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The employability of human resources management graduates from a selected university of technology in the Western Cape, South Africa

The
employability
of HRM
graduates

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to provide an insight into the need to provide an industry-relevant curricula to higher learning institutions, which addresses the needs of the industries so that unemployment is addressed.

Design/methodology/approach – The researcher sought to look for a cause and consequence relationship, which resulted in the usage of a mixed-methods approach whereby both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used. Correspondingly, the study was conducted in two phases, literature analysis and experimental study, including field work.

Findings – The paper provides experiential visions about how institutions of higher learning can provide industry-relevant education. It proposes that for graduates to be employable, there should be synergy between what industries want and what the institutions of higher learning are providing, hence the need to redesign the curricula.

Research limitations/implications – The research focused exclusively on Cape Peninsula University of Technology HR graduates from 2014 to 2017 instead of considering all graduates of HR in the workplaces in Cape Metropolis.

Practical implications – Tertiary institutions as the custodians of knowledge will have to go out to the customers (recipients of their products) and inquire for relevant operational requirements.

Social implications – HR graduates will be properly empowered through proper industry-relevant curriculum which enables them to be employable or to create employment instead of waiting to be employed.

Originality/value – This paper fulfills a recognized need to study how the curriculum offered by universities contributes to the employability of human resources management graduates.

Keywords Employability, Human resources, Industry requirements, Skills relevance and skills gap, Suitability of curriculum

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

It was the legend Nelson Mandela who said, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world” (Mandela, 2014, p. 45). It is for this purpose that governments invest large sums of money into the education of their citizens, even though they do not necessarily supervise the development of the curriculum. Pym (2014, pp. 37-50) postulated that there is a serious disjuncture between what the industry requires and what the academics spend time studying. If the industry and the academia worked hand-in-hand, there would be a synergy that would develop citizens who will hit the ground running when



they complete their tertiary studies. The most critical aspect of the learning in the university should be the ability to train a student on real-life situations in the industry. The absence of this congruency may explain the adamancy of the industry as they demand for experience from the new entrants. In a way the industry is saying that the universities do not supply relevant industry-ready products. These products have to spend time unlearning the university theory and adjusting to the real-life-work tasks and requirements.

Background/literature reviewed

What is a curriculum?

In an interesting study on engineering graduates from a university in the Western Cape, Ngetich and Moll (2013, pp. 125-138) identified a serious difference between what was taught to engineering graduates and what the industry required. Essentially, the surprise was that there was no relationship between industry expectations and what the institutions offered. Fongwa (2018, pp. 1-23) concurred with this finding and indicated that employers look for different skills from what the university emphasizes and focuses on. By implication, there is a need for a review of the curricula used in the institutions of higher learning. Academics need to spend time investigating the need of the industry and publishing books based on the demands of the industry.

A lot of definitions have been given regarding what a curriculum is. According to Saunders (2015, pp. 285-291), curriculum is defined as a plan tied to goals and related to objectives. Thus, from this definition, one may deduce that there is a chance of one to choose among the diverse activities the ones that are more suitable to him or her. Curriculum should be in line with the objectives of what one aims to do as it will be wastage of time to focus on things that are not applicable in one's career. If you choose a wrong curriculum, you will not make it to your desired destination as a student aiming to get better employment opportunities.

Suskie (2018, pp. 108-110) regards a curriculum as the means and materials with which students interact for the purpose of achieving identified educational outcomes. The way in which an institution delivers its curriculum to the students should be able to enhance the students to be marketable and competent when it comes to job opportunities. It is the curriculum that contributes to the employability of students and it is the nucleus for graduates' employability.

The curriculum development process involves the design and development of integrated plans for learning, the design of implementation of the plans, evaluation of the plans, their implementation and the outcomes of the learning experience. It is important to have a properly developed curriculum as it is the core of the learning process within the institution. The main purpose of the process is to translate broad statements of intent into specific plans and actions.

Relevance of curricula in education

It is the extent to which the curriculum that is provided meets the expected requirements by the industry. The curriculum should be in line with what the industries require for one to be employable. A curriculum is viewed as the nucleus of any educational institution (Dave, 2014, p. 11), meaning that without it there will not be any school or institution of learning existing. However, if the curriculum or curricula does not speak to the needs of the industries, then that curricula can be viewed or regarded as irrelevant as it will not be providing what is expected of it by the stakeholders. To ensure that a curriculum is relevant, it should be able to produce employable graduates as many graduates expect the curricula to be opening doors of employment for them in the job markets.

What is human resources?

