AN ASSESSMENT OF EMPLOYERS' EXPECTATIONS TO ENHANCE THE EMPLOYABILITY OF UNIVERSITY GRADUATES IN NAMIBIA.

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Declaration

I, **Victor P Nepando,** hereby declare that this study is my work and that is a true reflection of my research, and that this work or any part thereof has not been submitted for a degree at any other institution.

Victor P Nepando ……

Name of Student **Signature** **Date**

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Abstract

The issue of university graduate employability is a universal challenge however severe in developing countries. Namibia is one such developing country that has challenges with graduate employability. This study was conducted to establish the employers' perceptions of graduate employability. The study sought to establish the employers' perceptions towards graduate employability, employers' views on the effectiveness of recruitment and selection methods to determine the skills of graduates, and to establish interventions that can be put in place to enhance graduates' employability. The study adopted a qualitative exploratory research design informed by interpretivism as the research philosophy underpinning the study. Out of a population of 69 employers, twenty purposively selected employers were interviewed using a semi-structured interview guide, which contained questions, aligned with the research objectives. Data were analyzed using a thematic data analysis technique. An Atlas ti software was used to analyse data. The following results were obtained.

Employers perceived graduates to lack hands-on and soft skills. According to the employers, a lack of hands-on skills compromised productivity, and a lack of soft skills affected adjusting to the work environment and fitting into the team. The employers further indicated that a lack of these skills made the induction process long and costly to the organisation. The study established that recruitment and selection were aimed to select recruits who were then taken for induction, hence the selection process fails to determine the skills of the graduate. Finally, the study recommended the need for an inclusive approach to curriculum design, where all key stakeholders are part of the curriculum design process. The study also recommended enacting an attachment policy, which is inclusive and includes a module on soft skills in all courses. The Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creations were requested to conduct a skills audit, to guide and inform tertiary institutions on the demand for skills. Universities would be informed of trades, which require additional skills. The study also raised the need to

counsel students during their final year at university. The study suggested further study involving all key stakeholders on the challenges of graduate employability so that an inclusive plan of action can be generated.

Key terms: employability, graduate, perceptions, interventions, curriculum, tertiary

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Background of the Study

The challenge of graduate employability transcends across both developed and developing countries. The different country economies affect differences in the employability of university graduates. Vuksanovic, Santa, Moisender, Tuskila, and Leen (2014) note that in Europe there is a harmonized European higher education system hence the product of the system, that is, graduate absorption in the industry is shared. While European countries are not the same in terms of economic strengths, employability is also not the same but as indicated by Vuksanovic et al (2014) graduates can move across the European Union nations in seek of employment. However, Martinez-Pastor (2017) reports that there is a close link between university education curriculum and skills required in the industry including public service organizations, hence this solves the challenges of employability.

In the United States of America (USA) graduates' employability differs across the federal states. James (2021) and Ince (2019) report that graduates' employability ratings are compiled annually. The University of Cambridge and Massachusetts Institute of Technology is always on the top scoring the highest graduate employability.

China has a dual approach to graduate employability. It has local graduates who are trained according to the needs of the nation. (Rothwell and Rothwell, 2017). This group of graduates is highly employable. On the other hand, some Chinese students receive a university education outside China (Tran, Blackmore, and Rabimi, 2021). The foreign-trained Chinese show some skill gaps hence they have a low employable index because of having received a foreign curriculum. Therefore, according to Tran et al (2021), foreign-trained Chinese students are further trained to fit the local industry needs.

Graduate employability is different in Africa whereas Pita and Muller (2020) contend that graduate employability in Africa is met with a lot of challenges. Generally, the state of university education is responsive to the economic status hence limited financing affects the employability of university graduates. Sawahel (2021) singles out South Africa, Kenya, and Egypt as a few countries whose university curriculum speaks to the needs of industry. In contrast, Baah-Baoteng (2020) notes that graduates from Ghana have severe employability challenges because the curriculum does not expose students to the field of work. Similarly, Mgaiwa (2021) notes that Zimbabwean tertiary education is farfetched from addressing industry requirements. Though there is a lot of quality talk, Zimbabwean tertiary education is churning out graduates who do not fit into the industry, thus making the graduates highly unemployable. This has led most graduates to engage in informal trading or join teaching which they never trained for.

