approach to the process of the research encompassing a body of methods”. Leedy and Ormrod (2014) defined research methodology as the general approach chosen by the researcher when conducting a research project. This methodology chapter presents the research process used in this research project. This chapter deals with the philosophical research paradigms that guided the research methodology. Thereafter, the chapter explains the research process, research strategy as well as data gathering and analysis methods that were adopted in this study. Following the data analysis is a discussion of the ethical principles that guided this research study. The following section discusses research philosophy.

2.2 Research philosophy

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) stated that every research project has a philosophy on which certain assumptions are based. These assumptions provide credibility to the research framework which establishes the procedures for conducting the research. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) added that these philosophies determine the method by which knowledge is established with regards to a particular phenomenon. Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012) mentioned that there are numerous philosophies that can be used by researchers as their foundational standpoint for their

scientific inquiry. The common philosophies are interpretivism, realism, positivism, and pragmatism. A researcher selects one of these research paradigms based on their perspective of the world as well as the objective they desire to attain with the research (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). This chapter discusses four of these paradigms.

2.3 Research paradigms

Saunders et al. (2012) claimed that the objective of carrying out any research study is to comprehend new knowledge in the chosen field of investigation through a systematic and structured approach to enrich the present body of knowledge with a novel contribution. The research journey should start with discussing the choice of a topic, the domain of the research and the appropriate research paradigm (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). After these decisions have been made, the researcher can then select a suitable research approach for collecting and analysing data scientifically to provide a solution to the research question.

Bunniss and Kelly (2010, p. 360) described paradigms as “sets of beliefs and practices, shared by communities of researchers, which regulate inquiry within disciplines. The various paradigms are characterised by ontological, epistemological and methodological differences in their approaches to conceptualising and conducting research, and in their contribution towards disciplinary knowledge construction”. Oates (2006, p. 282) delineated a paradigm as “a set of shared assumptions or ways of thinking about some aspects of the world”. Saunders et al. (2012) defined paradigms as elementary belief structures based on ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions. The following section discusses in detail the four assumptions, giving a meaningful context to diverse paradigms used by researchers.

Ontology

Creswell and Clark, (2011, p.35) stated that ontology concentrates on the nature of reality and is involved with discovering answers to questions such as “what assumptions are being made about reality?”. In the same vein, Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) described ontology as “a set of clear expectations that describe the way realism is imagined and observed”. Creswell and Clark (2011) mentioned that ontology investigates whether reality exists because of natural laws (*objectivism*) or if reality is being constructed from the human mind and experience (*constructivism*). Furthermore, Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) mentioned that positivists believe that there are real causes that are temporarily precedent to the effects. In this study, the researcher, through questionnaires, explored the perspective of students to decipher their insights with regards to the role of social media use on graduateness skills and employability.

Epistemology

Epistemology seeks to clarify how reality is derived. In the same vein, Creswell et al., (2011) described epistemology as what human beings think, and know about it. Similarly, Teddlie and Tashakkore (2009) mentioned that epistemology focuses on learning and knowing about the social world and concentrates on the questions of how one can know about reality and the basis of knowledge. Easterby-Smith, Crossman and Nicolini (2008) mentioned that epistemology takes into consideration the bases of knowledge, methods of inquiry, as well as the parameters of what can be acknowledged. Positivism and interpretivism are two main research paradigms that work epistemology. This research project used different tools such as web-based surveys and interviews to investigate the context of the study which is to produce a model to enhance graduateness skills and employability through the use of social media amongst students in the final year at HDIs in the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa.

Axiology

Axiology seeks to clarify how values impact the opinion and understanding of reality. This research project observed and conversed some of the relevant present partialities and understandings regarding social media use, graduateness skills and employability. The following section discusses the three paradigms that is most used in information systems research (Saunders et al., 2012; Cooper & Schindler, 2010). These are positivism, interpretivism and pragmatism. The three paradigms are provided in detail below.

Positivism

According to Upadhyaya (2013), the positivist paradigm reveals the epistemological position of natural scientists. The positivist paradigm relies on the ability to form and test hypotheses on the current social order and thereafter predicts the events centred on existing relationships and patterns. The benefit of positivistic research is that the scholar does not in any way influence the research as the measurement and analysis are devoid of the researchers' 'feelings' thus ensuring or emphasising the credibility of the results (Saunders et al., 2012). Positivists employ a deductive approach to determine unilateral, and casual relationships (Bryman and Bell, 2015). However, there is a concern with the empirical testability of theories when research use positivism. Additionally, there is the issue of validity that normally arises with the positivism paradigm. Positivism is commonly used in natural science as well as in engineering fields. The researcher did not take into consideration the use of positivism as it generalises research findings.

Interpretivism

Interpretivism is also termed social constructionism as the view that reality is derived from the understanding of human behaviour in the social context while positivism, conversely, pursues a coherent justification for circumstances. Thus, social constructionism attempts to discover meaning as well as an understanding of human behaviour (Creswell, 2014). The interpretive method is related to qualitative research techniques, whereas the positivist approach is usually aligned with quantitative techniques (Oates, 2006). In the same vein, Saunders et al. (2012) stated that interpretivism is concomitant with a qualitative approach as it symbolises 'how' and 'what' research questions. Table 2 below provides the difference between positivism and interpretivism.

Table 2: Characteristics of positivism and interpretivism

Positivism	Interpretivism
Makes use of big samples	Makes use of small samples
Has a synthetic location	Has a natural location
Focuses more on hypotheses testing	Focuses more on generating theories
Yields detailed data, the results are objective	Yields rich data, the results are subjective
Generates results with high reliability, however low validity	Generates results with high validity, on the other hand, low reliability
Uses methods such as surveys, experimental studies and cross-sectional studies.	Uses methods such as case studies, grounded theory and action research.

Source: (Adapted from Collins & Hussey, 2009)

Pragmatism

Creswell (2014) described pragmatism as an approach where the questions of the study drive what 'works'. With pragmatism, knowledge is produced as the researcher may perhaps work with contradictory assumptions and variants (Saunders et al., 2012). This is supported by Joubish, Khurram, Ahmed, Fatima, and Haide (2011) who postulated that pragmatism involves norms, values and beliefs on how the research project was conducted. Pragmatism was considered appropriate for this study because it permits the researcher to explore multiplicity (Jackson, 2013) of methods to solve the research problem (Creswell, 2014). This research project thus applied pragmatism as a paradigm.

Creswell and Clark (2011) stated that pragmatism was developed because it focuses on the practical application of what works best to solve the research problem. Pragmatism provides real and appropriate solutions to problems (Creswell, 2014). Pragmatism allows a researcher to use diverse approaches in the way knowledge is best produced (Saunders et al., 2009). Creswell and Clark (2011) stated that pragmatic researchers put more emphasis on the problem of the research and employ all methods accessible to understand and address the problem. This is supported by Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) who stated that pragmatism focuses its attention more on the research problem and it applies mixed methods to develop an understanding of the problem under investigation. The philosophical basis of pragmatism as a research paradigm is chronicled below:

- a) Pragmatism is dedicated to a multi-system of philosophy and reality. Therefore, in pragmatic research, the researcher can employ both quantitative as well as qualitative assumptions to engage the research problem.
- b) Researchers select the methods, procedures and processes of research that best derive a solution to the research problem.
- c) Cameron (2011) stated that pragmatists do not perceive the world as an entire unity. Pragmatism is used in mixed methods where a scholar needs to draw conclusions from both the qualitative as well as quantitative data in a single study.
- d) Pragmatism enables multiple approaches, diverse assumptions, and different worldviews, and multiple ways of data collection and analysis.
- e) The pragmatist philosophy declares that there is no particular finest ‘scientific’ technique that can lead the way to unquestionable knowledge (Creswell, 2014).

Using conclusions from the above, this research project aligned itself with the pragmatic paradigm. The research project employed pragmatism which states that the research question drives what ‘works’ (Creswell, 2014). The justification of the selection of the pragmatic paradigm is centred on the objective of the research project, the sequential exploratory design, data gathering and data analysis, and the validation of the final artefact to be produced at the end of the research project. As already stated, the focal objective of the research was to develop and produce a model to enhance graduateness skills and employability through the use of social media amongst students in the final year at HDIs in the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa.

Pragmatism is associated with the mixed-method approach that was used for data gathering and analysis in this research project. Pragmatism thus supports the design science methodology

for addressing the research problem with the development of an artefact, which in this case was to develop and produce a model to enhance graduateness skills and employability through the use of social media amongst students in the final year at HDIs in the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa. The exploratory design method was used to gather quantitative and qualitative data to attain an informed understanding of the problem. The following section deals with the design science methodology that was used as the research design for developing the model that was the final artefact of this research project.

2.4 Research design

Upadhyaya (2013, p.6) described research design as “the blueprint of the research that describes the methods used for the collection, measurement and analysis of data”. There are diverse descriptions for research design: Saunders et al. (2012) postulated that a research design encompasses a research philosophy which denotes the philosophical worldviews, the research method, research strategy as well as research approaches useful to discover a solution to the research problem. This research project embraced a combination of research design descriptions by Creswell (2014) who described research design as processes of investigation and research techniques of data gathering, analysis and elucidation for a specific study. This study followed the research design science guidelines by Hevner, March, Park and Ram (2004).



Peffers, Tuunanen, Rothenberger and Charterjee (2008) stated that design science is progressively widely used in IS studies as a research method as it develops artefacts to solve ‘real-life’ problems (Murire, 2016; Venable, Pries-Heje & Baskerville, 2016; Olaitan, 2018). Gregor and Hevner (2013) claimed that incorporating design science will help scholars to develop knowledge and artefacts which can be generalised across a broad spectrum of real-life problems in the area under examination. Design science was proposed suitable to explore this study’s problem and produce a model to enhance graduateness skills and employability through the use of social media amongst graduates all over South Africa (Hevner, March, Park, & Ram, 2004).

Design science is used in IS research to address real-life problems through developing artefacts that are direct proportion to the problem context (Venable et al., 2016). Simon (1996, p.18), described an artefact as something that is “artificial, man-made, as opposed to something that occurs naturally”. Hevner et al. (2004, p.13) defined artefacts as “constructs (vocabulary and symbols), models (abstractions and representations), methods (algorithms and practices) and instantiations (implemented and prototype systems)”. Creswell (2014) described constructs as

terminology conceptualised to allow an academic to clarify the description and constraints of the problem. Furthermore, constructs define the components of the solution and the objectives of the solution to its interested audience. Thereafter, the model is used to symbolise the problem and its intended solution. The literature review was used to understand the problem of escalating graduate unemployment in South Africa and then produce a model to enhance graduateness skills and employability through the use of social media amongst final year students at HDIs in the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa. Based on the descriptions and opinions in favour of design science as a methodology for IS research, the research employed it in this research project due to its distinctiveness. Thus it was able to address the gap in academic research, with a particular focus on the research domains of management and information systems. The following section presents the design science guideline.

2.4.1 Design science guidelines

Design science consists of seven guiding principles that researchers can use when conducting, assessing and presenting the research project. The design science guidelines and their applicability to this research project are summarised in Table 3 below.

Hevner et al. (2004) asserted that researchers must use their innovative skills and conclusions to determine the finest and most practical way of applying the guidelines in a specific study. Design science guidelines delineated by Hevner et al. (2004) are presented next as they applied to this research project.

Guiding Principle 1: Design as an artefact

Zhang, Scialdone and Ku (2011 p.3) described an IT artefact as “an entity/ object, or a bundle thereof, intentionally engineered to benefit certain people with certain purposes in certain contexts. It is developed, introduced, adopted, and operated, modified, adapted, discarded and researched within contexts and with various perspectives”. This research project embarked on a comprehensive review of existing previous studies in the area of social media, graduateness skills and employability. The constructs of employability and graduateness skills and social media were combined to develop a conceptual model for enhancing social media use for employability, as illustrated in Figure 1 in Chapter 1. The final artefact, that is the model of this research project, was iterated, verified and validated so that it is proficient to address the research problem of the high rate of unemployment in South Africa.

Guiding Principle 2: Problem relevance

Problem relevance looks at a particular research problem under investigation and pursues to validate the worth of the solution to the subject area. The objective of IS research is to solve the problems as well as to identify prospects arising from the collaboration among people, information technology and businesses. The need to reduce the escalating rate of graduate unemployment is discussed in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

Guiding Principle 3: Design evaluation

Hevner et al. (2004) stated that the objective of design evaluation is to contrast the purpose of the solution to the research problem with the perceived findings from the demonstration of the artefact. The effectiveness, worth and applicability of the artefact were thoroughly tested in the evaluation phase through a systematic and accepted scientific method. The conceptual model was constructed from secondary literature and was refined through several iterations encompassing questionnaires, and interviews between graduates and employers in the Eastern Cape. The final artefact is presented in Chapter 7 of this thesis.

Guiding Principle 4: Research contribution

The Graduate Employability Social Media Model (GESM Model) is the main contribution of the research is aimed at enhancing gradueness skills and employability through the use of social media amongst students in the final year at HDIs in the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa. The model suggests a visibly defined process-based approach to increase student gradueness skills to enhance their employability. The implementation of this process-based approach can aid in reducing graduate unemployment.

Table 3: Design science guidelines and application to this project

Design Science Guidelines			
Guiding principle		Description	Application on this research project
1	Design as an artefact	A feasible artefact is thus a model, a constructor of an instantiation should be produced from a design science research project.	The main objective of the research was to develop and produce a model to enhance graduateness skills and employability through the use of social media amongst final year students at HDIs in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa This was a final artefact of the study.
2	Problem relevance	The main purpose of a design science research project is to construct a technology-based solution relevant to business problems.	Students at HDIs are not utilising social media to showcase graduate skills and contacting future employees due to security issues while online, data cost, and social media experience. Thus they have inadequate expertise necessary to successfully use social media as an employability tool.
3	Design evaluation	Well-executed evaluation methods must be rigorously applied to explore the quality and efficacy of the artefact.	The model was evaluated by recruiting agencies that are using social media as an employability tool.
4	Research contributions	The artefact from design a science research project should deliver a confirmable contribution to design foundations or design methodologies.	The Graduate Employability Social Media Model (GESM Model) is the main contribution of this research project aimed at enhancing graduateness skills and employability through the use of social media amongst students in the final year at HDIs in the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa.
5	Research rigour	Rigorous methods must be applied when constructing and evaluating an artefact in the design science research project.	Both the qualitative and quantitative approaches were employed in this research project. Therefore, questionnaires, as well as interviews, were used to perfect the final artefact of the research project. The Social Media Integration Model and Career EDGE Model formed the theoretical basis for this research.
6	Design as a search process	The search for an artefact involves employing available data to solve the problem in the environment.	Both primary data from questionnaires and interviews as well as secondary data obtained from the literature were employed to develop a model. The model was evaluated by experts (recruitment agencies, literature search) to refine it before the final model was published.
7:	Communication of research	The artefact of the design science research project needs to be accessible to technology-oriented audiences.	The finalised thesis is accessible in the UFH library and the results from this research project are published in relevant journals.

Source: (Adapted from Hevner et al., 2004)

Guiding Principle 5: Research rigour

Hevner (2004) stated that the design science supports the use of rigorous research approaches to the application as well as evaluation of the artefact. In support of this, Johannesson and Perjons (2012) stated that the design science researcher must use various means or forms of developing, and validating the artefact. Peffers et al. (2008) mentioned that research rigour commences from the research methodology. A thematic content analysis of secondary data is provided in Chapters 3 and 4 to validate a conceptual model for enhancing social media use for employability. The research methodology for this research project incorporated a survey and interviews of the data sources to confirm the model. The data gathering was conducted through a mixed-methods approach and structured equation modelling was employed to thoroughly analyse the results of the quantitative data.

Guiding Principle 6: Design as a search process

Gregor and Hevner (2013) stated that the artefact in a design science study must go through numerous iterations. The objective of these iterations is to confirm that the finest and most functional solution to address real-life problems is achieved by the final artefact. The design science research project aimed to find an operational solution to the research problem. Both primary data from questionnaires and interviews as well as secondary data obtained from previous related literature were employed to develop an artefact. The model was evaluated to refine it before the final model is published. The model was refined iteratively, centred on results from the analysis of empirical data gathered from final year students and employers.

Guiding Principle 7: Research communication

The finalised thesis is accessible in the University of Fort Hare (UFH) library and the results from this research project are published in relevant journals. The researcher recently published a paper in line with the thesis, see Appendix D. The issue of publishing papers is also supported by Hevner et al. (2004) who stated that research results have to be published and conversed in accredited journals, workshops and conferences so that the community and other scholars in the field utilise the solution presented by the final artefact. Furthermore, the final artefact must be published to allow for scientific reviews which may provide new visions that could improve on the original contribution. The phases described in the seven-step guiding principles are diagrammed in Figure 2 below.

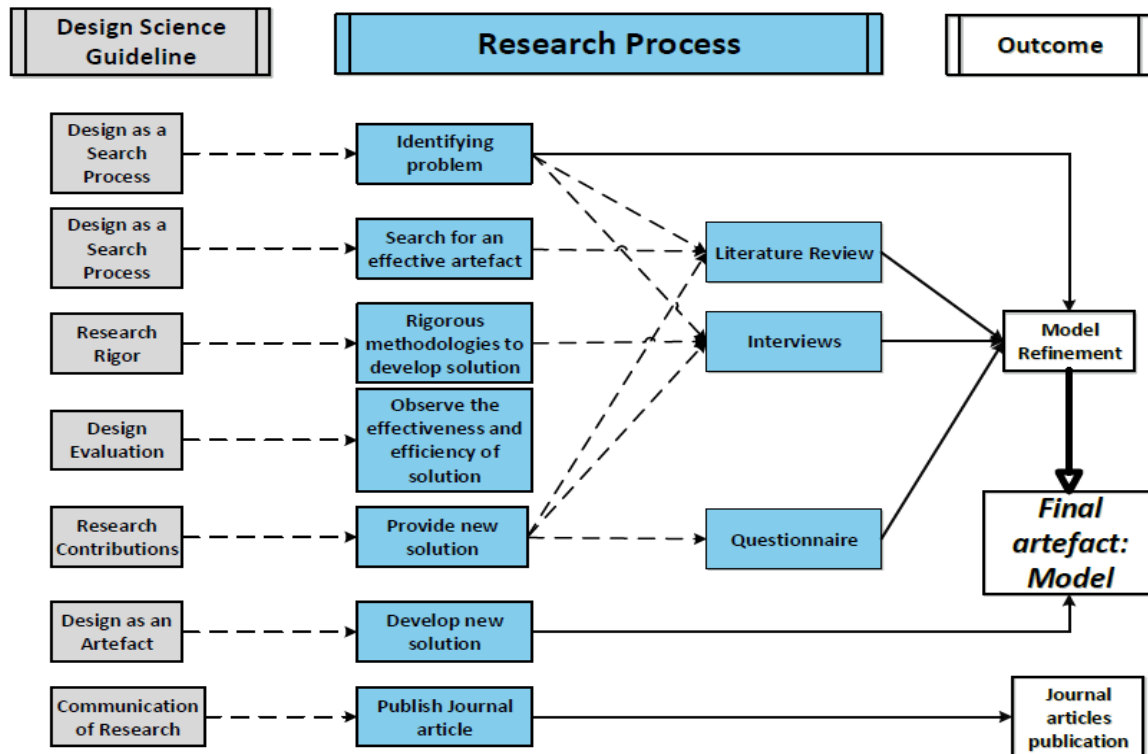


Figure 2: The seven-step guiding principles

Source: (Adapted from Hevner, 2007)

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To further strengthen the argument for the strength, relevance and usability of a design science artefact, the four-cycle view of design science study was proposed by Drechsler and Hevner (2016). This is discussed below as it relates to this study.

2.4.2 The three-cycle view of design science research

The three-cycle view was initiated by Hevner (2007). The rigour cycle, design cycle and relevance cycle form the three-cycle view. The relevance cycle put more emphasis on the problem under examination, the necessities for a solution as well as the standards in which the artefact was accredited. Between the relevance and rigour cycles, there is a design cycle, which is made up of building and evaluation processes of the artefact. The rigour cycle focuses on the development of an artefact using well-known theories, existing literature and expertise of what works as well as what does not when stabilising the artefact. Figure 3 below illustrates the three-cycle model.

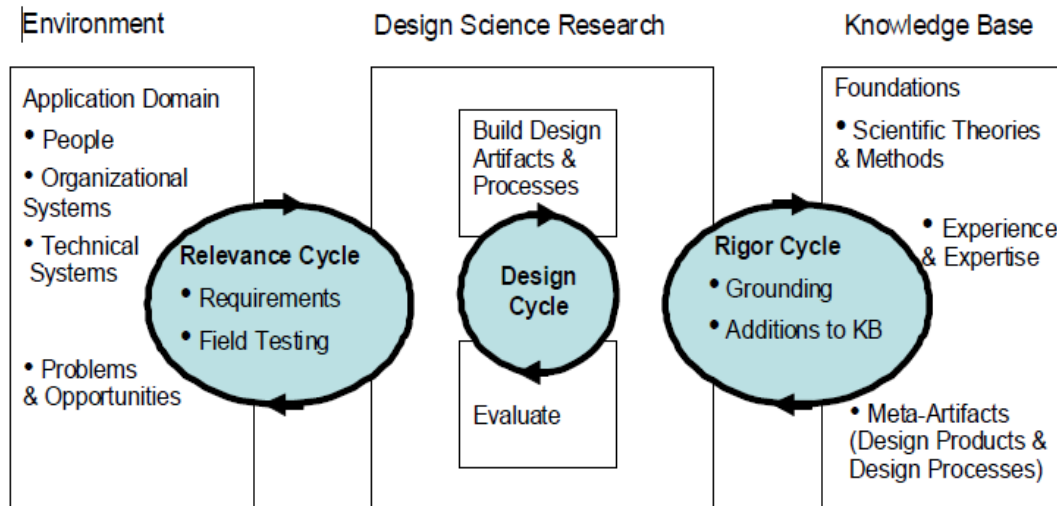


Figure 3: Design science research cycles

Source: (Adapted from Hevner, 2007)

Drechsler and Hevner (2016) postulated that research needs to consider the external environment. The considerations are required to adopt and employ an agile approach when solving real-life problems as a result of the multipart nature of the IS study. Due to the complexity of the IS researches, the initial three cycle view of design science research was modified to a four-cycle view. The additional cycle is termed the change and impact cycle and is depicted in Figure 4 below.

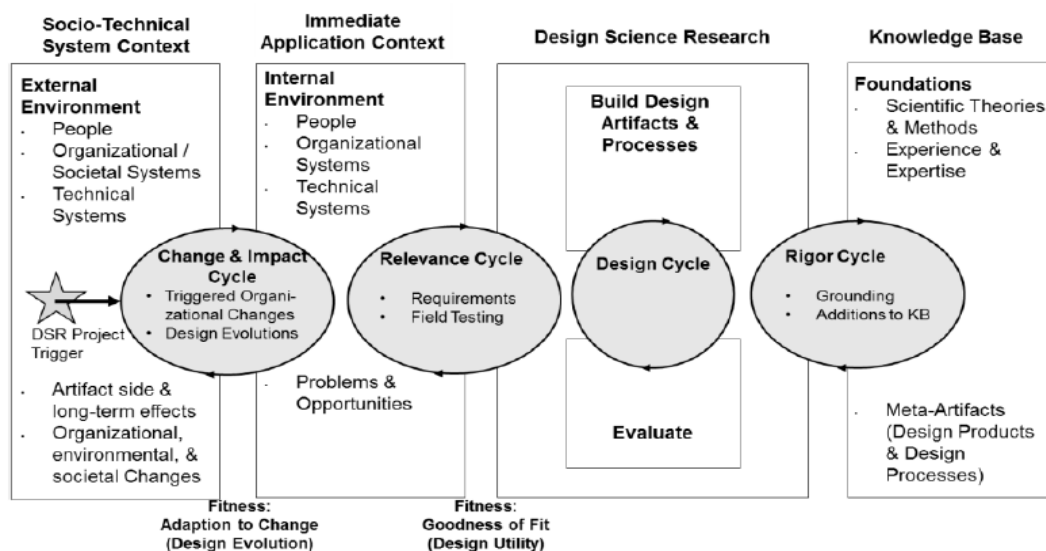


Figure 4: Four-cycle view of design science research

Source: (Adapted from Drechsler & Hevner, 2016)

Drechsler and Hevner (2016) asserted that the present-day IS research needs researchers to take into consideration the secondary effect of an artefact on the external environment before it is introduced to the environment. The suggestion for the change and impact cycle is that the researcher must make a distinction between an immediate application context from the broader impact as it may perhaps not be applicable in the socio-technical environment. Furthermore, the artefact must be useful to the community, and the business world, and thus it is of utmost importance to see an artefact assist with solving the problem of the government. The change and impact are directly relevant to this research project as the research hopes that the creation, testing and implementation of the model will enhance graduateness skills and employability through the use of social media amongst students in the final year at HDIs in the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa and that it also benefits all the graduates around South Africa as a whole.

2.5 Research approach

Two well-known approaches to the research process are deduction and induction. Collis and Hussey (2013) described the deductive method as the establishment of a conceptual and theoretical structure which is tested by empirical observation, whereas the inductive method is defined as a research study in which a theory is developed from the observation of empirical reality; thus general inferences are induced from particular instances. In the same vein, Khalid et al. (2012) described induction as the establishment of a generalisation derived from the investigation of a set of particulars, despite the fact deduction is the identification of an unknown particular, drawn from its resemblance to a set of known facts.

Saunders et al. (2012) stated that the deductive technique uses current philosophies obtained from literature whereas the inductive technique offers an enhanced approach to the nature of the problem. Furthermore, Troachim (2006) stated that in the deductive approach, suggestions and theories are developed before the research process and can be changed together with the outcomes of the empirical research conducted to validate the artefact. However, Troachim (2006) stated that when using the inductive approach the researcher moves from a specific observed viewpoint to broader, general ideas or theories where patterns and themes are identified from the phenomena and utilised to formulate a set of hypotheses. These are thereafter tested, leading to the development of theories and conclusions (Troachim, 2006).

For the purpose of developing the Graduate Employability Social Media Model (GESM Model), this study chose both approaches. The researcher developed a conceptual model from the present literature which was refined through exploratory design methods, data gathering and an analysis process. Then hypotheses were framed to identify patterns that determined general conclusions or theories (Collis & Hussey, 2013). Quantitative analysis was conducted and literature reported on the relationship between employability and graduateness skills is related to a deductive approach. Qualitative analysis that was conducted to validate the model (GESM Model) relate to inductive approach. The following section discusses the research strategy.

2.6 Research strategy

This research project employed a mixed-methods technique. Oates (2006) described mixed-methods as the methodology that encompasses both qualitative and quantitative data gathering methods used to complement each method. Wiid and Diginnes (2013) described qualitative research as the gathering, analysis and interpretation of data that cannot be meaningfully quantified. Saunders et al. (2016) asserted that qualitative studies focus more on meanings and inferences which cannot be quantified. However, Creswell (2014) described quantitative research as research that focuses more on the use of mathematical models, statistical tables, and graphs when demonstrating data. Theories, as well as hypotheses, are tested by analysing the relationship between variables in quantitative research. These variables are computable modes of data that are analysed using statistical processes.

2.6.1 Mixed methods as a choice for data collection and analysis

Greene (2008) added that a mixed-methods approach investigates the social world, and is made up of more than a singular method, to acquire knowledge of the phenomenon being examined. This is supported by Creswell (2014) who mentioned that mixed methods involve the use of both the quantitative and qualitative techniques in a single study. This opinion is also supported by Saunders et al. (2016). In this research project, this amalgamation was utilised to collect and analyse data. The combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques deliver a thorough understanding of the problem under study as compared to a singular approach (Creswell, 2014). A mixed-method approach was followed to identify the perception of final year students and employers with regards to the role played by social media in enhancing their graduateness skills and employability scientifically. The sequential exploratory design was chosen from the six types of mixed-methods designs (Creswell, 2014).

2.6.1.1 Sequential exploratory design

The study applied a sequential exploratory design. The quantitative data was gathered and analysed first. Qualitative data gathering and analysis were done in the second phase. The sequential exploratory design allows the amalgamation of a variety of research instruments such as interviews, questions, and a survey to develop a conceptual model and to identify variables. The sequential exploratory design makes use of the information found in journals, books, and conference papers to develop suitable research instruments to administer a larger population. This design is depicted in Figure 5 below.

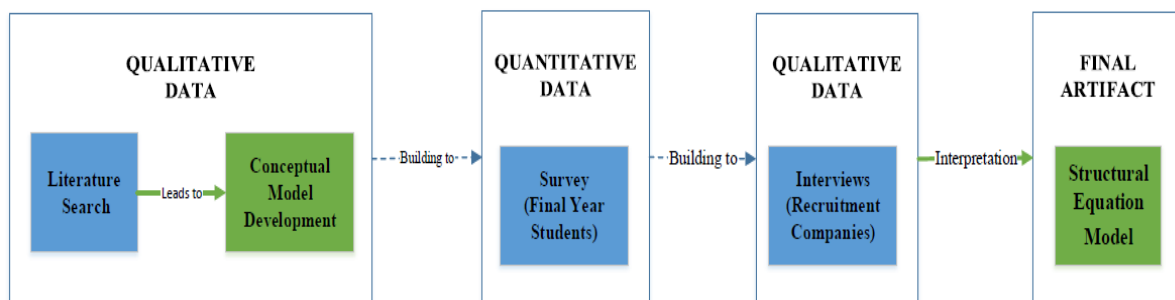


Figure 5: Sequential exploratory design and application to this project

Source: (Adapted from Oates, 2006)

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Creswell (2014) stated that sequential exploratory design is suitable for an iterative process of developing an artefact that can be tested within a larger population. The researcher started with a literature review which led to the conceptual model development presented in Figure 1 in Chapter 1. Questionnaires for the survey and interviews were also developed from the literature review. This research made use of a quantitative method (Survey) to collect the first data, followed by a qualitative method (Interviews). Analysis of the data from the quantitative method was done before the execution of data collection with the qualitative method (Creswell, 2014). Then the model was developed from the analysed data gathered using the quantitative method while the analysed data obtained from the qualitative method was used to refine the model. The following section discusses the population of the study.

2.7 Population and sample

Marshall and Rossman (2008,) described the population as the object for study which consists of events, individuals, organisations, human products and the conditions to which they are

exposed. In this research project, the population consisted of final year students from the University of Fort Hare (UFH) and Walter Sisulu University (WSU) and recruiting agencies.

The total population projected for this research project comprised 7000 participants from the UFH and WSU and 15 recruitment agencies around Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality. Thus, quantitative data was collected from the two universities. The rationale for choosing the population from HDIs in the Eastern Cape was to minimise the travelling expenses. Also, findings show that the Eastern Cape has the highest unemployment rate (37.4%) in the country (ECSECC, 2019). The Youth unemployment rate is at 50.8% in the province as compared to other provinces. Furthermore, most of companies in South Africa are of the view that HDIs do not produce quality graduates and that the graduates are not competent and cannot compete in the labour market for their employers with graduates from traditional universities.

For the sample size of this research project, the Raosoft calculator was used to compute the sample and 369 participants were obtained and thus used as a generalisable result of the total population. Saunders et al. (2016) stated that bigger sample size does not have a noteworthy influence on the findings of the study. This research sample size is similar to studies that were conducted by Steur, Jansen, and Hofman, 2016 and Gavaza, 2017.

This study applied the convenience sampling method. Saunders et al. (2012) described convenience sampling as a technique that is centred on the decision of the researcher. Thus, the researcher selects elements that are readily available and willing to share their experiences concerning a phenomenon under investigation. Convenience sampling was chosen as it easy to conduct and has few guidelines governing how the sample must be composed (Creswell, 2014). A further advantage of convenience sampling is that it is cost-effective and does not require more time to be conducted than probability sampling techniques (Saunders et al., 2012). The method that was employed for data gathering in this research project is provided in the succeeding section.

2.8 Data gathering method

Scholars make use of diverse data-gathering instruments for gathering data to solve the research question. The following section discusses the process employed to gather secondary data.

2.8.1 Secondary data collection: Literature review

A desktop research was employed in the form of literature review. Wiid and Diginnes (2013) described a literature review as the analysis of present documents which contain facts, statistics, evidence and data regarding the research problem as well as the subject domain. Saunders et al. (2012) described secondary data as information that has been formerly collected regarding the topic, albeit not for the particular study at hand. Olivier (2009) stated that the objective of the literature review is to offer perception into potential methods of solving the research question. The literature review is categorised into primary and secondary literature, as listed in Table 4.

Table 4: The differences between primary and secondary literature

Primary literature	Secondary literature
This is also referred to as grey literature.	Refers to formal writings about the subject matter.
Includes sources such as position papers, white papers.	Include conference papers.
Reports form part of primary literature.	Newspapers form part of secondary literature.
Attained from industry policies.	Attained from the books.
Obtained from minutes of congregational meetings on the subject area.	Obtained through reading academic journals.

Source: (Adapted from Saunders et al., 2012)

This research project followed three steps, as stated by Kumar (2014), in conducting a literature review which is presented in Chapters 3 and 4. The steps are stated below.

1. Searching for existing literature on graduateness skills, employability as well as social media use.
2. Selection of related, systematic and often cited literature on graduateness skills, employability as well as social media use.
3. An evaluation of the literature chosen from Step 2 as well as the formation of a conceptual model based on reviewed literature.

The literature search was conducted mostly based on key terms mentioned in the problem statement such as ‘social media’, ‘graduateness skill’ and ‘employability’. Further, the search also included terminology similar to the above keywords to enhance the inclusiveness of the search. These terms included ‘emerging technologies’, ‘work readiness’ and ‘employability’. After attaining articles that could be employed in the research study, the results were then further refined by using filtering as well as screening methods to eliminate literature that did not fit in the study. The framework provides seven iterative steps to assist in the literature search process and these are: ‘searching, sorting, selecting, acquiring, reading, identifying and refining’.

2.8.2 Primary data collection process

The first phase of gathering primary data was conducted using a quantitative questionnaire to gather the perspective of final year students about the influence of social media on graduateness skills and employability. This was done after a conceptual model had been created from the literature review. The students were given set categories regarding the role of social media in graduateness skills and employability. The outcomes from the research instruments were thereafter used to formulate and validate the model aimed at enhancing graduateness skills and employability in South Africa. The second phase of collecting primary data was conducted using a qualitative questionnaire to gather the perspective of employers with regards to the influence of social media on employability.

2.8.2.1 Research instruments: Questionnaire and interviews

This section presents the research instruments that were used in this research project. The succeeding section discusses a questionnaire.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire a data-collection tool used for the gathering and recording of information about a particular issue of interest (Saunders et al. 2012). In the same vein, Leedy and Ormrod (2013) described a questionnaire as a study instrument used for gathering views, attitudes or preceding experiences from a cluster of individuals by enquiring questions and tabulating their answers. Leedy and Ormrod (2013) mentioned that the survey gathers information from a sample of a given population to be able to generalise that population. This research project used a questionnaire since they are cost-effective in pursuing thoughts from students with regards to

the role played by social media towards enhancing graduateness skills and employability (Saunders, 2012).

The researcher used established instruments. The questions were adapted from the literature review of the studies by Changqing, et al. (2016); Coetzee (2014); Rothwell et al. (2009) who conducted research on social media use, graduateness skills and employability respectively. However, these instruments were not validated in the South African context in which the researcher conducted his study hence there was a need to validate them using factor analysis. Reliability test using the Cronbach Alpha coefficients was then used on the validated instruments.

The researcher printed the questionnaires and went to final years lecture rooms and handed the instrument. The instrument had detailed instructions about the completion of the questions. Also, a link to the web-based questionnaire was emailed to all final year students using a class list. An informed consent form was also provided for participants along with the data collection instrument. The questionnaire was composed of close-ended questions measured on a Likert scale. The questionnaire consisted of the following four sections: demographic; social media use; graduateness skill; and employability. The consent form for the participants accompanied the questionnaire (See the attached Appendix B). Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler (2008) asserted that a questionnaire is suitable for research to develop a model as a final artefact as it serves the purpose of generating rich knowledge in this context. Hence its use is suitable for this study. The following section discusses the interviews.

Interviews

Boyce and Neale (2006, p. 4) described an interview as a “qualitative research technique which involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program or situation”. The researcher used structured interviews which entails that all participants responded in the same order on pre-determined questions. Due to the outbreak of COVID 19 worldwide, the researcher needed to practise social distancing and thus could not see participants in person. The researcher got the contacts of participants through referrals. The researcher contacted them via telephone and email asking them to participate in the study and then hosted a qualitative questionnaire on Google Forms by means of which 15 consultants participated in the study (See the attached Appendix C).

Telephonic interviews were recorded with consent from the participants. Creswell (2014) asserted that the researcher needs to preserve the secrecy of the data collected. The researcher made sure that tapes used for gathering data, and all collected data and transcriptions were kept secret. The following section discusses the design of the research instruments.

2.8.2.2 Design of the research instrument for questionnaire and interviews

The questionnaire for the survey and interviews were developed from the components of social media, graduateness skills and employability acknowledged in the literature (Olivier, 2009). Social media, graduateness skills and perceived employability were broadly discussed and reviewed in Chapter 1 and are extensively reviewed in Chapters 3 and 4. Based on the advice by Olivier (2009), cautious attention was given to the structure of a perfect questionnaire. The suggested characteristics are listed below:

- i. Questions need to be clear as well as unambiguous.
- ii. Participants should easily understand the questions and understand them as anticipated by the researcher.
- iii. Questions must be short and interrelated concepts grouped.
- iv. There should be no repetition in the questions in order to avoid misperception by the participants.



The questionnaires were tested for compliance with these recommended characteristics through a pilot study, discussed in detail in the following section.

2.9 Pilot study

The research instruments were sent to the participants to check for ambiguousness as well as user-friendliness before being used to collect data (Wiid & Diggines, 2015). For the quantitative instrument, the researcher tested the questionnaire utilising a total of 90 participants from the total population (similar to the sample group for the study group but not including those for the sample). These 90 students were Information Systems Honours students, university interns and second-year students to determine if the research instrument needed to be adjusted to yield meaningful results and scale validation consideration. The pilot inquiry was carried out between the 4th of February and the 4th of March 2019.

For the qualitative instrument, the researcher tested the questionnaire utilising a total of six participants of the total population from recruitment agencies in East London (similar to the

sample group for the study group but not including those for the sample). The pilot study was carried out between the 2nd of April and the 2nd of May 2020.

The motivation for using participants from recruitment agencies in the Eastern Cape Province was due to the context of the research project. The researcher ensured that the questions were relatable to this group of people as the actual questionnaire was primarily addressed to them. Participants were asked to determine whether the questions were simple, unambiguous and logical in their field/context. The pilot study yielded the required results as the input of people from the human capital management assisted in further refining the research instrument. Four participants indicated that some of the questions regarding certain aspects of the conceptual model were not clear and well-disposed and might be difficult for some participants to understand. Appendix D depicts the original questions and then the revised versions. The questions were thus further modified to ensure easy understanding and avoid losing the intended meaning of the particular component. The questions were thereafter published on Google Forms from the 28th of June 2020 until the 31st of July 2020. The following section presents the data analysis for the study.

2.10 Data analysis



This section deals with the methods of data analysis used in this research project. The following subsection presents the quantitative data analysis technique that was applied in the research project.

2.10.1 Quantitative data analysis

Quantitative variables were applied to analyse responses obtained from the questionnaire. Bryman and Bell (2015, p. 15) described data analysis as “a procedure of revealing constant patterns as well as summarizing the significant details discovered in the examination”. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) (version 24) was used to perform the analysis and draw conclusions from the quantitative data gathered. The succeeding section discusses structural equation modelling.

2.10.1.1 Structural equation modelling

Structural equation modelling (SEM) was incorporated to analyse and draw conclusions from the data collected. SEM was chosen as it provides a multivariate analysis method that applies specialised versions of numerous analysis approaches as special cases (Byrne, 2010). SEM ensured that there were no biased estimations for the relationships amongst social media,

graduateness skills and employability of students in the final year at HDIs in the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa, and it allowed numerous measures to be related to a single dormant hypothesis. Byrne (2010) stated that SEM is a statistical technique that takes a confirmatory (hypothesis-testing) approach to data analysis. The main objective of SEM is to find a model that has a good enough fit with the collected data to serve as a representation of the real situation under examination (Byrne, 2010).