Weitlaner and Kohlbacher (2015, pp. 44-61) defined human resources management (HRM) as the managerial utilization of the efforts, knowledge, capabilities and committed behaviors

which people contribute to a commandingly synchronized human enterprise as part of an employment exchange to carry out work tasks in a way which enables the company to survive. HRM is regarded as that part of management that is concerned with all aspects related to people who do the work within and for all the organizations in society (Swanepoel, 2014, p. 6). From this definition, it is crystal clear that HRM is surrounded in management, society and organizations, and hence is an important function within any organization.

The strategic role of HR in a firm

Human resource is an important function within a company as it determines the survival or downfall of a company. It is through HR that a company can be able to identify its current and future Human Resources needs as well as retaining staff and attracting more potential employees to work. Also, it is through HR that a company can lose or gain employees who are talented to other industries or competitors basing on the way they would run the company. Several experts believe that HR has an all-inclusive perspective (Milman and Dickson, 2014, pp. 447-469) on gift or talent alignment to the corporation's approach.

HR guarantees alignment around the company's vision and values as it can be able to guide (Slocum *et al.*, 2014, pp. 73-87) or bring back leaders on track if they differ or divert from the company's vision and values. Through HR, business leaders are helped to maintain the vision and understand what the company's purpose is and the morals that drive employees' motivation as well as behaviors which can sustain the company from falling. HR facilitates discussions with the leadership team on modeling and implementing the vision and values of the firm, which can result in either improved behavior or deviant workplace behavior. Thus, HR is of greater importance within a firm as it is like the backbone of the company as most of the things or departments depend on it for survival and success.

Employability

Barnes *et al.* (2015, pp. 16-31) define employability as an individual's ability and willingness to become and remain attractive in the labor market so that one may be prosperous in a wide range of occupations. Employability is having a set of skills, knowledge, understanding and personal attributes that make a person more likely to decide on and secure professions in which they can be contented. Thus, employability is regarded as one's ability to get a job and to sustain it so that one remains marketable in the labor market. Employability is usually decided upon by the companies as they are the ones which know what type of an employee they want. It is important to point out that most companies use an open-entry method whereby the candidates will be employed without references or recommendations from institutions whilst others use recommendations from tertiary or higher learning institutions. Jackson (2013, p. 271) states that if graduate employability is measured in simplistic terms, such as whether or not a graduate has secured a job within the first six months of graduating, then the measurement is not accurate as one will not clearly understand what the graduate has gained.

Employability by race

There is a great difference in the employability rate of whites, colored's and blacks, and the Government of South Africa is endeavoring by all means to reverse the effects of apartheid through employment equity, affirmative action and black economic empowerment. Despite the attempts by the government, the South African job market still reflects racial elements as there is a great gap, with the whites being more employable as compared to the blacks (Kraak, 2015, pp. 93-113). This is asserted in the "graduate destination survey" that was published in 2013 by the Cape Higher Education Consortium (made up of Stellenbosch University, the University of Cape Town, University of the Western Cape and Cape

Peninsula University of Technology) (Kraak, 2015, pp. 93-113). The report from the survey found that employment attainment in the private sector was 61 percent for whites, 58 percent for Indians, while only 35 percent of Africans and 45 percent of colored's graduates were able to attain employment in the private sector. The report stated that the unemployment rate for colored's and African people would be significantly larger if it were not for the intervention of the public sector, which employs a large number of African (at 42 percent) and colored's (at 45 percent) graduates.

The above problem of blacks being unemployed in comparison to whites can also be due to the quality of education that is offered to the black children. To ensure that they all enjoy same opportunities of being employed after graduating, the learning curriculum and credits to be awarded within universities should be the same and not different.

Industry requirements

Industry requirements are generally accepted requirements followed by the members of an industry (Turker and Altuntas, 2014, pp. 837-849). These are the skills or knowledge required for a particular job within the industry and they should be developed right from the institution of learning to the workplace. Again, there should be congruency between what the industry requires and what the learning institutions offer. The industries have set standards that they expect their employees to have for one to be employed at a particular job. These standards or requirements are the core for one to do the expected job and without meeting those requirements of the industry one may not get employment. It is the duty of this research to bring about the complexity nature of the topic to simplicity by finding out what the industries expect or require from human resources graduates from a university of technology for them to be employable. For instance, industries require students with experience of one or more years, yet the graduates just completed their studies. This is a gap between what the industries want and what the institutions offer to the graduates.

Skills relevance

Dong *et al.* (2017, pp. 439-458) contend that relevant skills are attributes such as factual knowledge and skills which affect an individual's performance in a given field of knowledge. The skills obtained by the students should be relevant for the job to be done or for the desired employment. Some of the relevant skills include a person's cognitive style that enables coping with difficulty and breaking one's mental set.