Pitan and Muller (2020) conducted a study in South African Universities. The study focused on investigating the extent to which universities support student employability development opportunities. The results of the study found two employability development opportunities being adequately addressed. The study thus recommended the engagement of curriculum designers and industry. The government was called to play the facilitation role to ensure the industry is part of university curriculum design.

Just like any other African country, Namibia is realizing many graduates are failing to get employment. According to the Ministry of Higher Education, Technology and Innovation (MHETI), Namibian universities release around 7 000 graduates into the market, and by end of 2020, there were around 67 000 unemployed university graduates (Haufiku, 2021). Key education stakeholders engaged by the MHETI indicated employability as the major reason for the swelling number of unemployed graduates. The stakeholders expressed that if the graduates

have the right skills, even if they fail to get formal employment, they can be assisted to start and run their businesses. The challenge of graduate employability was confirmed in studies conducted by Kristings (2011) and Ikela (2018) which both established high-level un-employability of Namibian university graduates. While Namibia has a mixed economy and is dominated by the informal sector, the university curriculum is general (Shivoro, 2018). For this matter, there is no match between the curriculum and what exists in the industry. The graduates find themselves with qualifications that do not work, hence there is a need for universities' serious engagement with industry. There is a need to know the skills, knowledge, activities, and other qualities expected by the industry. Without that knowledge, it is difficult to design a curriculum that addresses the needs of the industry hence this study intends to fill this gap by researching to establish industry expectations on university graduates.

1.2 Problem Statement

As illustrated in the research background, unemployment among university graduates has over the years increased in Namibia. While the high graduate unemployment is a worrisome crisis, the Ministry of Higher Education, Technology and Innovation (2020), laments the lack of skills that make the graduates fit into the industry and the lack of entrepreneurial skills to start their businesses as the worst challenges. University graduates are supposed to acquire skills, attitudes, and other job-related characteristics that make them fit into the job market but this is not the case. The problem of graduate un-employability was confirmed in studies conducted by Naanda (2010) and Shivoro (2018) that found a high level of lack of skills and other job-related attributes among graduates from Namibian universities. The findings were further illustrated in a scenario reported by Haidula (2019) where two engineering graduates from local universities were denied employment by 20 companies because of perceptions employers had on whether the applicants possessed the relevant skills. The ideal situation is that university graduates should leave the college armed with skills needed in industry and be able to use skills

acquired from university to start their businesses. For this to be achieved, Khan and Law (2015), Erkarsian & Aykul (2018), and Manev (2018) indicate that there is a need for tertiary education to engage industry. There is an operation-in-silo challenge where universities focus on a general curriculum that does not reflect industry needs. This disengagement and communication gap needs to be attended to. Having identified this gap, this study engaged the industry to establish its experiences with university graduates and indicate what skills and other attributes are expected of graduates. The information from the industry would be used to plan and develop a university curriculum that speaks to industry needs. Failure to bring the industry into tertiary education would widen the skill misfit of university graduates to industry and escalate university graduate unemployment which Shivoro (2018), describes as a social time bomb to the nation.

1.3 Main Research Objective

This study aims to assess employers' expectations of enhancing the employability of university graduates in Namibia.

The study intends to achieve the following specific objectives**:**

1. To explore perceptions of employers on skills they expect from management science graduates;
2. To establish methods used by employers to assess graduate employability in the recruitment process; and
3. To investigate how employers can contribute to the employability of university graduates during in-service- training.

1.4 Main Research Question

What are the employers' expectations towards enhancing the employability of university graduates in Namibia?