SEM delivers two essential aspects of the procedure: that the processes under study are signified by a sequence of structural (regression) equations, and that these structural relationships are demonstrated pictorially to allow a clearer conceptualisation of the theory under study (Shiu et al., 2009). Wiid and Diggins (2015) added that the hypothesised model can then be statistically tested in the concurrent analysis of the entire system of the variable to define the degree to which it is consistent with the data. Also, SEM demands that the pattern of inter-variable relations be a specified prior model.

This research project employed four core structural equation models accordingly to suit the research situation (Burton & Mazerolle, 2011). These four were the 'path analytic models, confirmatory factor analysis models, structural regression models as well as the latent change models'. The study also used AMOS to measure the estimated structural equation model. Thus, a structural equation model was estimated through exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) which examined correlations between latent variables. For this research project, SEM delivered a framework for statistical analysis, for example, CFA was used to determine the structural model and measurement model (Byrne, 2010). Prior to this, the research project included the following SEM seven phases of consideration:

Phase 1: Developing a theoretical model

For empirical testing, this study developed a conceptual model of factors influencing social media on graduateness skills and employability amongst students at HDIs in the Eastern Cape in South Africa. (Hair et al., 2014; Wuensch, 2013). Based on theoretical support, hypotheses were formulated regarding the relationships between social media, graduateness skills and employability amongst students at HDIs in the Eastern Cape in South Africa were formulated.

Phase 2: Constructing a path diagram of dependence relationships

A path diagram of dependent relationships was constructed and the hypothesised relationships among the constructs integrated into the theoretical models, are depicted. Hair et al. (2014)

stated that path diagrams illustrate a ‘handy way of depicting models in a visual form’. SEM through path analysis explores paths to estimate significance and then evaluates the strength of the paths using standardised path coefficients (Hasiri & Afghanpour, 2016). The model estimation program computes path coefficient values. Path coefficient values are presented above their respective arrows on the arrow diagram specifying a model (Suhr, 2006). Hasiri et al. (2016) and Wuensch (2013) stated that statistically significant path coefficients range between -1 and + 1, with a p-value of 0.05. Furthermore, Hair et al. (2014) stated that for the null hypothesis to be rejected, the value of t-test statistics generated must exceed 1.96.

In this research project, path coefficients estimates were used to compare the direct effects on the study variables. Results of important tests reflected not only the absolute degrees of path coefficients but also factors such as the intercorrelations among the variables and the sample size (Hair et al., 2014). Suhr (2006) stated that path coefficients with values not more than 0.10 designate a weak effect; values nearly 0.30, a median effect and values above 0.50, a strong effect. For that reason, the closer the path coefficients value is to 1, the stronger the effect of variables (Wuensch, 2013). The higher the path coefficient, the greater the strength of the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable will be (Hair et al., 2014).



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Phase 3: Converting the path diagram into a set of structural equations and measurement models

A conventional model comprises two models, the structural model and the measurement model (Hair et al., 2014). Detailing the measurement model implicates allocating indicator variables to the hypotheses that they represent. When the two models are projected, the loading coefficients present estimates how dependable the indicators and the overall hypothesis are. For this project, the AMOS software package was employed to change the path diagrams into structural equations (structural models) and measurement models.

Step 4: Choosing the input matrix type and estimating the proposed model

For this fourth step, the input matrix type should be selected, and the projected model estimated. It is a necessity that a study obtains estimates of free parameters from the observed data when selecting input data type following the specification of the structural and measurement models (Hair et al., 2014; Wuensch, 2013). The analysed data in this study employed the AMOS for the estimations and drawing conclusions.

The most common method of estimation employed is the maximum likelihood (ML) estimation as it estimates the parameters of the whole system using all of the data (Wuensch 2013). ML was employed as the method of estimation to approximate the free parameters as identified for the study. ML formulates estimates based on maximising the possibility (likelihood) that the observed co-variances are drawn from a population assumed to be the same as that reflected in the coefficient estimates. The ML picks estimates which have the greatest chance of reproducing the observed data (Wuensch, 2013).

Step 5: Assessing the identification of model equations

The software programme needs to be evaluated to determine if produced results are insignificant for the structural model (Wuensch, 2013). In terms of identifying a model, there are no existing rules established, but guidelines are available (Hair et al., 2014). These guidelines were used to specify the structural model for this study.

Step 6: Evaluating the results for goodness-of-fit

In the evaluation process of the goodness-of-fit results, some considerations are mandatory related to the extent to which the theoretical and data models meet the assumptions of SEM. The goodness-of-fit tests establish the degree to which the structural equation model fits the sample data (Hair et al., 2014; 2006; Wuensch, 2013). The validity of the measurement model depends on the goodness-of-fit for the measurement model, jointly with the comprehensive proof of construct validity. To determine whether the model should be rejected or not, the goodness of fit tests was used to indicate how well the data fit the model, as it is the main tenacity of SEM. However, such general fit tests do not define if the explicit paths in the model are important. In this study, to confirm that the general fit of the proposed model of social media influence on graduateness skills and employability amongst final year students at HDIs is satisfactory, the following measures were employed: root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA); parsimony goodness-of-fit index (PGFI); comparative fit index (CFI) and goodness-of-fit index (GFI). Table 5 summarises the criteria and cut off points a model must meet to be a good fit.

Phase 7: Making the indicated modifications to the model if theoretically justified, and interpreting the results

The last phase, phase 7, of the SEM examination involves readjusting hypotheses and proposed model modification in quest of an enhanced fit and an understanding of the outcomes (Hair et

al., 2014; Wuensch, 2013). However, in the case of the present study, the model was not subjected to model modification.

Table 5: Summary of criteria and cut off points a model must meet to be a good fit

The goodness of fit measure	Criteria
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	RMSEA < or = to 0.05 indicates a good fit (Farrington, 2009) 0.10 < indicate acceptable models (Rootman, 2011)
Root mean square residual (RMR)	RMR = 0 indicates a perfect fit, RMR < 0.05 is a good fit and RMR below 0.08 is an adequate fit
Non-normed fit index (NNFI)	NNFI close to 1 is a good fit; Below 0.90 the model must be re-specified.
Root mean square residual (RMR)	< 0.05. Good models have small RMR
The goodness-of-fit index (GFI)	Between 0 & 1
Adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI)	Between 0 & 1
Comparative fit index (CFI)	CFI > 0.9
Parsimony fit index: Parsimony goodness-of-fit index (PGFI)	A better model has a higher PGFI which is close to 1

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Source: (Adapted from Hair et al., 2014)

The following section discussed qualitative data analysis.

2.10.2 Qualitative data analysis

A thematic content analysis was applied to validate qualitative data during analysis. Creswell (2014) described the content analysis as a method for scientifically examining textual data to identify the patterns, structures and important features of a given construct. From its name ‘thematic’ content analysis, it is evident that it identifies themes from the data collected and then categorises and defines the data in detail.

The thematic analysis of qualitative data was performed using the Nvivo software version 12 (NVivo, 2015). The ability to create evidential and scientific themes so that associations, as well as cross-conceptual relations, can be identified, was the reason for the researcher choosing Nvivo for thematic analysis. Broedera and Donze (2010) asserted that several studies in academia collect qualitative data to have a more scientific and auditable analysis of data. The findings are presented in Chapter 6 and the implications in Chapter 7 of this thesis. The nodes

created from the Nvivo analysis are presented in Appendix E. The following section discusses validation and evaluation.

2.11 Validation and evaluation

Certain validation criteria are used in quantitative and qualitative research. Oates (2006) stated that several criteria are used to assess, evaluate and validate the quality of research. The following section discusses the quantitative validation and evaluation criteria

2.11.1 Quantitative validation and evaluation criteria

Objectivity, reliability, internal and external validity formed part of the quantitative validation and evaluation criteria.

Objectivity: Focuses on the elimination of bias throughout the research process. It is practically difficult to eliminate bias on the side of the researcher due to conceptualisation and worldview; however, it is significant that awareness of bias and its effect be preserved throughout the research project. In this research project, the researcher ensured that participants were aware of the need to avoid bias during the process of gathering and analysing data. This assists to preserve an objective perspective when scripting the research outcomes.

Reliability: Pallant (2013) described reliability as the dependability obtained from the instrument when measuring the target attribute. In other words, reliability denotes the repeatability of the results from the study. The research methodology followed by this research project has been clearly defined in this chapter. The researcher was devoted to ensuring that the defined scientific and thoroughly tested research procedures were followed at every single phase of the research project. Also, the seven-step guiding principle of design science, which comprised the research design for the model, allows another scholar to simply repeat and test the validity of the study to verify whether comparable findings could be attained.

Internal and external validity: Bryman and Bell (2015) described validity as the extent to which the inferences drawn from the research project are correct. Furthermore, it is the degree to which the research results are error-free and the measurements accurate. Therefore, the cautious consideration of the instrument for data gathering, the process of data gathering and data analysis all lend credibility to the internal validity of the research project. External validity denotes the ability to generalise the findings: this is reliant on how descriptive the carefully chosen research samples are. The computable validation and verification of the entire research

are covered in detail in Chapter 5 of the thesis. Chapter 5 presents a rational description, clarifications and interpretations, reinforced by the evidence of the data generated. The following section discusses the qualitative validation and evaluation criteria

2.11.2 Qualitative validation and evaluation criteria

Credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability formed part of the qualitative validation and evaluation criteria.

Credibility: Thomson (2011) described credibility as the ability for research participants to believe the results attained from qualitative research. To ensure the credibility of the results, the results were assessed as well as refined by the expert in the field of employability until the results revealed a credible outcome.

Dependability: Thomson (2011) described dependability as the ability of the researcher to account for as well as unfold the variations that transpired in the context and how these variations conform to the way the scholar approached the research project. A comprehensive audit track of all the processes related to the literature research process and feedback from experts in the field of employability was kept during the study, which assisted the research to cross-check the findings from other researchers. Furthermore, this removed incorrect interpretations and the readiness of this data allowed the researcher to conduct a reliability review.

Transferability: Cho et al. (2006) described transferability as the extent to which the outcomes can be useful to other contexts or with other participants. This study demonstrated transferability as results obtained from context and the scope of the study can be generalised across African countries.

Confirmability: Cho et al. (2006) described confirmability as the process of ensuring that the researcher can track the collected data to its source, whilst the logic that was employed to interpret the data ought to be made clear. The response from the participants was documented for confirmation purposes and tracking the reports to the source of the report. The next section discusses ethical considerations.

2.12 Ethical considerations

Blumberg et al. (2008, p.179) described ethics as “norms or standards of behaviour that guide moral choices about our behaviour and our relationship with others”. Ethics guide a researcher during conducting the research project. Blumberg et al. (2008) asserted that it is necessary to follow ethics guiding principles to ensure that the researcher conducts the research in a manner that does not harm participants and that participants must be aware of the basis for the study.

An ethical clearance certificate was granted to the researcher on the 22nd of August 2019 by the University of Fort Hare Research Ethics Committee (Certificate Reference Number: CIL021SMUR01 (See Appendix A)).

Furthermore, Creswell (2014) mentioned that every researcher is obligated to honour the rights, values and wishes of the research project respondents. Silverman (2000, p. 201) asserted that “researchers should always remember that while they are doing their research, they are entering the private spaces of their participants”. Furthermore, Saunders (2012, p 34) stated that every scholar researching humans ought to contemplate the following factors of ethics: “breaking respondent’s confidentiality; anonymity; deception; risk of harm; misrepresenting results; deceiving as well as the exploitation of participants”. Furthermore, Oates (2006) listed factors that must be well considered when analysing data. These factors encompass the following: informed consent, honesty and trust, intervention and advocacy.

For participants to participate voluntarily as well as with informed consent, the researcher presented available information regarding the research project to them (Creswell, 2014). Saunders (2012) stated that informed consent should be acquired from respondents participating in the research project as it is one of the important ethical factors that have to be considered. The researcher presented an informed consent form along with the research instrument to participants during the data collection process. Participants were allowed to freely withdraw from participating in the research project at any phase of completing the research instrument. In the same vein, the codes of full disclosure, the privacy of participants’ demographic data as well as liberty to decline to answer some of the questions was endorsed through the process of data collection (Blumberg et al., 2008). The researcher assured the participants that confidentiality, as well as their anonymity, was guaranteed. This research project was therefore carried out free of abusing the ethical rights of the research participants (Creswell, 2014).

2.13 Summary of the chapter

The chapter presented the research design as well as the research methodology. The justification was stated for pragmatism as a choice of the research paradigm. Thereafter, design science was presented as the chosen research design for the construction and validation of the model for enhancing graduateness skills and employability amongst final year students in South Africa, which is an artefact for the research. The method employed for the gathering of both primary and secondary data was also presented. The chapter further described the mixed-method approach which was selected as a methodological choice for data gathering and analysis of primary data. Thereafter, the choice of questionnaires and interviews for data gathering was detailed. The chapter discussed the significance of the validity and reliability of the research methodology and motivated the significance of data reliability when dealing with the mixed-methods approach.



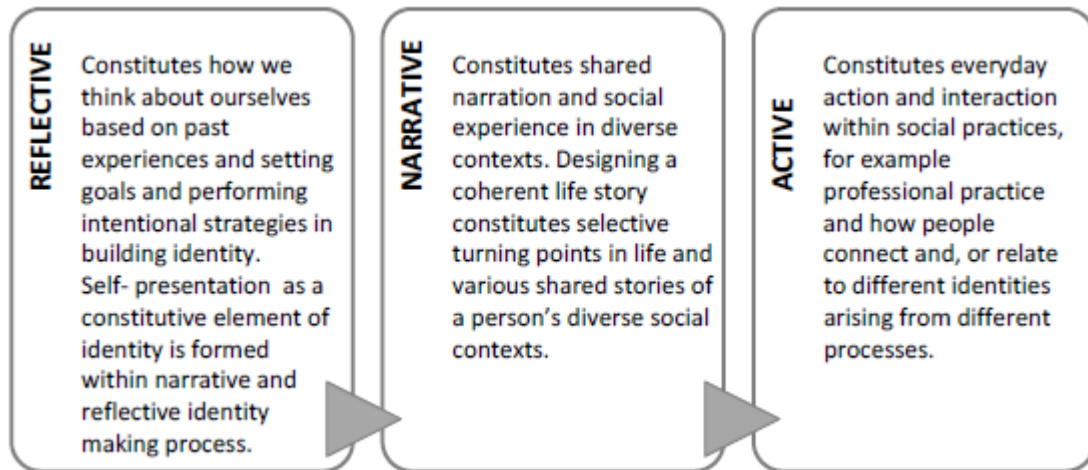
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within specific professions and (Starcic et al. 2017). In modern-dynamic and unpredictable work ing their careers to ensure life- sional identity development is efficacy (Stringer & Kerpelman, n today's labour market, social 15; Starcic et al. 2017). Identity- ntity-making, narrative identity- e et al. 2017), such that graduates s. Social media is acknowledged as significant spaces for the construction of professional identity (Aluri & Tucker, 2015). Social media has become spaces for activities related to identity development, and they influence how graduates understand themselves (Orsatti & Riemer, 2015). Orsatti and Riemer (2015) developed a framework for researching identity, noting that final year students can engage in social media through reflective, narrative and active modes.

Reflective identity-making encompasses how students think about themselves centred on past experiences, goal setting and the performance of intentional identity-building strategies. Starcic

et al. (2017) state that the reflective process in identity formation involves thinking about and reflecting on oneself from the perspective of other possible selves and images of action. On social media, a graduate's profile discloses identity through the presentation, which is multimodal and includes text, photos, images, video and communication history. Figure 6 describe reflective, narrative and active identity-making.



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CHAPTER 3: SOCIAL MEDIA USE, GRADUATENESS SKILLS AND EMPLOYABILITY

3.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter discussed the research method used in the research project. This chapter discusses how social media enhances graduateness skills and the employability of final year students in South Africa. One of the reasons for the high level of youth unemployment in South Africa is the skills gap between skills supply and skills demand. Emerging technologies can be used to overcome this challenge. The concept of social media is relatively new and has brought several changes in the labour market environment in South Africa, and hence there is a lack of relevant literature linking social media to graduateness skills and employability. Swan (2012) stated that the influence of social media on employment has been given minimal attention on an international level. This research investigated how final year university students can use social media to enhance graduateness skills of the youth.

The chapter is structured as follows: the first section discusses information and communication technologies (ICT) in SA; followed by a description of social media and varied concepts that have contributed to the rise of the social media phenomenon and evolution. The next section explains the Social Media Integration Model and diverse types of social media for employability. Further, a critical understanding of social media is exhibited and justification is provided for the empirical research before the chapter concludes.

3.2 Information and communication technology in South Africa

Mobile devices have increasingly become popular and more accessible which has led to dramatic growth in social media (Benson & Morgan, 2013). According to SouthAfrica.info (2019), more than 75% of South Africans use the Internet and more than 60% use social media in South Africa (Beavon, 2019). The country is ranked 5th on the African continent and 92nd in the world regarding individual Internet usage. Furthermore, smartphones used to access the internet is increasing; South Africa is ranked 62nd in the world in this regard and its connection rate has reached 26% of the population in comparison to the worldwide average of 22% (SouthAfrica.info, 2019).

The literature reveals that young adults using mobile technology have surpassed 80% (Shava, Chinyamurindi, & Somdyala, 2016; Cilliers, Viljoen, & Chinyamurindi, 2017). According to

Digital Statistics in South Africa (2018), out of 80% of young adults, students constitute 75% of the users of social media which they access through their mobile devices. In the same vein, Robinson, (2013) stated that South Africans that access social media networks using their mobile phones have exceeded 40 million. BusinessTech (2019) asserted that Facebook is the most popular social media site visited in South Africa with 22 million active users. The majority of them are women, constituting 50.9%. Individuals aged 25 to 34 are the largest user group, constituting 5.5 million. The second most popular cited social media platform is YouTube with 10 million users while Twitter is the third with 8, 3 million operators. LinkedIn experienced enormous growth with an increase to 7 million operators, 75 000 occupations and 30 000 enterprises. Instagram users increased from 1.1 million users in 2016 to 3.9 million users in 2018 (BusinessTech, 2019). The majority of the users are female, constituting 53.1% of the population. Individuals aged 25 to 34 are the largest user group, constituting 1.3 million (Beavon, 2019).

The development of ICT came with several changes in the labour market environment (Liu & Hwang, 2010). ICT refers to “technologies used to convey, manipulate and store data by electronic means. This can include e-mail, blogs, WhatsApp, video chat (e.g. Skype) and online social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn), it also consists of all the diverse computing devices (e.g. laptop computers and smartphones) that carry out a wide range of communication and information functions” (Perron et al., 2010: p. 67). Export.gov (2018) asserted that ICT has proved to be a very important enabling tool for societal and commercial development and ought to be prioritised in the South African economy.

A systematic literature review conducted by Di Capua (2010), studying 100 published articles on social networks, found that social media was used mainly for keeping contact with colleagues and family residing far away. However, the purpose of social networks has been extended since then to include publicity and job-hunting (Arnedillo-Sánchez et al., 2017; Piveca et al, 2019). Consequently, today, social media has become frequently utilised by business to look for potential personnel by means of the platform (Wanga et al., 2020). Additionally, recent studies (Becton et al., 2019; Roulin & Levashina, 2019) showed that 70% of recruitment agencies and employers make use of social media to conduct a background check as a way of screening prospective employees and approximately 50% of companies check an employee’s online identity via social media. On the other hand, institutions of higher learning, government organisations and private companies create social media pages for promotional purposes and to attract potential graduates and employees (Melao & Reis, 2020).

The study explored the role of social media in enhancing graduateness skills amongst youth in South Africa and the part it can perform in bridging the unemployment gap in the economy. The following section discusses the evolution of social media.

3.3 Defining social media

Hussain et al. (2017, p.4) described social networks as “a set of people, organizations and communal entities interconnected by a set of socially meaningful relationships”. From a technological perspective, Suen (2018) described social networking sites as a collection of technologies, for instance, blogs, online business networks, and peer-to-peer networks which support social interaction and collaborative action online. In support of the view from preceding authors, Roulin and Levashina (2019) described social media as internet-based tools which allow readers to engage with the writer or with the community online and in public.

The basis for social media originates from the development of the web to its current form as well as the growth in content generated by the users of social media. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) supported this view as they mentioned that the user-generated concept signifies the summation of ways in which individuals interact with social media whereas web 2.0 technologies work as a platform for its growth. This is based on the declaration that the user-generated concept and web 2.0 offer the context for the social media platform.

Boyd and Ellison (2008, p. 2) defined social media as "web and mobile-based services that enable end-users to create public profiles within a bounded system, articulate a list of users with which they have a connection, view and traverse their list of connections including those made by others within the system; although nature and nomenclature differ depending on the site". Social networking sites (SNS) are tools that permit individuals with a common interest to connect at the same time allowing them to create their public profile as well as content and communication (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Therefore, the term 'social media' in this thesis refers to both webs as well as mobile-based technologies that assist and transform communication into interactive dialogue. This research study made use of the definition provided by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010). The following section discusses the influence of social media on graduate' professional identity.

Figure 6: Reflective, narrative and active identity-making

Source: (Adapted from Orsati and Riemer, 2015)

Narrative identity-making constitutes a shared narration and social experience in diverse contexts. Designing a coherent life story constitutes selective turning points in life and various shared stories of a person's diverse social contexts. Active identity-making constitutes everyday action and interaction within social practices and how people connect with and/or relate to the identity being shaped in a variety of processes (Staricic et al. 2017). The following section discusses social media literature on gradueness skills and employability.

3.5 Social media literature on gradueness skills and employability

Recent reports indicate that a major part of the unemployment and underemployment problem for young people is their lack of the skills required by employers (Archer & Chetty, 2013; Harry et al., 2018). This section explores how social media is influencing gradueness skills and employability.

Social media use for recruitment is fairly new in South Africa; however, some companies help connect jobseekers to employers using these emerging technologies (Hussain et al., 2017). Companies like Kempston, Abantu Staff Solutions, Strategic placement, Work Africa and MPC recruitment have been established mainly for this purpose (Maltby, 2011). These companies normally request a Curriculum Vitae from graduates and then match them with possible jobs related to their qualifications. Considering the changing nature of the economic environment in the technological world, most corporations and federal institutions are keen to engage in social media tools as a means for recruitment purposes (Careerbuilder, 2011).

Social media has gradually evolved from being a platform for personal activities to a professional one. In the same vein, Benson and Morgan (2013) stated that social media platforms as one of the emerging technologies have become essential in daily life for many young adults. This is because social media sites offer a platform for self-presentation and self-disclosure (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Studies (e.g. Swan, 2012; Benson et al., 2013; Albal, 2018) have found that young graduates are using social media for employability.

Professionals recognise social media as vibrant tools for business and development; however, most graduate students coming into the business environment lack professional skills related to the business world (Benson et al., 2014). This study proposes that regardless of students' prolific use of social media, they need to be educated on how to engage effectively and efficiently when using these emerging technologies. The study concludes that universities should impart knowledge about the importance of social media to graduates, sharing how they

should shape their online presence as most employers are checking graduates' background on social media.

Albal (2018) added that social media platforms allow graduates to be exposed to extensive information related to the organisations of their interest in a cost-effective way. Additionally, social media enables graduates to discover useful information about their prospective employers (Benson et al., 2014). Social media, for instance, a blog, allows graduates to participate in an online discussion (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Through participating in the discussion forums, graduates will showcase their critical thinking and decision-making skills. Additionally, blogs stimulate interaction between graduates and recruitment companies locally or abroad (Kagohara et al., 2013). Therefore, social media provides features that promote graduate-employer interaction.

Social media has changed the way students associate with one another (Changqing, et al., 2016). However, the characteristics of students on a social network determine the diverse benefits that graduates lure from social media (Albal, 2018). Fletcher (2016) stated that emerging technologies have become even more influential with employers utilising social media to research the backgrounds of job applicants and potential employees and to conduct talent searches. Suen (2018) mentioned that students need to know how to behave when using social media as it has an impact on their online presence.

Several studies examined diverse attitudes and behaviour of workers towards emerging technologies in organisations (SHRM, 2016; Becton et al., 2019; Bhandarkar et al., 2021). Findings of the above studies noted that social media is being used for professional purposes. In their findings, it was noted that regardless of the complexity in attesting a correlation between social media uses, many businesses will adopt social media within their organisations to enhance their communication.

According to Jobvite (2009), more than 83% of enterprises use and were also planning to use social networks for recruiting. When the research was repeated in 2012, it found that the figures had positively changed from 83% to 92%. Several studies revealed that most organisations today are using social media for attracting new talent (Wirthman, 2016; Arnedillo-Sánchez et al., 2017; Piveca et al., 2019)

Research conducted in Britain by Benson et al. (2010) revealed that graduates mainly used Facebook to advance their career. A survey was employed to gather data from 272 business students. The findings of the study revealed critical variances amongst scholars around the

world. The results of the study indicated that students in Britain, when compared to students from other nations, mostly use social media for social purposes. The results indicated that students had no LinkedIn account while students from other nations had LinkedIn (Roulin et al., 2019). Concerning national differences, the study revealed that students in Britain view social media as a job-hunting tool to a lesser extent than students from other countries who claimed that LinkedIn is a useful tool for job hunting (Roulin et al., 2019).

Research conducted in Ireland in 2012 on the influence of social media on recruitment revealed that 52.6% of participants had Facebook accounts and 21.3% of them indicated they find it effective for recruitment. Graduates need to be aware of what they post on their Facebook accounts. Similarly, a study by Quinn (2013) revealed that one in ten people between the age of 16 and 34 years has been rejected for a job due to an online post. Additionally, a study by Kasper (2014) on how the human resources recruiting professionals are conducting screening across diverse industries found that 93% of recruiters check candidates' social media postings. The survey also indicated that 73% of recruiters have hired a candidate through social media.

In European countries, more than 70% of employers go through social profiles of prospective employees during the recruitment process; as a result, final year students' profanity and poor-selling on social media reduce their chances of being employed (Salm, 2017). Similar results were revealed by Krishnan et al., (2017). Therefore, final year students should make use of social media to sell their talents.

Koch et al. (2018) examined the current state of the hiring processes in South Africa. The study found that recruiters in South Africa are following their international counterparts, with LinkedIn being the main platform for their recruitment processes. Some universities started to design special modules and workshops for helping students to develop a professional online identity and employability record using social media sites such as LinkedIn (Rienties et al., 2012; Lancaster, 2013). The University of Central Lancashire in the United Kingdom established a social media initiative called 'Twitter Critters' where students engage with prospective employers through sharing sketches of their work and receiving feedback and advice from the experts (Swan, 2012). The students, in both cases, reported that the experience was priceless in providing them with feedback and ideas on new ways of presenting themselves to industry professionals.

Additionally, social media sites such as LinkedIn and Facebook have come to recognise their useful role and become inventive to close the higher education – employment gap through

diverse programmes and approaches. LinkedIn's acquirement of the most popular career-skills instructor is the most notable initiatives so far. The acquisition enables graduate to gain access to the platform for skill-building and education. Furthermore, Facebook introduced a new initiative called Tech Prep which provides information on how unemployed youths can pursue a career in computer science (Facebook, 2015). The site gives access to youths to be educated about computer science, learn about the required skills for one to become a computer programmer, and the available careers for programmers.

These initiatives can provide better opportunities for experiential learning, and provide unemployed graduates with the skills they need to obtain the jobs that are and will be vs. the jobs that once were (Abdu et al., 2016). Nevertheless, the youth residing in parts of the country with low internet access rates, and those who are from rural backgrounds are not always aware of these priceless resources. Thus it becomes an obligation for policymakers in the education sector to spread awareness about these resources. Awareness could be achieved through including enough information about social media in their curriculum and their teaching, to educate students in the best practices to successfully use social media to acquire the skills needed to get their first job (Mashigo, 2014).

Technology supports final year students to interconnect with employers and can assist the youth to create and showcase talents and skills. Given the possible benefits of technology, it is astonishing that its use is not more pervasive. This is due to graduates' attitudes towards social media, security issues while online, data cost and social media experience to employ social media as an employability tool in this digital world (Almeshal, 2015; Albal, 2018). The next section discusses the significance of social media through a Social Media Integration Model.

3.6 Social Media Integration Model

This section presents the Social Media Integration Model (SMIM), which was originally proposed by Garcia (2011). The SMIM has been employed in numerous research studies (including: Roučková, 2015; Valos et al., 2016; Webb & Roberts, 2016). The SMIM has four components: exposure, connecting, sharing and feedback. These four constructs in Figure 7 illustrate how technology could enhance gradueness skills of youth as well as finding employment.

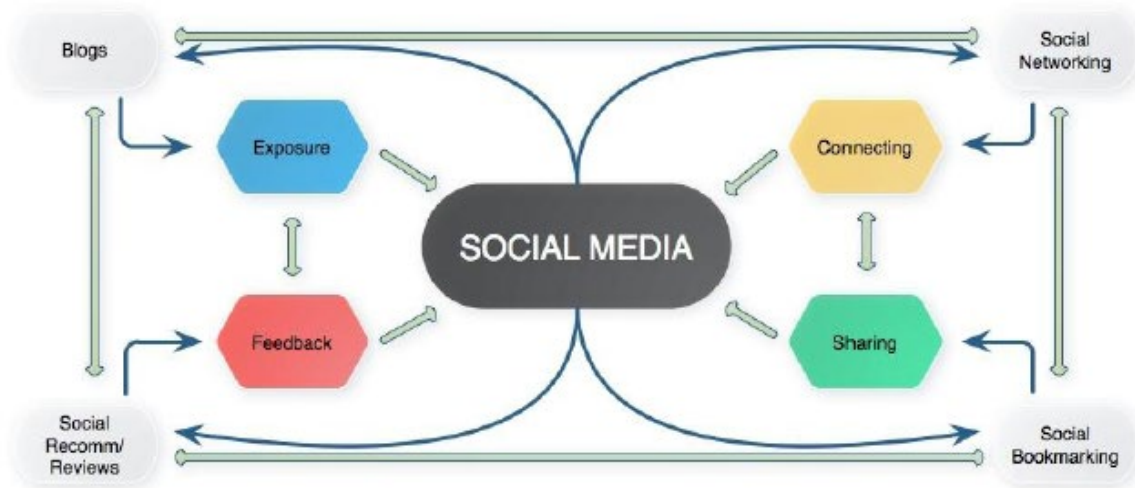


Figure 7: Social Media Integration Model

Source: (Adapted from Garcia, 2011)

Exposure is the first construct of the model. With regards to scholarship, one of the graduateness skills domains, technology such as social media tools, wikis, as well as simulations can be used to create authentic learning exposure. Authentic learning experiences deliver practical learning experiences which can assist the youth to progress in their skills development. Through these technologies available to them they will develop decision-making skills, enterprising skills, analytical thinking, and problem-solving skills. Additionally, social media can be used by graduates for self-presenting (Hu & Zhang, 2016). Social media such as blogs and YouTube provide graduates with a platform to expose and showcase their talent, skills, knowledge and achievements and to upload presentations (Benson & Morgan, 2013; Joosten, 2012).

Connecting is the second construct of the model (Garcia, 2011). Social media platforms can support students to develop their digital identities, build relationships with employers, and showcase their skills. Southampton University developed an initiative called the mission employable. The application reveals how social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn were used for professional purposes. A further example of an initiative is the LinkedIn-style web folio, developed by the students at Abertay University, which can be used to create relationships with future employers.

Information sharing is the third construct of the model (Garcia, 2011). Social bookmarking sites such as blogs or websites are used for sharing information. Thus social media is used to spread information amongst students regarding job opportunities or internships available

(Benson et al., 2014). Changqing et al. (2016) found that social networking tools like LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter have become significant social platform for better communication and for sharing information regarding job opportunities. Through social media, employers and recruiting companies can advertise job postings and internship programmes (Manchester Metropolitan University, 2018). Thus, social media can act as an enabler for graduates to share information about job openings and internships.

Feedback is the fourth construct of the model. With regards to lifelong learning, technologies such as blogs and e-portfolios can assist final year students to collect feedback from prospective employers, reflecting on their self-development. Lifelong Learning provides a student with the ability to become independent. On the other hand, through social recommendations and reviews, valuable feedback can be provided to graduates taking part in the discussion forums. Additionally, social media could be used by prospective employers to provide feedback on those graduate students who have showcased their skills and talents (Hu et al., 2016). Apart from the use of technology, graduate skills diagnostic tools can be used to help final year students identify their gradueness skills. Career services can help to develop the employability skills of students. The following section discusses the diverse types of social media for employability.



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3.7 Diverse types of social media for employability purposes

This section presents various social media tools that are most often used by graduates when looking for employment. These tools include Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube. The above-mentioned social media were chosen because they are used most by both graduates and employers for employment purposes. Additionally, they assist students to learn about employment opportunities.

3.7.1 Facebook

Facebook is a social media site that provides digital space for humans to build social relations with each other (Solomon & Schrum, 2014). In the same vein, Suen (2018) described Facebook as a social utility that supports people to network and keeps in touch with friends, family and co-workers. Facebook started in the teaching and learning community to keep alumni and university friends in touch; however, its influence has extended much further than this and individuals around the world use this service to stay in touch (Albal, 2018). Facebook offers various functions including the following: relationships, identity, conversations, reputation and presence. Facebook allows its users to form groups of shared interests which graduate students

can also join and share their social or professional interests. In these groups, graduates need to post content relevant to their career and their job search. Additionally, final year students could utilise Facebook's 'like button' to organisations that are aligned to their degrees so that information that the company posts on their page will be accessible to them.

3.7.2 LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a more professional social media site compared to Facebook. It is an SNS that provides a platform for professionals in diverse trades to network and communicate (Burch, 2013). Thus, it is a necessity for final year students to be actively engaged with LinkedIn as it will assist them in meeting all relevant organisations and their human resources recruitment departments and agencies. This is because LinkedIn is much more than an online Curriculum Vitae (Koch et al., 2018). Roulin and Levashina (2019) mentioned that LinkedIn provides the benefit of employers being able to associate with high-value individuals free of charge. There is an emphasis on self-presentation and relationships are based on linking with people you know, who in turn refer you to whom you want to meet, thereby creating a reputation-based network (Burch, 2013). LinkedIn provides various functionalities including identity, reputation and relationships. The latest statistics show that there are over 630 million professionals on LinkedIn worldwide with more than 500,000 networking groups. Some of the features, for instance 'Talent Advantage' and the CV dashboard are designed to assist recruiters who want to get the best out of the functionalities by enhancing the search capabilities and releasing relevant job-seeking data such as CV buzz words used by recruiters (Hussain et al., 2017).

Graduates could use the LinkedIn account as a space to share what they have achieved at the university. Literature has revealed that LinkedIn is a useful professional tool for graduate job seekers, thus, students' exposure to this professional site can be beneficial for employment purposes and professional image (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Hussain et al., 2017; Koch et al., 2018). However, it could also enhance the chances of a graduate being spotted early by employers, and create contacts while they are still studying. LinkedIn helps a graduate to create a network with individuals with whom they share the same interest (Koch et al., 2018). The LinkedIn profile needs to be updated whenever a graduate completes an activity so that the professional image is kept up to date. With the exception of the aforementioned reason, the student needs to keep visiting the site and open profiles of influencers and groups that are of interest to be more knowledgeable about the platform (Hussain et al., 2017). The more they learn, the more they will be able to approach business mentors, people who can help them grow in their career and make more contacts.

Kok (2018) stated that LinkedIn in South Africa has reached seven million users, while 75 000 jobs are posted on the platform and 30 000 corporations are actively engaged on the site. Thus, considering the current unemployment rate in the country, this professional platform poses a world of possibilities that many graduates in the country have not yet tapped into.

However, there are very many individuals and organisations in South Africa that have adopted LinkedIn. Kok (2018) stated that most of the LinkedIn users in South Africa are based in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, Bloemfontein, Port Elizabeth and Polokwane, covering the major businesses, which shows that the platform is being used in all corners of the country. In South Africa, the majority of LinkedIn users use the site for networking. It is highlighted that 56% of South African users use LinkedIn to network with other professionals. Sixty per cent of LinkedIn users use the platform to stay up to date with what their colleagues are doing (Kok, 2018). Sixty-one per cent of South African LinkedIn individuals use the platform to keep up to date on industry discussions, meaning that LinkedIn as a social media networking site for professionals allows individuals not only to connect with others but also to learn and update their skills and knowledge, staying on top of what the trends are in a specific industry. Through LinkedIn, graduates will be exposed to the key skills that are needed by the prospective employees, thus enabling them to specialise. Final year students need to demonstrate their interest in a sector by joining and participating in discussion groups on LinkedIn (Hussain et al., 2017). This in turn will allow them to make connections and develop their network. Also, following employers, making contact and asking them questions will enable students to gain a greater insight into an organisation and to promote themselves.

Koch et al. (2018) noted that LinkedIn provides the most insight into the history of recruiting, education, and years of experience. In a study conducted by Jobvite in 2014, it was found that 79% of employers indicated that they were appointing a candidate through LinkedIn, 26% indicated that they had done so via Facebook and only 14% said they had nominated a candidate on Twitter (Jobvite, 2014). Although LinkedIn has one of the highest success rates on any website, companies still use common recruitment platforms such as job boards, job sites and corporate websites (Koch et al., 2018). This is because several employers select these common discovery tools due to their limited knowledge of how to successfully access social media sites (Allden and Harris, 2013).

3.7.2.1 Comparison between Facebook and LinkedIn

Facebook is a site open to everyone mainly for socialising while LinkedIn is a site for professional alignment (Roulin & Levashina, 2019). As mentioned earlier, Facebook allows people to share information with partners via status messages and photo sharing. By comparison, LinkedIn allows people to build a link with new peers related to their professional field. Unlike Facebook, where everyone can be friends of another user, LinkedIn requires these two people to have social networking friends. Another difference between the two networks is how people present themselves: On Facebook, people can display their interests, favourite series, movies and bands, whereas LinkedIn does not offer these features – on LinkedIn a person presents their professional, detailed profile, for example, their place of residence and their education (Roulin et al., 2019). Facebook is therefore likened to a nature reserve, with a very open structure and unusual behaviour but LinkedIn offers a small space for thoughtless collaboration between people.

Another study by Van Dijck (2013) that analysed the differences between Facebook and LinkedIn found that Facebook is more focused on providing people with self-presentation tools, while LinkedIn tends to focus on digital marketing. Apart from the differences, both platforms provide related connection terms. The study concludes that the networks in question do not provide a neutral platform for self-disclosure because they are tools for building identity and it is important to alert users to this fact so that they can change the way they use these tools.

Research has shown that LinkedIn and Facebook are widely used as recruitment tools as they offer job transfer features for employers (Fletcher, 2016; Swan, 2012). Also, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) stated that Facebook and LinkedIn are the most popular social networking sites among graduates. Today, most employers use LinkedIn and Facebook because most final-year students use these sites, so employers are likely to reach out to new professionals (Benson & Morgan, 2013).

3.7.3 Twitter

Rodens (2011) described Twitter as a "combination of personal publishing and communication with a new type of real-time publishing allowing for immediate and anytime anywhere feedback" (p. 3). Twitter is an online microblogging and social networking site. This platform allows individuals to read and send messages that are limited to 140 characters. More than 55% of active Twitter users follow companies, and thus Twitter is increasingly being used as a professional network. This trend commenced with employers going to look at their employees

‘tweets’ to see what they were doing in their spare time and also saying about the company. Present-day Twitter is progressively being employed by employers to recruit talent (Salm, 2017). Several employers view Twitter as a source of information about their applicants, using spin-off sites such as twitjobsearch.com and tools such as Tweet Deck to tap into the ‘twisphere’ and find out possible information about their consumers and candidates (Nigel Wright, 2011).

In a study designed to analyse a study published on microblogging in education (MIE) between 2008 and 2011, the findings indicate that many students have used Twitter to keep up-to-date and communicate with experts in their field (Gao et al., 2012). Therefore, final year students can use Twitter to follow employers, other employees and analysts in their favourite area. On Twitter, graduates will always be aware of news and events in their field. The following section discusses YouTube's impact on final year student use.

3.7.4 YouTube

YouTube is a video sharing service that permits users to view videos posted by other users and to upload their videos (Solomon & Schrum, 2014), and thus YouTube is becoming a major part of multimedia information distribution. The service started as a standalone website in 2005 and was acquired by Google in 2006. Videos uploaded to YouTube may appear on the YouTube website and may be posted on other websites, although files are hosted on the YouTube server. The motto of the YouTube website is "Broadcast Yourself". This shows that the YouTube service is primarily intended for people who want to publish the videos they have made. Graduates, therefore, have the opportunity to showcase their skills through YouTube videos (Wattenhofer et al., 2012).