Skills gap

Skill gap is the difference in the skills required on the job and the actual skills possessed by the employees (Jackson, 2015, pp. 350-367). When there is a skill gap, it is vital to ensure that the gap is bridged. To cover the skill gap between the industry curriculum and academic curriculum, the education provided to students should be in line or at par with what the industry requires so that there will be a match. Zink (2014, pp. 126-132) defines skill gap as a training gap, claiming that employers are not doing enough on-the-job training, or that educational institutions are not in harmony with employers' need. If the gap is found to be from the education side, it means that the institutions of education should change their curriculum to meet the potential employers' expectations, which is the main reason for conducting this research.

Background of education

Any student who embarks on education looks forward to completing his or her studies for purposes of occupation, self-actualization, self-advancement, self-esteem and a lot of other motivations. Most institutions offer theory which is driven, and it aims at creating a mere

student rather than its objective of imparting knowledge. This becomes a problem to a student when he or she gets to a company where the corporate needs a student who can be readily absorbed into the company without being an expense to the company through training on how the corporate works and the job assigned to the student after hiring. The education provided to the graduates should also aim at framing their attitude which should be challenge-driven and adaptable.

The value of education

Education has both intellectual and economic value. Education encourages imagination, creativity and interest in knowledge as well as giving students more opportunities for high-paying jobs and offers better economic security (Mutie and Makewa, 2017, pp. 16-38). Thus, education is value adding to individuals who embark on it, as it gives people the skills and tools they need to navigate the world and be able to survive as they may get better income to use for their development. It is also imperative to point out that getting better education does not guarantee one to get employment as you might fail to get employment on the basis of the availability of vacancies within the market place or the skills demanded at a time.

To add on, education encourages students to educate themselves and seek out information which helps them to develop themselves. Education offers students the prospect to learn about many different things such as art, sports, mathematics, literature and business studies only but a few to mention so that the students can discover what interests them. This gives students or learners the basic building blocks needed to succeed in life later through a career and further education. If students figure out their careers early and advance toward them academically, it will fulfill their hopes of better future through obtaining the right education and curriculum that is required in the industry.

The effect of education on a country's development

It is imperative to state the differences between education, skills training and development as well as pointing out how these impact the development of a country. Skill training is a program organized by the firm to develop knowledge and skills in the workers according to the job requirements whilst development is a prearranged activity in which the manpower of the organization learns and grows (Khan *et al.*, 2014, pp. 33-46). When people are educated, they will also acquire training and development sometimes, but the impact of this on the development of the country might be that the criterion used to implement them might benefit the minority at the expense of the majority. Furthermore, when there is proper education, skill training and development, these are likely to positively impact the development of a country as the required skills will be offered to run the country's economy and the country will not get in a financial quagmire.

Again, education primarily involves the presentation of material by the faculty to students who are learning about the subject matter. The material being studied is fundamentally well-known material whilst training is concerned with the teaching of specific, factual, narrow-scoped subject matter (Entwistle, 2013, p. 65), and development is concerned with a broader subject matter of conceptual skills. When there is poor or no education, and no training and development done within the company, there will be no improvement or no new ideas to be generated as how to solve the problem that the country faces. This results in the retarded development of the country as education is the key to success of a nation.

Purpose of the study

This research investigated whether the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) HR graduates were easily assimilated into the employment sector or easily hired after

completing their qualification and to check if their qualification met the industrial requirements within the Western Cape. The identified gap resulted in the recommendations given to bridge the gap at the end of the research.

Problem statement

Human resources graduates find it difficult to get employment after graduating, and if they get employment, they get employed in fields other than their fields of expertise. Graduates, especially those from universities, have high expectations in that they assume that after completion of their studies, their degrees should be able to open employment doors for them without struggling like those who have lesser qualifications. This is not the case with the employers who feel that the return to employing a graduate is low as they regard graduates as people who require substantial on-the-job training before they provide any returns to the firm.

Research objectives

In conducting this research, it is expected that the findings might provide a basis for further research into how the human resources department at the institution under investigation could ensure the development of an employable human resources graduate. This may possibly be achieved through developing a curriculum as well as teaching and learning methods that enhance the desired employability skills in the graduates.

The following are the objectives of this study:

- (1) to determine if the curriculum from the university meets the industrial requirements;
- (2) to establish whether there is correspondence between the skills that employers require and those that the new graduates from CPUT possess; and
- (3) to determine the skills that employers require in human resources graduates for them to be employable.

Research methodology

This study followed a mixed approach of quantitative and qualitative research design to explore human resources graduates' employability and the skills necessary for their success in the labor market. According to Creswell (2013, p. 44), qualitative research has to do with expectations and the use of hypothetical frameworks that enlighten the learning of research complications addressing the meaning individuals or groups give credit to a social or human problem. To study this problem, use of an emerging mixed approach to acquire the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study was applied.