The study intends to answer the following specific research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of employers on the skills they expect from management science graduates?
2. What methods are used by employers to assess graduate employability in the recruitment process?
3. How can employers contribute to the employability of university graduates during training?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study will establish the factors that affect the employability of UNAM graduates in the field of management science and offer strategies on how to improve graduates' employability in Namibia. The recommendations will benefit the faculty of management sciences in designing market-driven courses or programs. In addition, this study will provide literature to future researchers who will be researching on employability of graduates from any other institution of higher learning within and outside Namibia.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

This study made use of a small sample size and therefore, the conclusions arrived at were based on a few individuals' opinions which do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the population. The sample of 20 employers is too small to make generalizations for all employers in Namibia. Secondly, this study will be conducted in a short period of fewer than four months which proved to be an inadequate time for conducting a comprehensive study on graduate employability. Further research needs to be conducted in places other than Windhoek so that comparisons can be made. The selection of 20 human resources managers using convenience sampling could have introduced selection bias. A further study could be conducted to include

several organizations. Covid-19 restrictions may affect face-to-face interviews. Zoom platform and other video conferencing devices were used to circumvent the restrictions.

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

The study involves employers of companies in Windhoek. The reason for engaging employers is that they are the ones who employ and have perceptions towards the employability of university graduates in Namibia. They are a rich source of data for the problem under study.

1.8 Structure of the Thesis

Chapter One: Introduction

The chapter lays the introduction of the study, presents an overview of the background of the study, describes the problem statement, and outlines the research objectives and questions. The chapter also explains the significance of the study, and the limitations of its delimitation, ns. Finally, the chapter defines key terms.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The chapter presents and discusses literature related to the study. The chapter begins with the theory underpinning the study and proceeds to present literature aligned with the research questions.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

This chapter presents and justifies the research methodology adopted for this study. The chapter also presents sampling techniques used, research instruments employed, data analysis, and how data trustworthiness and ethical principles were addressed.

Chapter Four: Data Presentation, Discussion, and Interpretation

The chapter presents and analyses data collected from primary research. The data is presented in sections under each research question. The chapter also interprets the findings and links them to related literature.

Chapter Five: Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

This chapter draws a summary of the study, focusing on the findings. Based on the findings, conclusions and recommendations are drawn. The chapter also recommends further study.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter presented the introduction of the study. An overview of the background was presented and it outlines the development of university graduate employability over time. The next section presented the problem statement that outlined the need to conduct this study. Research objectives and questions were presented. These divided the topic into manageable components. The next sections explained the significance of the study, its limitation, and the delimitations of the study. In this same chapter, key terms were defined, and fin, ally the chapter presented the structure of the thesis. The next chapter presents and discusses literature related to the study.

CHAPTER TWO

EMPLOYERS' EXPECTATIONS AND EMPLOYABILITY OF UNIVERSITY GRADUATES

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on the employers' expectations and employability of university graduates. Specifically, this chapter reviews the concept of employability as defined by the possession of work-related skills. The chapter also explores graduate employability at global, regi, zonal, and local levels. In the same chapter, the process of graduate recruitment and selection is discussed. Finally, the chapter presents the study's theoretical framework.

2.2 Meaning of Employability and Employability Skills

Different authors have defined employability in different but interrelated ways. For example, Aida, Norailis, and Rozaini (2015) indicate that employability means the rate at which labour is absorbed into the job market based on the characteristics of labour. According to Lorenz (2014), graduate employability means the rate of absorption of graduates into the labour market after graduation. Lorenz (2014) observed that graduate employability differs from discipline to discipline. The author noted that graduates who specialised in medicine, engineering, and science-related courses find it easy to be absorbed quickly into the job market than graduates who possess social sciences qualifications. According to Finch, Hamilton, Baldwin, and Zehner (2013), graduate employability refers to how quickly graduates find employment after graduating. According to Carroll (2014), the employability of graduates is one of the several ways of measuring the quality of higher education. Carroll (2014) goes on to explain that if a large proportion of unemployed graduates from institutions of higher learning is high, the quality of higher education provided may be poor from the perspective of employers. On the other hand, if the majority of the graduates are absorbed into the job market, then the quality of higher education may be good (Carroll, 2014). Besides being a benchmark for measuring

the quality of higher education, graduate employability also demonstrates the professional success of graduates (Lorenz, 2014).