Statistics show that every minute there are more than 48 hours of video content uploaded and daily views exceed three billion (Statista, 2021). YouTube strongly integrates with other social networks, for example, Facebook, Twitter and Google+ to help offline distribution. YouTube acts as a popular social media platform, connecting registered users with subscriptions that notify subscribers of public updates and content for registered users (Wattenhofer et al., 2012).

In summary, each social media communication tool has its strengths and weaknesses. Graduates should therefore be clear about what they want to achieve and how they will do it (Benson & Morgan, 2013). There is a need for every graduate to have access to research tools commonly used by those working in the field of study or their industry, and to research why and how they are used. Also, graduates need to consider how much time they spend on social

media. It is better to work regularly and intentionally on one or two platforms than to spread them slowly across multiple platforms with outdated content (Fletcher, 2016; Swan, 2012). It also helps to be consistent in all of your professional profiles and to link between them to present a consistent image to potential employers.

3.8 Summary of the chapter

The chapter dealt with the significance of social media in skills development and finding employment opportunities. Graduates use social media in a variety of ways and for a variety of reasons, including professional and personal reasons. The chapter clearly describes the advances in information and communication technology in South Africa. The emergence of social media was explored including the various concepts that have contributed to the growth of social media. The Social Media Integration Model has made it clear that social media provides a platform where communication on both sides (employers and employees) is represented by four elements: exposure, connectivity, sharing and feedback. Graduates and employers use three important communication tools, namely Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. The chapter explained that the visible functionality of the network is related to the actual usefulness of the network in job searching. In addition, this chapter explained how social media is intertwined with other nations and the results obtained for use in the South African labour environment.



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CHAPTER 4: GRADUATENESS SKILLS AND EMPLOYABILITY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter sets the groundwork and presents a review and critique of the extant literature around employability and gradueness skills. The objective of this chapter is to determine the literature connection between gradueness skills and employability. There is a gradueness skills gap dominating the labour market which has resulted in unemployment and underemployment for young adults in South Africa (Harry et al., 2018; Edayi, 2015) and internationally (Chadha & Toner, 2017). The unemployment rate in South Africa is currently estimated to be 32.5 %, with the percentage of unemployed graduates being estimated to be 9% of this total (Statistics South Africa, 2020). The high rate of youth unemployment in South Africa is attributed to a range of factors, that include a) a lack of student gradueness skills and employability attributes, b) race and social class issues, c) unavailability of employment opportunities, d) curriculum issues at the university, e) poor socioeconomic status, f) the choice of tertiary education institution, and finally, g) a poor basic education system as well as social connections which graduates can access once they leave the university (e.g. Mncayi, 2016; Benson, et al., 2014; Harry, et al., 2018; Borah et al., 2021).

The chapter is structured as follows: the first section focuses on tertiary education in South Africa, the definition of employment and employment history from 1994 to date as well as youth unemployment in South Africa. The succeeding section then presents graduate skills that are affecting graduate employment in South Africa. The next section then discusses the initiatives by the government to eradicate unemployment in South Africa. Employability models are presented before the conclusion.

4.2 South African Department of Higher Education and Training

The role of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) in South Africa includes human capital development, gradueness skills development, and generating, attaining and applying new knowledge (Phago & Thwala, 2015; Borah et al., 2021). Higher education is vital for trade and industry as well as for societal development (Phago & Thwala, 2015). However, in South Africa, the DHET works in tandem with the Department of Science, Technology & Innovation (DSTI). The assimilation of the DSTI and DHET into one ministry provides an opportunity to open the fabrication of knowledge and abilities and contribute to innovation in

South Africa (Nzimande, 2019). Additionally, the amalgamation provides the economy with chances to readjust, transpose and project their joint abilities in new ways. Thus, this will assist in addressing the rutted and conflicting connection between the primary outputs of the DHET and DSTI systems.

The government is providing support to formerly underprivileged people to advance their studies (Nzimande, 2019). This support takes account of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) which is a subsidy arrangement for students to obtain higher education qualification (Bursaries, 2015). In 2020, the NSFAS received more than 493 904 applications for financial aid in 2021, compared to the 365,922 applications for 2020 (Maqhina, 2020). Statistics reveal that female applicants constituted 68% of the total, whereas 32% were male applicants. This indicates that more females who were previously disadvantaged are accessing tertiary education (Maqhina, 2020).

Furthermore, Chinyamurindi (2016) stated that these individuals were affected by apartheid policies and the government is making efforts to redress past imbalances. The availability of these schemes has contributed to massification at South African universities as previously disadvantaged students have access to funding to finance their learning (Nkosi, 2014). Regrettably, this effort is accompanied with an upsurge in the unemployment rate of youth, particularly graduates (Harry et al., 2018). This has triggered an excess of graduates in the labour market equated to the employment prospects accessible (Chadha & Toner, 2017).

There are 3 categories of higher education institutions in South Africa: universities, technikons and colleges. Universities award learners with a bachelor's degree, which can range from 3-6 years of study depending on the discipline, honours degree, master's degree and doctorate degree. UNESCO (2006) state that universities provide a wide variety of certificate and diploma programmes in various disciplines. Technikons offer educational programmes in the technical and professional field which range from national certificates (one year course) to national higher diplomas (four year course). Higher Education Monitor (2009) states that technikons may also provide degree programmes in technology. Colleges normally offer only certificate and diploma courses in a specific discipline, for instance, education, nursing or agricultural (UNESCO, 2006). The next section discusses historically disadvantaged institutions in South Africa where the study was carried out.

4.2.1 Historically Disadvantaged Institutions

Historically Disadvantaged Institutions (HDI's) are universities which were established as non-white universities following the recommendations of the Eisleen Commission in 1959, by the extension of the University Education Act of 1959 which specifically prohibited racially integrated education except in exceptional/ extraordinary cases approved by the then Apartheid government (Meyer, 1974; Bengu, 2021). Whereas traditional higher education institutions comprise of universities that are fiscally stable, have sufficient reserves that allows them to operate fully without highly reliant on state funding for their survival (Higher Education Monitor, 2009; Bengu, 2021). Due to the historic injustices, HDIs in their nature, are not financially well off, they have not generated adequate reserves to ensure that they sustain themselves fully, they do not have sufficient resources to produce quality graduates instead they are enormously dependent on government funding for their survival (Bengu, 2021). This has an influence on the quality of graduates they produce which will affect their employability. For this study, the researcher chose to examine the influence of social media use on graduateness skills and employability of final year students at HDIs.

Due to scarce skills shortages in the economy, the government of South Africa have requested all the higher education institutions around the country together with HDIs to contribute towards the supply of scarce skills. Most HDIs primarily offer theoretical-oriented university degrees, diplomas, and national certificates (Higher Education Monitor, 2009). There are two HDIs in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, namely the University of Fort Hare (UFH) and Walter Sisulu University (WSU).

The UFH has three delivery sites. They are situated in Alice, Bhisho and East London. The Bhisho campus is located in a semi-urban area, that of East London is situated in a metropolitan area, while the Alice campus is situated in a rural area. UFH offers diplomas as well as a degree programme in five faculties, namely the Faculty of Law, Education, Science and Agriculture, Management and Commerce as well as Social Sciences and Humanities (Council on Higher Education, 2015).

WSU is another HDI and has four delivery sites located in Mthatha, Butterworth, East London (Buffalo City) and Queenstown. All the campuses are located in an urban area (Council on Higher Education, 2015). WSU offers national certificates, diplomas and degrees in six faculties, namely the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Technology, Health Sciences,

Education, Business Management, Management Science and Law Commerce as well as Social Sciences and Humanities. The following section defines employability.

4.3 Employability

The theory of employability has received significant attention within the existing literature. Yorke and Knight (2006, p.6) described employability as “a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy”. The definition provided by Yorke and Knight focused on two aspects which are academic qualifications and skills as a means to acquire employment. After acquiring the job one should be in a position to maintain it, and also be able to give back to society.

In the same way, Singh and Singh (2017, p. 20) described employability as “the ability of an individual to gain employment suitable to his/her educational standard”. This definition is in line with the one by Yorke and Knight (2006) as it focused on educational qualifications as a means to attain the best job in line with the educational standard one possesses. Neither of these two definitions mentioned what attributes and skills one should have to sustain in the working environment. However, Maltby (2011) described employability as the capacity to find initial employment, endure that employment and find new employment if needed”. The definition by Maltby explains that a final year student should be in a position to acquire a job after finishing their studies, then endure in that job and if opportunities arise be able to apply for them. Students should thus be well-equipped with various skills to move from one job to another. This definition did not mention which skills and attributes a final year student should have to gain employment, nor did it indicate ways in which the student will sustain in the employment. Thus, a graduate should have some transferrable skills in order to survive in the working place.

From the three stated definitions, employability can be divided into four distinctive parts. Initially, it is the ability to obtain a skill or a qualification to acquire and secure employment. Moreover, it is the ability to maintain this employment. Furthermore, it takes account of the capacity to interchange between different roles inside the organisation and, lastly, it is the ability to secure a new role with another enterprise if there is a need.

Yorke and Knight's (2006) definition of employability is extensively recognised amongst scholars (e.g. Archer & Chetty, 2013; Edayi, 2015; Shyju & Chandra, 2018; Mseleku, 2019), and in general, it covers abilities, accomplishments, individual success and describes

employability as an endless practice of development. Moreover, Yorke and Knight's (2006) definition supports the objective of the study, that is to find, examine and analyse gradueness skills influencing the employability of final year students. Thus this research project employed a definition of employability by Yorke and Knight (2006).

These delineations indicate that employability is about ensuring that graduates possess all the abilities and skills required for them to deliver in the workplace. These abilities and skill are discussed more in detail in Section 4.5. Thus, graduate employability is determined by individual traits which entail knowledge, abilities, and attitudes offered to potential employers. However, Mncayi (2016) asserted that employability does not look only at an individual's abilities, but takes into account several aspects such as race, obtainability of work opportunities, curriculum issues, poor socioeconomic status, the choice of tertiary education institution, a poor education system as well as social connections which graduates belong to. The above-mentioned factors are discussed in depth in the graduate unemployment in South Africa section. The history of unemployment in South Africa is discussed next.

4.4 History of unemployment in South Africa

Employment is the foundation of economic and societal development (World Bank, 2018). The influence of high levels of unemployment is overwhelming, resulting in poverty, social exclusion, inequality, crime and social instability (Harry et al., 2018). Employment creation is a challenge both internationally (Archer et., 2013; Artess et., 2017) and in South Africa (Harry et al., 2018; Bangani, 2019). Statistics show that there were an estimated 10.3 million jobless residents in South Africa in 2019, with 6 million being youths below the age of 35 (Statistics South Africa, 2020). This is because apartheid laws barred people from access to education which resulted in the current skills issue in the country (Yokoi, 2013).

To counter the imbalances during the apartheid era, the government has made a call for assistance from HDIs to contribute towards citizen empowerment through inventiveness that hastens trade and industry growth and the supply of scarce skills (Walker & Fongwa, 2017b). However, students graduating from such institutions are unemployed, mostly due to factors pointed out in Chapter 1. Unemployment in South Africa is higher when matched to statistics at the end of apartheid, with much of the youth looking for work. The CIA World Fact Book (2019) revealed that the unemployment rate in South Africa is 29.1 per cent as of 2020, compared to 22,43 per cent in 2008 (Plecher, 2020). Figure 7 below shows the unemployment trend in South Africa.



Figure 8: The unemployment rate in South Africa from 1999 to 2019

Source: (Adapted from Plecher, 2020)

Hooley (2017) stated that South Africa is one of the economies with the highest unemployment rate worldwide and studies reveal that unemployment is one of the most persistent policy challenges facing governments (Kundaali, 2015; Edayi, 2015). If the state has a high rate of unemployment it will lead to both economic and social-welfare difficulties, for instance, high levels of poverty as well as inequality (Hooley, 2017; Harry et al., 2018). This shows the single most important obstacle to poverty reduction in South Africa. The high rate of unemployment is caused by inadequate development of the employment market and a basic disparity amongst the skills the present economy demands, and what is being supplied by higher education institutions (Kalufya & Mwakajinga, 2016; Shyju & Chandra, 2018; Mseleku, 2019). Thus, graduates need to equip themselves with all the skills that are required by employers (Walker & Fongwa, 2017; Zwane, 2015). The following section discusses graduate unemployment in South Africa.

4.4.1 Graduate unemployment in South Africa

The labour market size in the South African economy is vital and it cannot be overlooked (Bangani, 2019). Studies have revealed that fewer than 20% of individuals above the age of 30 years are unemployed in South Africa, equated to 45% of the youth below the age of 30 years

(Coetzee & Esterhuizen, 2010; Edayi, 2015; Ismail, 2017). There are several reasons for this youth unemployment such as a lack of employability, type of qualification acquired and field of study, quality of the tertiary institution, high expectations from graduates, lack of job search and work experience (Chiwara et al., 2017; Harry et al., 2018; Mseleku, 2019). If graduate unemployment rates carry on escalating, this will result in continuing unemployment, poverty and frustration among the youth may increase (Graham & De Lennon, 2016)

Krishnan, Ramalingam, Ching and Maruthai (2017) underlined the four most important groups of skills and qualities that employers want graduates to have. These attributes comprise all the skills in the gradueness skills set and interview skills (Lord, Lorimer, Babraj, & Richardson, 2019) Today most graduates do not make it in the recruitment phase because they lack the necessary interview skills and skills required for the job (Krishnan et a., 2017; Lord et al., 2019). In the same vein, Lord et al. (2019) stated that most of the new graduates who are seeking employment opportunities do not have enough competence when it comes to skills, capabilities and experience which will allow them to find employment opportunities and settle themselves in the workplace. Additionally, Chadha and Toner (2017) mentioned that graduates are not equipped with the capability to adjust to continuous change in the working environment. Kalufya and Mwakajinga (2016) claimed that several of these final year students who do not have the necessary skills are produced by HDIs where they did not develop these skills. Therefore, graduates become underprivileged as they are under-skilled and not competent for the industry.

The youth alone cannot be completely blamed for the unemployment conditions in the country (Yokoi, 2013). Some of the blame should go also to companies, government and institutions of higher education as they are also involved in the employment process (Archer et al., 2013). Universities are more focused on the educational content and most of them are not aware of the newest developments and applicable and required skills in the industry. In general, most universities consider their final year students to be well equipped for the working environment (Artess et al., 2017). Yet, employers note that many final year students lack significant skills that they (the employers) require.

Another factor leading to graduate unemployment is variances in the superiority of tertiary institutions for instance between historically white institutions (HWIs) and historically disadvantaged institutions (HDIs). Most of the final year students from HWIs have a better chance of obtaining employment after graduation compared to those students from HDIs

(Harry et al., 2018). Additionally, companies are apprehensive about hiring graduates from certain institutions of higher education based on their view of the universities' learning principles and philosophy. In general, companies are of the opinion that HDIs do not produce quality graduates and that the graduates are not competent and cannot compete in the labour market for their employers with graduates from HWIs (Chadha & Toner, 2017).

Unrealistically high expectations from final year students could also lead to a high rate of unemployment. Several youths think that acquiring the highest qualifications will ensure high salaries and decision-making positions immediately (Hooley, 2017; Shyju & Chandra, 2018). Similarly, Kalufya and Mwakajinga (2016) mentioned that many final year students assume they will commence with high earnings; however, they do not have any experience. Having such expectations, graduates find it hard to start from an entry-level position. As a result, some choose to stay out of work waiting to get their dream employment (Krishnan, Ramalingam, Ching, & Maruthai, 2017). Employers, for that reason, pay less and invest in training these graduates so that they meet the needs and demands of the working environment (Chiwara et al., 2017). Should high expectations among graduates continue, it will result in a further increase in youth unemployment.



Job search activities are an additional cause for high graduate unemployment. Molek (2010, p. 93) described employment search as a "normal occurrence which works seekers use as a form of investment to enhance their position in the labour market". Employment search requires time as well as effort to accomplish an objective, which in this case is being successful in obtaining employment. The procedure of looking for employment is lengthy and fresh graduates from an institution of higher education are classified as new entrants lacking working experience. They must learn to search and apply for employment advertisements, fill in application forms, do psychometric tests and interviews as well as a formal assessment before an employment agreement is reached (Krishnan et al., 2017). Mmesi (2015) added that youth unemployment is a major concern predominantly for Black graduates as many face difficult living and social conditions.

In a study conducted in the Eastern Cape, Harry et al. (2018) cited that students' background is a major factor in selecting their education and career paths. Most of the students at HDIs, such as the students enrolled at the two universities used in this study, come from poor a social-economic status and there is a high possibility that after graduation they would be responsible for the upkeep of their families (Benson et al., 2014; Harry et al., 2018). This prospect will

generate stress in the youth and their lived experience, including the expectation of securing employment.

With regards to the poor education system, most of the rural students at HDIs have the challenge to adapt to English as the moderating language in tertiary education (Steyn et al., 2014; Krishnan et al., 2017). This is because most rural schools teach every subject class in the mother language. Thus, it becomes a difficult task for students to use English at tertiary institutions, and as a result, these students sometimes take longer to complete their education because of their limited understanding of the English language (Harry et al., 2018).

The higher education curriculum in most universities in South Africa was designed to focus on the theoretical aspects while technikons have a more practical approach which means that the students will not gain the relevant skills to contest in the labour market (Artess et al., 2017). Most of the students studying Bachelor of Commerce degrees do not go for work-based learning to gain experience in the working environment (Harry et al., 2018). This poses a challenge for them to compete within the labour market as they lack experience.

Social connection plays a vital role in the labour market (Harry et al., 2018). Final year students should have these networks to assist them with employability. The South African government is trying to provide resources and opportunities; however, these are hard to come by because there is a need for an individual to have a connection to get employed (Reddy et al., 2016). The previous chapter discussed more in-depth how final year students should utilise emerging technologies such as social media to have a social connection that will help them with employability.

For graduates to sustain their work environment after getting job opportunities, these graduates need to have an employability capacity and must adjust to new challenges in the working environment which is called professional adaptability (Ismail, 2017). These are two main elements essential when crafting active, competent, employable graduates who can sustain a competitive working environment (Chetty, 2012). Kalufya and Mwakajinga (2016) argued that graduates should not only have a certificate, they should also be able to show their graduate employability capacities which include a combination of personal qualities, understanding and practices as well as being able to apply these skills practically in their working experience. The following section discusses the overview and unemployment of youth in Eastern Cape Province.

4.4.2 Overview and Unemployment of Youth in Eastern Cape Province

Eastern Cape province is the second biggest province in South Africa and is situated in the south-eastern part of South Africa. The province is halfway amongst the key market centres of South Africa's major economic hubs, the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal provinces (Young, 2019). A total of 7 million are living in the Eastern cape, constituting 13 % of the total South African population. The Eastern Cape is abundantly rich in natural resources, from grazing land to forests, marine life to rich farming soils, water to the wilderness. There are seven South Africa's ecological zones, the province's climate allows for the production of a wide range of crops (Young, 2019). Crops that are produced in Eastern Cape province include the following: pineapples, tea, tomatoes and chicory are successfully cultivated. A total of 7 million are living in the Eastern cape, constituting 13 % of the total South African population. The major industries include automotive, tourism, agriculture, and agro prosing (Young, 2019). In eastern cape province, the primary sector contributes 1.9 %, secondary sector, 17,4 % and lastly the tertiary sector contributes 71,1 % (ECSECC, 2019; Hamann & Tuinder, 2012).

According to Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Consultative Council (ECSECC) survey that was conducted in 2019 on the developments in the Eastern Cape labour market. The findings show that the Eastern Cape has the highest unemployment rate (37.4%) in the country (ECSECC, 2019). The Youth unemployment rate is at 50.8% in the province. Between the period of the last quarter of 2018 and the first quarter of 2019 working-age population (15 – 64 years) increased by 0.3% to 4.276 million. At the same time, the number of employed declined by 4.9% to 1.307 million. However, due to Covid 19 causing the decline in economic activity worsened the ability of the province to absorb labour into the mainstream economy.

Additionally, Mncayi (2016) highlighted that graduates lack labour market knowledge, this is one of the reasons for higher unemployment amongst the youth. Moreover, several youths are located in remote areas, which is distant from the economic hubs of the Eastern Cape. Therefore, students require financial resources to get access to these areas (Council on Higher Education [CHE]; Reddy et al., 2016). Msimanga (2013) furthermore points out that the lack of networks interrupts employment opportunities amongst final year students as they do not have information about the labour market. This study, therefore, proposes the use of emerging technologies such as social media should be used to enhance gradueness attributes a final year need to secure employment. The following section discusses gradueness skills that final year students should have to enhance their chances of being employed in South Africa.

4.5 Graduateness skills

Jackson (2013) described graduateness skills as the degree to which a final year student has the characteristics and attributes that prepare them for triumph in the workplace. In the same vein, Coetzee (2012) described a graduate's skills as the attributes that make the final year student capable of attaining and keeping fulfilling work. These graduateness skills can also be termed generic skills. Generic skills refer to core skills that can be applicable transversely to a range of professions (Pool & Sewell, 2007). Similarly, Paadi (2014, p.2) described generic skills as “attributes which support the various fields of study and are transferable to a range of settings in the workplace”. Employers need graduates with both generic skills and subject-specific skills, knowledge and understanding (Bozionelosa et al., 2020).

Coetzee (2014) stated that employability is affected by a student's graduateness skills. Thus, it has become a challenge for most of the graduates holding a degree to secure employment after graduation (Tomlinson, 2012; Tymon, 2013, Altman et al, 2014; Holmes, 2013). However, tertiary institutions have realised the significance of final year students' graduateness skill, and in turn, academics are imparting these skills to students to become competent and professionally capable to make continued positive contributions to the community through their careers. Focusing on the graduateness skill of final year students will assist them to be ready for the comfortable and prosperous transition into their work and to be in the position to manage their sustained employability in the modern-day workplace (Coetzee, 2011).

The Fourth Industrial Revolution has witnessed a significant increase on the internet (Min et al., 2018), with technology being introduced in our organisations and societies. The organisations ought to link all fabrication sections to enable interaction in real-time (Min et al., 2018). Industries ought to have communication among the diverse players and connected objects in a production line. In the fourth industrial revolution, factories will be drive-in smart cities and power-driven by wind, sun and geothermal energy.

In this fourth industrial revolution, employers are giving more attention to the graduateness skills of their prospective employees because they realise that human capital is an essential immaterial asset that is used to gain a competitive advantage, as well as to secure survival and success in a turbulent economic environment (Lu, 2021). This view was supported by Mseleku (2019), who stated that final year students graduating from higher education institutions need to have more than one set of graduate attributes as these are desired by a prospective employer to fit in this mutable knowledge-intensive and technology-advancing economy.

Skills and traits that form the gradueness of final year students at the higher education institutions are believed to be a significant outcome of tertiary level scholarship experiences as well as exit level outcomes (Arnedillo-Sánchez, 2017). Final year students' gradueness skills denote that distinctly from their degree-specific knowledge as well as technical skills, graduates can exhibit a set of transferable skills and individual traits that indicate their employability and work readiness (Cao et al., 2019). Studies (e.g. Bridgstock, 2009; Coetzee, 2014; Jackson, 2013; Tsitskaria et., 2017) have reviewed that the gradueness skills set consists of eight main skills which are grouped into three areas of individual development: scholarship, global plus moral citizenship, and lifelong learning.

4.5.1 The cornerstones of the gradueness skills set

This section presents in-depth information on the three cornerstones of the gradueness skill set. The first section unpacks the scholarship domain.

4.5.1.1 Scholarship

The scholarship domain illustrates the graduates' attitude towards knowledge. There are different types of scholarships playing a vital role in infusing knowledge amongst youth, including universities, technikons, TVET colleges and many other trade schools. Additionally, scholarship is promoted in South Africa through bursaries including the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) which is a loan and support scheme for students to acquire higher education qualification (Bursaries, 2015). NSFAS provides an opportunity for previously disadvantaged students to have access to finance for their learning. A graduate with a higher level scholarship is predisposed to have higher employability or is ready for work (Archer & Chetty, 2013; Artess et al., 2017). Problem-solving, decision-making skills, analytical thinking as well as enterprising skills constitute three sets of the scholarship domain (Coetzee, 2014).

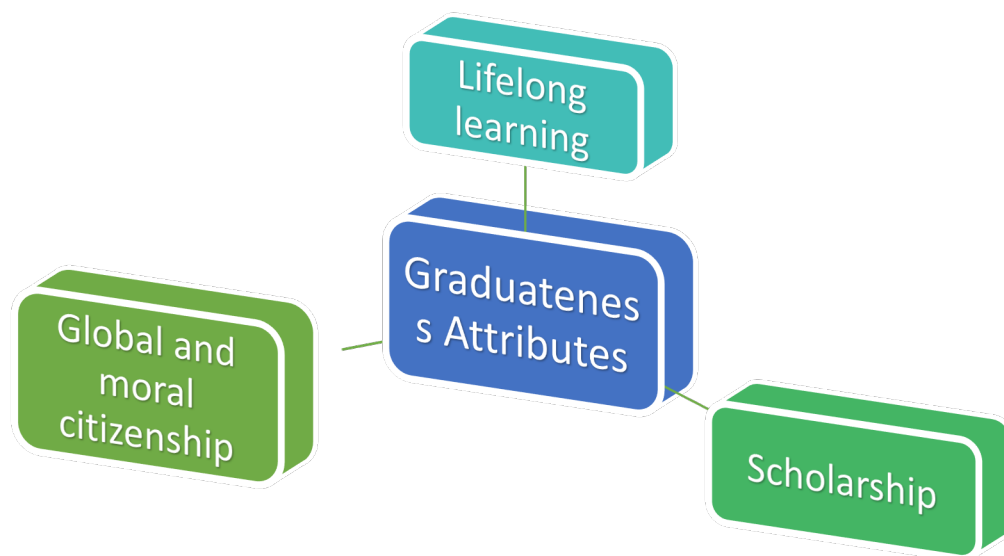


Figure 9: The three cornerstones of the graduateness skills set

Source: (Adapted from Coetzee, 2012)

4.5.1.1.1 Enterprising skills

Coetzee (2014, p.3) described enterprise skills as “the skills, knowledge and attributes needed to apply creative ideas and innovations to practical solutions”. Enterprising implies being adventurous, exercising thinking outside the box, and being proactive when engaging in economic activities. Chimucheka (2014) stated that entrepreneurship teaching has been encouraged in educational institutions in South Africa. Stokes et al. (2010) stated that private enterprise education can affect an entrepreneur’s development. Thus, the promotion is aimed at increasing the number of entrepreneurs in the South African economy (Wanga, Lianga, Mahtob, Denga, & Zhang, 2020). Chimucheka (2014) also stated that entrepreneurship education incorporates numerous and a variety of styles of learning aimed at preparing final year students to be responsible, risks takers, manage results and learn from outcomes (Howarda & Reileyb, 2020)

4.5.1.1.2 Analytical thinking skills

Coetzee (2014, p.3) defined analytical thinking as “being skilful in using logical thinking and analysis in clarifying information and data, as well as drawing understanding from the data analysed”. Analytical thinking skills contain reflective thinking to provide correct explanations of information and data, the ability to identify associations and patterns and to draw conclusions from statistical data (Lilley & Barker, 2014). In South Africa, Mokoena (2019) revealed that most high schools use a teacher-centred learning style which does not promote analytical thinking skill amongst students. Conversely, there is a need to restore prevailing teaching and

learning disparities, this calls for education policymakers to develop a curriculum that is aligned to promote analytical thinking. Thus, high education should be in a position to deliver educational services that equip final year students with the skills central to the needs of the local and global economies (Lilley & Barker, 2014). This denotes that there is a need for graduates to think critically, creatively and innovatively; communicate effectively, and link educational experiences to the broader societal and global economies.

4.5.1.1.3 Problem-solving and decision-making skills

Coetzee (2014, p.4) described problem-solving and decision-making skills as “the ability of a graduate to be creative as well as proactive in the process of solving a recognised often an ill-defined problem or problematic complex situation”. Thus, final year students should be in a position to propose distinctive and novel ideas that add new knowledge and insights to a problem. Creative problem-solving influence the business processes positively as it facilitates innovation, flexibility and competitiveness (Kalufya & Mwakajinga, 2016). It also demands thinking outside the box and confidence in making the decision (Shyju & Chandra, 2018). Coetzee (2012) argued that final year students should be in a position to make clear decisions that spur on.



4.5.1.2 Global and moral citizenship

The second domain is global and moral citizenship which illustrates graduates' approach to the world and their societies (Coetzee, 2014). The research revealed that global and moral citizenship is being promoted in South Africa (Mseleku, 2019). Mathebula (2009) mentioned that higher education institutions have developed global and moral citizenship curriculums and they contain teaching approaches that take account of a variety of topics, such as government, law, history and democracy. The curriculum enforces final year students to deliberate present events and is able to engage with the world (Mseleku, 2019). Kalufya and Mwakajinga (2016) posited that to enhance global and moral citizenship skills amongst graduates, modern technology could be employed to make the teaching of citizenship education interesting. It includes an instructional tool, for instance interrogating databases of information about historical documents and using maps and charts can be used to promote critical thinking. This domain looks at ethical and responsible behaviour, how the graduates present and apply information skills, as well as how graduates interact with employers world-wide (Coetzee, 2014).

4.5.1.2.1 Ethical and responsible behaviour

Coetzee (2014, p.3) defined ethical and responsive behaviour as “the ability to take the lead in upholding the code of moral beliefs and values of one’s profession, community, and/or workplace in all one does”. Coetzee (2012) added that ethical and responsible behaviour involves the willingness of an individual to t lead in offering direction to others, inspiring and authorising them to behave ethically towards the community and environment. Furthermore, a leader must be in a position to be accountable for the results of their decisions and actions. Enterprises and communities have realised that ethical and responsible behaviour fosters good business practices. In the same vein, Nicholson and DeMoss (2009) argued that it is essential for every graduate to be held responsible for understanding the significance and concerns of the ethical and socially responsible behaviour relevant to their qualification as well as their profession.

4.5.1.2.2 Presenting and applying information skills

Coetzee (2014, p.3) described presenting and applying information skills as “the ability for a graduate to clearly and convincingly communicate knowledge, facts, ideas, and opinions with the view to offer solutions for their benefit or the benefit of their society or workplace”. Coetzee (2012) added that graduates must commit information to memory and apply information by offering solutions to make a positive change in individual life, the community and the workplace. Reissner (2010) argued that critical thinking, reading and writing are pillars of graduate scholarships, professional work, and sustained professional development in the graduate’s life. In this fourth industrial revolution, individuals’ success is determined by the extent of their capability to organise and present ideas assertively, staying focused and showing enthusiasm and clarity (Watson & Adamson, 2010). Furthermore, Watson and Adamson (2010) mentioned that well-developed critical thinking skills in presenting and applying information is a powerful communication tool that helps individuals to inform and contribute to graduates’ success in the workplace. In Cameron’s (2007) opinion critical reading and writing are transferable skills that enhance graduates’ further studies and career progression.

4.5.1.2.3 Interactive skills

Coetzee (2014, p.3) described interactive skills as “the ability to effective and efficient use of language as well as technology when communicating and interacting with people from diverse cultures, backgrounds and authority levels and building social networks”. Griesel and Parker (2009) argued that employers anticipate graduates to have a good command of English as a major business language. Coetzee (2012) added that graduates ought to be well versed with

relevant knowledge and expanded social, communication and cooperation skills. Graduates should be capable of working in diverse contexts with experts from other fields and be able to analytically select, acquire, use and produce new knowledge that will benefit the business world.

4.5.1.3 Lifelong learning

The third domain is lifelong learning which illustrates graduates' attitude towards continuous learning to further their knowledge in this digital world. Longworth and Davies (1996, p. 21) described lifelong learning as "the development of human potential through a continuously supportive process which stimulates and empowers individuals to acquire all the knowledge, values, skills and understanding they will require throughout their lifetimes and to apply them with confidence, creativity and enjoyment in all roles, circumstances and environment". In South Africa, lifelong learning is being promoted through the National Qualification Framework (NQF) which is the basis for a system of education and training that ensures access, flexibility, progressing, and portability (Motshekga-Sebolai, 2003; Walters, 1999). The NQF permits individuals to become progressively trained in a lifelong process. By integrating education and training into one system with a credit-based qualifications framework, all individuals' chances of developing their capacities will be radically increased, whether they are involved in full-time or part-time study, employed or unemployed, in general education or industrial preparation. Lifelong learning is made up of two sets of skills: goal-directed behaviour and continuous learning orientation. A graduate with a higher level of lifelong learning is predisposed to have higher employability or is ready for work (Archer & Chetty, 2013).

4.5.1.3.1 Continuous learning orientation

Coetzee (2014, p.4) described continuous learning orientation as the "cognitive openness toward lifelong learning and the willingness to proactively engage in the process of acquiring new knowledge, skills and abilities throughout one's life and career in reaction to, and in anticipation of, changing technology and performance criteria". Graduates with a continuous learning orientation are willing to participate in the practice of acquiring new knowledge, skills and capabilities during their lives and careers in expectation of changing technology and also performance criteria (Coetzee, 2012). Reflecting on and reasoning about an individual's work develops the higher-level critical thinking skills that serve graduates well in any endeavour (Reissner, 2010).

4.5.1.3.2 Goal-directed behaviour

Coetzee (2014, p.4) defined goal-directed behaviour as “the ability to be proactive and to apply initiative to achieve one's goals, accomplish tasks, or meet deadlines. Setting realistic goals, developing plans and taking action to achieve one’s goals, accomplish tasks and meeting deadlines are core elements of goal-directed behaviour”. According to Coetzee (2012), goal-directed behaviour also implies that information needed must be made available to solve problems and to make decisions. Today individuals make use of the internet to find new information (Coetzee, 2012). Bezuidenhout (2011) regards goal-directed behaviour as an important aspect of individuals’ self-managed employability.

Griesel and Parker (2009) stated that generic, transferable skills and attributes that indicate an employee's graduateness skills are essential to their industries and for that reason they expect final year students to have these when they complete their degrees and are ready to enter the workplace. In support of the above, Thompson, Treleaven, Kamvounias, Beem and Hill (2008) stated that generic and transferable skills and attributes that makeup employees' graduateness skills are essential to enterprises when developing workplace culture which fosters innovation, adaptability and flexibility.

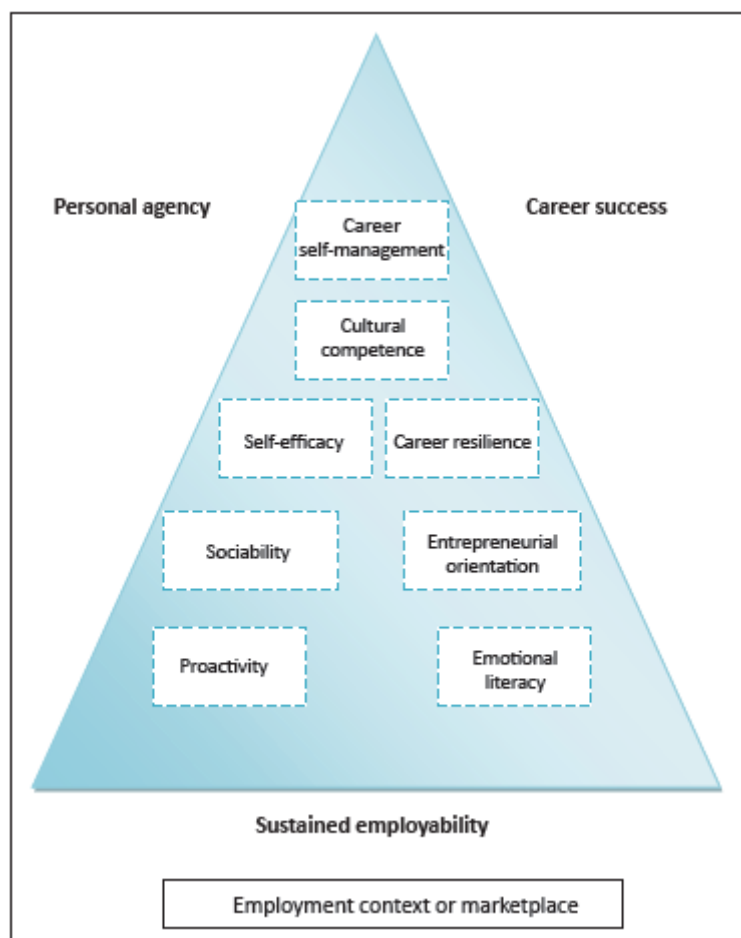


Employability is an important driver of self-directed behaviours which assist individuals to secure and retain employment. Graduates with high levels of graduateness skills are more likely to believe they are sufficiently skilled to secure and retain employment. High levels of graduateness skills translate to higher employability in graduates and more adaptable graduate employees.

Employers know that qualifying is compulsory for every final year student; however, it is insufficient for a graduate to find a job, having achieved high marks (Archer & Chetty, 2013). The necessity of skills is not easily interchangeable to increase an individual's bargaining power and their chance of getting full-time employment (Jackson, 2013b). The following section discusses employability attributes.

4.6 Employability Attributes

Apart from graduateness attributes that were extensively discussed in the previous section final year students need to have employability attributes. This section describes employability attributes. There are eight core employability attributes that are important for increasing the likelihood of securing and sustaining employment opportunities (Bezuidenhout and Coetzee, 2010). Figure 10 describe attributes underlining graduates’ employability.



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Figure 10: Attributes underlining graduates' employability

Source: (Adapted from (Bezuidenhout, 2011))

Career self-management encompasses the capability to reveal one's career desires and develop clarity about what one wants to achieve in one's career, recognise the skills one needs to succeed in one's career and the actions one needs to take to accomplish one's career goals (Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013). Career self-management denotes that one has self-confidence and determination to engage constantly in development activities at the same time pursuing one's career goals (Bezuidenhout, 2011). Final year students need to choose their career path and develop themselves towards the career of their choice.

Cultural competence encompasses understanding the customs of other cultures, knowing their values and beliefs. Bezuidenhout (2011) stated that graduates must have the confidence to communicate intercultural, finding it easy to do so and being capable of inductee and sustain relations with individuals from various cultural backgrounds. This one of the significant employment attributes graduates should have as the workplace environment is diversified and

so one should be in a position to understand and know other workmates culture and able to work with them while respecting their cultural beliefs (Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013).

Self-efficacy denotes the ability to work individually with others, the ability to make personal decisions, to have the confidence to achieve personal objectives through personal own effort, to continue with challenges and to enjoy the invention of original solutions (Bezuidenhout, 2011). This is a crucial attribute a graduate should possess. Employers are keen to employ self-driven graduates, that is to work independently with the ability to apply their mind and able to decide that that will positively benefit the organisation (Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013).

Career resilience denotes the ability to adjust to varying environments by welcoming job and organisational changes. Career resilience involves looking forward to working with new and diverse people, having self-assurance and being keen to take risks (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011). Career resilience enables a high degree of flexibility, elasticity, and capability, irrespective of antagonistic career state of affairs (Bezuidenhout, 2011). Workplace environments are ever-changing. Most organisations are adopting technology to help achieve their objectives. Thus graduates should be in a position to adjust and copy with varying environments and organisational changes.



Sociability denotes the ability to build networks of relationships with individuals who can advance one's career and use the networks to find new job opportunities (Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013). It also includes vigorously looking for feedback from others to progress in one's career and being willing to take risks (Bezuidenhout, 2011). Social connection plays a vital role in the employability of graduates. Through social media, graduates could link up with prospective employers as discussed extensively in chapter 3.

Entrepreneurial orientation denotes being curious about, and the need to venture into new business opportunities. It also includes being open to new ideas and feeling positive about the implications of changes in one's workplace or studies (Bezuidenhout, 2011). Higher education institutions should play a critical role in motivating graduates to be entrepreneurs. Thus, entrepreneurship programmes should be incorporated into the university curriculum. This will equip a student to be an employment provider than being employment seekers (Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013).

Proactivity refers to acting in anticipation of future problems, needs, and change. It involves enhancing one's knowledge and skills to ensure career progress, adapt to changing circumstances and persevering in the face of difficult career circumstances (Bezuidenhout, 2011). Graduates need to always look ahead at future activities, projects and events and anticipating needs, problems and possible outcomes.

Coetzee (2010) describe **emotional literacy** as the ability to adapt the use of emotions and the quality of people's ability to read, understand and manage their own and workmate's emotions (Coetzee, 2010). Universities should teach graduates about emotional literacy as essential when developing self-confidence, boosting self-esteem, social and emotional development, and encouraging emotional self-management over impulse reactions (Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013). Developing emotional literacy aids graduates mental health and also physical well-being, as both are inextricably linked.