Characteristics of the population

The population under survey were 150 HR graduates from CPUT, which is in the Western Cape, South Africa. The CPUT alumni were enthusiastically available and willingly participated from different provinces where they are scattered.

Target population. The study used both quantitative and qualitative research methods (mixed methods) to take advantage of the competencies of each of these methods. Data were collected using a structured survey questionnaire containing structured questions followed by open-ended (semi-structured) questions. The research instrument was tested (pilot study) to enable the reconstruction based on the actual needs of the research and the respondents. A statistician was requested to review the questionnaire for suitability for statistical purposes. The target population was HRM administrators and HR managers in the companies and organizations in the Cape Metropolis of the Western Cape (South Africa) that have HRM departments.

Sampling the population. Random sampling of the companies and organizations was used to sample the respondents, from which people in the HRM departments were interviewed. Random sampling was used to enable all the organizations to have an equal opportunity for the research. Together with the random sampling, only HRM departments were targeted for the research (purposive sampling) and the sample consisted of HRM administrators together with the HR Managers in the randomly selected companies and organizations. The sample size comprised of 150 respondents.

Data collection and the instrument to be used. To be able to make conclusions or suggestions, one should have data to use. Data are basic material with which researchers work and they can be obtained via observation and such data can take the form of numbers (numeric or quantitative data) or language (qualitative data). The data for this study were collected through face-to-face interviews with the participants as well as use of in-depth questionnaires. Creswell (2013, p. 147) stated that qualitative research, an important step in the process, is to find people or places to study and to gain access to and establish a link with partakers so that they will make available noble information.

Questionnaire design. To come up with the questionnaire, the researcher firstly decided on the information required, defined the target respondent, chose the method(s) of reaching the targeted respondents, decided on question content and developed the question wording. The questions were further put into a meaningful order and format, pretesting the questionnaire through the help of the statistician for CPUT, and developing the final questionnaire.

Data validation. Data validation is the process of ensuring the instrument used has been tested for both reliability and validity before the data collection processes. The interviewers were trained to reduce other issues around the validity and reliability of the data collected. The data were edited, cleaned and captured on to an Excel Spreadsheet, from whence the illustrations were constructed which helped with the understanding of the relationship of the variables under study. A statistician assisted with all the processes through the research, to determine and guarantee for fitness, accuracy and consistency. The methods applied under the supervision of the statistician were, amongst others, data type validation, cross-referencing validation and structure process evaluation method.

Data analysis. The excel analysis tool was used for analysis because of its effectiveness and user-friendly qualities. The data were converted to graphs and tables for easy reading and comparison where necessary.

The findings

The researcher will focus on findings which he considers being of significance and provides conclusions as well as gives recommendations for the person who reads. The study indicates that HR graduates find it difficult to get hired in the industries to work as human resource employees as well as the disjuncture between the industrial needs and what the institutions of higher learning are producing. Below is an interpretation of the analyzed data which was converted into a graphical format for readability through the use of the excel data analysis tool (Table I).

Section A: Demographics

Question 1: How old are you this year?

Results

Discussion

QN 1: age in years	18–25	26–30	31–40	> 41
Percentage (%) of people	19	22	29	30

Table I.
Age

It was surprising to find out that most of the respondents were part-time students aged 41 years and more, yet there should be more youth (14–35 years; Cramm *et al.*, 2013, pp. 19-24) in the workplace than the elders.

Conclusion: it is an issue that should be viewed and taken note of as there should be more youth in the industries. Thus, most of the youth are not employed; especially, recent graduates are still wandering to get employment.

Recommendations and implications: there is need for the employers to consider hiring graduates who are still fresh and energetic to utilize their skills and power within their companies. Also, the government and other stakeholders should take a stand in eradicating youth unemployment.

QN 2: What departments are you employed in?

Results

QN 2: departments	Human resources	Finance	Marketing	Other
Percentage (%) of people	38	0	7	55

Discussion: out of the participants, only 38 percent of the HR graduates were working in an HR-related environment and the rest were working in other related fields. This should send a message to the institutions offering these courses as they do not make a follow-up to find out if their products are marketable.

Conclusion: one can deduce that there are few graduates working within their field of study.

Recommendations and implications: it is suggested that the institution consult with surrounding companies or other companies to help their products to be marketable.

QN 3: if other, please specify.

Results

QN 3: Other departments	Retail	Operations	Hospitality	HR	Marketing
Percentage (%) of people	22	1	32	38	7

Discussion: 62 percent of the HR graduates were working in other industries and not in an HR environment. It cannot be concluded that the reason is strictly the curriculum and the employability thereof. It is however understood that graduates work wherever they get opportunities.

Conclusion: HR graduates are resorting to any employment that avails itself, as they are desperate for employment. It may also be necessary also for the institutions to regularly research on discipline demands to enable them to recruit students according to market demands.