Career self-management, career resilience as well as cultural competence are fundamental persona attributes that influence graduates' ability to sustain their employability while self-efficacy, sociability, proactivity, emotional literacy and entrepreneurial orientation seem to promote proactive adaptability in changing environments and to increase a person's suitability for employment and the likelihood of achieving career success (Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013). Career self-management appears to act as the motivational drive for enhancing graduate's employability by engaging in activities to keep posted marketable skills, for setting personal goals and for building strong professional networks for achieving these goals and aspirations (Bezuidenhout, 2011; Bridgestock, 2009). The following section discusses the initiatives by the government to reduce the unemployment rate of graduates in South Africa.

4.7 Initiatives by the government to curb graduate unemployment in SA

To curb the unemployment in South Africa, the government has several initiatives including providing internship and the introduction of entrepreneurial development studies (Reddy et al., 2016). Internships are offered to graduates who have completed their studies at tertiary institutions for them to gain work experience as it was noted as one of the factors most considered by the employers (Smith & Bauling, 2013). This is aimed at reducing the number of job seekers and increasing the number of job providers in the country. However, the internship opportunities that are offered by the government and other organisations are not

enough to absorb all the graduates from the tertiary institutions and that is why the economy is experiencing a high unemployment rate (Reddy et al., 2016).

Hooley (2017) argued that there is a need to understand employability concerns as it offers graduates an opportunity to be mindful of their perspective, abilities, attitudes and knowledge to become effective and efficient employees that will contribute positively to the knowledge economy. Conversely, Tymon (2013) mentioned that most of the final year students at higher education institutions are not aware of employability as this aspect is often overlooked. This is also supported by other researchers (Chiwara et al., 2017; Artess et al, 2017; Head, 2018). These abilities are discussed in more detail in Section 4.7.

As more final year students are graduating from higher education institutions around South Africa without the necessary demand for them, it has led to the labour market becoming competitive. This gap is the result of the ever-cumulative labour supply which has left the government of the Republic of South Africa with a severe problem in their hands. To curb this unemployment growth, the government has introduced several entrepreneurial development studies to the curriculum of students in the TVET and FET colleges as well as universities (Sousa et al., 2019). This is intended to decrease the number of graduates seeking employment and increasing the number of entrepreneurs who can provide jobs in the country (Chinyamurindi, 2016). Conversely, this has not been very effective as most of the universities make these classes theoretical rather than practical. Therefore, it is hard for graduates to initiate their entrepreneurial business as they do not have practical experience (Harry et al., 2018). The following section discusses the employability models.

4.8 Employability models

The section presents three models of graduate employability which focus on personal alumni employability factors that form the basis of the study. The first sub-section discusses the understanding, skills, efficacy beliefs and metacognition (USEM) model.

4.8.1 Understanding, skills, efficacy beliefs and metacognition model

The USEM model was developed by Yorke and Knight (2006) and it is well-known as a widely accepted model of employability (Turner, 2014). According to Yorke and Knight (2006), employability is affected by four inter-related components: U-Understanding, S-Skills, E-Efficacy beliefs and M-Metacognition.

Understanding is defined as “deeper and extensive than knowledge; skills go further than the idea of customary key skills in addition to, it encompasses awareness as well as reaction to context; efficacy beliefs narrate to graduate perception of personal qualities; metacognition denotes the capacity for self-regulation as well as the reflection on learning” (Yorke & Knight, 2006, p.11). Figure 11 illustrates the USEM model of employability.

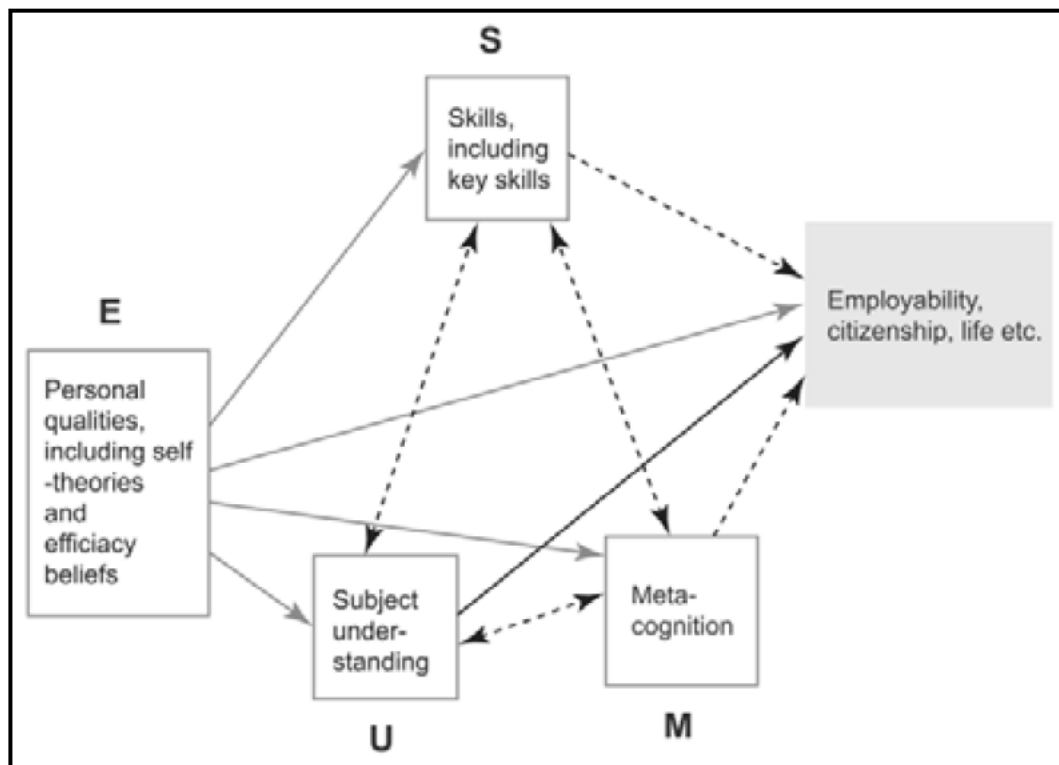


Figure 11: The USEM model of employability

Source: (Adapted from Yorke and Knight, 2006)

The distinctiveness of the model rests on the belief in flexible self-theories as contrasting to fixed self-theories (Yorke & Knight, 2006). Self-theory is defined as "the organized, consistent set of perceptions and beliefs about oneself" (Yorke & Knight, 2006, p.13). People with flexible self-beliefs have confidence that characteristics like intelligence can be developed as they are not fixed (Yorke & Knight, 2006), therefore, they learn from their errors and apply what they have learnt to future tasks (Turner, 2014). In the end, they are more self-assured in their aptitude for being effective when confronted with novel challenges (Louis, 2011). On the other hand, the USEM model has not been widely used because of evaluation criteria as complex psychology, theories such as employability cannot be measured through summative assessments (Shawcross & Ridgman, 2013). Additionally, to sum up, the USEM model

addresses employability from an academic viewpoint, not from the perceived needs of employers and government (Shawcross & Ridgman, 2013). The next sub-section discusses the DOTS model.

4.8.2 Decision learning, Opportunity Awareness, Transition learning, Self-awareness DOTS Model

Decision learning, Opportunity Awareness, Transition learning, Self-awareness (DOTS) was developed by Law and Watts in 1977. The DOTs models have four elements designed to facilitate the development of the following:

Decision learning – final year students need to be assisted to understand various ways they can employ when deciding on a career choice (Law & Watts, 1977). Their decision will be based on pressures, expectations and cues; methods of decision-making; developing skills in prioritisation, curation of information and self-knowledge; learning to balance risk against likely reward, and taking responsibility for the impact and outcomes for themselves (Watts, 2014).

Opportunity awareness – final year students need career assistance to experience and gain an understanding of the world of work, their potential range of opportunities, what requirements and responsibilities they will need to meet, and what satisfaction and rewards they are likely to achieve, knowing what work opportunities exist and what their requirements are (Law & Watts, 1977).

Transition learning – final year students need career assistance to grow self-awareness and skills, manage the transitions into adulthood and into adult decisions, such as 'knowing' the reality of the differences between school and work; applying and linking learning to the workplace; building soft skills to help them join and navigate the world of work, such as negotiation, communication, representation, rights and responsibilities including job searching and self-presenting skills (Law & Watts, 1977).

Self-awareness – refers to the ability to identify and articulate motivations, skills and personality as they affect career plans (Law & Watts, 1977). Self-Assessment is a vital and often overlooked step in planning your career path. To evaluate the suitability of certain speciality options, it is important to know who you are as a person. This involves taking a careful inventory of your current values, interests, skills and personal qualities.



Figure 12: The DOTS Model of Employability

Source: (Adapted from Law and Watts, 1977)

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The importance of this model lies in its simplicity, as it allows final year students to organise their career development learning into a manageable framework. On the other hand, the model has recently attracted some criticism (Watts, 2014). McCash (2006) claims that the model is over-reliant on a mechanistic matching of individuals and environment, and therefore underplays other critical issues such as social and political contexts. He also points out that there is an implication that failure to secure a “self-fulfilling” occupation can be presented, or experienced, as the fault of the unsuccessful individual. Also, it has become evident that the model has shortcomings when it is applied beyond careers education to the broader concept of employability (McCash, 2006). They also seem to suggest that students introduced to basic concepts of career development through DOTS would be incapable of developing and learning about more sophisticated analyses through this simple introductory structure (McCash, 2006). The next sub-section discusses the Career EDGE model.

4.8.3 Career EDGE model

The Career EDGE model was originally proposed by Dacre Pool and Sewell (2007) to address the limitations of the USEM and the DOTS. The power of Career EDGE rests on its simplicity

because it can be elucidated to final year students, parents and academics with ease. However, this strength could also be perceived as a weakness, in that it does not assist in explaining to non-experts in the field, particularly the students themselves and their parents, exactly what is meant by employability. The study adopted the Career EDGE model as its theoretical framework because it has been employed in numerous research studies on graduate employability within a South African context (Coetzee et al., 2010; Harry et al., 2018). Career EDGE is comprised of two sections: reflection as well as evaluation. Dacre Pool and Sewel (2007, p. 3) asserted that Career EDGE encompasses “career development learning; experience - work and life; degree subject knowledge, skills and understanding; generic skills and emotional intelligence”. Furthermore, Dacre Pool and Qualter (2013) stated that reflection, as well as evaluation, is important because it assists graduates to develop individual effectiveness, assurance and self-esteem, which is key towards graduate employability. All constructs in the model are of equal importance and greatly affect graduates’ employability (Dacre Pool, 2020). Dacre Pool (2016) asserted that Career EDGE is an important tool for transferring knowledge amongst youth. Figure 13 illustrates the career EDGE model.

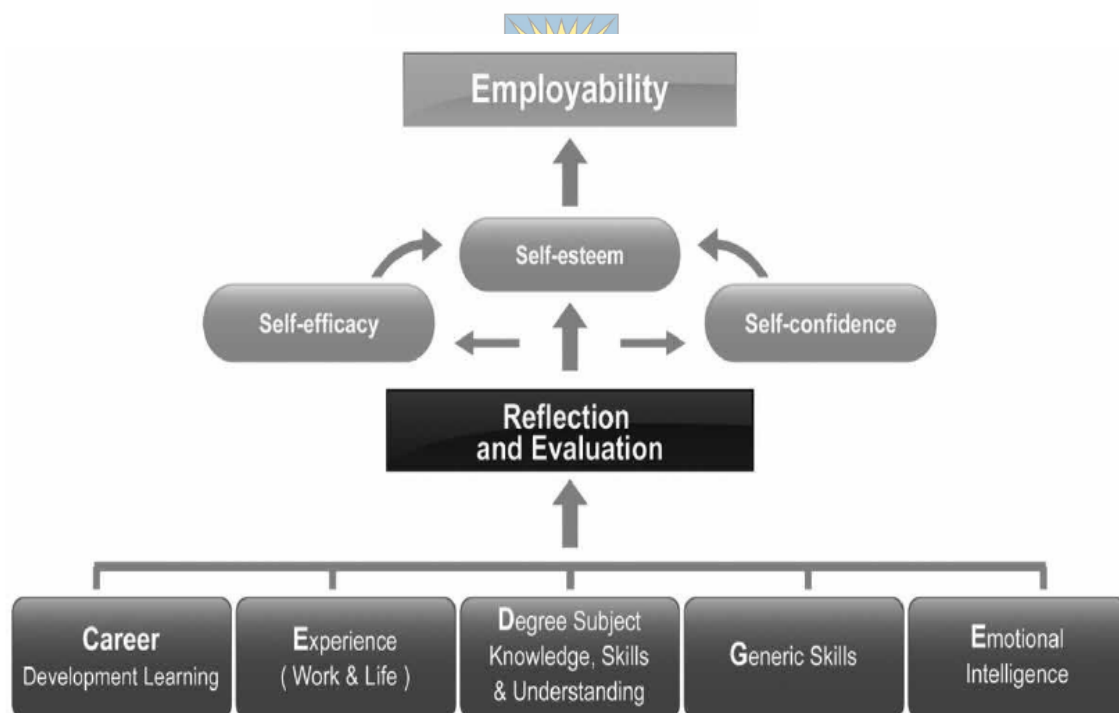


Figure 13: The Career EDGE model

Source: (Adapted from Dacre Pool, 2020)

This research employed the Career EDGE model as part of the theoretical foundation. The Career EDGE describes the constructs that influence gradueness skills and employability of

final year students. Dacre Pool (2016) proposed that overlooking one of the factors illustrated in the figure has a negative influence on graduate employability. The Career EDGE model also offers information on what should be considered when developing programmes and interventions on employability. Additionally, the Career EDGE model plays a vital role in knowledge transfer activities (Dacre Pool, 2020). Factors from the Career EDGE model have been employed in numerous employability studies, including those of Mashigo (2014); Harry, et al., (2018); Lourens (2016). Conversely, the Career EDGE model has been criticised in that it mainly emphasises the supply side dimensions (Green et al., 2013). Furthermore, Green et al. (2013) added that the Career EDGE model centres on a person's specific transferable employability skills and does not consider the broader context. On the other hand, the current research focus is on individual graduate employability factors and not on the broader context that take into account both personal conditions and external factors. Therefore, the Career EDGE model was suitable for this research project. The following section discusses the components of the career EDGE model.

4.8.2.1 Components of the Career EDGE model

This section discusses the elements of the career EDGE model, with the focus first being on career development learning.



4.8.2.1.1 Career development learning

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Final year students need to obtain some education in career development learning. Dacre Pool and Sewell (2007, p. 284) described career development learning as “the ability to assist final year students to obtain knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes, which will equip them to manage their chosen careers, for instance, their lifelong progression in learning and work”. Career development learning activities can include training on CV preparation, job searching, job applications and interview preparation, self-presentation and communications skills (Pitan & Atiku, 2017). Tomlinson (2012) indicated that career development learning will help the final year students to understand the demands of the labour market, which could be an added advantage for them to stay competitive. Career development has proved to be essential as without it final year students would not what to assume about the career world and would have no idea of how to search for jobs (Dacre Pool, 2020). However, in South Africa, students are not exposed to career development learning. Higher education institutions focus more on the theory which in turn results in most of the final year students graduating without job searching and application skills. Dacre Pool (2016) mentioned that career development learning assists final year students to develop their opportunity awareness and career management skills. Final

year students could learn about the career world, and the process of learning represents the development of necessary skills through social media, therefore these skills will then assist final year students to enhance their chances of being employable (Kundaeli, 2015).

Career development learning is similar to the concept of deployment skills. Deployment skills refer to the extent to which a final year student is aware of their attributes, and how they choose to use that knowledge (Archer et al., 2013). Deployment skills are made up of career management skills, adaptability and mobility, as well as job search skills. Lowden, Hall, Elliot and Lewin (2011) claimed that a final year student's awareness of opportunities in the labour market has an impact on their employability. Numerous employability studies reveal that most of the final year students who commence their job search process early will have a high probability of securing employment (Jackson, 2013b). Some graduates fail to secure employment because they are not using effective job-search channels, as a result, it will impact their employability (Archer et al., 2013). Therefore, final year students ought to be taught how to market their knowledge and skills using emerging technologies such as social media. The next section discusses work experience.

4.8.2.1.2 Work experience

Copps and Plimmer (2013, p. 4) defined work experience as "activities that increase the amount of work experience gained, the perceived value of work experience, network contacts, and community involvement". Work experience includes the activities graduates take part in outside the tertiary institutions (Copps & Plimmer, 2013). Work experience can be obtained by carrying out work voluntarily or as a part-time worker (Hooley, 2017). Dacre Pool and Sewell (2007) asserted that there is a need for final year students to be given opportunities as well as guidance through life and career-related experiences as part of the course or programme to increase their chances of being employable. Employment experience is essential for employers as they normally use work experience and qualifications as the sources for selecting and evaluating potential candidates (Jackson, 2013b). Cole and Tibby (2013) stated that work experience assists in developing a graduate's confidence, and it also increases the chances of getting employed as the graduate will be able to apply their studies in the career world. However, in South Africa, the curriculum being employed in most programmes does not allow students to enter in-service training to gain work experience. Consequently, it will be a challenge for most final year students to be employed as employer's value work experience and how students can apply their studies in the career world, develop their confidence and enhance their employability skills and attributes (Cole & Tibby, 2013). Jackson (2013d) stated



that graduates with work experience have more chance to be rewarded especially in terms of wages and career progression (Jackson, 2013d).

4.8.2.1.3 Degree subject knowledge, understanding and skills

Most of the students enrolled at a tertiary institution are motivated by the idea of pursuing an academic qualification in a specific discipline, acquiring a good occupation and being rewarded for it (Edayi, 2015). According to Dacre Pool (2020) numerous employers use academic qualifications when considering candidates for the job application, with subject-specific knowledge and skills being exceptionally important. Final year students in most cases are employed based on their academic qualification. Thus, selecting the right course programme may increase final year student's attractiveness in their selected occupation. However, in South Africa, there is a critical skills shortage due to a lack of career guidance (Panyaza, 2018). There is a need for the South African public education system to establish career guidance as this plays a critical role in facilitating the transition of graduates from universities to work (Pheko & Molefhe, 2016). This could mitigate the problem of studying already saturated fields as pointed out in the findings. Career guidance will help enlighten students about the skills needed in diverse careers as well as job opportunities (Rodriguesa, Butlerb, & Guest, 2019). This in turn will help the students to make calculated decisions with regards to career choice (Panyaza, 2018).



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Research illustrates extensive variances between unemployment rates and the level of education in South Africa (e.g. Archer et al., 2013; Artess et al., 2017). The graduates in South Africa have a 20-25% chance of becoming employed compared to a person holding a school-leaving certificate (Van der Berg & Van Broekhuizen, 2012). Furthermore, many job seekers in South Africa do not have a tertiary qualification, and thus completing an appropriate tertiary qualification may have a significant effect on successfully finding employment (Smith, 2011).

4.8.2.1.4 Emotional intelligence

Dacre Pool and Sewell (2007, p. 283) described emotional intelligence as “the capacity to recognise our feelings and those of others for motivating ourselves and for managing emotions well in ourselves and relationships”. Emotional intelligence is made up of four related components including managing one's own emotions, perceiving emotions, managing others' emotions and the use of emotions to facilitate thought (Armour, 2012). Huq and Gilbert (2013) argued that emotions have to be well managed and this is one facet that must not be underestimated as it signifies the maturity of a graduate when handling situations. At the workplace, graduates may experience various emotions and the employer views the effective

handling of these emotions as personal qualities (Parmentier et al., 2019). Moreover, being capable of handling anger, conflict, and other undesirable emotions, will positively have an emotional impact on healthy well-being. Emotional intelligence is more than applicable to final year students for employment, it also plays a vital role in shaping individual understanding and actions in life (Paadi, 2014).

Coetzee et al. (2013) revealed that emotional intelligence has an influence on job performance and leadership success. On the other hand, Coetzee and Beukes (2014) claimed that in South Africa, emotions from a career perspective have been given little attention, and there are few studies on the relations between emotional intelligence and employability, thus encouraging the need for additional research in this area. Figure 11 illustrates the attributes of emotional intelligence.

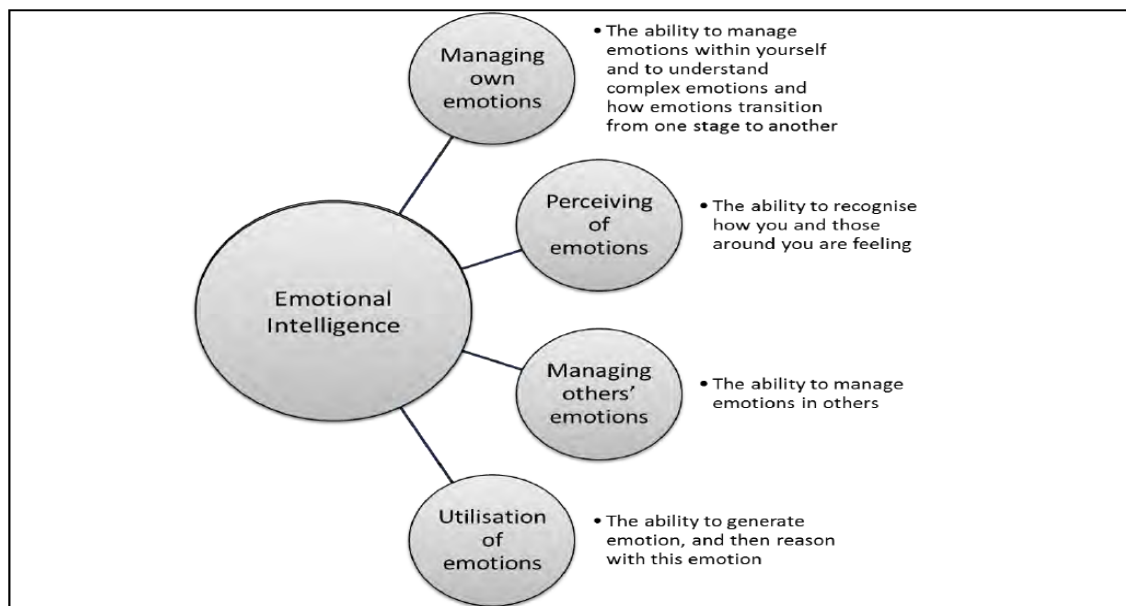


Figure 14: Emotional intelligence

Source: (Adapted from Dacre Pool and Sewell, 2007)

4.8.2.1.5 Reflection and evaluation

Dacre Pool and Qualter (2013) described reflection and evaluation in Career EDGE as the opportunities to imitate and assess the scholarship capabilities that have taken place. The reflection and evaluation development is essential for the youth and is highly valued by industry (Jackson, 2014b). Reflection and evaluation are fundamental to the development of self-efficacy, self-confidence and self-esteem (Jackson, 2014b). Thus, final year students could use the Employability Development Profile (EDP) which assists graduates to reflect and

evaluate their strengths and weaknesses, which can be used to see if there is a need for training to enhance the individual skills set (Dacre Pool et al., 2014).

4.8.2.1.6 Self-efficacy

Dacre Pool and Sewell (2007, p. 285) described self-efficacy as “one’s ability to plan and perform actions necessary to attain goals”. Efficacy principles describe exactly how individuals feel, perform, contemplate and inspire themselves (Dacre Pool & Sewell, 2007). Self-efficacious individuals tackle more challenging responsibilities, persist, and experience less pressure and anxiety in learning environments (Turner, 2014). Furthermore, Turner (2014) stated that self-efficacy has a substantial influence on performance. Self-efficacy is thought to be flexible and as a result can be enhanced through mastering practices (Turner, 2014). Mastery understanding consists of letting persons try out specific tasks (Dacre Pool & Sewell, 2007). Turner (2014) argued that final year students’ self-belief ought to be developed through the discipline studied. In the same vein, Archer et al. (2013) mentioned that long-distance learning students develop self-belief through studying and working at the same time, which will contribute highly to their metacognitive skills, employment skills, and efficacy beliefs.

4.8.2.1.7 Self-confidence

Dacre Pool and Sewell (2007, p. 284) described self-confidence as the “belief in one’s ability to achieve one’s goals”. People with self-confidence carry a sense of self-assurance and presence (Dacre Pool & Sewell, 2007). To this end, numerous final year students described having developed self-confidence after they had completed their tertiary studies (Turner, 2014), therefore supporting the idea that self-theories are flexible and respond to developmental efforts (Turner, 2014).

4.8.2.1.8 Self-esteem

According to Turner (2014), self-esteem is an academic success requirement. Similarly, learning psychologists assert that self-influence plays a significant role in the individual’s success (Dacre Pool & Sewell, 2007). Turner (2014) highlighted the significance of considering context when addressing issues of self-belief. Furthermore, Turner (2014) explained that the growth of self-belief is the trust that ability can be improved, that an individual can plan, and apply actions to attain goals.

4.8.3 Generic skills (Graduateness attributes)

Graduateness skills were discussed extensively in Section 4.5 of this chapter.



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4.9 Summary of the chapter

The chapter dealt with the relationship between gradueness skills and employability. The chapter has revealed that there is a gradueness skills gap dominating the labour market leading to unemployment and underemployment for young adults in South Africa. Universities in South Africa play a pivotal role in developing human resources. However, the unemployment rate in South Africa is escalating at an alarming rate. The high rate of graduate unemployment in South Africa is attributed to a range of factors, including a lack of student gradueness skills and employability attributes, race and social class issues, unavailability of employment opportunities, curriculum issues at the university, poor socioeconomic status, the choice of tertiary education institution, and finally, a poor basic education system as well as social connections which graduates can access once they leave the university. Employability is affected by a student's gradueness skills as it has become a challenge for most of the graduates holding a degree to secure employment after graduation. This has led to a high rate of unemployment amongst graduates, which is worsened by the inadequate growth of the job market. Thus, lack of gradueness attributes amongst final year students is contributing to the high rate of graduate unemployment in South Africa. The government is making an effort to curb this growth through offering internships to graduates who have completed their studies at the tertiary institutions for them to gain work experience, which was noted as one of the factors most considered by employers. The chapter ended by discussing the theoretical models of graduate employability which focus on personal alumni employability skills. The following chapter presents the quantitative data analysis of this study.

Chapter 1 Introduction
Chapter 2 Research Methodology
Chapter 3 Social Media and Employability
Chapter 4 Graduateness Skills and Employability
Chapter 5 Presentation of Findings from Quantitative Data
Chapter 6 Presentation of Findings from the Qualitative Data
Chapter 7 Summary, Discussion, Limitations, Contributions, Future Research, Recommendations and Conclusions

Chapter 5
Presentation of Findings from Quantitative Data
5.1 Introduction
5.2 Response rate
5.3 Descriptive statistics – Demographics
5.4 Reliability analysis
5.5 Factor analysis
5.6 Inferential statistics of the study's theoretical variables and constructs
5.7 Correlation analysis
5.8 Inferential analysis on direct and indirect effects using structural equation modelling (SEM)
5.9 Summary of the chapter

Hare

CHAPTER 5: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS FROM QUANTITATIVE DATA

5.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters presented the relevant literature that supports the research problem and the methodology of this research. The empirical literature section covered information around social media, gradueness skills, and employability. This chapter provides an overview of the analysis of the data that was collected making use of the questionnaires. The data was analysed making use of SPSS version 25 and AMOS. This chapter is divided into various sections. The first section discusses the response rate, while the next section presents the result of the research study. Then, the results from the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) are presented.

After the establishment of the constructs in this study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to assess the reliability of these constructs. A one-sample t-test was used to test for equality of means for the continuous theoretical constructs. To establish the dominant gradueness skills that exist within the sampled institutions, Friedman's two-way ANOVA test was conducted. To determine if there are statistically significant differences between multi-level groups of independent demographic variables on the theoretical variables, the Kruskal-Wallis H test, which is a rank-based non-parametric test, was used. The Spearman Rho correlation coefficient was used to examine the nature, strength, and direction of the correlations that exist between the dependent variable (perceived employability), the independent variable (social media use), and the mediating variable (gradueness skills). Lastly, to quantify the effect of the mediating variable, multiple linear regression models using structural equation modelling (SEM) were utilised.

This chapter is structured as follows; the first section provides the response rate for the study. The following section details the descriptive statistics on demographics. The following section details the factor analysis applied in the study. The next section describes inferential statistics of the study's theoretical variables and constructs. The following section describes correlation analysis. The following section describes inferential analysis on direct and indirect effects using structural equation modelling (SEM). The chapter concludes with a summary of the chapter. The following section presents the study's response rate.

5.2 Response rate

The response rate in this research study refers to the percentage of final-year students who completed the survey from the total study population (Pallant, 2015). Of the 500 questionnaires that were distributed to final year students at the two historically disadvantaged institutions in the Eastern Cape Province, 465 were completed, yielding a response rate of 93%. Of the 465 questionnaires that were completed, only 411 were found to be complete and acceptable. This means that 11.61% of the questionnaires that were collected could not be used. Conversely, the reason for the uncompleted questionnaires may be as a result of technical problems, such as poor network connectivity, which caused the web-based questionnaire to load slowly and the respondent to abandon the questionnaire before it had been completed. Also, the research instrument may have been too long for some final year students to complete, although in the pilot study the length of the questionnaire was found to be acceptable. The next section discusses the results of the research instrument.

5.3 Descriptive statistics – Demographics

The biographical variables of the research project are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Descriptive statistics for biographical variables

Variable	Levels	df	f	Valid %
Institution	Walter Sisulu University	1	202	49.1
	University of Fort Hare		209	50.9
Gender	Male	2	169	41.1
	Female		242	58.9
Ethnicity	Black	3	388	94.4
	Coloured		20	4.9
	White		2	0.5
	Other		1	0.2
Age	Below 21 years	4	50	12.2
	21 to 30 years		309	75.2
	31 to 40 years		35	8.5
	41 to 50 years		8	1.9
	Above 50 years		9	2.2
Faculty	Management & Commerce	5	296	72.0
	Education		26	6.3
	Social Sciences & Humanities		30	7.3
	Science and Agriculture Engineering		19	4.6
	Health Sciences		16	3.9
	Law		24	5.8
Level of study	Undergraduate	1	282	68.6
	Postgraduate		129	31.4

N=411

A descriptive analysis was used to describe the study's demographic features. Descriptive statistics such as tables, pie charts, and bar charts to aid the analysis of data were used. The results of demographics have been categorised as follows (institution, gender, ethnicity, age, faculty, level of study). The following section present percentage distribution by institution.

5.3.1 Percentage distribution by institution

Figure 15 shows the percentage distribution of respondents by the institution. The study population was almost evenly distributed amongst the two institutions, with a slight majority of the respondents, 50.9% (n = 209), studying at UFH whilst 49.1% (n = 202) were students from WSU. This illustrated a fair representation in this study of both universities, although participants from UFH were slightly more represented than those from WSU by 1.8 %.

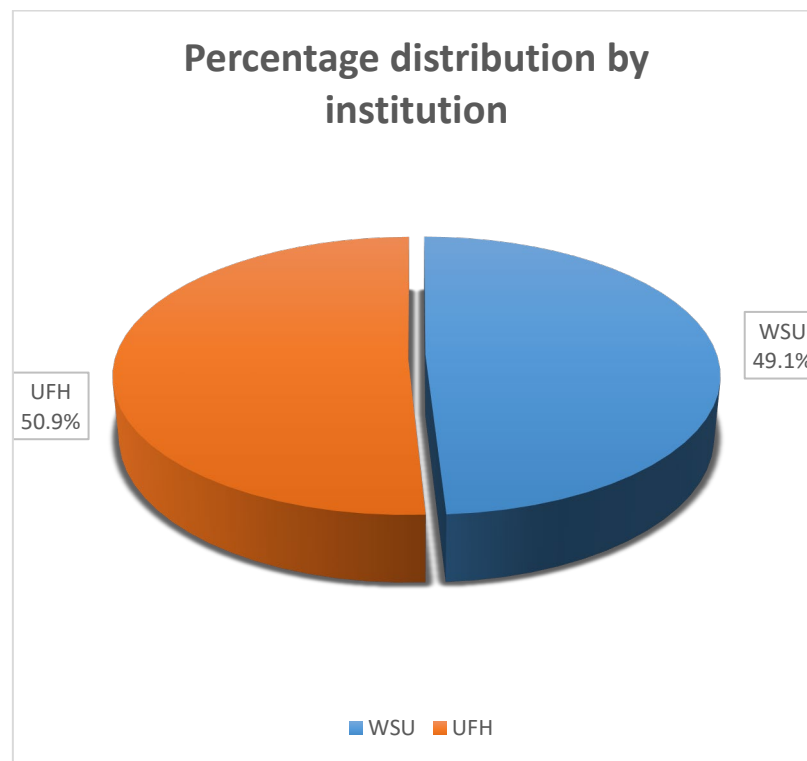


Figure 15: Percentage distribution by the institution

5.3.2 Percentage distribution by gender

Figure 16 shows the gender distribution of respondents. As revealed in Table 1, 411 respondents participated in the survey. There were 169 male respondents, which constituted 41.9% of the total sample, and 242 female respondents, constituting a majority sample of 58.1 %. This implies that there were more female final year students who participated in the study than male final year students, by 17.8 %.

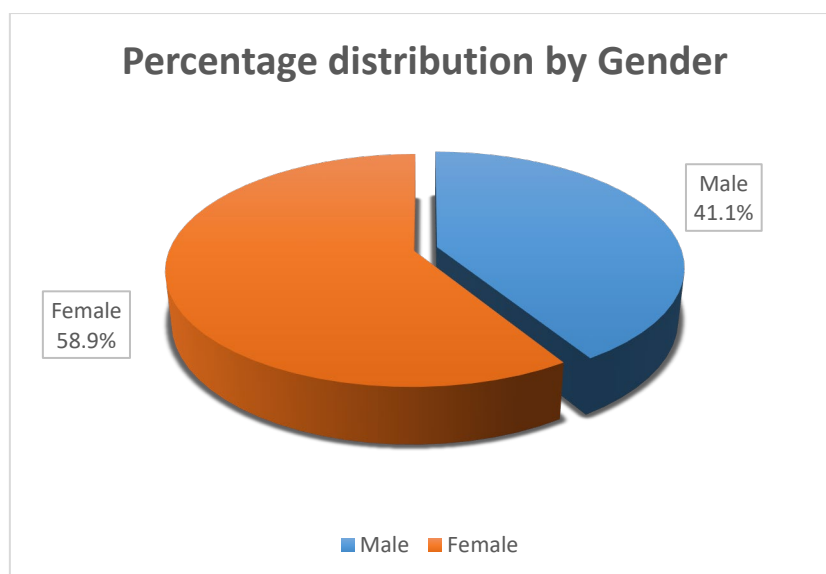


Figure 16: Percentage distribution by gender

5.3.3 Percentage distribution by ethnicity

Figure 17 below depicts the distribution of respondents concerning their ethnicity within the sampled institutions. The majority of the respondents (94.4%, $n = 388$) were Black African students followed by Coloured students who constituted 4.9% ($n = 20$) of the sample. White students constituted only 0.5% ($n = 2$) of the sample.

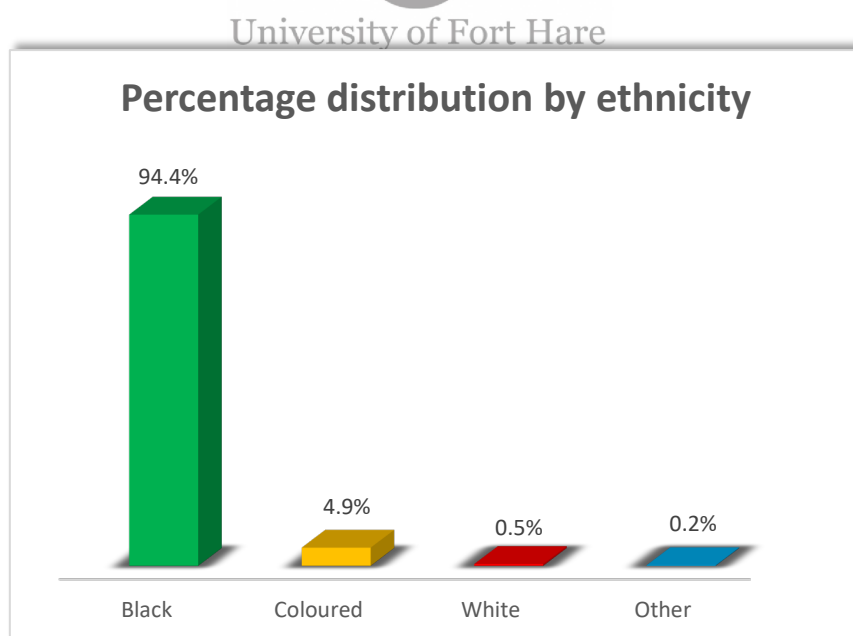


Figure 17: Percentage distribution by ethnicity

5.3.4 Percentage distribution by age

The ages of the sample size of respondents in this research study ranged from some below 21 and the rest between 21 and 50. Figure 18 shows that the majority of the respondents (75.2%,

n = 309) were in the age group of 21 to 30 years, 12.2% (n = 50) of the respondents were below 21 years of age, 8.5% (n = 35) were in the age group of 31 to 40 years, and 2.2% (n = 9) were above 50 years of age. Only eight respondents (1.9%) were between 41 and 50 years.

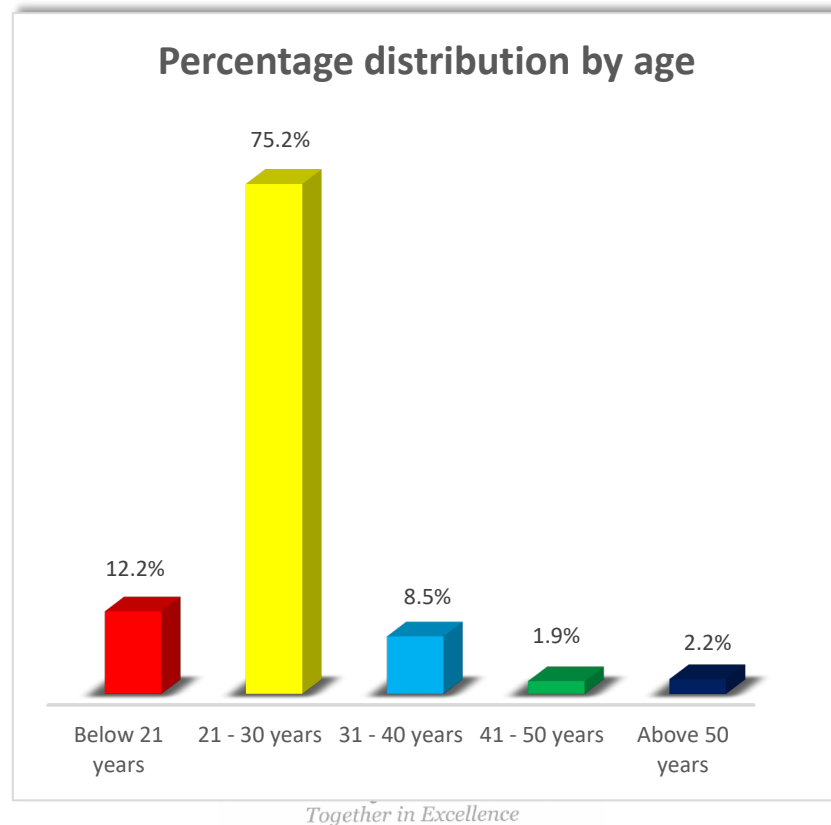


Figure 18: Percentage distribution by age

5.3.5 Percentage distribution by faculty

Figure 19 illustrates the various faculties of the respondents. The majority of the respondents (72.0%; n = 296) at the time of the study were from the Management and Commerce Faculty and the Administration Faculties. Twenty-six (6.3%) respondents were from Education, 30 (7.3%) were from the faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, while 19 (4.6%) were from the faculties of Science and Agriculture and Engineering and Technology. Twenty-four respondents (5.8%) were from the Law Faculty whilst only 16 (3.9%) were from the Faculty of Health Sciences.

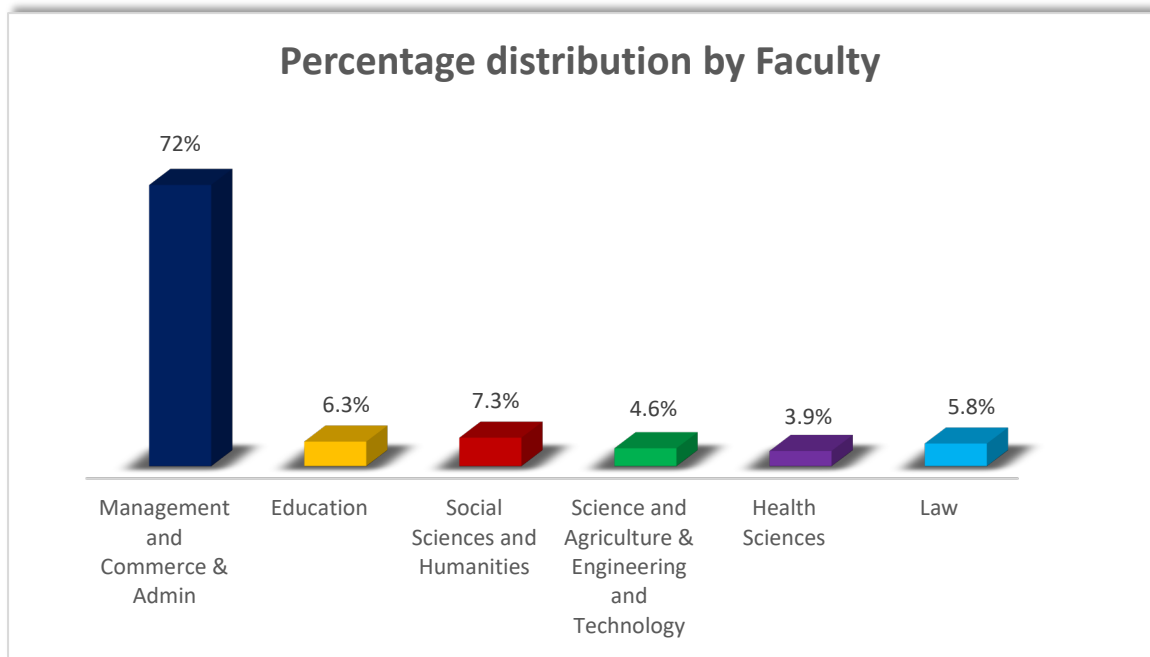


Figure 19: Percentage distribution by faculty

5.3.6 Percentage distribution by level of study

Figure 20 shows the distribution of respondents concerning their study levels within the sampled institutions. The majority of the respondents (68.6%, $n = 282$) at the time of the study were undergraduates whilst 31.4% ($n = 129$) were postgraduates. The following section presents the findings of the reliability analysis.

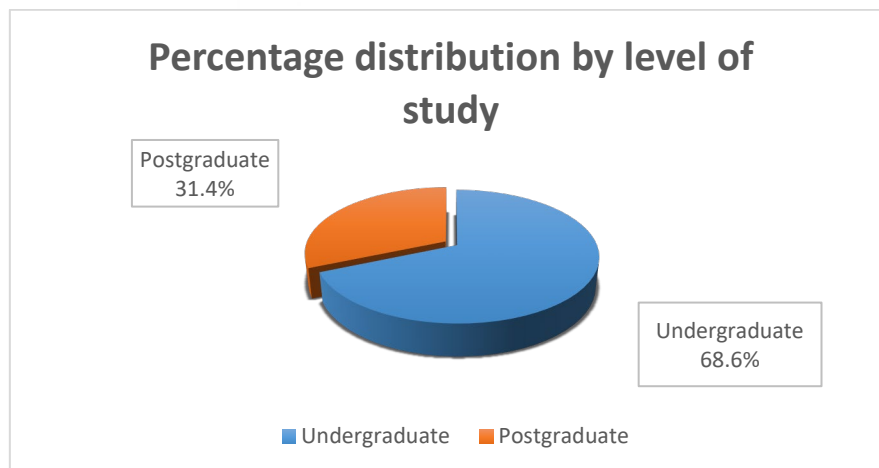


Figure 20: Percentage distribution by level of study

5.4 Reliability analysis

The study made use of Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Cronbach, 1951) to test for the reliability of the research instrument. A reliability of 0.70 or higher is regarded as appropriate (Dunn,

Baguley, & Brunsdon, 2013; Nunnally, 1978). Table 7 shows the reliability of each scale as it relates to the variables measured. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the scales ranged from 0.816 to 0.963, which showed a good reliability coefficient for the study variables.

Table 7: Reliability analysis

Variable/s	Valid	Items used	Cronbach's α
Social media usage	411	4	0.839*
Perceived employability	411	16	0.827*
Graduateness skills	411	47	0.963*
1) Goal-directed behaviour	411	8	0.876*
2) Problem-solving and decision	411	8	0.881*
3) Continuous learning orientation	411	7	0.874*
4) Interactive skills	411	6	0.816*
5) Presenting and applying skills	411	5	0.844*
6) Enterprising skills	411	4	0.853*
7) Analytical thinking	411	4	0.842*
8) Ethical and responsible behaviour	411	5	0.863*

*Significant reliability



5.5 Factor analysis

The SPSS version 25 and AMOS were used for the analysis. Firstly, EFA using SPSS and CFA using AMOS were used to determine the items which load to specific theoretical constructs for the theoretical variables in the study.

5.5.1 Exploratory factor analysis for the mediating variable (graduateness skills) using SPSS

To determine the empirical factors for the graduateness skills tool, factor analysis was conducted on the 64-item instrument adopted from Coetzee (2014). Explorations of various factor solutions were conducted employing additional extraction and data rotation methods to find the most parsimonious set of factors. The data was considered suitable for factor analysis based on the results from the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling competence (Kaiser, 1970, Kaiser, 1974). The most parsimonious result was achieved with eight factors by employing principal component analysis using varimax rotation with Kaiser normalisation.

Table 8 shows that the KMO measure of sampling adequacy was 0.946, above the commonly recommended value of 0.6, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant (Chi-square = 11364.987; df = 1081; $p < 0.0001$) and the commonalities were all above 0.50.

Table 8: The KMO measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy		0.946
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approx. Chi-square	11364.987
	df	1081
	Sig.	<0.0001

Given these overall indicators, factor analysis was deemed to be suitable with 47 items, having eliminated a total of 27 items. The cumulative variance accounted for with the eight established factors was 61.52% (Table 9 below) which accounted for almost 62% of the total variability. Using the guidelines established by Reise, Waller, and Comrey (2000), all 47 items loaded high (i.e., ≥ 0.45) on the primary loadings of their respective factors.

Table 9: Total variance explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation sums of Squared		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
Factor 1	17.593	37.433	37.433	5.168	10.995	10.995
Factor 2	2.716	5.778	43.211	4.329	9.211	20.207
Factor 3	1.957	4.164	47.375	3.943	8.389	28.596
Factor 4	1.721	3.662	51.036	3.372	7.175	35.771
Factor 5	1.388	2.952	53.988	3.203	6.814	42.585
Factor 6	1.244	2.647	56.635	3.181	6.769	49.353
Factor 7	1.218	2.592	59.227	3.064	6.519	55.872
Factor 8	1.077	2.291	61.518	2.654	5.646	61.518

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 9 provides a summary of the descriptive statistics of the mediating variable (graduateness skills) using a variance. From the eight factors that tested the mediating variable, Factor 1 had the highest variance score of 10.995. Factor 2 had the second-highest variance score of 9.211. This was followed by Factor 3 that recorded a variance score of 8.389. Factor 7 had the second-lowest variable score of 6.519. Of the factors that tested graduateness skills, Factor 8 had the lowest variance score of 5.646.

After evaluating the survey items and associated variables, the eight factors were named, "Goal-directed behaviour" (GGDB) for Factor 1, "Problem-solving and decision making skills" (GPDS) for Factor 2, "Continuous learning orientation" (GCLO) for Factor 3, "Interactive skills" (GIS) for Factor 4, "Presenting and applying skills" (GPIS) for Factor 5, "Enterprising

skills” (GES) for Factor 6, “Analytical thinking” (GAT) for Factor 7, and “Ethical and responsible behaviour” (GERB) for Factor 8. All items had high loadings (i.e., all ≥ 0.45) suggesting strength to the empirical validity of the constructs.

NB: For all the abbreviations of the items in all factor loadings refer to the research survey (Appendix B)

Some summary statistics of counts and distribution of measures at the factor level on the rotated factor matrix are presented in Tables 10 to 19 below. Some of the items were removed from the variables to achieve this factor analysis result. The following section presents the factor loading for goal-directed behaviour.

Table 10: Extract of rotated component matrix primary factor loadings – Factor 1: Goal-directed behaviour

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7	Factor 8
1 GGDB1	0.528							
2 GGDB2	0.638							
3 GGDB5	0.604							
4 GGDB6	0.620							
5 GGDB7	0.553							
6 GGDB8	0.694							
7 GGDB9	0.722							
8 GGDB10	0.654							

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 14 iterations.

Table 10 depicts the factor loadings for goal-directed behaviour. Ten items were used to measure goal-directed behaviour. However, eight items for goal-directed behaviour (GGDB1, GGDB2 GGDB5, GGDB6 GGDB7, GGDB8, GGDB9, and GGDB10) loaded onto one factor as expected and the other two items kept overlapping across two factors and were thus eliminated from further analysis for this study. The researcher can decide whether to discard cross-loading or problematic items from the analysis provided there are several adequate items left (Pallant, 2013). Goal-directed behaviour's items had factor loadings ranging from 0.528 to 0.722, which demonstrates satisfactory evidence of discriminant validity for this construct. The following section presents the factor loading for problem-solving and decision-making skills.

Table 11: Extract of rotated component matrix primary factor loadings – Factor 2: Problem-solving and decision-making skills

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7	Factor 8
1 GPDS1		0.575						
2 GPDS2		0.634						
3 GPDS3		0.685						
4 GPDS4		0.629						
5 GPDS5		0.564						
6 GPDS6		0.564						
7 GPDS7		0.556						
8 GPDS8		0.513						

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 14 iterations.

Table 11 depicts the factor loadings for the problem-solving and decision-making skills. Eight items were used to measure problem-solving and decision-making skills. All eight items for problem-solving and decision-making skills (GPDS1, GPDS2, GPDS3, GPDS4, GPDS5, GPDS6, GPDS7 and GPDS8) loaded onto one factor as expected. Problem-solving and decision-making skills' items had factor loadings ranging from 0.513 to 0.685, suggesting strength to the empirical validity of the constructs. The following section presents the factor loading for continuous learning orientation.

Table 12: Extract of rotated component matrix primary factor loadings – Factor 3: Continuous learning orientation

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7	Factor 8
1 GCLO1			0.556					
2 GCLO2			0.621					
3 GCLO3			0.728					
4 GCLO4			0.589					
5 GCLO5			0.555					
6 GCLO6			0.492					
7 GCLO7			0.491					

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 14 iterations.

Table 12 depicts the factor loadings for continuous learning orientation. Seven items were used to measure continuous learning orientation. All seven items for the continuous learning orientation (GCLO1, GCLO2, GCLO3, GCLO4, GCLO5, GCLO6, and GCLO7) loaded onto one factor as expected. Continuous learning orientation's items had factor loadings ranging

from 0.491 to 0.728, suggesting strength to the empirical validity of the constructs. The following section presents the factor loading for interactive skills.

Table 13: Extract of rotated component matrix primary factor loadings – Factor 4: Interactive skills

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7	Factor 8
1 GIS1				0.672				
2 GIS2				0.764				
3 GIS3				0.758				
4 GIS4				0.705				
5 GIS5				0.613				
6 GIS6				0.459				

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 14 iterations.

Table 13 depicts the factor loadings for the interactive skills. Sixteen items were used to measure interactive skills. However, six items for interactive skills (GIS1, GIS2, GIS3, GIS4, GIS5, and GIS6) loaded onto one factor, as expected, and ten items kept overlapping across six factors and were thus eliminated from further analysis for this study. The researcher can decide whether to discard cross-loading or problematic items from the analysis provided there are several adequate items left (Pallant, 2013). Interactive skills' items had factor loadings ranging from 0.459 to 0.764, which demonstrates satisfactory evidence of discriminant validity for this construct. The following section presents the factor loading for presenting and applying skills.

Table 14: Extract of rotated component matrix primary factor loadings – Factor 5: Presenting and applying skills

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7	Factor 8
1 GPIS1					0.507			
2 GPIS2					0.611			
3 GPIS3					0.644			
4 GPIS4					0.638			
5 GPIS5					0.465			

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 14 iterations.

Table 14 depicts the factor loadings for the presenting and applying skills. Five items were used to measure presenting and applying skills. Five items for presenting and applying skills (GPIS1, GPIS2, GPIS3, GPIS4, and GPIS5) loaded onto one factor, as expected. Presenting and applying skills items had factor loadings ranging from 0.465 to 0.644, which demonstrates

satisfactory evidence of discriminant validity for this construct. The following section presents the factor loading for enterprising skills.

Table 15: Extract of rotated component matrix primary factor loadings – Factor 6: Enterprising skills

	Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7	Factor 8
1	GES1						0.537		
2	GES2						0.633		
3	GES3						0.688		
4	GES4						0.691		

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 14 iterations.

Table 15 depicts the factor loadings for the enterprising skills. Five items were used to measure enterprising skills. However, five items for enterprising skills (GES1, GES2, GES3, and GES 4) loaded onto one factor, as expected, and four items kept overlapping across three factors and were thus eliminated from further analysis for this study. The researcher can decide whether to discard cross-loading or problematic items from the analysis provided there are several adequate items left (Pallant, 2013). Enterprising skills items had factor loadings ranging from 0.537 to 0.691, suggesting strength to the empirical validity of the constructs. The following section presents the factor loading for analytical thinking.

Table 16: Extract of rotated component matrix primary factor loadings – Factor 7: Analytical thinking

	Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7	Factor 8
1	GAT1							0.501	
2	GAT2							0.651	
3	GAT3							0.792	
4	GAT4							0.723	

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 14 iterations.

Table 16 depicts the factor loadings for the analytical thinking skills. Four items were used to measure analytical thinking skills. Five items for analytical thinking skills (GAT1, GAT2, GAT3, and GAT4) loaded onto one factor, as expected. Analytical thinking skills items had factor loadings ranging from 0.501 to 0.792, which demonstrates satisfactory evidence of

discriminant validity for this construct. The following section presents the factor loading for ethical and responsible behaviour.

Table 17: Extract of rotated component matrix primary factor loadings – Factor 8: Ethical and responsible behaviour

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7	Factor 8
1 GERB1								0.466
2 GERB2								0.458
3 GERB3								0.587
4 GERB4								0.633
5 GERB5								0.537

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 14 iterations.

Table 17 depicts the factor loadings for ethical and responsible behaviour skills. Five items were used to measure ethical and responsible behaviour skills. Five items for ethical and responsible behaviour skills (GERB1, GERB2, GERB3, and GERB4) loaded onto one factor, as expected. Ethical and responsible behaviour skills items had factor loadings ranging from 0.458 to 0.633, suggesting strength to the empirical validity of the constructs.

5.5.2 Exploratory factor analysis for the dependent variable (perceived employability) using SPSS

To determine the empirical factors for the perceived employability tool, factor analysis was conducted on the 16-item instrument adopted from Rothwell, Jewell, and Hardie (2009). Explorations of various factor solutions were conducted employing additional extraction and data rotation methods to find the most parsimonious set of factors. The most parsimonious result was achieved with five (5) factors by employing principal component analysis using varimax rotation with Kaiser normalisation.

Table 18 shows that the KMO measure of sampling adequacy was 0.792, above the commonly recommended value of 0.6, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant (Chi-square = 1841.098; df = 120; $p < 0.0001$) and the commonalities were all above 0.50. Given these overall indicators, factor analysis was deemed to be suitable with all 16 items retained.

Table 18: The KMO measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy.		0.792
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1841.098
	df	120
	Sig.	<0.0001

The cumulative variance accounted for the five established factors was 62.698 % (see Table 19 below) which accounts for almost 63% of the total variability. Table 19 provides a summary of the descriptive statistics of the dependent variable (perceived employability) using a variance.

From the five factors that tested perceived employability, Factor 1 reported the highest variance score of 14.812. Factor 2 reported the second-highest variance score of 13.46. This was followed by Factor 3 that recorded a variance score of 12.964. Factor 4 had the second-lowest variable score of 12.029. Of the factors that tested perceived employability, Factor 5 reported the lowest variance score of 9.458. The following section discusses the summary of the results of the rotated factor matrix in Table 19 below

**Table 19: Total variance explained**

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation sums of Squared		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
Factor 1	4.547	28.416	28.416	2.370	14.812	14.812
Factor 2	1.607	10.044	38.460	2.150	13.436	28.248
Factor 3	1.564	9.777	48.237	2.074	12.964	41.212
Factor 4	1.241	7.759	55.996	1.925	12.029	53.241
Factor 5	1.072	6.702	62.698	1.513	9.458	62.698

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

All 16 items loaded high (i.e., ≥ 0.50) on the primary loadings of their respective factors, suggesting strength to the empirical validity of the constructs.

Table 20: Rotated component matrix primary factor loadings

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
1 PE1					0.784
2 PE2					0.793
3 PE3	0.690				
4 PE4	0.635				
5 PE5	0.768				
6 PE6	0.638				
7 PE7	0.522				
8 PE8			0.739		
9 PE9			0.794		
10 PE10			0.727		
11 PE11				0.638	
12 PE12				0.829	
13 PE13				0.638	
14 PE14		0.647			
15 PE15		0.815			
16 PE16		0.822			

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 7 iterations.

Table 20 depicts the factor loadings for the perceived employability. Sixteen items were used to measure the perceived employability. Factor 1's items had factor loadings ranging from 0.522 to 0.768, Factor 2's items had factor loadings ranging from 0.647 to 0.822, Factor 3's items had factor loadings ranging from 0.727 to 0.794, Factor 4's items had factor loadings ranging from 0.638 to 0.638, and Factor 5's items had factor loadings ranging from 0.784 to 0.793. The following section discusses the exploratory factor analysis for the independent variable.

5.5.3 Exploratory factor analysis for the independent variable (social media use) using SPSS

To determine the empirical factors for the social media use tool, factor analysis was conducted on the 4-item instrument adopted from Changqing, Jibao, Wei, Xuesong, and Jun (2016). Explorations of various factor solutions were conducted employing additional extraction and data rotation methods to find the most parsimonious set of factors. The most parsimonious result was achieved with only one factor by employing principal component analysis.

Table 21 shows that the KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.742, above the commonly recommended value of 0.6, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant (Chi-square =

720.142; df = 6; p <0.0001) and the commonalities were all above 0.59. Given these overall indicators, factor analysis was deemed to be suitable with all four items.

Table 21: The KMO measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy.		0.742
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	720.142
	Df	6
	Sig.	<0.0001

The cumulative variance accounted for with the four established factors was 67.94% (see Table 22 below) which accounts for almost 68% of the total variability. Table 22 provides a summary of the descriptive statistics of the independent variable (social media use) using a variance.

Table 22: Total variance explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction sums of squared loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.718	67.944	67.944	2.718	67.944	67.944
2	0.570	14.255	82.200			
3	0.484	12.098	94.298			
4	0.228	5.702	100.000			

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

One factor that tested social media use, reported a variance score of 14.812. The following section presents the component matrix primary factor loadings.

All 4 items loaded high (i.e., ≥ 0.77) on the primary loading, suggesting strength to the empirical validity of the construct. After evaluating the survey items and associated variables, the construct was named "social media use".

Table 23: Component matrix primary factor loadings

Item		Factor 1
1	SME1	0.773
2	SME2	0.874
3	SME3	0.870
4	SME4	0.774

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

The following section discusses the CFA using AMOS.

5.5.4 Confirmatory factor analysis using AMOS

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) followed after exploratory factor analysis to determine the factor structure of the instruments. In the EFA, the researcher explored the factor structure and in the CFA the researcher confirmed the factor structure as extracted in the EFA. The path diagrams for the mediating variable, independent variable, dependent variable (see Figure 18 to Figure 20) present the standardised regression weights (factor loadings) for the common factors and each of the indicators. The squared multiple correlation coefficients, describing the amount of variance the common factor accounts for in the observed variables, are also displayed.

From the findings of the study, it is evident that the regression weights are all statistically significant ($p < 0.0001$ recorded for all factors). The corresponding fitness indexes and assessment for the individual models are presented in Table 24 to Table 28. While the chi-squared test retains its popularity as a fit statistic, there are several severe limitations of this test. Due to this, the researcher applied other index parameters for the model fit assessment. These included RMSEA, GFI, incremental fit indices/relative fit indices, and PGFI.

Firstly, for absolute fit testing, the researcher adopted the RMSEA which is regarded as one of the most informative fit indices (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000) due to its sensitivity to the number of estimated parameters in the model. In addition to the RMSEA, the researcher also adopted the GFI which is an alternative to the chi-square test. Further, the researcher used incremental fit indices, also known as comparative (Miles & Shevlin, 2007) or relative fit indices (McDonald & Ho, 2002). These are a group of indices that do not use the chi-square in its raw form but compare the chi-square value to a baseline model. Under this category, the researcher opted for the comparative fit index (CFI) (Bentler, 1990). Lastly, the researcher considered the parsimony goodness-of-fit index (PGFI) to assess the parsimonious fit. Using the guidelines below, the results for the fitness indexes assessment for the structural models of the confirmatory factor analysis shows that the established models are adequate.

- RMSEA – An RMSEA of between 0.08 to 0.10 provides a mediocre fit and below 0.08 shows a good fit (MacCallum, Browne, & Sugawara, 1996). However, more recently, a cut-off value close to .06 (Hu & Bentler, 1999) or a stringent upper limit of 0.07 (Steiger, 2007) seems to be the consensus amongst authorities in this area.

- GFI – GFI values should range between 0 and 1 and it is generally accepted that values of 0.90 or greater indicate well-fitting models.
 - CFI – A cut-off criterion of $CFI \geq 0.90$ was initially advanced; however, recent studies have shown that a value greater than 0.90 is needed to ensure that misspecified models are not accepted (Hu & Bentler, 1999). From this, a value of $CFI \geq 0.95$ is presently recognised as indicative of a good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999).
 - PGFI – Mulaik, et al. (1989) recommended a parsimony fit indices within the 0.50 region.
- Figure 18 below depicts the output of the measurement model of the mediating variable which is followed by an explanation of the diagram.

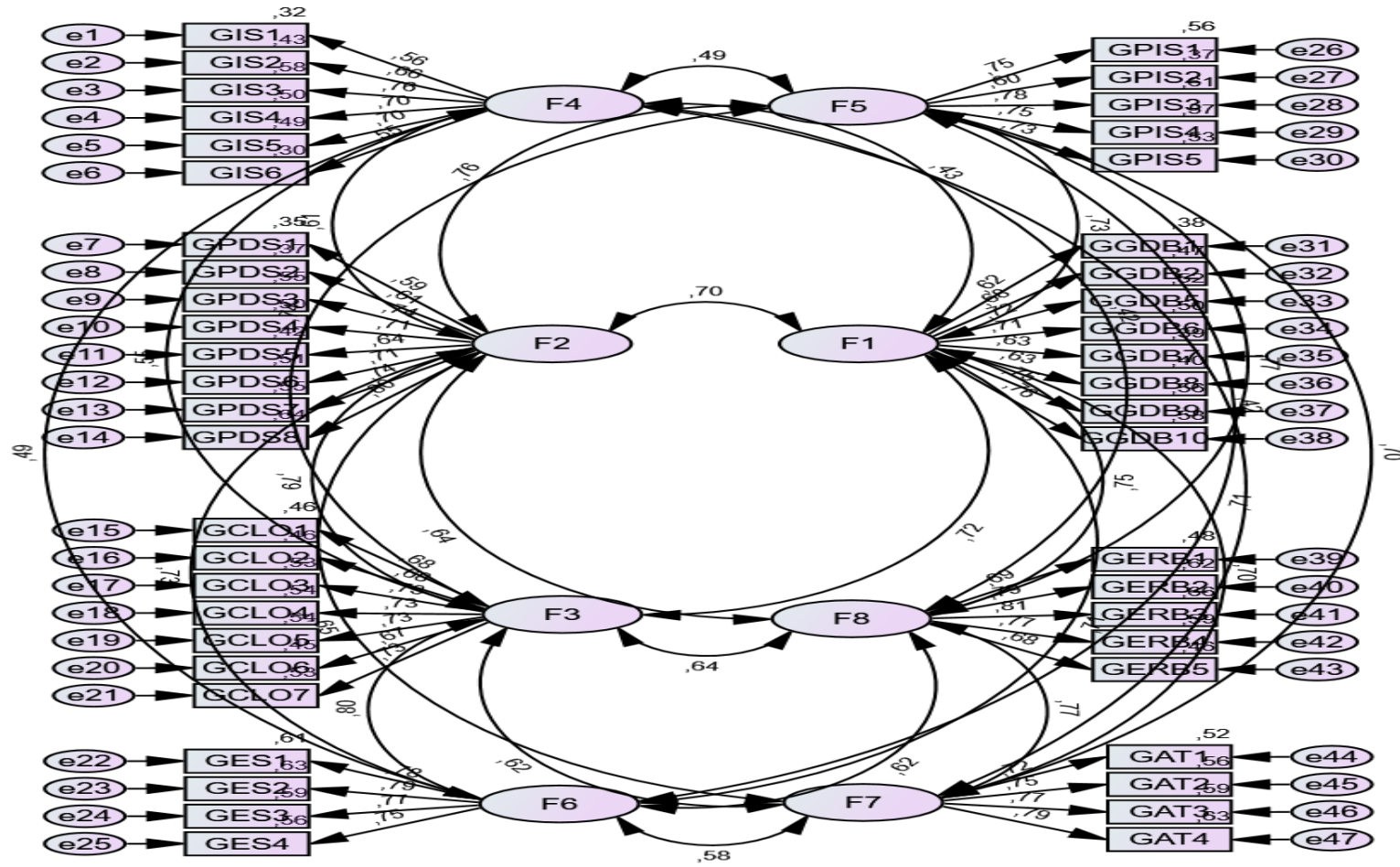
The measurement model of the mediating variable illustrated in Figure 21 reported that the chi-squared test retained its popularity as a fit statistic, a chi-square of 11364.987, with a degree of freedom of 1081 and RMSEA of 0.059. This indication proved that the measurement model was a good fit for the variables under study. The overall fit of the model measured showed a P-Value of 0.0001, which indicates that the model is regarded as significant. Table 24 below depicts the fitness indexes assessment for the mediating variable structural model.

Table 24: The fitness indexes assessment for the mediating variable structural model

Name of category	Name of index	Index value	Comments
Absolute fit	RMSEA	0.059	The required level was achieved
Absolute fit	GFI	0.949	The required level was achieved
Incremental fit	CFI	0.967	The required level was achieved
Parsimonious fit	PGFI	0.709	The required level was achieved

The RMSEA of 0.059 reported for this study was below 0.08 which shows a good fit as stated in Table 7 in Chapter 2. The GFI of 0.949 reported from this project is above the recommended GFI values of 0.90 as stated in Table 5 in Chapter 2. The CFI reported for this study was 0.967 which is above the recommended CFI value of 0.9. The PGFI of 0.709 reported for this research project was above the recommended parsimony fit indices of 0.50.

Figure 21: The path diagram for CFA of the mediating variable (Graduateness skills)



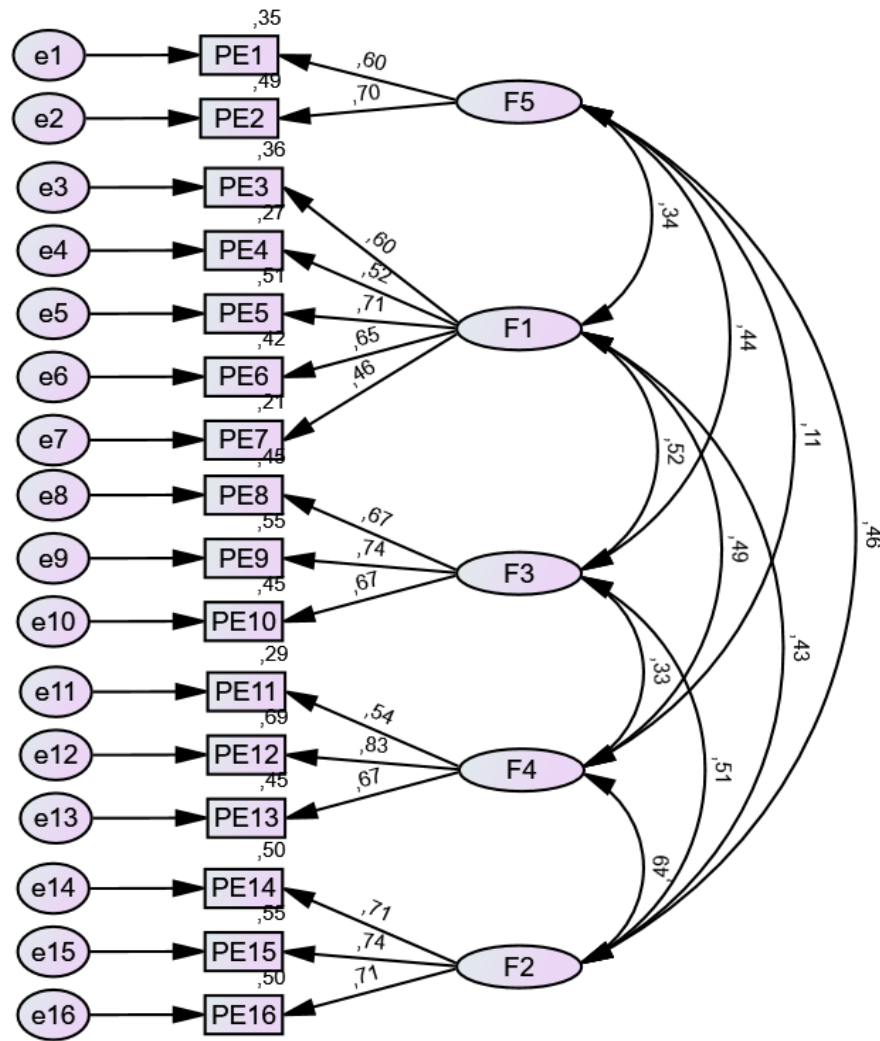


Figure 22: The path diagram for CFA of the dependent variable (Perceived employability)

Figure 22, the path diagram for CFA of the dependent variable (perceived employability). The measurement model of the dependent variable illustrated in Figure 22 reported that the chi-squared test retained its popularity as a fit statistic, a chi-square of 1841.098, with a degree of freedom of 120 and an RMSEA of 0.072. This indication proved that the measurement model is a good fit for the variables under study, which is in line with established joint fit criteria (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2005). The overall fit of the model measured showed a P-Value of 0.001, which indicates that the model is regarded as significant. Table 25 below depicts the fitness indexes assessment for the dependent variable structural model.

Table 25: The fitness indexes assessment for the dependent variable structural model

Name of category	Name of index	Index value	Comments
Absolute fit	RMSEA	0.072	The required level was achieved
Absolute fit	GFI	0.923	The required level was achieved
Incremental fit	CFI	0.987	The required level was achieved
Parsimonious fit	PGFI	0.638	The required level was achieved

The RMSEA of 0.072 reported for this study was below 0.08 which shows a good fit as stated in Table 7 in Chapter 2. The GFI of 0.923 reported from this project is above the recommended GFI values of 0.90 as stated in Table 5 in Chapter 2. The CFI reported for this study was 0.987 which is above the recommended CFI value of 0.9. The PGFI of 0.638 reported for this research project was above the recommended parsimony fit indices of 0.50, which is in line with established joint fit criteria (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2005). The following section presents Figure 23, the path diagram for CFA of the independent variable (social media use)

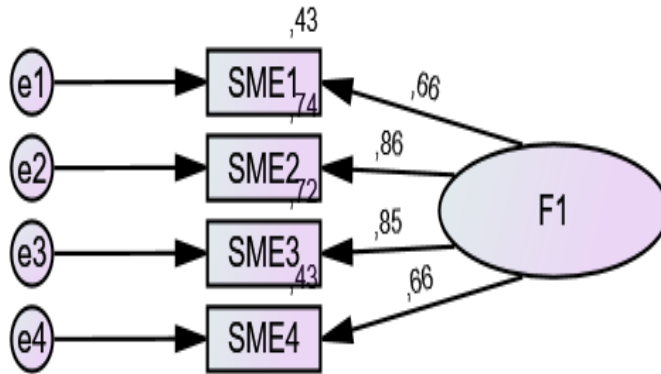


Figure 23: The path diagram for CFA of the independent variable (Social Media Use)

This indication proved that the measurement model was a good fit for the variables under study. The overall fit of the model measured showed a P-Value of 0.001, which indicates that the model is regarded as significant. Table 26 illustrates shows the fitness indexes assessment for the independent variable structural model.

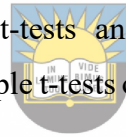
Table 26: The fitness indexes assessment for the independent variable structural model

Name of category	Name of index	Index value	Comments
Absolute fit	RMSEA	0.058	The required level was achieved
Incremental fit	CFI	0.951	The required level was achieved
Parsimonious fit	PGFI	0.317	The required level was achieved

The RMSEA of 0.058 reported for this study was below 0.08 which shows a good fit as stated in Table 5 in Chapter 2. The CFI reported for this study was 0.951 which is above the recommended CFI value of 0.9. The PGFI of 0.317 reported for this research project was within the recommended parsimony fit indices of 0.50, which is in line with established joint fit criteria (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2005). The following section discusses the inferential statistics of the study's theoretical variables and constructs.

5.6 Inferential statistics of the study's theoretical variables and constructs

This section discusses the various inferential statistics of the study's theoretical variables and constructs. These include one-sample t-tests and Friedman's two-way ANOVA tests. The following section focuses on the one-sample t-tests on established theoretical continuous variables.



5.6.1 One sample t-tests on established theoretical continuous variables

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Table 27 presents a summary of the descriptive statistics of the research study's main theoretical variables. Data is displayed in terms of the total number of respondents, minimum, maximum, mean scores and standard deviation of the data set from the sample. Social media use was measured using a 4-point Likert scale (i.e. 1 – Never, 2 - Almost Never, 3 - Fairly Often, and 4 - Very Often). On the other hand, perceived employability, as well as gradueness skills and its respective constructs, were all measured using a 6-point Likert scale (i.e. 1 - Strongly Disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 - Slightly Disagree, 4 - Slightly Agree, 5 – Agree and 6 - Strongly Agree).

The findings show that the overall mean for all the established theoretical variables and constructs was moderately high. This was the case for the overall rating of social media usage (mean = 3.1271; n = 141, SD = 0.68373) and a similar rating was also revealed on the mean rating of perceived employability (mean = 4.3283; n = 141, SD = 0.67526). With regards to gradueness skills (mean = 4.3978; n = 141, SD = 0.73470), the mean rating by respondents was slightly higher than that of perceived employability.

According to the individual constructs of gradueness skills, interactive skills (mean = 4.7818; n = 141, SD = 0.81996) was the most highly rated skill followed by presenting and applying skills (mean = 4.4185; n = 141, SD = 0.91633). Problem-solving and decision-making skills (mean = 4.3662; n = 141, SD = 0.85747) had a slightly higher mean rating than continuous learning orientation (mean = 4.3615; n = 141, SD = 0.89661) but slightly lower than the mean rating of analytical thinking (mean = 4.3832; n = 141, SD = 0.99360). Enterprising skills (mean = 4.3358; n = 141, SD = 1.02444) was among the least rated constructs but it was slightly higher than goal-directed behaviour (mean = 4.2670; n = 141, SD = 0.92765) as well as ethical and responsible behaviour (mean = 4.2686; n = 141, SD = 1.01273).

Table 27: Summary of descriptive statistics of main theoretical variables

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	S.D
Social media usage	411	1.00	4.00	3.1271	0.68373
Perceived employability	411	1.50	5.94	4.3283	0.67526
Gradueness Skills	411	1.63	5.85	4.3978	0.73470
1) Goal-directed behaviour	411	1.25	6.00	4.2670	0.92765
2) Problem-solving and decision making	411	1.00	6.00	4.3662	0.85747
3) Continuous learning orientation	411	1.00	6.00	4.3615	0.89661
4) Interactive skills	411	1.00	6.00	4.7818	0.81996
5) Presenting and applying skills	411	1.00	6.00	4.4185	0.91633
6) Enterprising skills	411	1.00	6.00	4.3358	1.02444
7) Analytical thinking	411	1.00	6.00	4.3832	0.99360
8) Ethical and responsible behaviour	411	1.00	6.00	4.2686	1.01273

A one-sample t-test was conducted to infer the respondents' views and perceptions on the established variables (see Table 28 on the next page). In each case, the mean for the 4-point Likert scale variable was compared to a stipulated mean level of 2.5 and that of the 6-point Likert variables and constructs was compared to a pre-determined mean of 4.5. Mean levels significantly higher than these predetermined means were regarded as respondents using social media for finding employment or agreeing to the respective items measuring perceived employability and gradueness skills. On the other hand, those that are significantly lower were regarded as respondents generally not using social media for finding employment or disagreeing with the

respective items measuring perceived employability and gradueness skills. There was strong significant evidence from the data gathered in the study that most respondents generally agreed to all the constructs ($p < 0.0001$).

Table 28: One sample t-tests for the mean responses of the main variables

Variable	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Social media usage	3.1271	0.68373	18.595	410	<0.0001**
Perceived employability	4.3283	0.67526	24.868	410	<0.0001**
Gradueness skills	4.3978	0.73470	24.774	410	<0.0001**
1) Goal-directed behaviour	4.2670	0.92765	16.763	410	<0.0001**
2) Problem-solving and decision making skills	4.3662	0.85747	20.479	410	<0.0001**
3) Continuous learning	4.3615	0.89661	19.479	410	<0.0001**
4) Interactive skills	4.7818	0.81996	31.693	410	<0.0001**
5) Presenting and applying skills	4.4185	0.91633	20.321	410	<0.0001**
6) Enterprising skills	4.3358	1.02444	16.539	410	<0.0001**
7) Analytical thinking	4.3832	0.99360	18.021	410	<0.0001**
8) Ethical and responsible	4.2686	1.01273	15.386	410	<0.0001**

Statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$). Social media usage statements were rated on a 4-point scale. Perceived employability and gradueness skills statements were rated on a 6-point scale. (*) Significantly using/disagreeing, (**) significantly using/agreeing

Thus, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the respondents do make use of social media to search for employment (3.1271; $t = 18.595$; $p < 0.0001$). In general, the sampled participants highly perceived their possibilities of obtaining and maintaining employment (4.3283; $t = 24.868$; $p < 0.0001$). In terms of gradueness skills, which are attributes that make final year students capable of attaining and keeping fulfilling work, the respondents overly agreed that they possess such skills (4.3978; $t = 24.774$; $p < 0.0001$). These skills include interactive skills (4.7818; $t = 31.693$; $p < 0.0001$), problem-solving and decision-making skills (4.3662; $t = 20.479$; $p < 0.0001$), continuous learning orientation (4.3615; $t = 19.479$; $p < 0.0001$), and enterprising skills (4.3358; $t = 16.539$; $p < 0.0001$). Furthermore, among these skills the results also identified presenting and applying skills (4.4185; $t = 20.321$; $p < 0.0001$), goal-directed behaviour (4.2670; $t = 16.763$; $p < 0.0001$), ethical and responsible behaviour (4.2686; $t = 15.386$; $p < 0.0001$) and analytical thinking (4.3832; $t =$

18.021; $p < 0.0001$). The following section discusses Friedman's two-way ANOVA tests for gradueness skills

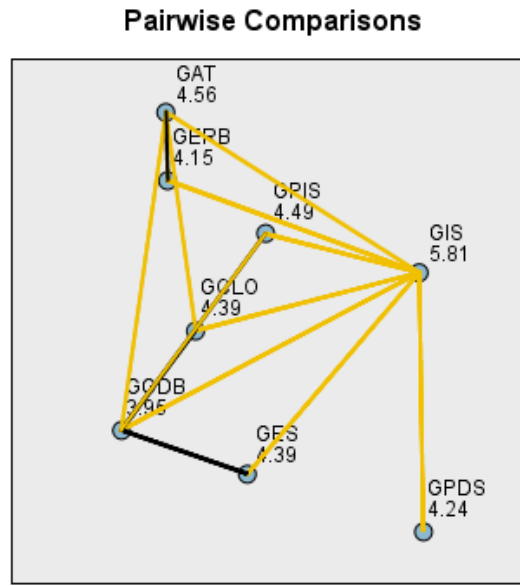
5.6.2 Friedman's two-way ANOVA tests for gradueness skills

To establish the dominant gradueness skill/s that exist within the sampled institutions, a Friedman's two-way ANOVA test was conducted. Results in Table 29 show that there was significant evidence to conclude that the gradueness skills were rated differently by the respondents ($p < 0.0001$).