Recommendations and implications: it is recommended that the universities or institutions provide necessary skills which will make HR graduates to be respected and not be employed as general employees without qualification. Thus, there is a need for revising their curriculum and make it industry relevant (Figure 1).

Question 4: what is your position in your organization?

Results

Discussion: 17 percent of the graduates occupy the positions of HR Manager, HR Practitioner, HRD Officer, Recruitment and Selection Officer, whilst 83 percent of the HR graduates are working in other industries occupying non-HR-related positions.

Conclusion: with this evidence, it is crystal clear that the HR graduates find it difficult to get hired for the course they enrolled for at universities and other institutions of higher learning.

The employability of HRM graduates

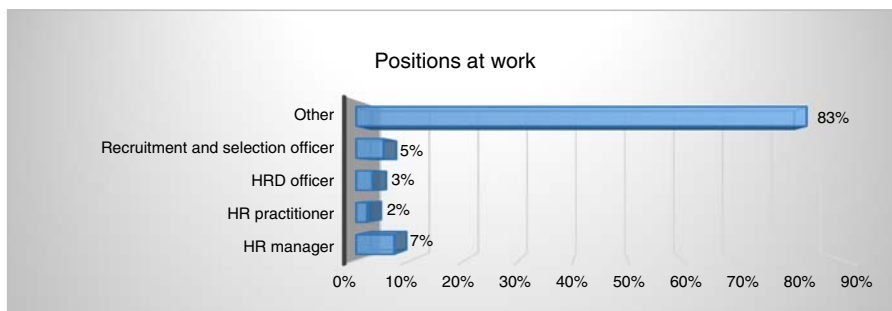


Figure 1.
Positions at work

Recommendations and implications: graduates from HR and other related fields of study should be recognized and allowed to obtain the required experience to validate the knowledge which they possess from institutions of higher learning.

Question 5: if other, please state in space below.

Results

QN 5:	Hospitality: cashiers, waiters and waitresses	Operations	Retail: salesman and cashiers	HR interns	HR Admin
Percentage (%) of people	40	1	35	16	8

Discussion: of concern is the fact that fewer of them reported doing HR tasks, 8 percent as HR Admin and 16 percent as HR interns (totaling 24 percent) compared to 35 percent in retail sales and teas, 1 percent operations and 40 percent as waiters and cashiers in the hospitality industry. It can be clearly stated here that either there are no positions available in HR because of unemployment levels or because the HR graduates may not be strictly fit-for-industrial purpose in that discipline. Thus, most of the graduates were working as general or other employees, not in the commonly known HR positions.

Conclusion: the HR graduates are all over in the labor market searching for any available job and occupy it as shown by the results.

Recommendation: Research should be conducted to try and establish the essence of HR in organizations so that the graduates will be in demand.

Question 6: what is your highest educational qualification?

Results

Discussion

Most of the respondents (94 percent) to the survey were graduates with national diplomas and degrees. This means that the respondents fit in prominently in the research as it has to do with their employability of HR graduates, but the employed graduates were not working in the field of study majority of them as they were scattered all over the labor market. However, there were minority involved who had matric or matric and technical certificates (6 percent) as shown in Figure 2.

Conclusion: approximately 62 percent of the people attending or with chronic illness are or can be classified as semi-literate. This is in agreement with the statistics by government that 57 percent of South Africans do not have matriculation.

Recommendations and implications: broad grassroots work needs to be undertaken to educate the communities both for the sake of their health and for the benefit of the nation in that a skilled population is an employable population.

Question 6: what human resources functions are you involved in?

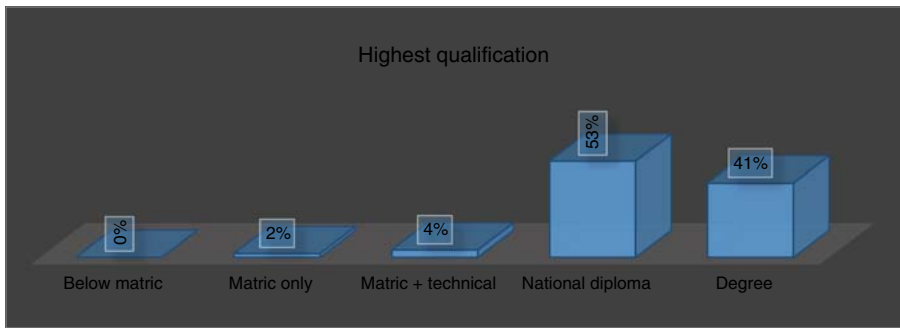


Figure 2.
Qualifications

Results

Salary determination 11%	Promotions 13%	Hiring 6%	Other – please explain 70%
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Discussion: 70 percent of the respondents were not performing the commonly known HR functions such as promotions, salary determination and hiring as they were involved in other HR and non-HR functions.