Table 29: Related samples of Friedman's two-way ANOVA by ranks

Variable	Mean Rank	N	Test Statistic	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Gradueness skills					
Goal-directed behaviour (GGDB)	3.95	411	159.095	7	<0.0001
Problem-solving and decision-making skills	4.24				
Continuous learning orientation (GCLO)	4.39				
Interactive skills (GIS)	5.81				
Presenting and applying skills (GPIS)	4.49				
Enterprising skills (GES)	4.39				
Analytical thinking (GAT)	4.56				
Ethical and responsible behaviour (GERB)	4.15				

The mean rankings suggest that interactive skills (mean rank = 5.81) were the dominant gradueness skill, followed by analytical thinking (mean rank = 4.56), then presenting and applying skills (mean rank = 4.49). Continuous learning orientation (mean rank = 4.39) and enterprising skills (mean rank = 4.39) were ranked the same. On the other hand, the least ranked gradueness skills were problem-solving and decision-making (mean rank = 4.24), ethical and responsible behaviour (mean rank = 4.15) and goal-directed behaviour (mean rank = 3.95). It was then necessary to conduct a post hoc analysis to determine the actual differences among these gradueness skills. Figure 24 and Table 30 show the post hoc pairwise comparisons, which show the dominance of interactive skills.



Each node shows the sample average rank.

Figure 24: Friedman's 2-way ANOVA pairwise comparisons for gradueness skills

Thus, post hoc analysis was conducted with a Bonferroni correction applied, resulting in a significance level set for the dominance of interactive skills on all the other seven gradueness skills (All $p < 0.0001$).


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Table 30: Significant pairwise results for Friedman's two-way ANOVA pairwise comparisons for gradueness skills

Theoretical constructs	Test statistic	Adj. p
GGDB – GPIS	0.535	0.049*
GGDB – GAT	-0.602	0.012*
GGDB - GIS	1.859	<0.0001*
GERB - GIS	1.659	<0.0001*
GPDS - GIS	1.573	<0.0001*
GCLO - GIS	1.420	<0.0001*
GES - GIS	1.420	<0.0001*
GPIS - GIS	1.324	<0.0001*
GAT - GIS	1.257	<0.0001*

* Significant difference

There was also sufficient evidence at a 5% significance level to conclude that analytical thinking skills were significantly dominant/higher than the goal-directed behaviour skills ($p < 0.05$). Presenting and applying skills were also significantly higher than goal-directed behaviour skills (p

< 0.05). The remaining pairwise differences were not significantly different. The next section presents the correlation analysis.

5.7 Correlation analysis

This section focuses on non-parametric correlations between all major theoretical variables.

5.7.1 Non-parametric correlations between all major theoretical variables

The researcher found it imperative to assess the underlying correlations between the major theoretical variables. Table 31 shows the Spearman Rho correlations (r_s) and significance probabilities for relations of social media use (independent variable), perceived employability (dependent variable), and gradueness skills (mediating variable).

Table 31: Spearman's Rho correlations (r_s) and significance probabilities (p) for relations of employee wellbeing with other theoretical constructs post-merger and acquisitions

Theoretical constructs	SM	PE	G
Social media usage	$r_s = 1.000$		
Perceived employability	$r_s = 0.127$ $p < 0.010^{**}$	$r_s = 1.000$	
Graduateness skills	$r_s = 0.303$ $p < 0.0001^{**}$	$r_s = 0.518$ $p < 0.0001^{**}$	$r_s = 1.000$

** Correlation is significant level is 0.01(2-tailed test).

These results suggest that the independent variable (social media use) had a weak, significant and positive correlation with the dependent variable, perceived employability ($r_s = 0.127$; $p = 0.010$). Thus, the more the individual's perception of possibilities of obtaining and maintaining employment the more the usage of social media in finding employment. On the other hand, the use of social media by students had a moderate, significant and positive correlation with gradueness skills, which is the attribute that makes final year students capable of attaining and keeping fulfilling work ($r_s = 0.303$; $p < 0.0001$). Lastly, the dependent variable (perceived employability) had a moderate, significant, and positive correlation with the mediating variable ($r_s = 0.518$; $p < 0.0001$). The following section presents the inferential analysis of direct and indirect effects using structural equation modelling.

5.8 Inferential analysis on direct and indirect effects using structural equation modelling

To determine the underlying direct and indirect effects that exist on the dependent variable (perceived employability), the independent variable (social media use), and mediating variable (graduateness skills), structural equation modelling (SEM) was adopted. The researcher assessed direct effects that exist between the independent variable and the dependent variable, the independent variable, and the mediating variable as well as the mediating variable and the dependent variable.

5.8.1 Direct effects using SEM for the independent variable on the dependent variable

Figure 25 shows the path diagram drawn in AMOS for the direct effect of the independent variable (social media use) on the dependent variable (perceived employability).

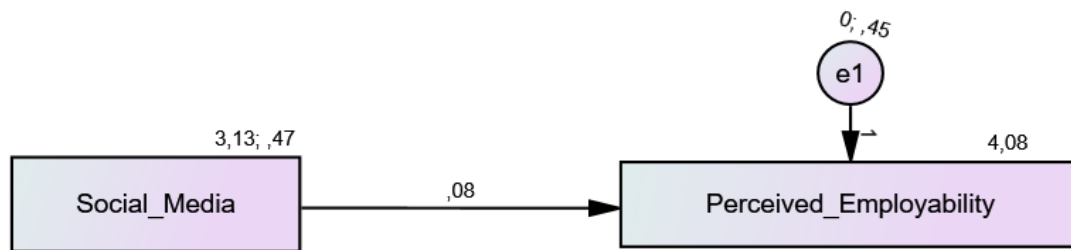


Figure 25: The path diagram for the social media use and perceived employability structural model

In this research project, the observed, endogenous variable (perceived employability), the observed, exogenous variable (social media use), and an unobserved, exogenous variable were denoted by e1. Table 32 to Table 36 present the summary results of the established default model for the social media and perceived employability structural model. The following table illustrates the fitness indexes assessment for the structural model.

Table 32: The fitness indexes assessment for the structural model

Name of category	Name of index	Index value	Comments
Absolute fit	RMSEA	0.062	The required level was achieved
Incremental fit	CFI	0.950	The required level was achieved

Table 32 presents the summary results of the established default model. The model fit summary shows that the model is an adequate fit, thus RMSEA = 0.062 and CFI = 1.000. The following table illustrates regression weights.

Table 33: Regression weights

		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
Perceived employability	<--- Social Media	0.078	0.049	1.606	0.108	par_1

Table 33 reveals the unstandardized and standardized parameter estimate of the regression weights. The parameter estimates for the social media use and perceived employability model (beta = 0.078; p = 0.108) is not significant. The following table illustrates standardized regression weights.

Table 34: Standardised Regression Weights

	Estimate
Perceived employability <--- Social media use	0.079



The standardised regression weights for the prediction model of perceived employability by social media use has an estimate of 0.079, as illustrated in Table 34. The following table illustrates the effects.

Table 35: Intercepts

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
Perceived employability	4.084	0.156	26.242	***	par_3

However, the intercept for the prediction model of perceived employability by social media use is highly significant (beta = 4.084; p < 0.0001) as shown in Table 35. The following table illustrates the direct effects.

Table 36: Direct effects

Variable	Direct effects	Standardised direct effects
	Social media use	Social media use
Perceived Employability	0.078	0.079

Thus, the regression weight for social media use in the prediction of perceived employability is not significantly different from zero at the 0,001 level (two-tailed). This also implies that the unstandardised and standardised direct effects as depicted in Table 36 are not statistically significant. In conclusion, since regression weight for social media use is not significant, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that social media use does not have a significant direct effect on perceived employability.

5.8.2 Direct effects using SEM for the mediating variable on the dependent variable

Figure 26 shows the path diagram drawn in AMOS for the direct effect of the mediating variable (graduateness skills) on the dependent variable (perceived employability). In this research project, the observed, endogenous variable (perceived employability), the observed, exogenous variable (graduateness skills) and an unobserved, exogenous variable are denoted by e1.

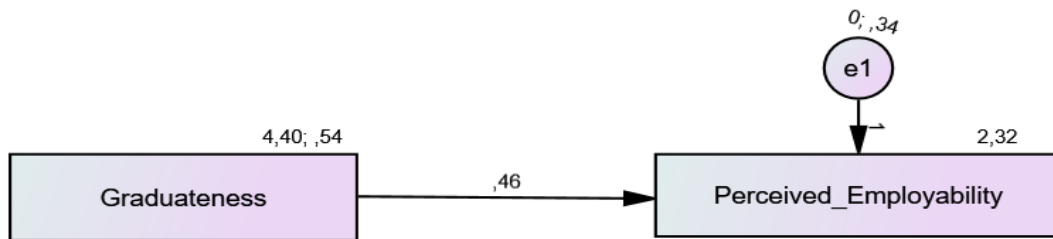


Figure 26: The path diagram for the graduateness skills and perceived employability structural model

Table 37 to Table 41 present the summary results of the established default model for the graduateness skills and perceived employability structural model. The following table illustrates the fitness indexes assessment for the structural model.

Table 37: The fitness indexes assessment for the structural model

Name of category	Name of index	Index value	Comments
Absolute fit	RMSEA	0.065	The required level was achieved
Incremental fit	CFI	0.985	The required level was achieved

Table 37 above presents the summary results of the established default model. The model fit summary shows that the model is an adequate fit, thus RMSEA = 0.065 and CFI = 0.985.

Table 38: Regression weights

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
Perceived employability <--- Graduateness skills	0.456	0.039	11.577	***	par_1

The regression weight for graduateness skills in the prediction of perceived employability is significantly different from zero at the 0,001 level (two-tailed). Table 39 and Table 40 reveal the unstandardised and standardised parameter estimate of the regression weights. The parameter estimates for the graduateness skills and perceived employability structural model (beta = 0.456; $p < 0.0001$) are highly significant.

**Table 39: Standardised regression weights**

	Estimate
Perceived employability <--- Graduateness skills	0.496

The standardised regression weight for the prediction model of perceived employability by graduateness skills has an estimate of 0.496 as illustrated in Table 39. The following table illustrates intercepts.

Table 40: Intercepts

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
Perceived employability	2.322	0.176	13.217	***	par_3

Also, the intercept for the prediction model of perceived employability by graduateness skills is highly significant (beta = 2.322; $p = < 0.0001$). The following table illustrates the direct effects.

Table 41: Direct effects

Variable	Direct effects	Standardised direct effects
	Graduateness	Graduateness
Perceived employability	0.456	0.496

This also implies that the unstandardised and standardised direct effects as depicted in Table 41 are statistically significant. Thus, when graduateness skills increase by 1 unit, perceived employability increases by 0,456 units. In conclusion, since our regression weight for graduateness skills is significant, there is sufficient evidence to conclude the graduateness skills does have a significant direct and positive effect on perceived employability.

5.8.3 Direct effects using SEM for the individual constructs of the mediating variable on the dependent variable

Figure 27 shows the path diagram drawn in AMOS for the direct effects of the individual constructs of the mediating variable (graduateness skills) on the dependent variable (perceived employability).

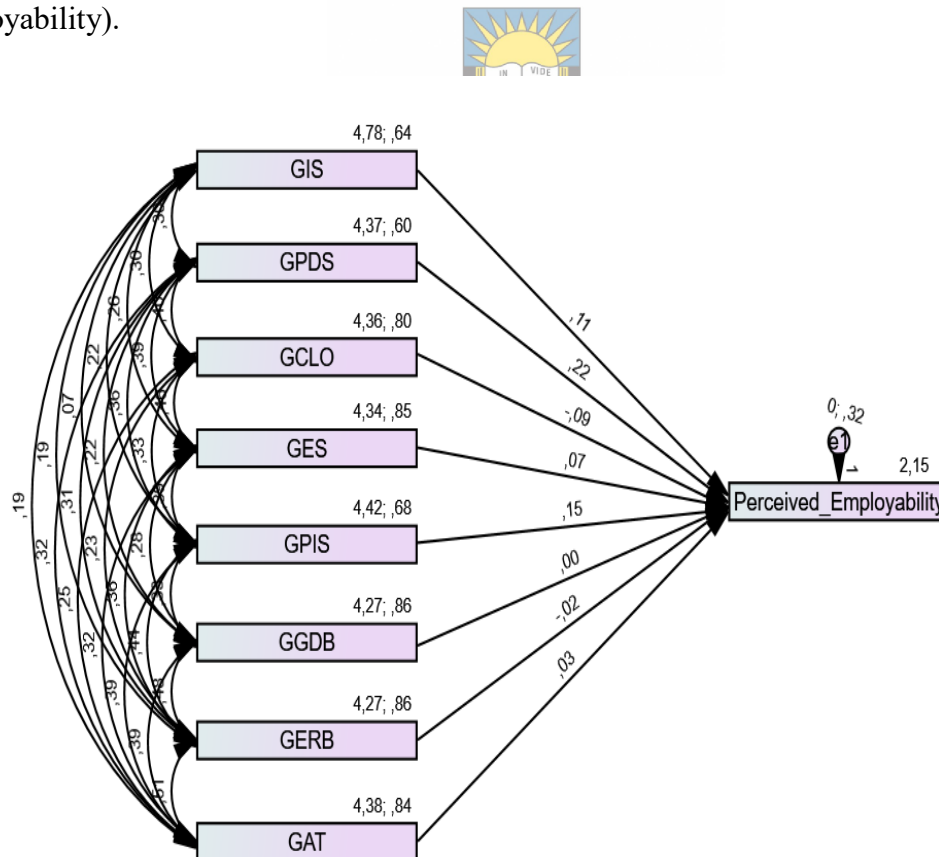


Figure 27: The path diagram for the gradueness skills and perceived employability structural model

In this research project, the observed, endogenous variable (perceived employability), the observed, exogenous variables (interactive skills (GIS), problem-solving and decision-making skills (GPDS), continuous learning orientation (GCLO), enterprising skills (GES), presenting and applying skills (GPIS), goal-directed behaviour (GGDB), ethical and responsible behaviour (GERB) and analytical thinking (GAT) and an unobserved exogenous variable are denoted by ϵ_1 . Table 42 to Table 45 present the summary results of the established default model for the gradueness skills constructs and perceived employability structural model. The following section illustrates the fitness indexes assessment for the structural model

Table 42: The fitness indexes assessment for the structural model

Name of category	Name of index	Index value	Comments
Absolute fit	RMSEA	0.086	The required level was achieved
Incremental fit	CFI	0.903	The required level was achieved

Table 42 illustrates that the model fit summary shows that the model is an adequate fit, thus RMSEA = 0.086 and CFI = 0.903, which is in line with established joint fit criteria (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2005). The following section illustrates the regression weights

Table 43: Regression weights

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
Perceived employability	<--- GIS		0.108	0.041	2.627	0.009	par_1
Perceived employability	<--- GPS		0.222	0.054	4.138	***	par_2
Perceived employability	<--- GCLO		-0.086	0.051	-1.669	0.095	par_3
Perceived employability	<--- GES		0.072	0.041	1.738	0.082	par_4
Perceived employability	<--- GPIS		0.154	0.049	3.167	0.002	par_5
Perceived employability	<--- GGDB		0.000	0.047	0.008	0.993	par_6
Perceived employability	<--- GERB		-0.019	0.044	-0.423	0.672	par_7
Perceived employability	<--- GAT		0.034	0.041	0.839	0.401	par_8

Table 43 reveals the regression weights. The only significant parameter estimates for the perceived employability prediction structural model are those for perceived employability and interactive skills (beta = 0.108; $p < 0.009$), problem-solving and decision-making skills (beta = 0.222; p

<0.0001) and presenting and applying skills ($\beta = 0.154$; $p < 0.002$). Continuous learning orientation ($\beta = -0.086$; $p < 0.095$), enterprising skills ($\beta = 0.072$; $p < 0.082$), goal-directed behaviour ($\beta = 0.000$; $p < 0.993$), ethical and responsible behaviour ($\beta = -0.019$; $p < 0.672$) and analytical thinking ($\beta = 0.034$; $p < 0.401$) had non-significant direct effects on perceived employment. The following Table 44 presents standardised regression weights

Table 44: Standardised regression weights

		Estimate
Perceived employability	<--- GIS	0.132
Perceived employability	<--- GPDS	0.263
Perceived employability	<--- GCLO	-0.118
Perceived employability	<--- GES	0.102
Perceived employability	<--- GPIS	0.195
Perceived employability	<--- GGDB	0.001
Perceived employability	<--- GERB	-0.026
Perceived employability	<--- GAT	0.048

Table 44 reveals the standardised parameter estimates of the regression weights. The standardised regression weights for the prediction model of perceived employability by GIS have an estimate of 0.132, GPDS has an estimate of 0.263, GES has an estimate of 0.102, GPIS has an estimate of 0.195, GGDB has an estimate of 0.001 and GAT has an estimate of 0.048. The following table illustrates intercepts.

Table 45: Intercepts

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
Perceived employability	2.151	0.189	11.385	***	par_44

Also, the intercept for the prediction model of perceived employability is highly significant ($\beta = 2.151$; $p < 0.0001$). The following table reveals the total effects.

Table 46: Total effects

	GAT	GERB	GGDB	GPIS	GES	GCLO	GPDS	GIS
Total effects	0.034	-0.019	0.000	0.154	0.072	-0.086	0.222	0.108

		GAT	GERB	GGDB	GPIS	GES	GCLO	GPDS	GIS
Standardised effects	T.	0.048	-0.026	0.001	0.195	0.102	-0.118	0.263	0.132

Table 47: Direct effects

		GAT	GERB	GGDB	GPIS	GES	GCLO	GPDS	GIS
Direct effects		0.034	-0.019	0.000	0.154	0.072	-0.086	0.222	0.108
Standardised D. effects		0.048	-0.026	0.001	0.195	0.102	-0.118	0.263	0.132

In conclusion, for the individual constructs of gradueness, only interactive skills, problem-solving and decision-making skills, and presenting and applying skills have significant direct and positive effects on perceived employability.

5.8.4 Hypotheses Testing

To quantify the influence that exists within the hypothesized frameworks as well as the effect of the mediating variable, some models using SEM were utilised. The results reveal that the mediating variable (gradueness) affect the dependent variable (perceived employability), but the independent variable (social media use) does not affect the dependent variable or still affects the dependent variable (perceived employability) but in a smaller magnitude. If a mediation effect exists, the effect of the independent variable (social media use) on the dependent variable (perceived employability) will disappear/will not exist (or at least weaken) when the mediating variable (gradueness) is included in the model. The effect of the independent variable (social media use) on the dependent variable (perceived employability) goes through the mediating variable (gradueness).

A conceptualised structural model was developed (see Figure 28). The main objective was to establish whether gradueness skills (moderating variable (MV)) mediate the relationship between social media use (independent variable (IV)) and perceived employability (dependent variable (DV)). The role of a mediator is to provide an indirect effect of social media use (independent variable (IV)) on perceived employability (dependent variable (DV)). Thus, the researcher wanted to test the significance of a mediator in the independent variable and dependent

variable relationship. The testing procedure of path analysis in SEM was applied. And, social media use, perceived employability, and graduateness skills were an independent variable, a dependent variable, and a moderator variable respectively.

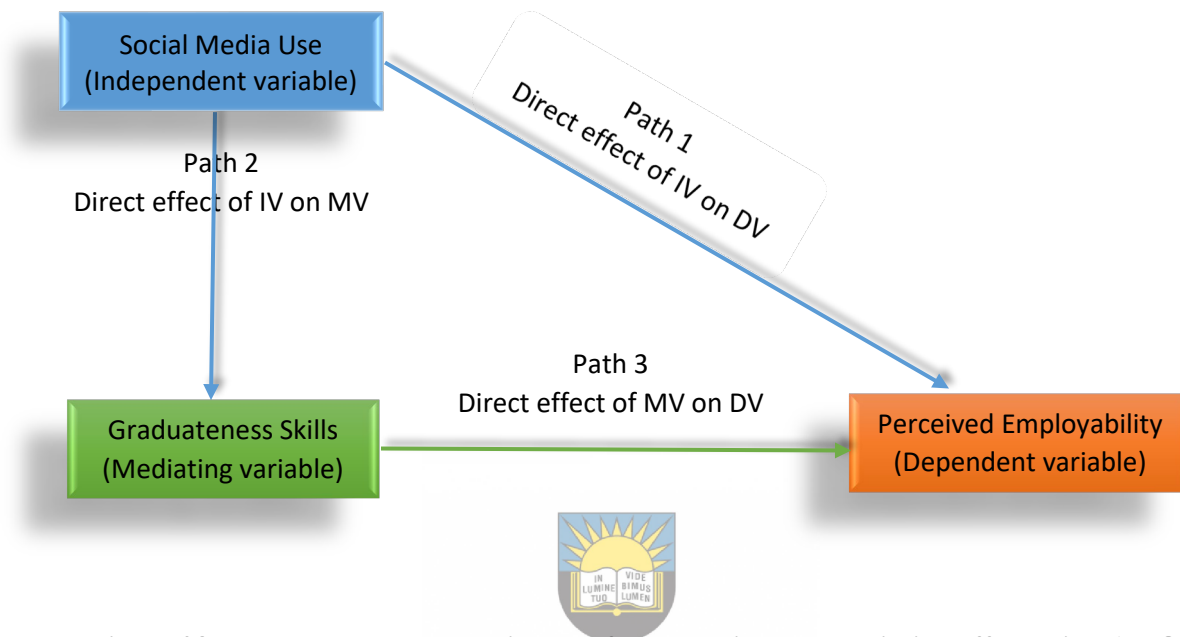


Figure 28: The conceptual path diagram for modelling the mediating effect using AMOS

Figure 29, presents the following hypotheses frameworks.

✚ **Path 1:** Direct effect of social media use on perceived employability.

H1₀. There is no significant direct effect of social media use on perceived employability amongst final year students at HDIs.

H1₁. There is a significant direct effect of social media use on perceived employability amongst final year students at HDIs.

✚ **Path 2:** Direct effect of social media use on graduateness skills.

H2₀. There is no significant direct effect of social media use on graduateness skills amongst final year students at HDIs.

H2₁. There is a significant direct effect of social media use on graduateness skills amongst final year students at HDIs.

✚ **Path 3:** Direct effect of graduateness skills on perceived employability.

H30. There is no significant direct effect of graduateness skills on perceived employability amongst final year students at HDIs.

H31. There is a significant direct effect of graduateness skills on perceived employability amongst final year students at HDIs.

Using SEM, the model was constructed in AMOS and the diagram is shown in Figure 27. The observed, endogenous variables are perceived employability and graduateness. The observed, exogenous variable is social media use and the unobserved, exogenous variables are denoted by e1 and e2. The standardised parameter estimates are shown in the diagram. The rectangles represent the observed variables and the circles are for the error terms.

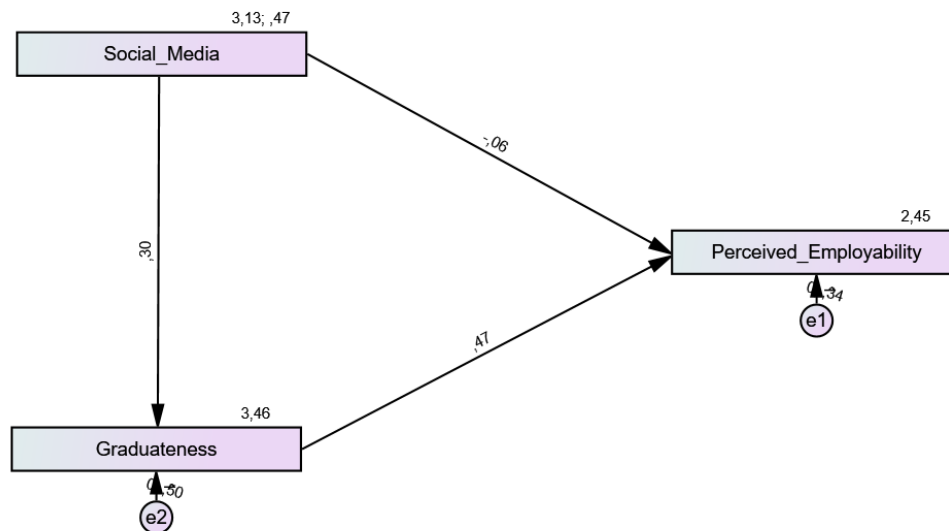


Figure 29: The conceptual path diagram for modelling the mediating effect using AMOS

Table 48: The fitness indexes assessment for the structural model

Name of category	Name of index	Index value	Comments
Absolute fit	GFI	1.000	The required level is achieved
Incremental fit	CFI	1.000	The required level is achieved

Table 48 reveals the fitness indexes assessment for the structural model. The model fit summary shows that the model is an adequate fit, thus GFI = 1.000 and CFI = 1.000, which is in line with

established joint fit criteria (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2005). The following table illustrates regression weights.

Table 49: Regression weights

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
Graduateness skills	<---	Social media	0.301	0.051	5.910	***	par_3
Perceived employability	<---	Social media	-0.064	0.044	-1.461	0.144	par_1
Perceived employability	<---	Graduateness	0.473	0.041	11.552	***	par_2

Table 49 reveals the parameter estimates for the graduateness skills and social media use model (beta = 0.301; p = <0.0001) as well as perceived employability and graduateness skill model (beta = 0.473; p = <0.0001) which are highly significant. Thus, the regression weight for social media use in the prediction of graduateness skills is significantly different from zero at the 0,001 level (two-tailed). Also, the regression weight for graduateness skills in the prediction of perceived employability is significantly different from zero at the 0,001 level (two-tailed). In other words, all of them are significantly different from 0. The interpretations of the parameter estimates are straightforward. When social media increases by 1 unit, graduateness skills increases by 0,301 units, and when graduateness skills increase by 1 unit, perceived employability increases by 0,473 units. However, the parameter estimates for the social media use and perceived employability model (beta = -0.064; p = > 0.0001) was not statistically significant.

Table 50: Standardised regression weights

			Estimate
Graduateness skills	<---	Social media use	0.280
Perceived Employability	<---	Social media use	-0.065
Perceived employability	<---	Graduateness	0.515

The standardised regression weights for the prediction model of graduateness skills by social media use has an estimate of 0.280. The standardised regression weights for the prediction model of perceived employability by graduateness skills has an estimate of 0.515. The following table illustrates intercepts.

Table 51: Intercepts

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
Graduateness skills	3.456	0.163	21.197	***	par_5
Perceived employability	2.449	0.196	12.516	***	par_4

Also, the intercept for the prediction model of graduateness skills is highly significant (beta = 3.456; $p < 0.0001$). The intercept for the prediction model of perceived employability is highly significant (beta = 2,449; $p < 0.0001$). The following table reveals the total effects.

Table 52: Total effects

Variable	Total effects		Standardised total effects	
	Social media use	Graduateness	Social media use	Graduateness
Graduateness skills	0.301	0.000	0.280	0.000
Perceived Employability	0.078	0.473	0.079	0.515

This also implies that the unstandardised and standardised direct effects as depicted in Table 52 are statistically significant. Thus, when social media increases by 1 unit, graduateness skills increases by 0,301 units, while when social media increase by a unit, perceived employability decreases by 0.001. The following table presents the direct effects.

Table 53: Direct effects

Variable	Direct effects		Standardised direct effects	
	Social media use	Graduateness	Social media use	Graduateness
Graduateness	0.301	0.000	0.280	0.000
Perceived Employability	-0.064	0.473	-0.065	0.515

In conclusion, social media have a significant direct and positive effect on graduateness skills while social media have a negative effect on perceived employability. In conclusion, from the

above-hypothesised framework there is sufficient evidence at a 5% level of significance to decide the following:

 **Path 1:** Direct effect of social media use on perceived employability.

Not to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no significant direct effect of social media use on perceived employability.

 **Path 2:** Direct effect of social media use on graduateness skills.

To reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant direct effect of social media use on graduateness skills.

 **Path 3:** Direct effect of graduateness skills on perceived employability.

To reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant direct effect of graduateness skills on perceived employability.

Lastly, to quantify the effect of the moderating variable, a bootstrapping approach with 1000 replications was used in AMOS. This was to test the following hypotheses:

H40. Graduateness skills do not have a significant mediating effect on the relationship between social media use and perceived employability amongst final year students at HDIs

H41. Graduateness skills do have a significant mediating effect on the relationship between social media use and perceived employability amongst final year students at HDIs.

Table 54: Indirect effects

Variable	Indirect effects		Standardised indirect effects	
	Social media use	Graduateness skills	Social media use	Graduateness skills
Graduateness skills	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Perceived employability	0.142*	0.000	0.144*	0.000

(*) Significant at alpha = 0.05 using the bootstrapping approach

The standardised indirect (mediated) effect of social media use on perceived employability is 0.144 ($p = 0.002$). That is, due to the indirect (mediated) effect of social media use on perceived

employability, when social media use goes up by 1 standard deviation, perceived employability goes up by 0.144 standard deviations.

Table 55: Standardised indirect effects – Two-tailed significance (BC)

	Social media use graduateness	
Graduateness skills	...	...
Perceived employability	0.002	...

This is in addition to any direct (unmediated) effect that social media may have on perceived employability. From the hypothesised frameworks, H4, the researcher can conclude that there is a significant indirect effect of social media use on perceived employability as well. The following section provides a summary of accepted and rejected hypotheses.

These results revealed that social media use had a weak, significant and positive correlation with the perceived employability ($r_s = 0.127$; $p = 0.010$). The use of social media by students had a moderate, significant and positive correlation with graduateness skill, ($r_s = 0.303$; $p < 0.0001$). Lastly, perceived employability had a moderate, significant, and positive correlation with the mediating variable ($r_s = 0.518$; $p < 0.0001$).

Table 56: Summary of accepted and rejected hypotheses

Hypotheses	Accepted	Rejected
There is a significant direct effect of social media use on perceived employability amongst final year students at HDIs.		X
There is a significant direct effect of social media use on graduateness skills amongst final year students at HDIs.	X	
There is a significant direct effect of graduateness skills on perceived employability amongst final year students at HDIs	X	
Graduateness skills have a significant mediating effect on the relationship between social media use and perceived employability amongst final year students at HDIs.	X	

5.9 Summary of the chapter

This chapter presented the analysis of data collected from the final year students at HDIs by means of a questionnaire. The questionnaire contained demographics, social media use, graduateness skills attributes, and perceived employability sections corresponding to the objectives of the research study. The response rate for this research project was 93%. The findings were presented in the form of text, graphs, and tables. Both exploratory factor analysis, as well as confirmatory factor analysis, were piloted to define the items which load to specific theoretical constructs for the theoretical variables of this research study. The study made use of Cronbach's alpha to test reliability analysis. A one-sample t-test was used to test for equality of means for the continuous theoretical constructs. Friedman's two-way ANOVA test was conducted to find the dominant graduateness skills that exist within the sampled institutions. The Spearman Rho correlation coefficient was used to examine the nature, strength, and direction of the correlations that exist between the dependent variable (perceived employability), the independent variable (social media use), and the mediating variable (graduateness skills). With regards to the relationship between social media use and graduateness skills, the results show social media use had a moderate, significant, and positive correlation with problem-solving and decision-making skills, continuous learning orientation, and enterprising skills. The remaining graduateness skills, thus, interactive skills, presenting and applying skills, goal-directed behaviour, ethical and responsible behaviour and analytical thinking all had weak, significant, and positive correlations with social media use. Lastly, multiple linear regression models using structural equation modelling (SEM) were utilised to quantify the effect of the mediating variable. The study found that the direct effect of social media use on graduateness skills is significant as well as the direct effect of graduateness skills on perceived employability. Also, the direct effect of social media use on perceived employability does not exist except when the mediating variable (graduateness skills) is included. Thus, graduateness skills fully mediate the relationship between social media use and perceived employability (full mediation). Thus, graduateness skills do have a significant mediating effect on the relationship between social media use and perceived employability. The next chapter (Chapter 6) presents the findings from the qualitative data.

Chapter 1 Introduction	
Chapter 2 Research Methodology	
Chapter 3 Social Media and Employability	
Chapter 4 Graduateness Skills and Employability	
Chapter 5 Presentation of Findings from Quantitative Data	
Chapter 6 Presentation of Findings from the Qualitative Data	Chapter 6 Presentation of Findings from the Qualitative Data 6.1 Introduction 6.2 Description of participants 6.3 Initial codes 6.4 Themes 6.5 Graduate challenges 6.6 Requisite graduate skills needed 6.7 Social media role in recruitment 6.8 Social media role in enhancing graduate skills and employability 6.9 Strategies to enhance graduate & employability skills and employability through social media 6.10 Summary of the chapter
Chapter 7 Summary, Discussion, Limitations, Contributions, Future Research, Recommendations and Conclusions	

CHAPTER 6: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS FROM THE QUALITATIVE DATA

6.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 provided an overview of the analysis of the data that was collected making use of the questionnaires from final year students. Section 2.4 in Chapter 2 discussed the exploratory sequential mixed method employed for data collection and analysis for this study. The exploratory sequential design was adapted for the data collection phase of study from the variety of mixed-method approaches available. The rationale for the sequence of events in a sequential exploratory mixed method design for data collection and analysis was that it was an effective way to learn about the phenomena under investigation.

The study employed rich data typically generated by quantitative data as a way of understanding the depth of the issues regarding the phenomenon under investigation, thereafter following up with a qualitative inquiry to garner more confidence about the generalisability of the study. Creswell and Poth (2009) stated that exploratory sequential design is appropriate for answering the research questions on a subject topic of an exploratory nature in its given context. The researcher has room to draw out themes and patterns from the survey instrument, thereby giving a rich context to findings that might not have been achievable with the use of a singular quantitative questionnaire. Chapter 5 presents empirical data which was collected from final year students at two historically disadvantaged institutions in South Africa.

To answer the research question, “How can the use of social media enhance graduateness skills and employability amongst final year students at HDIs in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa?”, this study applied various phases of collecting data as part of the exploratory sequential mixed method design for the process of data collection and analysis. The artefact (model, explained in Chapter 5) was built through a design science process, and in accordance with Peffers et al.’s (2008) Design Science process (diagrammed in Table 2, Chapter 2). The first phase of data collection for the study was through quantitative data collection to confirm the need for the study in the problem domain.

This chapter is structured as follows; the first section describes participants. The following section details initial codes and themes for the study. The following section describes graduate challenges findings. The next section narrates findings on requisite graduate skills needed. The following section describes social media role in recruitment findings. The following section describes findings on social media role in enhancing graduate skills and employability. The following section narrates findings on strategies to enhance graduate & employability skills and employability through social media. The chapter concludes with a summary of the chapter. The following section discusses the description of participants.

6.2 Description of participants

Due to the outbreak of COVID 19 worldwide, the researcher needed to practise social distancing so could not visit in person. The researcher contacted participants via telephone and email and then hosted a qualitative questionnaire on Google Forms to test the components of social media use, graduateness skills and employability presented in Chapter 5. According to Snolnoki and Hoffmann (2013), Google Forms is an  online survey instrument that allows participants to complete questionnaires and submit online. Online surveys are considered a suitable means of collecting qualitative data whereby the researcher's presence has minimum influence on the participant's views and opinions (Snolnoki & Hoffmann, 2013). Participants were drawn from recruitment agencies or Human Resources (HR) or Human Capital Management in South Africa. A total of 15 participants responded to the online survey.

Responses were later exported to Excel, cleaned and reviewed for spelling errors. The emerging themes were then analysed and findings from them presented. The importance of the qualitative data collection phase is that it provides rich contextual data, which enables the researcher to establish whether or not the conceptual model can meet the main objective of the research in its given context. The inquiry, through the questionnaire, was designed to explore interpretations and draw meanings that would help to unearth the critical components of social media, graduateness skills and employability which must be included in the final artefact. Before the presentations and discussion of narratives of the participants on social media use, graduateness skills and employability it is imperative to present the usage profile of the participants.

Table 59 shows that 47% of the participants were male, while 53% were female, which indicates that the majority of the participants were female. The results of the study are congruent with gender

in the HR field. Burt (2017) mentioned that the human resources field is controlled by women. A 2016 report from Human Capital Statistics revealed that 72% of women are in HR management. Table 57 below shows the distribution of participants.

Table 57: Usage profile of the participants

Interviewee	Gender	Age group	Speciality	Years of experience in Human management function? (HRM)
1	Male	36 – 45 years	Deputy Director of Human Resources	15 years in the HR environment
2	Male	36 – 45 years	IT Manager	12 Years
3	Male	26 – 35 years	HRM	3 years
4	Male	26 – 35 years	Recruiting and Line Manager to Lecturers	3.5 years' experience in HR
5	Male	26 – 35 years	Specialist in Remuneration and Employee Benefits.	7 years
6	Female	36 – 45 years	Hr Officer/Administrator	13 Years
7	Male	36 – 45 years	HR experience specialising in Employee Relations	17 years
8	Female	26 – 35 years	HR Practitioner	1 year
9	Female	25 – 35 years	HR Practitioner	6 years' experience in HR
10	Female	25 – 35 years	HR Practitioner	5 Years
11	Female	26 – 35 years	HR Practitioner	12 years' experience
12	Female	26 – 35 years	Specialist in Recruitment	4,5 years of experience
13	Female	36 – 45 years	HR Practitioner	3 years
14	Female	36 – 45 years	HR Practitioner	8 years of experience
15	Male	26 – 35 years	HR Practitioner	1 year

N=15

Regarding the age categories, the biggest and the smallest age group that participated in the study were between the ages of 36 and 45 and 26 and 35 respectively. Twenty-seven per cent of the participants were between 36-45 years; 73% of the participants were between 26-35 years while none of the participants was between 18-25 and 46 and 55 years. Figure 30 depicts the age category of participants.

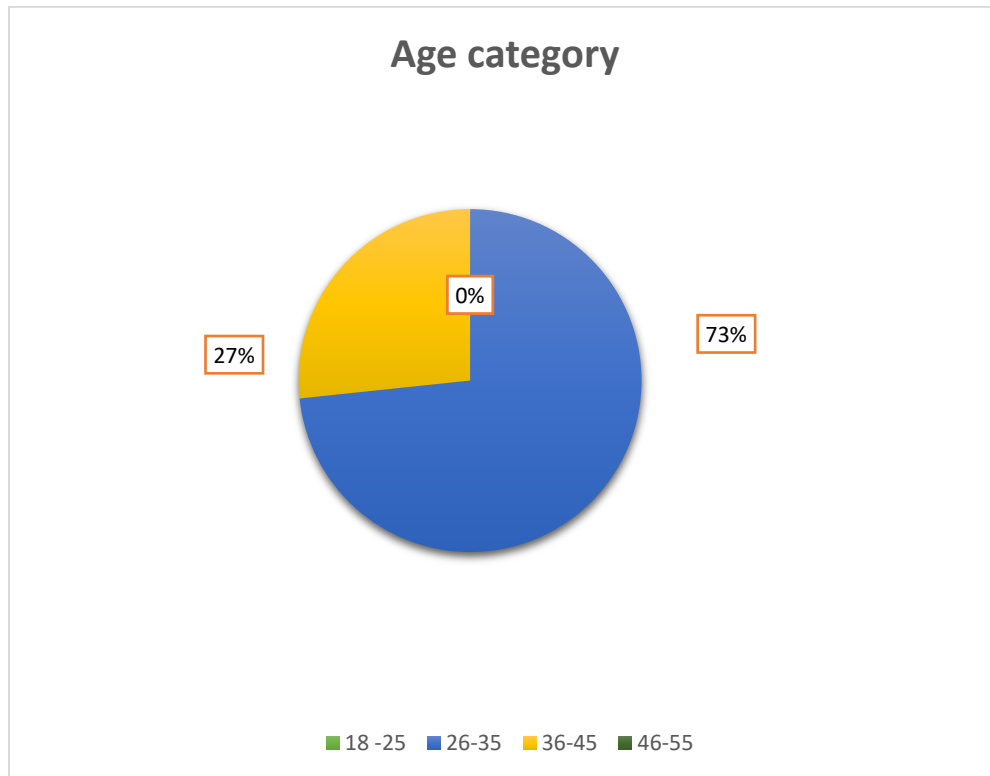


Figure 30: Age category of the participants

Concerning years of experience, Figure 31 below shows that 46% of the participants at the time of the study had between 0-5 years of experience; 27% had between 11-15 years of experience, while 20% had between 6-10 years of experience. This indicates that 100% of the participants had between 25-45 years of experience.