Conclusion: only 30 percent of the HR graduates were performing the commonly known HR functions such as promotions, salary determination and hiring.

Recommendations and implications: there is a need for companies to deploy HR graduates and expose them to the relevant functions that they are supposed to perform.

6. Ii: other HR functions.

Results

Other functions	T & D	IR	General admin	Strategic planning	Non-HR functions	Commonly known HR functions
No. of people (%)	3	1	9	1	56	30

Discussion: a majority of the HR graduates are involved in the HR functions and 29 percent of the HR alumni are involved in non-HR-related functions such as sales rep, cashiers, waiters and waitresses.

Conclusion: on the basis of the findings given above, it can be said that HR graduates end up doing non-HR duties in the industries that they are working as they are working as sales reps, cashiers, waiters and waitresses.

Recommendations and implications: companies where HR graduates are working doing non-HR-related stuff should consider giving them a chance to work even as interns under supervision of senior employees.

Question 7: how long have you been in human resources position? (including other places)

Results

QN 7: tenure in HR position in years	0–5 years	6–10 years	11–15 years	> 16 years
No. of people	53	20	13	14

Discussion: 53 percent of the employees were less than five years at work.

Conclusion: most of the employees had five years of experience working in an HR position as they had recently graduated, and some had been promoted to such positions.

Recommendations and implications: it is recommended that HR graduates be employed in their field of expertise by the employers when they review their curriculum vitae.

Section B: the strategic role of human resources in a company.

Suggested statements were fabricated established on the literature review on the employability of HR graduates within the selected university in the Western Cape, which is CPUT. These statements were ranked by the respondents using the Likert scale, which was provided where the rating was from 1-5 interpreted as follows: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree. The results of the Likert scale have been grouped as indicated in the forthcoming paragraphs.

The Likert scale

Please rank the following by crossing the most applicable using the Likert scale below.
Note: 1 = disagree strongly, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree.

Section B: the Likert scale

Please rank the following by crossing the most applicable using the Likert scale below.
Note: 1 = disagree strongly, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree.

In my work, it is important for me to know	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Job analysis and design</i>					
1. I have a lot of duties to perform as human resources personnel	0%	2%	3%	51%	44%
2. The amount of work is fine, but I will be tired by the end of the day	25%	20%	7%	11%	37%
3. I get the necessary support from subordinates when overloaded by work	11%	5%	12%	37%	35%
4. The support I get from colleagues at work is helpful to perform my chores.	0%	7%	17%	29%	47%
5. I always finish my tasks in time.	11%	5%	2%	33%	49%
<i>Incentives</i>	00	00	00	00	00
6. The wage difference between any two levels is very slight	4%	6%	20%	43%	27%
7. There are no salary incentives for the type of experiences we have	4%	5%	7%	34%	50%
8. I will leave human resources as soon as I get another job in industry	3%	0%	22%	56%	19%
9. There are no promotion opportunities in human resources	51%	33%	13%	2%	1%
10. I am satisfied with my incentives	36%	29%	21%	8%	6%
<i>Training and development</i>	00	00	00	00	00
11. The training and development we receive is very helpful	0	5	3	60	32
12. The organization does not offer the type of training I want	9	7	19	31	34
13. There is sufficient training scheme within the company	14	3	17	35	31
14. We have experts in training and development	0	1	5	60	34
<i>Recruitment and selection strategy</i>	00	00	00	00	00
15. There is fairness in recruitment and selection	23%	13%	28%	19%	17%
16. We have Employment Equity within our company	39%	43%	6%	7%	5%
17. The recruitment platform is easily accessible to all	61%	6%	9%	14%	10%
18. It is difficult to get recruited for human resources	1%	5%	2%	44%	48%
19. I do exactly what is on my job description	36%	28%	10%	14%	12%
20. New employees are inducted on arrival	17%	16%	0%	55%	12%

Job analysis and design

Discussion on the amount of work allocated to the graduates in the industries: in sum, 95 percent of the participants agreed and strongly agreed that they had a lot of duties

to perform and 48 percent also indicated that they could be tired after completing their chores. It is ridiculous to find out that the HR graduates who are familiar with the labor relations as well as the Basic Conditions of Employment Act allow the employers to give them a lot of work and remain silent. This means that there is a problem within the job market where the graduates are being assigned more than what their scope of work is.

Recommendations and implications: the employers should consider sticking to their job descriptions so that they hire people to do other duties and avoid being understaffed.

Conclusion: 51 percent of the participants agreed and 44 percent strongly agreed that they have a lot of work instead of just doing what their job descriptions are.

Discussion on getting necessary support from subordinates when overloaded by work: 72 percent of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed to the statement that they got necessary support from subordinates when overloaded by work, which means that most of the graduates are getting relevant support from their workmates which can help them to improve their performance. However, there were a minority who were neutral (12 percent), 16 percent disagreed and strongly disagreed, meaning that they felt like being neglected by their co-workers which made it hard for them to complete or to perform their duties well. This may lead to employee turnover especially to the recent graduates who do have experience with the workplace behaviors and end up quitting jobs and becoming unemployed graduates.

Recommendations and implications: it is recommended that the industries where the graduates are working provide necessary support for them to be able to execute their duties well. This should be done not only to graduates, but to all employees so that the work itself becomes enjoyable and achievable.

Conclusion: most of the respondents agreed that they received necessary support from their colleagues so that they execute duties well, though there were a few who did not receive help.

Incentives structure

Statement: the wage difference between any two levels is very slight.

Discussion on wage difference: most of the employees (70 percent) indicated that they agreed and strongly agreed that there was a slight difference in wages and they also understood reasons for differences which they pointed out seniority and tenure at work as reasons. There were a few (20 percent) who did not want to review their status on this as they felt that it was sensitive and selected neutral. However, there were a minority (10 percent) who pointed out that there was great wage difference as they got less far from their colleagues who are just but one level ahead of them, which means they disagreed and strongly disagreed to the given statement as shown on the above Likert scale. The wage difference on different levels is said to be much by the graduates who have qualifications which seem not to be recognized in the industries they are working more.

Recommendations and implications: companies or employers should consider trying to rectify the identified gap so that the employees remain motivated and loyal to the organization, as this is ample evidence that employees are likely to agitate for increased wages.

Conclusion: most of the respondents (43 percent) agreed and 27 percent strongly agreed and they recorded that there is a huge gap between salaries of different levels. Thus, there is a gap existing within the workplace of salaries which should be viewed and considered.

Discussion on salary incentives for the type of experiences the graduates have: 84 percent of the respondents indicated that they strongly agreed and agreed that they were not rewarded for the skills and experiences they had, meaning that the majority of the employees who participated in this research felt that they were not rewarded according to their worth in the companies they worked for. Of the participants, 7 percent

chose to be neutral, whilst 9 percent disagreed and strongly disagreed with the given statement under discussion.

Recommendations and implications: it is recommended that the employers consider utilizing proper incentives to reward employees so that employees can maximize their performance and their skills for the benefit of the company.

Conclusion 50 percent of the respondents indicated that they strongly agreed that they were not rewarded for the skills and experiences they had. In sum, 34 percent of the respondents were in agreement with the posed statement.

Statement: I will leave human resources as soon as I get another job in industry.

Discussion: of all the respondents, most (75 percent) agreed and strongly agreed to the given statement, which means that they are willing to be in other fields of work if chances arise. This is due to the fact that HR is not amongst critical skills and people from other fields of study are doing HR duties within some companies and also there is no growth for the graduates to develop themselves. Only a minority of the participants, i.e. 3 percent, strongly disagreed to the given statement that they would not quit HR as indicated above in figure 8.20, and the 22 percent were neutral as they did not want to review their stance on the given statement.

Recommendations and implications: it is recommended that the employers consider redesigning the jobs given to their employees or enriching the duties so that boredom and other factors which cause the HR graduates to consider quitting HR field can be dealt with.

Conclusion: an indication that 53 percent of the participants were ready to leave HR for other opportunities is ample evidence that there are problems within the HR sector where they work.

Training and development

Statement: the training and development we receive is very helpful.

Discussion: 92 percent of the respondents indicated that they had received helpful training as they agreed and strongly agreed to the given statement. This means that most of the employed HR graduates were trained for them to be able to perform their duties well, which is regarded by most companies as a cost as they assume that graduates are all-knowing people. If companies have managed to offer training to the HR graduates, more HR graduates can be hired and provided with some training to bridge the gap between curriculum of the universities or tertiary institutions and industry requirements.

Recommendations and implications: it is recommended that the employers consider maintaining their effective and helpful training and for those ones not providing training should consider implementing training strategies which the recent alumni of HR might possess. Thus, there is need for hiring HR graduates and train or guide them for them to deliver as per the expectations of the company.

Conclusion: some of the companies under which some of the graduates are working provided sufficient and relevant training whilst others did not.

Statement: there is sufficient training scheme within the company

Discussion: majority of the respondents (16 percent) agreed and strongly agreed that there was an adequate training scheme within the company and even indicated verbally to some of them that they had received different schemes of training. This shows that some companies where the HR graduates are employed are providing sufficient training to avoid costs which may be caused by incompetence of the graduates. In sum, 17 percent of the respondents decided to be neutral on the given statement whilst 17 percent disagreed and strongly disagreed.