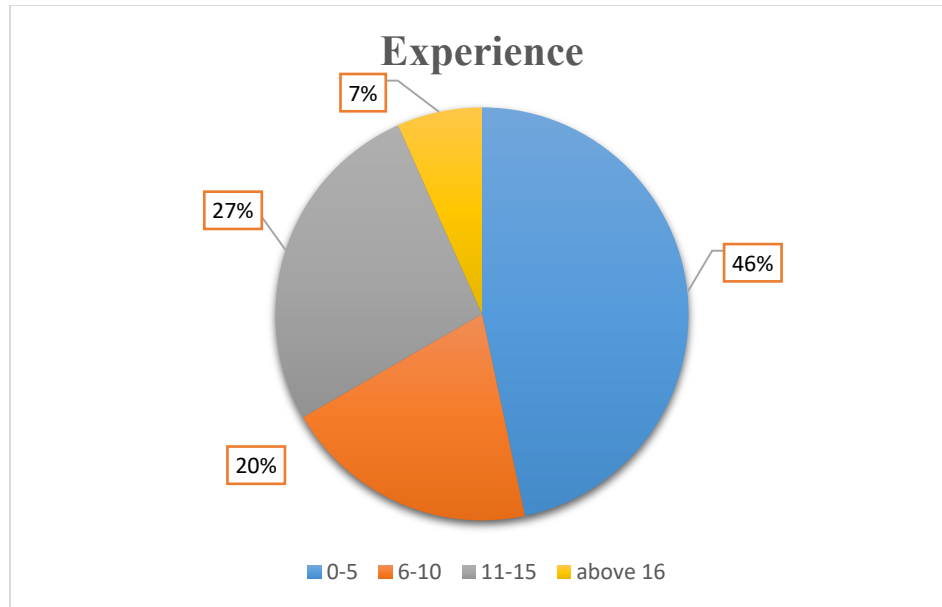


Figure 31: Experience of the participants

6.3 Initial codes

The coding of the data into themes was not aided by the use of a software program. The coding of the data was done manually. Gibbs (2007) mentioned that the coding of the responses is significant as it refines interpretations of the interviews and it helps to summarise and synthesise the data collected. Initially, the researcher read through the interviews and came up with what could be the possible codes, based on the responses. Then diverse highlighters were used to group the different codes into themes. Figure 32 illustrates the initial codes, which were identified and refined into themes.

6.4 Themes

After the potential codes had been identified, the codes were grouped into potential themes. Different highlighters were used to group the different codes into themes and sub-themes. The themes that were identified were narrowed down to sub-themes as shown in Appendix E. Themes try to identify patterns from the codes. The themes that were identified in this research are listed in Table 58 and illustrated in Figure 32.

Table 58: Themes

THEMES :
Graduate challenges
Requisite graduate skills needed
Social media role in recruitment
Social media role in enhancing graduate skills and employability
Strategies to enhance graduate & employability skills and employability through social media



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Together in Excellence

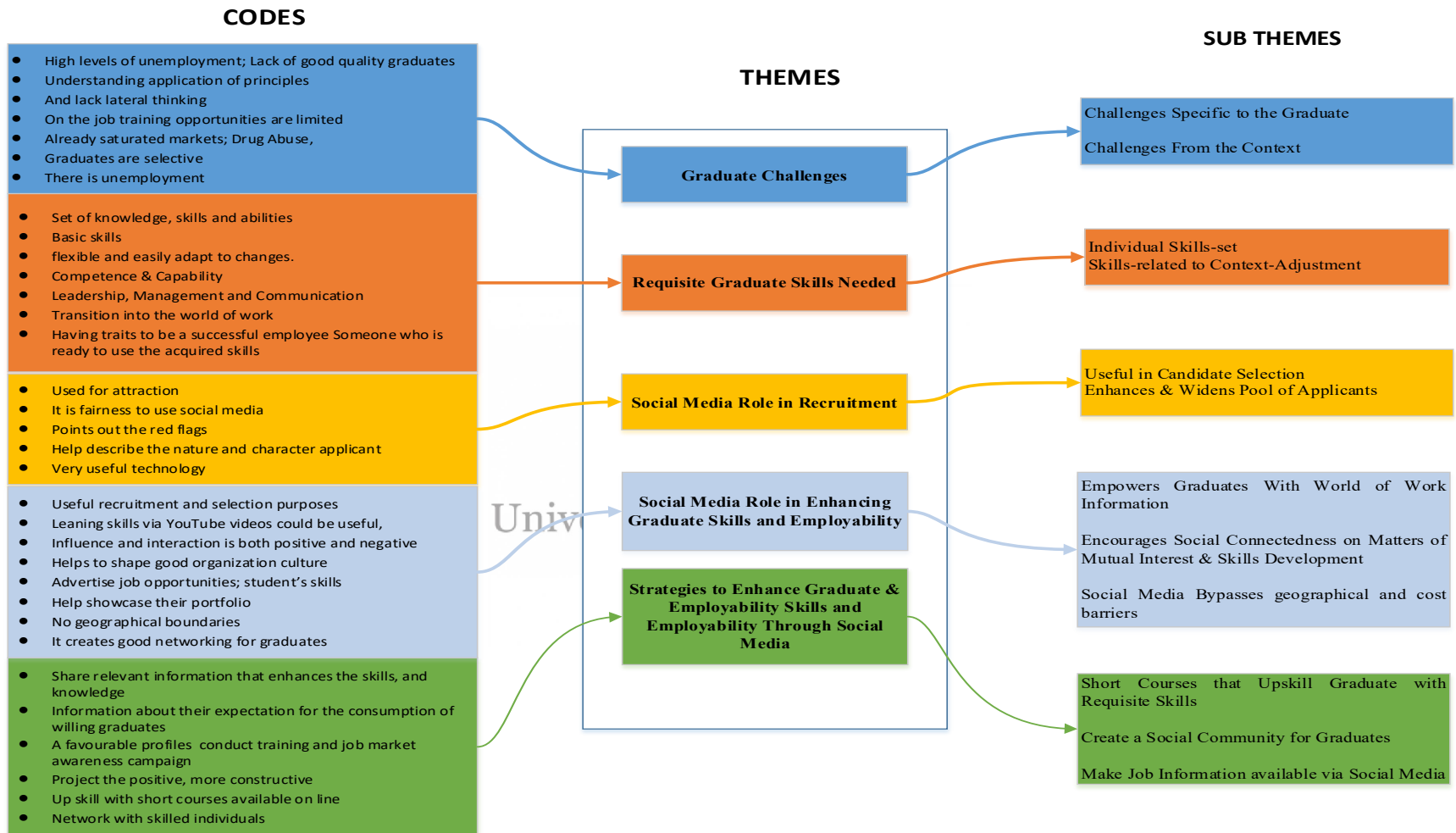


Figure 32: Initial codes and themes

6.5 Graduate challenges

From the interviews conducted, it was noted that graduates' challenges were split into two groups, namely challenges specific to the graduates and challenges from the context. The following section narrates challenges specific to the graduates.

6.5.1 Challenges specific to the graduates

There are challenges specific to graduates. These challenges influence the employability of final year students. Youth need to deal with these challenges specific to them to enhance their chances of being employed. The participants expressed that most of the graduates today are finding it challenging to be hired as they lack understanding of the application of principles they have studied and lack lateral thinking. One of the participants articulated that:

Understanding the application of principles, they have studied and lack lateral thinking
(Participant 2).

In the same vein, another participant revealed that most graduates find it challenging to translate what they have studied in the work environment. Graduates cannot think outside the box and hence finding it challenging to solve problems using a creative approach via reasoning that is not immediately obvious. Thus, tertiary education is producing incompetent graduates who are not equipped for work. Participant seven echoed the same sentiments:

Translating their theoretical knowledge into practice (Participant 7).

The participants pointed out that good communication skill is essential when a graduate want to be employed as it is necessary to communicate properly with prospective employers. Apart from that, the participants also revealed that some of the graduates are not willing to go for work-integrated learning voluntarily where they can get experience. On the other hand, the youth ought to choose a career path in which the market is not flooded. Another participant articulated that:

1) Graduates who are unaware of the need to communicate properly with prospective employers and even current employers. 2) Graduates who are not willing to do work experience which they are required to have when applying for a job. 3) Graduates who opt for careers where the market is already saturated (Participant 4).

Similarly, another participant articulated that numerous graduates do not have a good command of English and they find it challenging to communicate effectively with prospective employers during the interviews. The participant added that most of them find it challenging to communicate their ideas well as a result of only speaking their mother tongue at home. Additionally, some students learn to pass and get a degree and cannot apply their knowledge in the real world.

Many do not have a good command of the English language which would enable them to put their best foot forward in interviews etc. They struggle to articulate what they want to say even if the knowledge is there, they don't always communicate their ideas well, this is mainly due to not speaking English at home, in my opinion. Some graduates also tend to learn in parrot-fashion and cannot apply what they've learnt to real-world concepts (Participant 12).

In another view, the participant expressed that graduates are selective when it comes to opportunities available to them. Some of the graduates do not want to relocate, some do not want to start from lower positions taking into consideration the qualification they hold, while others tend to be only concerned with the salary being offered. One of the participants noted:

Graduates are too selective (Participant 5).

The participant pointed out that work experience is a requirement nowadays for someone to be employed. Thus, graduates need to gain experience; however, most graduates expect to be paid more because they are the holder of bachelor's degrees.

Expect a high salary with no work experience (Participants 15).

The following section deals with graduates' challenges from the context.

6.5.2 Challenges from the context

Contextual factors influence the employment of final year students. HR practitioners who participated in the research mentioned the poor socioeconomic situation of the country which is also a hindrance. Subsequently, most of the participants highlighted that there is a high level of unemployment as a result of the poor socioeconomic activity. There are limited job opportunities in the economy. Additionally, universities are producing graduates that in most cases fail to meet

industrial expectations, which results in industries not hiring graduates as they lack required skills. One of the participants noted:

High levels of unemployment; Lack of good quality graduates produced by many academic institutions, implying that the Industry cannot absorb graduates produced since they lack good graduate's attributes (Participant 1).

Apart from poor socioeconomic activity, most of the graduates expect a high salary with no work experience. Thus they need to go for work-integrated learning. Some of the participants noted that there are few opportunities for internships to get on-the-job training and experience. Thus, the economy is not providing opportunities for final year students to attend graduate trainee programmes. One of the participants noted:

On the job training opportunities are limited (in the form of graduate trainee programs). It's a challenge for a graduate to start a career since most academic programs at tertiary institutions fail to meet the industry's expectations (Participant 3).

Participant 6 had a different view of what others raised. The participant stated that there is a rise in the unemployment of youth because sophisticated software is being used to replace human capital. Also, the participant articulated that there is a need to realign the high education curriculum with emerging technologies so that graduates will be equipped with the required skills.

Unemployment, the introduction of 4IR might be a challenge as technology is taking the space, the most section within HR are systematized and leaving little room for specialisation. The curriculum must be aligned as such. Effective use of technology in all areas within HR is a must and such that new entrants should be capable to explore that in areas (Participant 6)

The following section discusses the requisite graduate skills.

6.6 Requisite graduate skills

Graduates need to acquire the required skills to increase their chances of being hired. Graduates' skills are categorised into individual skills set and skills adjusted to the context. The following section details the individual skills set.

6.6.1 Individual skills set

The individual skills set is the combination of knowledge, personal qualities, and abilities that final year students need to develop through their life and work. Interpersonal skills take into account specific technical knowledge and abilities required for a job. These skills include dependability, adaptability, motivation, problem-solving, and analytical skills. Participants indicated that final year students should be well skilled with interpersonal skills. One of the participants had the following input:

A well-versed student should have problem and decision-making skills, analytical thinking skills, organization and time management skills, technical and communication skills, goal-directed behaviour, analytical thinking skills as well as ethical and responsible behaviour (Participant 2).

In the same vein, another participant articulated that these individual skills are attained through continuous learning. Numerous tertiary education programmes offered at HDIs are designed in such a way that they foster individual skills development in every field of study. One of the participants articulated:



This is when your qualification has adequately prepared you to join the workforce in your particular field of study (Participant 4).

Additionally, another participant pointed out that individual skill allows final year students to have traits to become successful employee. Thus, if they get an opportunity, they will deliver as expected and be able to grow and enrich their skill set with vast experience gained from the position held.

Having traits to be a successful employee (Participant 11).

To conclude, it is a must that graduates should enrich their skill set. The following section deals with skills – related to context adjustment

6.6.2 Skills related to context adjustment

Concerning the skills related to context adjustment. A pool of skills was listed including the following: interactive skills, leadership and influence skills, organisation and time management skills, technical and communication skills, problem-solving and decision-making skills, presenting

and applying information skills, continuous learning orientation, goal-directed behaviour, enterprising skills, analytical thinking skills as well as ethical and responsible behaviour

The participants indicated that most of the skills that were listed were of utmost importance towards the employability of final year students. One of the participants narrated that a complete graduate should have skills in problem-solving and decision-making; the graduate should think critically as this will assist them to solve complex problems in the workplace; they must be able to manage time; must have good communication skills; and must have goal-directed behaviour, as well as ethical and responsible behaviour.

problem and decision-making skills, analytical thinking skills, organization and time management skills, technical and communication skills, goal-directed behaviour, analytical thinking skills as well as ethical and responsible behaviour (Participant 2).

Participants 1 and 8 made a similar point, stating that a well-rounded graduate must have all the gradueness skills provided on the list and more to increase employability chances. The participants furthermore said that all skills are of equal importance as they work in harmony to achieve organisational objectives.



The skills listed above are all important and required in order to increase employability levels. A well-rounded graduate must have all these skills and more' (Participant 1).

All of the above skills are important (Participant 8).

Most organisations are using emerging technologies such as social media in recruiting and selecting new talent. The following section discusses the role of social media in recruitment.

6.7 Social media's role in recruitment

Social media plays an important role in candidate selection and it enhances and widens the pool of applicants. The following section focuses on the importance of social media in candidate selection.

6.7.1 Useful in candidate selection

Social media has changed the way employers associate with prospective employees. Employers are examining the social media research backgrounds of job applicants. Employers check the social profiles of prospective employees during the recruitment process, and as a result, final year students' profanity and poor selling on social media reduce their chances of employment. A

participant noted that it is useful to identify ‘red flags’ as they reveal the nature and character of prospective employees. Graduates need to know how to behave when using social media as it has an impact on their online presence and employability. One of the participants noted the following:

Social networks should not be a qualifying factor. They should be handy in picking out possible red flags (such as racism and extremist behaviour) (Participant 3).

However, other participants disagreed about social media being used to select applicants as information on social media may not be based on facts. They also felt it would be unfair to use comments there to pass judgment on individual character. A participant stated that it is not fair to use social media as it has nothing to do with how they would perform their work. Another one expressed that it depends on the level of the position. One of the participants noted:

I believe people write to entertain the reader and basically to start a healthy argument with others or the personal audience in social media. To use that to assess my ability to work in your team is a little bit unfair because you do not know how far I have evolved from the day of the post (Participant 9).



Some participants argued that it is not fair not to hire a graduate because of some posts or photos found on their social media profile yet they qualify for the job. The argument was based on the fact that social media is meant for people to express themselves and should not be used for candidate selection. Thus they felt there must be policies in place guiding how the employment agents could incorporate the information on social media into recruitment and selection of new talent. Another participant expressed;

No, it is not fair because when a person meets requirements and knows his/her job that what matters (Participant 10).

Another participant pointed out that information presented on social media is not always accurate, some of the graduates forget to update their profile. Therefore, there is no need for recruitment agents to depend on the information found on a graduate's profile. Furthermore, the participant mentioned that graduates need to be careful about what they post and comment on social media as it affects their employability.

No, some people can lie about their information and some do not update their information. HR cannot rely on that information. People need to be careful of what they post and comment on (Participant 14).

6.7.2 Enhances and widens the pool of applicants

Social media is used to spread information amongst students regarding job opportunities or internships available. Thus it is useful for attraction purposes to share information regarding job opportunities across geographical borders and thereby widening the pool of applicants. Also, information shared can reach many. However, the participants pointed out that social media policies in line with recruitment and selection must be followed and administrative requirements have to be followed once applications have been received from potential candidates. One of the participants had this to say:

Social media platforms are only relevant for attraction purposes only. However other administrative requirements of the recruitment and selection must always be undertaken once applications have been received from potential candidates (Participant 1).

The following section discusses the role of social media in enhancing gradueness skills and employability amongst final year students.



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6.8 Social media role in enhancing graduate skills and employability

From the interviews conducted, it was noted that social media plays a significant role in enhancing graduates skills and employability. The first section focuses on how social media empowers graduates with the world of work information.

6.8.1 Empowers graduates with the world of work information

Information on training opportunities can be advertised through social media. The participants pointed out that the graduate must learn how to use social media to their benefit in their employability journey. Graduates should learn how to search for job opportunities, advertise their skills and profiles on social media for prospective employers to view. The participants added that through innovation offered by social media, graduates could get their "name" out in the world to a larger scope of prospective employers.

One of the participants noted:

It would be important for the graduate to learn how to use social media for their benefit in their employability journey - how to search for job opportunities, advertise their skills and profiles on social media for prospective employers to view etc. Social media allows for a number of technological innovations to help graduates get their "name" out in the world to a larger scope of prospective employers and to help showcase their portfolio if they have developed something like this (Participant 4).

The following section explains how social media encourages social connectedness on matters of mutual interest and skills development.

6.8.2 Encourages social connectedness on matters of mutual interest and skills development

Technology such as social media can help students build relationships with employers and others with whom they share a mutual interest; develop their digital identities; and showcase their skills. Thus through social media, good networks can be developed where graduates can share experience and knowledge. The participants further articulated that graduates will be accountable for what they post if possible employers are watching. One of the participants narrated it as follows:

Very useful to highlight relevant skills and network to possible employers. Makes young applicants more accountable for what is posted, if possible employers are watching (Participant 15).

A participant pointed out that graduates could make use of YouTube videos to learn new skills. LinkedIn was revealed to be useful in formal sharing of information. However, the participant stated that most of these social media are being misused, for instance sharing humorous information which does not contribute to learning.

Learning skills via YouTube videos could be useful, but platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are not useful. LinkedIn can be useful to participate in a formal sharing environment, but the use of it has become like Facebook i.e. sharing of memes that do not contribute to learning (Participant 2).

In the same view, another participant echoed that social media provide a platform for graduates to learn. Graduateness skills could be developed through social media if graduates read stories that are related to their field of interest. These stories could explain how a particular person developed

skills and became successful in finding employment. Additionally, one of the participants said the following:

We all need Social Media for relevance, we need to learn online, the employability may improve with social media especially if you read the stories on linked related to your field of interest (Participant 9).

6.8.3 Social media bypasses geographical and cost barriers

Social media has no geographical barriers. Thus, geography is no longer a barrier. People can connect from everywhere in the world using social media, as long as they have an online connection. A participant cited that social media allows information to reach the world instantly at a very affordable cost. One of the participants noted:

Information can reach the globe on time (Participant 5).

The following section discusses the strategies to enhance graduate and employability skills and employability through social media.

6.9 Strategies to enhance graduate and employability skills and employability through social media



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The participants acknowledged that social media could deal with the challenges of enhancing graduate and employability skills. The strategies acknowledged differed for every individual graduate. The following section illustrates the strategies which graduates used in dealing with their challenges.

6.9.1 Short courses that upskill graduates with requisite skills

Technology supports final year students to better engage with employers and can help students develop and showcase their gradueness skills. With regards to short courses that upskill final year students with the requisite skills, and to improve their knowledge and expertise, social media is a useful channel for them to communicate information about these skills they've attained – in preparation for future opportunities. Some participants revealed that social media is useful for providing training to graduates. One of the participants noted:

Social media can be used to share relevant information that is aimed at improving the skills, knowledge and expertise of graduates in preparation for future opportunities (Participant 1).

In a bid to curb the challenges facing graduates, Participant 5 revealed that social media is a tool that can be used to conduct both training and awareness campaigns for final year students. This training will help to educate them on the job market demands and trends so that they will be well informed about the requirements of the world of work. One of the participants articulated:

We can conduct training and awareness campaign so that students will be well versed with job markets demand and trends (Participant 5).

Social media could be used to provide constructive feedback to graduates who have showcased their skills after enhancing their skills to meet the demands of the job market. It is thus a powerful tool that graduates should use to expose their talents. One of the participants noted:

Social media is a very powerful tool nowadays and can be used as a platform to project the positive, more constructive side of individuals (Participant 7).

Therefore, social media is useful for enhancing graduates' skills. Final year students should make use of training that is available on webinars. Through this training on webinars, the graduates can be kept posted and updated on market trends. Additionally, final year students should make use of various online short courses that help to enrich required skills. One of the participants had the following to say:

There are webinars and training that take place from time to time on social media, they keep people updated of the trends (Participant 14).

Another participant agreed that graduates could use social media to upskill themselves with the short courses available online. There is also the opportunity for networking with skilled and experienced individuals with whom they share a mutual interest.

Upskill with short courses available online, network with skilled individuals (Participant 15).

The following section describes how social media can be useful for graduates to form a social community.

6.9.2 Create a social community for graduates

Social media helps create a social community for graduates. Some participants articulated that graduates should make use of available technologies to create good networks with future employers and share their experience. Apart from that, graduates could also initiate social communities with others with whom they share the same interests or who are in the same industry. In these communities, some graduates share experiences that will help others to become entrepreneurs and start a business. One of the participants noted:

It can be a good platform for good networks, others become entrepreneurs and open businesses through experiences shared via social media, (Participant 6).

6.9.3 Make job information available via social media

A social media platform can be used to post jobs and share these with potential graduates who can view and apply for them. Companies could use emerging technologies such as social media to advertise job opportunities available, and chances are high that a pool of applicants would be attracted as many graduates are active on social media. Participants also articulated that social media could be used to educate and advise graduates on skills the labour market requires which in turn helps graduates acquire skills that will make them employable. Another participant expressed the following:

The best use of it is to ensure that jobs are posted and shared on the platform to potential graduates to search and apply for them. With that, a campaign to educate and advise graduates as to the skills that are lacking both in graduates and in the job market could be used to mitigate some unemployment and possibly drive graduates to further skills themselves on what is highlighted by the campaign, (Participant 2).

Similarly, some participants stated that social media is a medium of communication that is used by various industries to communicate information about their expectations from prospective employees. Thus, final year students ought to like and follow industries on their social media platform in order to have updated information concerning employment. This view was noted by one of the participants:

Social media can be used by the industry to give information about their expectation from prospective employees (Participant 3).

It is thus evident that social media is useful in the recruitment and employment industry. However, graduates have to be educated about what information they should post on their social media platforms as it has an impact or influence when prospective employers are conducting a background check – since most organisations are using social media so check the character and background of their prospective employees. One of the participants confirmed this by stating:

Social media should be used for its advantages in the employment and recruitment industry. Graduates should be warned about the kind of stuff they should and should not post on social media and to ensure that their online media presence is closely monitored and updated so that they are aware of what "others" can see about them. Social media allows for quick and easy judgement-making, so it would be wise for graduates to ensure that it (their social media presence, profile and image) is a favourable one, as far as possible (Participant 4).

Organisations and universities should work in harmony. Whenever there are opportunities, companies need to contact universities for referrals. Then students will be able to use social media to apply on companies' websites. A participant stated:

Companies should approach institutions to present to final year student on job opportunities in their companies so that students can use social media to apply on their websites (Participant 11).

6.10 Summary of the chapter

This chapter dealt with qualitative data collected from HR practitioners on the influence of social media on graduateness skill and employability. After the responses of the participants, codes and themes were generated. The themes included the following: graduate challenges; requisite graduate skills needed; social media role in recruitment; social media role in enhancing graduate skills and employability; strategies to enhance graduate and employability skills; and employability through social media. The findings from the analysis revealed that social media is useful in enhancing graduateness skills and employability opportunities amongst final year students. The conclusion on the influence of social media on graduateness skills was reached because the majority of the participants articulated that students should make use of emerging

technologies to improve their gradueness skills through displaying their talents. Social media can help to communicate significant information in preparation for future opportunities that could final year students could use to improve their skills, knowledge and expertise. Additionally, there are short courses that upskill graduates with required skills and final year students should make use of such training via webinars. Through such training on webinars, the graduates will be kept posted and updated on market trends. Another conclusion from the analysis and discussion of data was confirmation of the importance of social media in ensuring sustained employability.



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Chapter 7 Summary, Discussion, Limitations, Contributions, Future Research, Recommendations and Conclusions	Chapter 7: Summary, Discussion, Limitations, Contributions, Future Research, Recommendations and Conclusions 7.1 Introduction 7.2 Research objectives 7.3 Summary of findings 7. 4 Discussion of findings with empirical literature 7.5 Implications of the study 7.6 Strategies to help final year students 7.7 Strategies to help hr practitioners 7.8 Contribution of the research project 7.9 Limitations and direction for future research 7.10 Final summary

CHAPTER 7: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS, CONTRIBUTIONS, FUTURE RESEARCH, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Introduction

In Chapter 1, the research introduced the problem statement, objectives, literature on social media, graduateness skills and employability. Chapter 1 helped set the scene concerning the research. Chapter 2 presented the methodology that was followed in this research project. Chapter 3 presented the literature review, which covered an in-depth discussion on the concepts under study such as social media, graduateness skills and employability. Chapter 4 defined relevant research studies that have been conducted on graduateness skills and employability, as well as the Social Media Integration Model and Career EDGE theoretical frameworks. Chapter 5 presented the quantitative results, while Chapter 6 presented qualitative results of the data analysed for the study. Narratives gathered from the data analysis revealed how social media influences both graduateness skills and the employability of final year students.

This chapter is structured as follows; the first section discusses the research objective. The following section provides the summary of findings. This is followed by the discussion of findings with the empirical literature. The next sections provide the implications of the study. Based on the research findings, the researcher offers strategies to help final year students and strategies to help hr practitioners. The following section describes the contribution of the research project. The limitations of the study are stated, and suggestions are made for potential future research directions. The chapter concludes with a final summary – as this concludes the thesis. The following section discusses research objectives.

7.2 Research objectives

The research project objective was to develop a model to enhance graduateness skills and employability using social media amongst final year students at HDIs in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. The research objective was answered by making use of the results obtained from the questionnaires and interviews. The results presented in Chapters 5 and 6 led to the achievement

of this objective. However, even though the primary objective had been achieved, as explained in Chapter 5 and, to attain it the following secondary research objectives were also identified:

Secondary Objective One: To determine the influence that social media use has on employability amongst final year students at HDIs. The study findings presented in Chapters 5 and 6 led to the achievement of this objective. From the quantitative analysis, results revealed that the direct effect of social media use on perceived employability does not exist and can only exist when the mediating variable (graduateness) is included. Thus social media use had a weak, significant and positive correlation with the perceived employability ($r_s = 0.127$; $p = 0.010$). Conversely, the qualitative results revealed that social media can help students build relationships with employers. Social media is used to spread information amongst students regarding job opportunities or internships available. Thus it is useful for attraction purposes and the sharing of information regarding job opportunities across geographical borders, thereby widening the pool of applicants. Results revealed that social media could be used to educate and advise graduates on skills the labour market requires which in turn helps these graduate to acquire skills that will make them employable.

Secondary Objective Two: To determine the influence that social media use has on graduateness skills amongst final year students at HDIs. The results presented in Chapters 5 and 6 led to the achievement of this objective. The study found that the direct effect of social media uses on graduateness skills is significant with ($r_s = 0.303$; $p < 0.0001$). The qualitative results supported the findings from the quantitative study, as the results revealed that social media can help students build relationships with colleagues who share a mutual interest, and can develop their digital identities and showcase their skills. Social media could be used to provide constructive feedback to graduates who have showcased their skills after enhancing their skills to meet the demands of the job market. The finding revealed that final year students should make use of training that is offered on webinars. Through this training on webinars, the graduates can be kept posted and updated on market trends. Lastly, the results revealed that graduates could make use of YouTube videos and other tools such as 'Twitter Critters' and Tech Prep to learn new skills.

Secondary Objective Three: To determine the influence that graduateness skills have on employability amongst final year students at HDIs. The study findings presented in Chapters 5 and 6 led to the achievement of this objective. The study found that the direct effect of

graduateness skills is on perceived employability ($r_s = 0.518$; $p < 0.0001$). The qualitative results also supported the finding from the quantitative results. The results revealed that a well-rounded graduate must have all the skills in the graduateness skills set and more to increase employability chances. The results further noted that all skills are of equal importance as they work in harmony to achieve organisational objectives.

Secondary Objective Four:

To determine the influence that graduateness skills significantly mediate the relationship between social media and employability amongst final year students at HDIs. The results presented in Chapters 5 and 6 led to the achievement of this objective. The results found graduateness does have a significant mediating effect on the relationship between social media use and perceived employability. The succeeding section presents the summary of findings.

7.3 Summary of findings

This section discusses both the quantitative and qualitative findings as the research project applied a mixed-method methodology to answer the research question. The subsequent section discusses the quantitative findings.



7.3.1 Quantitative findings

All three scales used in this research project were reliable and valid. The independent, dependent and mediating variables scales reported a Cronbach alpha that was above the accepted level of 0.7, as stated in Section 5.4. All the variables scales reported a Cronbach Alpha that ranged from 0.816 to 0.963, also as stated in Section 5.4 of Chapter 5. The Cronbach alpha scores for social media usage (independent variable), perceived employability (dependent variable), and graduateness skills (mediating variable) were 0.839; 0.827 and 0.963 respectively. These high Cronbach alpha scores confirmed that all scales that were used for data collection were highly reliable. The factor loading for both the independent and dependent scales and the variance of these scales demonstrated satisfactory evidence of discriminant validity for the scales. For that reason, the scales that were employed for this research project were valid as there was satisfactory confirmation of the constructs' validity on all the scales.

From the findings of the study, the regression weights were all statistically significant ($p < 0.0001$ recorded for all factors). Although the chi-squared test retains its popularity as a fit statistic, other

index parameters for the model fit assessment were used including the following: the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), goodness-of-fit statistic (GFI), incremental fit indices/relative fit indices, and parsimony goodness-of-fit index (PGFI).

The measurement model of the mediating variable (graduateness skills) reported that the chi-squared test retains its popularity as a fit statistic, a chi-square of 11364.987, with a degree of freedom of 1081 and RMSEA of 0.059, which was below 0.08 which shows a good fit as stated in Table 7 in Chapter 2. This indication proved that the measurement model was a good fit for the variables under study. The overall fit of the model measured showed a P-Value of 0.0001, which indicates that the model is regarded as significant. The GFI of 0.949 reported from this project was above the recommended GFI values of 0.90 as stated in Table 7 in Chapter 2. The CFI of 0.967 reported from this study was above the recommended CFI value of 0.9. The PGFI of 0.709 reported for this research project was above the recommended parsimony fit indices of 0.50.

The measurement model of the dependent variable (perceived employability) reported that the chi-squared test retains its popularity as a fit statistic, a chi-square of 1841.098, with a degree of freedom of 120 and an RMSEA of 0.072. This indication proved that the measurement model was a good fit for the variables under study. The overall fit of the model measured showed a P-Value of 0.001, which indicates that the model is regarded as significant. The GFI of 0.923 reported from this project was above the recommended GFI values of 0.90 as stated in Table 7 in Chapter 2. The CFI of 0.987 reported for this study was above the recommended CFI value of 0.9. The PGFI of 0.638 reported for this research project was above the recommended parsimony fit indices of 0.50.

The measurement model of the independent variable (social media) reported that the chi-squared test retains its popularity as a fit statistic, a chi-square of 720.142 with a degree of freedom of 6 and an RMSEA of 0.058. This indication proved that the measurement model was a good fit for the variables under study. The overall fit of the model measured showed a P-Value of 0.001, which indicates that the model is regarded as significant. The CFI of 0.951 reported for this study was above the recommended CFI value of 0.9. The PGFI of 0.317 reported for this research project was within the recommended parsimony fit indices of 0.50.

These results revealed that the independent variable (social media use) had a weak, significant and positive correlation with the dependent variable perceived employability ($r_s = 0.127$; $p = 0.010$). Thus, the more the individual's perception of possibilities of obtaining and maintaining

employment, the more the usage of social media in finding employment. On the other hand, the use of social media by students had a moderate, significant and positive correlation with graduateness skills, which is the attribute that makes final year students capable of attaining and keeping fulfilling work ($r_s = 0.303$; $p < 0.0001$). Lastly, the dependent variable (perceived employability) had a moderate, significant, and positive correlation with the mediating variable ($r_s = 0.518$; $p < 0.0001$)

The SEM was employed to find a model that has a good enough fit with the collected data to serve as a representation of the real situation under investigation. For this research project, the structural model was measured using various fit indices which are relevant and sufficient to measure the fitness of the model such as the RMSEA, GFI, incremental fit indices/relative fit indices, and the PGFI.

7.3.1.1 The Graduate Employability Social Media Model

The Graduate Employability Social Media Model (GESM Model) was constructed in AMOS and the diagram is shown in Figure 33. The observed, endogenous variables are perceived employability and graduateness. The observed, exogenous variable is social media use and the unobserved, exogenous variables are denoted by e_1 and e_2 . The standardised parameter estimates are shown in the diagram. The rectangles represent the observed variables and the circles are for the error terms.

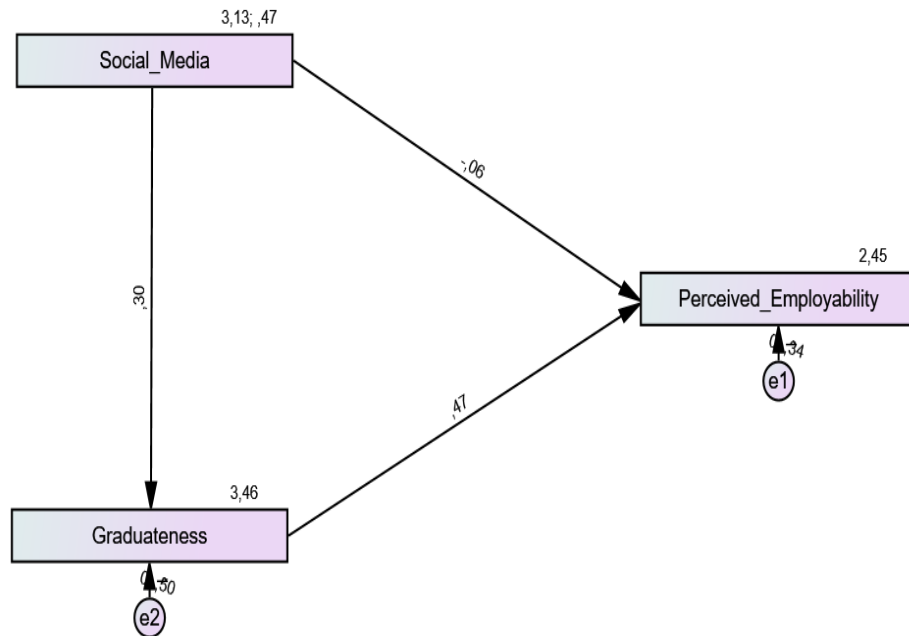


Figure 33: The Graduate Employability Social Media Model

The GESM Model illustrates that the parameter estimates for the graduateness skills and social media use model ($\beta = 0.301$; $p = <0.0001$) as well as perceived employability and graduateness skills model ($\beta = 0.473$; $p = <0.0001$) are highly significant. Thus, the regression weight for social media use in the prediction of graduateness skills is significantly different from zero at the 0,001 level (two-tailed). Also, the regression weight for graduateness skills in the prediction of perceived employability is significantly different from zero at the 0,001 level (two-tailed). However, the parameter estimates for social media use and perceived employability model ($\beta = -0.064$; $p = <0.0001$) are not statistically significant. The succeeding section presents the qualitative findings.

7.3.2 Qualitative findings

The research findings illustrated that most of the graduates today are finding it challenging to be hired as they lack an understanding of how to apply the principles of what they have studied. Apart from that, the research findings noted that numerous graduates do not have a good command of English, and lack good communication skill which is necessary to converse properly with prospective employers. Furthermore, the youth ought to choose a career path in which the market is not flooded.

The research findings revealed that graduates are selective about opportunities available to them. Some of the graduates do not want to relocate, some do not want to start from lower positions taking into consideration the qualification they hold. It also emerged from the study that graduate trainee programmes are limited, and as a result, graduates lack experience.

The study revealed that graduates should be well-equipped in all the gradueness skills in the skills set. The study found that HR practitioners use social media platforms for attraction purposes, as information can reach worldwide in good time. Thus, this study suggests that graduates should learn how to search for job opportunities, and advertise their skills and profiles on social media for prospective employers to view. In the same vein, the study revealed that employers do check social profiles of prospective employees during the recruitment process, and as a result, final year students' profanity and poor-selling on social media will reduce their chances of being employed.

The results of this study revealed that graduates need to be educated about what information they should post on their social media platforms as it has an impact or influence when prospective employers are conducting background checks since most of the organisations are using social media to check the character and background of their prospective employees. Additionally, the finding revealed that policies should be in place to govern how the employment agents could incorporate use of social media into recruitment and selection of new talent.

The findings from the analysis revealed that social media is useful in enhancing gradueness skills and employability opportunities amongst final year students. A considerate number of participants revealed that social media can help students build relationships with employers and other individuals with whom they share a mutual interest, develop their digital identities and showcase their skills. Thus through social media good networks can be developed where graduates can share experiences and knowledge. Further, the results of this study found that social media is a very powerful tool that can be used as a platform to project the positive, more constructive side of individuals.

The results of this study also found that there are webinars and training from time to time on social media, which keep people updated on the trends in the labour market. It was found that social media is a tool that can be used to conduct both training and awareness campaigns for final year students to educate them on the job market demands. The following is a discussion of findings with the empirical literature.

7.4 Discussion of findings with the empirical literature

The main focus of the research was to develop a model to enhance graduateness skills and employability through the use of social media amongst final year students at HDIs in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa.

7.4.1 Discussion of quantitative findings

The findings of the quantitative analysis revealed that there is an insignificant relationship between social media use and perceived employability. Thus, social media use has the least influence on perceived employability compared to other variables in the model. The insignificant influence of social media use on perceived employability in the labour market might be as a result of scales from the study by Changqing et al (2017) employed in this research project which focused only on information searching capability of social media without recognising the information sharing and interactive nature of the social networking platforms with regards to employability (Garcia, 2011; Benson et al., 2014).

The study found that social media use has **positive** influence on graduateness skills. The researcher anticipates a significant effect of social media use on graduateness skills as it was reported the second strongest path coefficient compared to other variables in the model. Therefore, the study concludes that the use of social media plays a key role in enhancing the skills of final year students at HDIs in South Africa.

For the current study, graduateness skills reported a significant influence on the employability of final year students. The findings of a positive relationship between graduateness skills and employability are also supported in the literature (Coetzee, 2014; Altman et al., 2014; Kalufya & Mwakajinga, 2016; Mseleku, 2019), as discussed in Chapter 4. The researcher anticipates many benefits from graduateness skills as it was reported the first strongest path coefficient compared to other variables in the model. Universities should therefore emphasise graduateness skills since it has the strongest influence on the employability of final year students (Shyju & Chandra, 2018). This research project identified the strong influence of graduateness skills because it is evident that most employers need graduates to be competent for work. Therefore, final year students should utilise social media to enhance their graduate skills to increase the chances of being employed.

7.4.2 Discussion of qualitative findings

Skills disparity is one of the key challenges for the youth trying to enter the labour market. The outcomes of this research are similar to the literature which revealed that most of the graduates today are finding it challenging to be hired as they lack understanding of how to apply principles they have studied and they lack lateral thinking (Coetzee, 2014; Mokoena, 2019). It also emerged from the study that graduates lack good communication skill which is necessary to converse properly with prospective employers (Kirstein, 2016). The conclusions are also congruent with the recent work of Lord et al. (2019) which indicated that numerous graduates do not have a good command of English which would enable them to put their best foot forward in interviews. In dealing with the employability challenge facing most graduates, the study suggested that universities need to teach students academic literacy and professional skills (Khumalo, 2015).

The finding aligns with literature which revealed that graduates are selective when it comes to opportunities available to them (Shyju & Chandra, 2018). Some of the graduates do not want to relocate, some do not want to start from lower positions taking into consideration the qualification they hold. It also emerged from the study that graduate trainee programmes are limited, and as a result, graduates lack experience. This finding of limited employment opportunities and graduate trainee programmes replicates research studies conducted by others (e.g. Kalufya & Mwakajinga, 2016; Mseleku, 2019) who revealed the same findings.

Furthermore, the results of the research study are comparable with previous work (Bangani, 2019), which indicated that the employment difficulties faced by the youth are linked to a lack of graduateness skills and experience, yet, most graduates expect to be paid more because they are the holder of bachelor's degrees (Harry et al., 2018). In dealing with the challenge faced by graduates, the research project revealed strategies that could be used by final year students to enhance their chances of being employed. The strategies are discussed in Section 7.6 of this chapter.