Recommendations and implications: it is recommended that the employers consider redesigning the jobs given to their employees or enriching the duties so that boredom and other factors causing the HR graduates to consider quitting the HR field.

Conclusion: an indication that 53 percent of the participants were ready to leave HR for other opportunities is ample evidence that there are problems within the HR sector where they work.

Statement: we have experts in training and development.

Discussion: the maximum number (94 percent) of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that they had experts in training and development within their companies. The researcher became concerned that if the companies have such experts then why they cannot employ graduates and train them if need be for training. There were a few (5 percent) who decided to be neutral with the least individuals disagreeing (1 percent) to the given statement.

Recommendations and implications: it is recommended that the companies contemplate on hiring fresh graduates and make use of their training experts to train them if need be for training so that they become competent enough.

Conclusion: the maximum number of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that they had experts in training and development within their companies. Thus, training should not be a problem when needed in such companies.

Recruitment and selection strategy

Statement: there is fairness in recruitment and selection.

Discussion: most of the respondents were neutral (28 percent) on the given statement as they did not want to review their companies' status regarding the matter under study. In sum, 23 percent strongly disagreed and 13 percent of the respondents disagreed that there was fairness in recruitment and selection within their companies as shown above in the Likert scale.

Recommendations and implications: having obtained the given responses under this statement, the researcher recommends that those companies which are not being fair in recruitment and selection should contemplate on implementing fairness in hiring as well as hiring HR graduates to execute the duties that needs HR alumni.

Conclusion: most of the respondents were neutral on the given statement as they did not want to review their companies' status regarding the matter under study. In sum, 23 percent strongly disagreed and 13 percent of the respondents disagreed that there was fairness in recruitment and selection within their companies. Thus, there was no fairness in the recruitment and selection which might be the possible contributing factor to the unemployability of the recent HR graduates.

Statement: we have Employment Equity within our company.

Discussion: 82 percent the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that they had employment equity within their companies. Thus, employment equity has not been and is not being applied by most companies; hence, there is a high rate of graduates without jobs. Only a minority (12 percent) agreed and strongly agreed to the given statement, whilst the other minority were neutral (6 percent).

Recommendations and implications: it is recommended that the employers consider applying egalitarian principles within their companies especially on hiring as well as hiring HR graduates to perform the duties that needs HR graduates.

Conclusion: majority of the respondents indicated that they strongly disagreed and disagreed that there was equity within their companies. This makes the researcher to develop curiosity as to what the government is doing when it comes to implementation of national policies.

Statement: it is difficult to get recruited for human resources.

Discussion: most of the respondents (92 percent) strongly agreed and agreed that it was difficult to be recruited for HR jobs. Some went on to indicate that it was the reason why they ended up being in other fields that they did not study. This shows that it is hard for HR graduates to be hired within the HR field hence high rate of HR graduates who are

unemployed. There were a few (6 percent) who happened to have been hired in HR who disagreed and strongly disagreed to the given statement whilst the least percentage decided to be neutral (2 percent).

Recommendations and implications: it is recommended that the employers consider applying egalitarian principles within their companies especially on hiring as well as hiring HR graduates to perform the duties that need HR graduates.

Conclusion: the greatest number of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that it was difficult to be recruited for HR jobs.

Suggestions for future study: the demands in the industry are dynamic at best, and the only constancy in the global work environment, is change. Technology changes fast enough, as well as the demands and competitions, together with redefining of job-tasks, given the fast pace at which things change. The textbook in the classroom has become obsolete and largely out of touch with the realities of the workplace. There is a need for continuous assessment, by academics, of the changes of the needs and hence the character of the industry. New books should image regularly that are based on tasks to be performed by graduate employees when the graduate of institutions of higher learning.

Summary of findings

The survey has clearly identified weaknesses that are in the system used for tuition provided to students as customers. It can be concluded that there is a particular path that may need to be followed in the development of industry-relevant curricula. This would apply for all disciplines as encountered during the literature review. The universities need to understand that the students they have are customers who need to be given the correct product in the form of the curricula dispensed by the institutions of higher learning. The absence of these industry relevant offerings constitutes poor service and creates a serious problem for the university graduates when they complete their studies. Over and above all else, it should be understood in no uncertain terms that the material given to the students has a bearing on their employability, upon failure of which, the students may fail to get correct training-relevant professions, landing themselves in placements that have nothing to do with their basic training. The researchers feel that universities will do well to look closely at the size of their enrolments for specific courses, given the demand in the industry. The model therefore assists in providing some ready-made graduates that do not need retraining. It may be said that the universities and institutions of higher learning need to have products that help their students hit the ground running – so to speak.

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Further reading

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