The findings of the research study are congruent with work by others (Coetzee, 2014; Harry et al., 2018; Mseleku, 2019) who proclaimed that a well-equipped graduate should have all the graduateness skills in the skills set in order to be competent for work. Additionally, the results of this research project appear to support that social media can help students to build employment connections with their prospective employer as well other graduates with whom they share a

mutual interest (Albal, 2018). Thus, through social media, good networks can be developed where graduates can share experiences and knowledge (Benson et al., 2013). The study replicates findings from previous studies that showed how social media can assist in enhancing employability (Abdu & Siudikiene, 2016; Shyju & Chandra, 2018; Piveca & Maček, 2019).

The results are also similar to the recent work of Becton et al. (2019), who indicated that HR practitioners use social media platforms for attraction purposes, as information can reach participants in good time. Thus this study suggests that graduates should learn how to search for job opportunities, and advertise their skills and profiles on social media for prospective employers to view (Sangeeta & Ahlawat, 2018). In the same vein, the study revealed that employers do check social profiles of prospective employees during the recruitment process, and as a result, final year students' profanity and poor-selling on social media reduce their chances of being employed (Arnedillo-Sánchez et al., 2017).

The findings also reflect research studies conducted by Hussain et al. (2017) and Becton et al. (2019) which revealed that graduates need to be educated about what information they should post on their social media platforms as it has an impact or influence when prospective employers are conducting background checks since most of the organisation are using social media to check the character and background of their prospective employees. Additionally, the finding revealed that policies should be in place to govern how the employment agents could incorporate the use of social media into recruitment and selection of new talents (Wirthman, 2016).

The findings of the study match research studies conducted by various others (Garcia, 2011; Hussain et al., 2017; Albal, 2018; Piveca & Maček, 2019) who revealed that social media is a very powerful tool which can be used as a platform to project the positive, more constructive side of individuals. In addition to that, graduates could build relationships with employers and other individuals and develop their digital identities and showcase their skills.

The results of this study are consistent with the literature which suggests there are webinars and training presented on social media from time to time, which keep people updated about the labour market trends (Benson et al., 2013; Salm, 2017). It also emerged that graduates could make use of YouTube videos to learn new skills. Furthermore, the study finding replicates other studies which

indicated that social media is essential as it aids in carrying out training and awareness campaign for final year students to educate them on the job market demands.

The results match the finding from the recent work of Borah et al. (2021) which revealed that there is a need to realign the higher education curriculum with emerging technologies for graduates to be prepared with the required skills. The succeeding section explains the implications of the study.

7.5 Implications of the study

This study developed a model to enhance gradueness skills and employability through the use of social media amongst final year students at HDIs in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. The findings of this research project can be useful for policymakers, graduates and HR practitioners. Several elements were acknowledged in the research project which has positive and negative implications for gradueness skills and employability of the final year student.

7.5.1 Policymakers

Prevalent social media sites, for instance, LinkedIn and Facebook help to close the higher education-employment gap through diverse programmes and approaches. Nevertheless, youth residing in parts of the country with low internet access, and those who are from a rural background are not aware of these priceless resources (Facebook, 2015). Therefore, policymakers in the education sector should spread awareness about these resources. This could help mitigate the problem of youth unemployment since many students are studying in fields that are already flooded in the market. Awareness could be achieved through embedding social media in university curriculums and teaching, to educate students about the best practices to successfully use social media to acquire the skills needed to get their first job.

Furthermore, a clear consideration by policymakers of the impact of social media on gradueness skills and employability of final year students can help draft effective policies which could underline the parameters HR practitioners adopt to use these emerging technologies effectively and efficiently. The researcher of the study recommends that policymakers should look into developing social media recruitment policies that can be used by HR practitioners in the South African context. Such policies will guide HR practitioners on how to conduct their recruiting and selection of employees (Altimeter, 2011).

7.5.2 Expert guidance

The establishment of expert guidance plays a significant role in facilitating the transition of graduates from universities to work (Pheko & Molefhe, 2016). This could mitigate the problem of studying already saturated fields as pointed out in the findings. Expert guidance will help enlighten graduates about the skills needed in diverse careers as well as job opportunities (Rodriguesa et al., 2019). This will help graduates to make well thought through decisions about career choice. Conversely, career experts often use a psychological model, whereas a more pedagogical or labour market-oriented model would be more suitable (Bozionelosa et al., 2020). Additionally, career experts need to change their delivery mode when providing advice to graduates. They need to move to technological modes of advice delivery embracing the internet and social networks, as it assists in overcoming hurdles against selecting a career path. Furthermore, there is a need to establish career education within the curriculum as it will be a better option to empower graduates rather than ‘testing and telling’ the graduates (Chinyamurindi, 2012).

Additionally, as there are few career information systems in South Africa, the need exists for career information systems that will be accessible to graduates at little or no cost, as this will help them with a decision for their future career. Policymakers should work around policies that will unlock the development of such a system (Rodriguesa et al., 2019).

7.5.3 University education and training programmes

HDI should focus on offering programmes containing skills demanded by the labour market to increase the employability of final year students (Cao et al., 2019). Universities should collaborate with organisations and should adjust to the new requirements of the labour market. Additionally, university curriculums should offer classroom training, allow on-the-job training, and traineeships, imparting graduates with both general as well as particular vocational skills that are industry-specific skills (Pheko & Molefhe, 2016). Such traineeship will help mitigate the lack of skills amongst graduates and enhance their skills set.

7.5.4 Work experience opportunities

Work experience enhances the chances of final year students to obtain and improve significant labour market skills. Properly designed internships provide the youth with significant skills and valued experience on their chosen career path (Changqing et al., 2016). Internships allow graduates to acquire practical experience and put into practice their existing skills (Bozionelosa et al., 2020).

However, there is one risk related to internships – several graduates will end up changing from a low-paid internship to another, rather than moving from an internship into conventional employment. Additionally, there are limited frameworks that set clear standards for the learning component of the internship (Bozionelosa et al., 2020). It is therefore essential that the content and modalities of internships are well structured and monitored to ensure that the intended learning outcomes of the programmes are achieved.

7.5.3. Entrepreneurship promotion

The government should promote entrepreneurship (Chimucheka, 2014). Wanga et al. (2020) stated that entrepreneurial entry can be fostered by social media. Chimucheka (2014) proposed that financial and advisory assistance is needed for those graduates wishing to commence small companies. This will help mitigate the high rate of unemployment amongst the youth, and in turn, they will become future employers. Entrepreneurship promotion comprises direct financial assistance, training in entrepreneurial skills, and mentoring (Pérez-López et al., 2019). In other nations, particular programmes have been set up to promote entrepreneurship as an entry point to the labour market (Howarda & Reileyb, 2020). There should be easy access to financial and tax relief for young businesspeople (Chimucheka, 2014). However, there are no follow-ups on self-started businesses. This makes it challenging to develop suitable policy measures (Chimucheka, 2014). There is a need to analyse the success of your enterprise through gathering information on, perhaps, the failure rate of newly-established enterprises and their impact on the net job (Pérez-López et al., 2019). Strategies to help graduates and HR practitioners were developed to provide guidelines for the future use of social media for employment purposes in developing countries. The next section presents strategies to help final year students.

7.6 Strategies to help final year students

It is recommended that in order to increase their chances of being employed, final year students need to be well-equipped with skills required by employers (Albal, 2018). Final year students should constantly upskill through the aid of social media, as there are many online seminars aimed at improving the skills of graduates (Becton et al., 2019). This will enhance the overall gradueness skills which in turn leads to the employability of final year students (Almeshal, 2015). Furthermore, final year students should make use of various short courses online, which will help them to enrich the with the required skills.

Final year students need to avoid posting provocative or inappropriate photographs, videos or information on social media (Becton et al., 2019). Those posts may get many likes and comments which is the trend for a few days, nevertheless, it can have a negative effect on their career. Additionally, they should avoid posting discriminatory comments related to race, gender, religion (Albal, 2018). Those comments meant to offend another person or group could prevent the person from being employed. For instance, a mere drunkenly tweet on racism or homophobia can lead to final year students not being hired. Graduates should avoid posting offensive comments like this on social media, even if they are meant as a joke (Albal, 2018).

Final year students need to avoid bad-mouthing their previous company or fellow employees on social media. Putting grievances on social media for the world to see is never the way to go (Nassiriyar et al., 2015). A future potential employer might see it and decide that the person is not worth hiring since they have badmouthed previous employers. Additionally, graduates should refrain from mocking clients using social media as it can have the same poor effect as putting an organisation in a bad light. Most organisations will not tolerate that. So individuals should avoid posting these types of complaints online and to help save their jobs.

Final year students should use social media to find significant information in preparation for future opportunities that could be used by the graduates to improve their skills, knowledge and expertise (Almeshal, 2015). Social media could be used to provide constructive feedback to graduates who have showcased their skills after enhancing their skills to meet the demands of the job market (Garcia, 2011). It is a powerful tool that graduates should use to expose their talents.

Final year students need to create an efficient technological knowledge-based relationship with their future employers, as this will help to get significant information about vacancies available. Good social media networks can be developed where graduates can share experiences and knowledge.

Universities need to include content that will cover all aspects of the graduateness skills in their teaching and learning (Artess et al., 2017). Higher education institutions and universities should link graduates with employers, as this will help to build and strengthen the relationships of employers and final year students (Benson et al., 2014; Borah et al., 2021). The next section presents strategies for HR practitioners.

7.7 Strategies to help HR practitioners

Social networks provide numerous resources to help HRM keep up with information, technology and trends. HR practitioners should develop a social media recruitment plan that will assist in achieving organisation objectives (Nassiriyar et al., 2015). The plan should take into account content and a social recruiting strategy. In the recruiting strategy, goals must be identified, for instance answering what the company requires from social media or what it is expected. Additionally, the social media strategy must have set rules to be used consistently throughout the organisation not only by the HR department (Becton et al., 2019).

HR practitioners ought to develop a vibrant vision for digitisation, clarifying the complete view of talent acquisition and engagement to get top-management consensus. The vision must be allied with the organisation objectives so that HR is positioned for a more strategic role – that of a profit driver instead of an administrative cost centre. The vision ought to be supported by a resilient business case for technology investments. As part of the vision, HR must also lay down clear guidelines on how they will embrace social media use, to warrant that the employer brand is not adversely obstructed by the information shared by employees on external media (Becton et al., 2019).



IT systems that are interoperable should be in place for HR practitioners to roll out initiatives that cut across departments and geographical areas (Nassiriyar et al., 2015). The existing HR IT setting in most companies is made up of disjointed, restricted systems that do not support end-to-end process integration. This means HR will need to graduate to a more flexible IT architecture. Additionally, HR IT systems will need to support mobile and social media integration and at the same time, be flexible enough to accommodate future advancements in technology (Nassiriyar et al., 2015).

HR practitioners should understand the overview of the platforms and their possible uses so that they can find the most suitable platform for recruiting purposes (Nassiriyar et al., 2015). Additionally, HR practitioners should create opportunities for the organisation to gain experience with social networks. However, clear boundaries must be in place for the use of social media.

HR practitioners should make use of platforms that are relevant to them (Nassiriyar et al., 2015). They need to employ social networks that are most closely aligned with where their target audience can be found. It is usually best to start small, with a presence in one to three networks, and gauge results and workload accordingly. LinkedIn is used by most organisations, particularly those just starting in social networks. The site engages almost every imaginable industry and skills set – so companies will likely want to include this as a baseline network. The next section discusses the research contribution.

7.8 Contribution of the research project

The contribution of the research project has been divided into three sections. They are theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions, as discussed below.

7.8.1 Theoretical contribution

The main contribution made by this study to the body of knowledge in the fields of both information systems and Business Management is the GESM Model illustrated in Figure 30. This model is proposed as a guide for the higher education sector to enhance graduateness skills and employability amongst youth in South Africa. Evidence of a significant contribution to the body of knowledge in an area of inquiry must be substantiated (Rugg & Petre, 2010). Holweg and Van Donk (2009) asserted that conceptual models serve diverse purposes depending on the context of the study. For this study, the GESM was aligned to the description of Rugg and Petre (2010) which speaks to the implementation of a theoretical principle, showing how it can be applied in practice; making the ideas or components tangible and demonstrating through empirical inquiry that the concept is relatable to stakeholders in its context and can lead to process improvement in its chosen field. The contribution of the GESM is theory-driven, and the theories have been supported and validated by intense empirical findings from final year students at HDIs and HR practitioners.

Additionally, students at HDIs are an interesting theoretical sample due to them being an under-researched sample. The HDI context has received scant focus and attention. In theory, the link between psychological constructs (such as graduateness skills and employability) with a technology dimension, especially within the South African context and internationally, remains unexplored. This study contributes towards bridging the existing knowledge gap in the current literature with specific reference to the impact of social media on graduateness skills and

employability amongst students at HDIs in the South African labour market context. This study provides new knowledge regarding the influence of social media on graduateness skills and employability in the South African labour market and thereby contributes to the existing gap in this regard. The study has addressed this gap and can be used by other academic researchers as a reference in future studies with the same context. Additionally, the study will help final year students to shape their strategies when using social media to enhance their graduateness skills to increase their chance of being employed.

7.8.2 Methodological and practical contribution

The research study contributes to the growing body of research as it utilised a mixed-method approach to explore lived experiences. Early research on employability primarily adopted qualitative methods grounded in an interpretivism epistemology (Chinyamurindi, 2016). The use of a mixed-method technique in this research helped to investigate the social world to acquire knowledge of the phenomenon being examined, namely the influence of social media on graduateness skills and employability. The mixed research method allowed participants to give detailed information about the challenges they face as final year students and HR practitioners provided detailed information about what they expect from graduates.

The research results have provided a theoretical contribution, but they also have practical bearings. The study shows that there is a need for the government to devise policies that set guidelines for HR practitioners to follow when recruiting and selecting graduates.

7.9 Value of the GESM Model

Having deliberated the elements of the GESM Model and the validation for their inclusion, there is also a need to establish how GESM Model will be a useful and practical addition to the literature already available on the context of employability. Primarily, models of employability ought to inform the preparation of programmes and planned interventions intending to focus on the area. This model provides transparency on skills final year students should have to increase their chances of being employable. Additionally, a model concerning graduate employability should be something that can be explained with ease to graduates, HR practitioners, policymakers and academics. The GESM Model allows academics, careers advisors, policymakers and all individuals involved with the promotion of employability within higher education to do so without veiling the issue in complexity. The GESM Model will be a valuable tool to youth as it will transfer

information about the significance of graduateness skills and social media towards their employability. It can be used to demonstrate to employers how the roles of graduateness and social media can both contribute to graduate employability. To end, GESM Model could be adapted for use with groups other than final year students from HDIs and new graduates. It would be possible to adapt GESM Model for use at any life stage, for instance, with mid-life career changers.

7.10 Limitations and direction for future research

Regardless of the contradiction between the quantitative and qualitative findings and the consequential enhanced validity, the contributions of the study ought to be understood in the light of some limitations. Future studies should investigate the information sharing and interactive nature of the social media on employability. This study used a sample from HDIs in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, and thus the findings are mostly applicable to this setting. Future research could attempt to survey other universities in South Africa. This would increase the theoretical rationale to better understand the influence of social media use on graduateness skills and employability in South Africa. Further studies should also consider samples from different geographical areas to ascertain how the findings revealed herein relate to those that may be found in other countries. Therefore, it is recommended that future research studies should not be limited to South African universities, but should extend to other developing countries within the Southern Africa Development Community universities. This research project applied a cross-sectional approach which constituted a cross-section of South African final year students in the HDIs and HR practitioners. Therefore, future studies could employ a longitudinal approach, which could yield more complete results.

This study employed a mixed research method. The data was generalised to a large population. Therefore, it is suggested the future studies should use a focus group to understand the influence of social media use on graduateness skills and employability amongst graduates in South Africa.

Furthermore, this study only used a sample of 369, therefore it is recommended that future research studies should include bigger study samples and population groups. This would lead to greater precision and reduced uncertainty and increase confidence to estimate results, as well as enhance the ability to detect differences.

The study was theorised in terms of determining the influence of social media use on graduateness skills and employability of the final year students at HDIs in South Africa. This restricted the present study to the role of social media regarding graduateness skills and employability, yet other factors exist that influence graduateness skills and employability. It is recommended that future research studies should include these other factors.

7.11 Final summary

The study aimed to establish whether social media use has an influence on graduateness skills and employability amongst final year students at HDIs. Chapter 1 briefly introduced the research study. Chapter 2 discussed the methodology that was followed in this research project.

The literature reviewed in Chapters 3 and 4 of the study showed that there is a positive relationship between social media use and graduateness skills and employability. The theoretical framework underpinning this research project, Social Media Integration Model and Career EDGE Model were discussed in depth in these two chapters.

This study adopted a pragmatism research paradigm and utilised a mixed research approach to collect and analyse the data. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. An online survey and interviews were conducted to collect primary data, while literature from other studies and mostly academic journal databases were utilised as secondary data. The population of this study was drawn from final year students at two historically disadvantaged institutions in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa as well as 15 HR practitioners from recruitment agencies around Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality.

A total of 412 questionnaires and 15 interviews were administered on a Google Form. Analysis and interpretation of findings were done using both the descriptive and inferential statistical measures with the aid of software such as SPSS 24, which assisted on reliability and validity tests; and Listel 9, which assisted with the Structural Equation Model.

Chapters 5 and 6 presented the findings of the research project. Chapter 5 revealed that a positive relationship exists between social media use and graduateness skills and employability. The findings also revealed that social media use does not significantly influence employability amongst final year students. The results from Chapter 6 revealed that social media use can enhance graduateness skills and employability. For this reason, universities should encourage students to

make use of the emerging technologies available such as social media to enhance their graduate skills and employability. This final chapter, Chapter 7, has concluded the research study with a summary of findings; contributions of the research; recommendations that can be used by academics and final year students, as well as recommendations for future research; and the limitations of the study.



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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Ethical Certificates



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ETHICS CLEARANCE REC-270710-028-RA Level 01

Project Number:	CIL021SMUR01
Project title:	Social Media influence on Graduateness and Employability: The case of Historically Disadvantaged Institutions.
Qualification:	PHD in Information Systems
Principal Researcher:	Obrain T. Murire
Supervisor:	Dr L. Cilliers
Co-supervisor:	Prof W. T. Chinyamurindi

On behalf of the University of Fort Hare's Research Ethics Committee (UREC) I hereby grant ethics approval for CIL021SMUR01. This approval is valid for 12 months from the date of approval. Renewal of approval must be applied for BEFORE termination of this approval period. Renewal is subject to receipt of a satisfactory progress report. The approval covers the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project and research instrument(s). The research may commence as from the 22/08/19, using the reference number indicated above.

Note that should any other instruments be required or amendments become necessary, these require separate authorisation.

Please note that the UREC must be informed immediately of

- Any material changes in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the document;

- Any material breaches of ethical undertakings or events that impact upon the ethical conduct of the research.

The Principal Researcher must report to the UREC in the prescribed format, where applicable, annually, and at the end of the project, in respect of ethical compliance.

The UREC retains the right to

- Withdraw or amend this approval if
 - Any unethical principal or practices are revealed or suspected;
 - Relevant information has been withheld or misrepresented;
 - Regulatory changes of whatsoever nature so require;
 - The conditions contained in the Certificate have not been adhered to.
- Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project.

Your compliance with DoH 2015 guidelines and other regulatory instruments and with UREC ethics requirements as contained in the UREC terms of reference and standard operating procedures, is implied.

The UREC wishes you well in your research.

Yours sincerely



Professor Pumla Dineo Gqola
Acting UREC-Chairperson
 22 August 2019

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12th September 2019

Mr OT Murire
University of Fort Hare
Bisho
South Africa

Dear Mr Murire

Re: Permission Letter to Conduct Research at WSU

Qualification: PhD in Information Systems

Institution: Fort Hare University

Permission is hereby granted for the study entitled "**Social Media influence on Graduatness and Employability: The Case of Historically Disadvantaged Institutions**" provided that copies of your completed study will be submitted to the Campus Rector of the campus in which the study will be conducted and the Directorate of Research Development

All data pertaining to Walter Sisulu University will be treated confidentially and you are required to abide by ethical principles at all times. It is your responsibility to seek consent from the participants.

Regards



Prof W. Akpan
Senior Researcher
Directorate: Research and Innovation

Directorate: Research Development

2019 -09- 11

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Appendix B: Questionnaire

Survey Questions:

Research Instrument



Ethical Clearance Number: CIL021SMUR01

Dear Participant,

I, Murire Obrain Tinashe (201101379), a PhD candidate at the University of Fort Hare, Department of Information Systems is asking from student's community to answer some questions, which I hope will benefit your community and possibly other communities in the future.

I am conducting research regarding social media influence on employability and graduateness. I am interested in finding out more about social media as a moderator between graduateness, employability of students at WSU and UFH. I am carrying out this research to help complete my PhD project.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study, and that can be identified with you, will remain confidential. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of using coding procedures. The participants are not required to write their names on the questionnaires.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact me on email: 201101379@ufh.ac.za or 0843334492

Please tick below if you have read and understood the information provided above, and agree to take part in the study under conditions stated above.

I agree to participate

☐

I do not agree to participate

☐

Your support will be greatly valued.

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I hereby agree to participate in research regarding social media influence on employability and graduateness skills. I understand that I am participating freely and without being forced in any way to do so. I also understand that I can stop this questionnaire or interview at any point should I not want to continue and that this decision will not in any way affect me negatively. I understand that this is a research project whose purpose is not necessarily to benefit me personally. I have received the telephone number of a person to contact should I need to speak about any issues which may arise in this interview. I understand that this consent form will not be linked to the questionnaire, and that my answers will remain confidential.

.....
Signature of participant

Date.....



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SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Please indicate with an 'x' on the correct response.						
Gender	Male	Female				
Ethnic group	Black (African)	Coloured	White	Indian	Other	
Age	Below 21 years	21-30 years	31-40 years	41-50 years	Above 50 years	
Faculty	Management and Commerce & Administration	Education	Social Sciences & Humanities	Science & Agriculture Engineering and Technology	Health Sciences	Law
Student Category	Undergraduate	Postgraduate				

SECTION B: SOCIAL MEDIA USE FOR EMPLOYMENT PURPOSES



University of Fort Hare

Social media refers to websites and applications which allows end-users (graduates, employers) to make a profile, facilitates collaboration and sharing of information in the virtual social world.

Please indicate your answer to these statement by putting an "X" next to the appropriate answer or circle it.

1. Which social media platform do you often use to find employment opportunities?
 - a) Facebook
 - b) LinkedIn
 - c) Twitter
 - d) Others
2. Which social media platform do you often find reliable when looking for employment opportunities?
 - a) Facebook
 - b) LinkedIn
 - c) Twitter
 - d) Others

3. Indicate the time you have been active on social networking platforms

- a) Less than 1 year
- b) 1 year or more but less than 2 years
- c) 2 years or more but less than 3 years
- d) 3 years or more but less than 4 years
- e) 4 years or more but less than 5 years
- f) 5+ years

4. Indicate the time you spend per session using social networking platforms looking for employment opportunities

- a) Less than 30 minutes
- b) 30 minutes to 1 hour
- c) 1 to 2 hours
- d) More than 2 hours

For each of the statements below, please mark with an **X** the number that best describes how much you agree or disagree with the statement: Never (N) Almost Never (AN) Fairly Often (FO) Very Often (VO)



Never	Almost Never	Fairly Often	Very Often
1	2	3	4

	Social Media Use for Employment	Never	Almost Never	Fairly Often	Very Often
SME1	I use social media to search for recruitment information.	1	2	3	4
SME2	I use social media to find employment information.	1	2	3	4
SME3	I use social media to search employment information.	1	2	3	4
SME4	I use social media to find the information related to job-hunting skills.	1	2	3	4

SECTION B: PERCEIVED EMPLOYABILITY

Perceived employability refers to the individual's perception of his or her possibilities

of obtaining and maintaining employment

For each of the statements below, please mark with an **X** the number that best describes how much you agree or disagree with the statement: Strongly Disagree (SD) Disagree (D) Slightly Disagree (SD) Slightly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Strongly Agree (SA)

I strongly disagree	I disagree	I slightly disagree	I slightly agree	I agree	I strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

	Student self-perceived employability	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
PE1	I achieve high grades in relation to my studies.	1	2	3	4	5	6
PE2	I regard my academic work as top priority.	1	2	3	4	5	6
PE3	Employers are eager to employ graduates from my University.	1	2	3	4	5	6
PE4	The status of this University is a significant asset to me in job-seeking.	1	2	3	4	5	6
PE5	Employers specifically target this University in order to recruit individuals from my subject area(s).	1	2	3	4	5	6
PE6	My University has an outstanding reputation in my field(s) of study.	1	2	3	4	5	6
PE7	A lot more people apply for my diploma/degree than there are places available.	1	2	3	4	5	6
PE8	My chosen subject(s) rank(s) highly in terms of social status.	1	2	3	4	5	6

PE9	People in the career I am aiming for are in high demand in the external labour market.	1	2	3	4	5	6
PE10	My degree is seen as leading to a specific career that is generally perceived as highly desirable.	1	2	3	4	5	6
PE11	There is generally a strong demand for graduates at the present time.	1	2	3	4	5	6
PE12	There are plenty of job vacancies in the geographical area where I am looking.	1	2	3	4	5	6
PE13	I can easily find out about opportunities in my chosen field.	1	2	3	4	5	6
PE14	The skills and abilities that I possess are what employers are looking for.	1	2	3	4	5	6
PE15	I am generally confident of success in job Interviews and selection events.	1	2	3	4	5	6
PE16	I feel I could get any job so long as my skills and experience are reasonably relevant.	1	2	3	4	5	6



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SECTION C: GRADUATENESS SKILLS

Graduateness skills refers to the attributes that makes final year student being capable of attaining and keeping fulfilling work.

For each of the statements below, please mark with an **X** the number that best describes how much you agree or disagree with the statement: Strongly Disagree (SD) Disagree (D) Slightly Disagree (SD) Slightly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Strongly Agree (SA)

I strongly disagree	I disagree	I slightly disagree	I slightly agree	I agree	I strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

	Factor 1: Interactive Skills	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
GIS1	On social media, I find it easy to listen to and understand what others are saying	1	2	3	4	5	6
GIS2	I use social media effectively to communicate with others	1	2	3	4	5	6
GIS3	On social media, I can gain support from others for recommendations and ideas	1	2	3	4	5	6
GIS4	On social media, I find it easy to communicate effectively with people from different cultures, backgrounds and authority levels	1	2	3	4	5	6
GIS5	I use social media to consult others and share my expertise and information	1	2	3	4	5	6
GIS6	I can communicate my viewpoints with clarity and fluency in English on social media	1	2	3	4	5	6
GIS7	I find it easy to confront people's problems to resolve conflicts on social media	1	2	3	4	5	6

GIS8	I take care to use appropriate vocabulary and grammar when communicating with others on social media	1	2	3	4	5	6
GIS 9	I find it easy to persuade, convince or influence others on social media	1	2	3	4	5	6
GIS10	I usually show respect for the views and contributions of other team members on social media	1	2	3	4	5	6
GIS11	I usually make a favourable first impression from the information I find on social	1	2	3	4	5	6
GIS12	I find it easy to make clear, concise presentations to others on social media	1	2	3	4	5	6
GIS13	I find it easy to get cooperation and support from others when working in a team	1	2	3	4	5	6
GIS14	I am able to build wide and effective networks of contacts to achieve my goals on social media	1	2	3	4	5	6
GIS15	I seek to progress to roles of increased responsibility and influence on social media	1	2	3	4	5	6
GIS16	Information I find on social media help to gain respect from others	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Factor 2: Problem-Solving and Decision-Making Skills	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
GPDS1	Information I find on social media assists me to make quick clear decisions that spur others on towards action	1	2	3	4	5	6
GPDS2	I can probe for further information on social media to enhance my understanding of a problem	1	2	3	4	5	6

GPDS3	I can structure the information I find on social media in a way that meets the needs of my audience	1	2	3	4	5	6
GPDS4	Information I find on social media helps me to initiate job search in order to make my life more satisfying and developmental	1	2	3	4	5	6
GPDS5	Information I find on social media help me to consider the complexities of the larger cultural, business and economic reality when approaching a problem or situation	1	2	3	4	5	6
GPDS6	Information I find on social media offer unique and novel ideas that add new knowledge and insights to a problem or situation	1	2	3	4	5	6
GPDS7	Information I find on social media help me to be creative in achieving my goals by anticipating problems before they happen	1	2	3	4	5	6
GPDS8	Information I find on social media help me to set priorities with a proper sense of urgency and importance	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Factor 3: Continuous Learning Orientation	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
GCLO1	Information I find on social media helps me to follow up on goals, tasks and assignments to ensure successful completion	1	2	3	4	5	6
GCLO2	I use social media to keep myself up to date on technical knowledge and new developments in my field	1	2	3	4	5	6

GCLO3	Information I find on social media assist me with ways to improve my knowledge and skills, and develop myself as a person	1	2	3	4	5	6
GCLO 4	I use social media to ask questions and get needed information and to properly size up a situation	1	2	3	4	5	6
GCLO5	Information on social media helps me to accept and tackle demanding goals with enthusiasm	1	2	3	4	5	6
GCLO 6	I get feedback when I participate on discussion forums or after showcasing my skills and talents	1	2	3	4	5	6
GCLO7	I make use of developmental or training opportunities I find on social media to enhance my competencies, knowledge and skills	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Factor 4: Enterprising Skills	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
GES1	Information I find on social media teach me to work under my own direction	1	2	3	4	5	6
GES2	Information on social media assists me to think in a disciplined and logical manner when approaching problems or situations	1	2	3	4	5	6
GES3	Information on social media helps me to consider the consequences of solutions by examining their feasibility and weighing their impact within the larger cultural, business or economic reality	1	2	3	4	5	6
GES4	My arguments for solutions on social media are grounded in both subject-/discipline-specific and	1	2	3	4	5	6



	general knowledge about global and local affairs						
GES5	I find it easy to identify business opportunities for myself, my community or organization on social media	1	2	3	4	5	6
GES6	Information I find on social alert me on dealing with organizational or team politics	1	2	3	4	5	6
GES7	Information on social media helps me to keep up to date with competitor information and market trends	1	2	3	4	5	6
GES8	I have sound financial awareness, through social media	1	2	3	4	5	6
GES9	Information on social media helps me to think in terms of profit, loss and added value	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Factor 5: Presenting and applying information skills	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
GPIS1	Information on social media helps me to write my ideas and opinions clearly to convince my audience	1	2	3	4	5	6
GPIS2	On social media, I avoid using unnecessary jargon or complicated language when presenting my ideas	1	2	3	4	5	6
GPIS3	Through social media, I find it easy to commit information to memory quickly	1	2	3	4	5	6
GPIS4	Information on social media provides me a wide range of alternatives prior to making a decision	1	2	3	4	5	6
GPIS5	The solutions I offer using information I find on social media make a positive difference	1	2	3	4	5	6

	in my personal life, community or workplace						
	Factor 6: Goal-Directed Behaviour	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
GGDB1	I spend a lot of time on social media search for new job opportunities and new information on search engines	1	2	3	4	5	6
GGDB2	I find it easy to access the information on social media I need to solve problems or make decisions	1	2	3	4	5	6
GGDB3	I avoid jumping to premature conclusions based on the information I find on social media	1	2	3	4	5	6
GGDB4	I try to find the real cause of problems before taking action on through asking people on social media	1	2	3	4	5	6
GGDB5	I usually set realistic goals using information on social media	1	2	3	4	5	6
GGDB6	I take action to achieve my goals using information I find on social media	1	2	3	4	5	6
GGDB7	I develop plans for specific goals and tasks	1	2	3	4	5	6
GGDB8	I use time efficiently, when using social media	1	2	3	4	5	6
GGDB9	I find it easy to meet deadlines, using the information I find on social media	1	2	3	4	5	6
GGDB10	I can identify the resources needed to accomplish tasks, from the information I find on social media	1	2	3	4	5	6

	Factor 7: Ethical and Responsible Behaviour	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
GERB1	Information I find on social media helps me to accept responsibility for the results of my decisions and actions	1	2	3	4	5	6
GERB2	Information I find on social media helps to take the credit or blame for the results of my work	1	2	3	4	5	6
GERB3	Information I find on social media helps to uphold the ethics and values of my profession, community or workplace in all I do	1	2	3	4	5	6
GERB4	Information I find on social media encourage to have a responsible behaviour towards the community and the environment	1	2	3	4	5	6
GERB5	Through social media, I provide direction to others, and to motivate and empower them	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Factor 8: Analytical Thinking	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
GAT1	I feel confident in my ability to draw insightful conclusions from numerical data I find on social media	1	2	3	4	5	6
GAT2	Information shared on social media helps me to see relationships and patterns	1	2	3	4	5	6
GAT3	I make rational judgment from analyzing information I find on social media	1	2	3	4	5	6
GAT4	I give accurate explanations of information and data presented on social media	1	2	3	4	5	6

Appendix C: Interview guide

1. Tell me a bit about yourself, for instance, your gender, speciality and years of experience in human resource management (HRM)? *
2. What do you think are the major challenges facing graduates in South Africa based on your experience?
3. Graduateness as "attributes that make final year student is capable of attaining and keeping fulfilling work" What would that mean to you?
4. Graduate skills include the following: Interactive skills, Leadership & influence skills, Organization & time management skills, Technical and communication skills, Problem and decision-making skills, Presenting and applying information skills, Continuous learning orientation, Goal-directed behaviour, Enterprising skills, Analytical thinking skills, Ethical and responsible behaviour



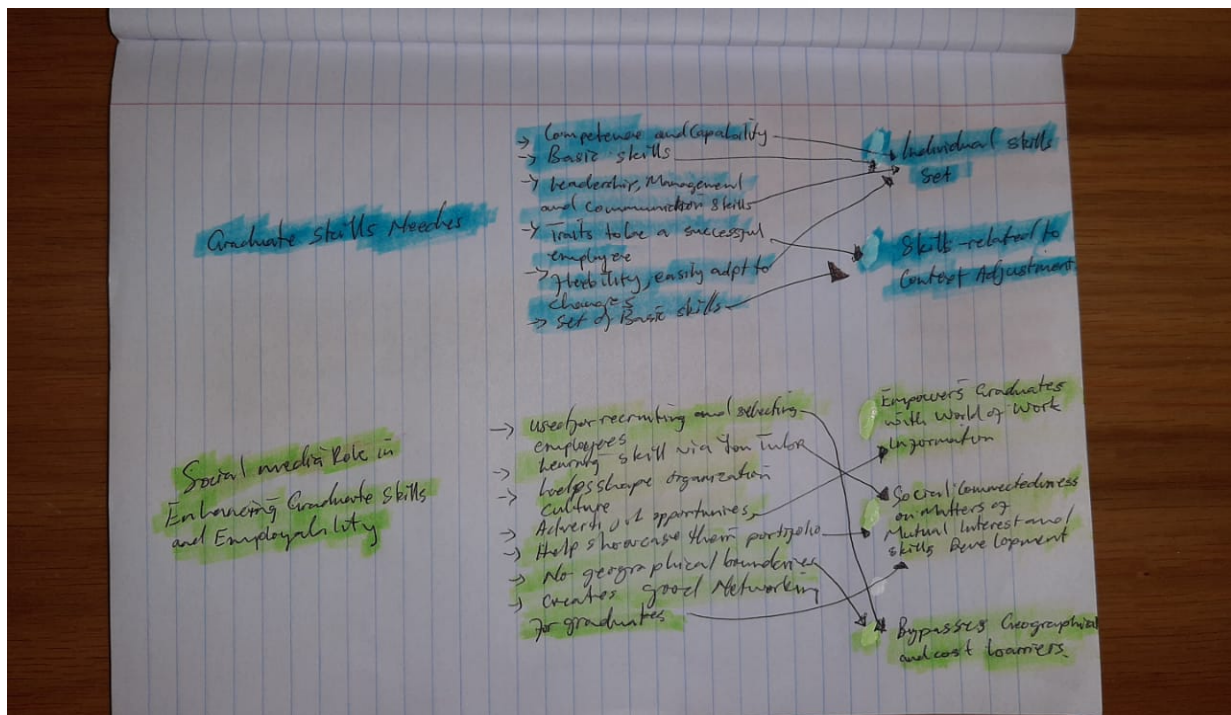
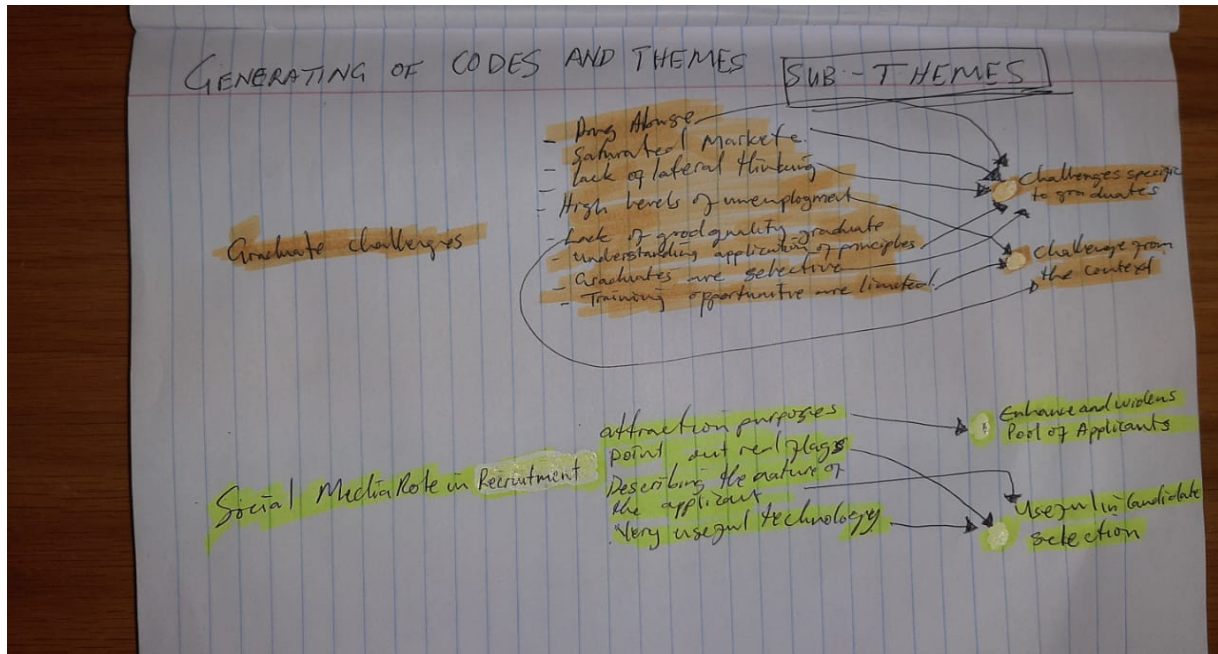
Which of those things would matter the most to you terms of employability?"

5. Concerning the use of social media, how do you see this in view of recruitment or hiring, for instance, in verifying candidate suitability? *
6. You've mentioned social media use, how does that matter in terms of developing graduateness skills and employability?
7. Given all you have discussed, how do you think the challenges of unemployment and lack of graduateness skills amongst final year students can be mitigated by social media? *

Appendix D: Original and Improved Questions

Original Question	Improved Question
Tell me a bit about yourself, for instance, years of experience in recruitment?	Tell me a bit about yourself, for instance, your gender, speciality and years of experience in human resource management (HRM)?
What are the major challenges facing graduates?	What do you think are the major challenges facing graduates in South Africa based on your experience?
	Which of those things would matter the most to you in terms of employability?"
	What about a skill need, for instance, gradueness skills?
Concerning the use of social media, how do you see this in view of recruitment, for instance, in verifying candidate suitability?	Concerning the use of social media, how do you see this in view of recruitment or hiring, for instance, in verifying candidate suitability?
Do you think social media is useful in developing graduates skills and employability	You have mentioned social media use, how does that matter in terms of developing gradueness skills and employability?
How does social media mitigate challenges of unemployment in South Africa can be mitigated through social media?	Given all you have discussed, how do you think the challenges of unemployment and lack of gradueness skills can be mitigated using social media amongst final year students?

Appendix E: Generation of themes and codes



Strategies to Enhance Graduate and Employability Skills and Employability through Social Media

- Share relevant ^{Information} about available opportunities
- Share information about their expectations with the graduates
- Job-market awareness campaign
- Network skilled individuals
- Upskill with short courses online
- project positive and constructive feed back

Short Courses that Upskill Graduate with Requisite skills

Create a social community for graduates

Make Job Information available via Social Media



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Appendix F: Plagiarism report