2.3 Graduate Employability

Rajaram (2013, p.1) defines graduate employability as a lifelong process that involves the acquisition of knowledge, skills, competencies, attributes,s, and behaviours. Sharing similar views, Aida et al. (2015) view graduate employability as graduate possession of not only course technical skills but also soft skills that are important for interpersonal relationships. These views indicate that graduate employability is more than degree knowledge but include other skills that are needed in a workplace. In summary, Shivoro (2018) opines that graduate employability is the possession of skills and competencies that enable a graduate to fit into the workplace and be productive.

2.4 Factors Affecting Graduate Employability

Several factors affect graduate employability. According to Aida, Norailis, and Rozaini (2015), there is no single factor that can comprehensively explain graduate employability. Many factors or combinations thereof influence the employability of graduates. The discussion below highlights some of the factors that influence graduate employability.

2.4.1 University Reputation

A study conducted by Jun (2017) aimed at establishing factors influencing the employment and unemployment of university graduates in China established that college reputation, major, and gender affect the job search prospects of graduates from Shandong Province in China. According to the findings from Jun's (2017) study, graduates who come from research universities find jobs faster than their counterparts who do not come from research-intensive universities. These findings are supported by earlier findings by other researchers like Kong and Fan (2013), Baron (201 and 4), and Min and Genshu (2016). According to Kong and Fan

(2013), the reputation of the university has an impact on the employability of its graduates. The authors stated that if the university has a good reputation both locally and internationally, its graduates find it easy to penetrate the job market as opposed to graduates from universities that have poor reputations. According to Min and Genshu (2016), some employers base their selection criteria for prospective employees on the university ty that the applicants graduated from. Min and Genshu (2016) stated that the level of productivity of employees who graduated from specific universities makes employers base their selection criteria for prospective employees on the name of the university. According to Min and Genshu (2016), employers view graduates from different universities differently. Whereas some universities are known to produce competent graduates who match work demands, other universities produce graduates who cannot easily be absorbed into a competitive work environment. Baron (2014) shared the same passion with Jun (2017) who stated that the absorption rate of graduates into the job market largely depends on whether the university is research or non-research based. According to Baron (2014), research-based universities produce competent graduates who match the current work demands in the labour market.

2.4.2 Global Economy and Rapidly Changing Technology

One of the key factors that influence the employability of university graduates is the trend in the global economy and rapidly changing technology. Of the advancement in technology that requires students to have specific skills, university graduates who possess such skills may find it easy to be absorbed into employment than those who may not have such skills (Curtis, 2013). Since the aim mainly focuses on maximizing returns from their investments, employers look for employees who can offer them what they are looking for (Curtis, 2013). Based on the above, it can be concluded that, without the required skills and knowledge required by employers, graduate employability becomes low whereas if graduates possess the skills and knowledge required by employers, graduate employability becomes high. Without the necessary skills,

absorption into the labour market becomes problematic. According to Tran (2019), rapid changes in technology is partly to blame for graduate employability. Tran (2019), further indicates that technology has reduced the absorption rate of graduates into the labour market since technology has significantly reduced the demand for manual power. As companies opt to use technology at the expense of labour, even graduates who are computer savvy find it difficult to get gainful employment. Based on the above, it can therefore be argued that although technology creates some employment opportunities for some graduates, its general impact on graduate employability is negative. This is because technology has made it possible for giant organizations that would have employed more people to employ only a handful of employees since most tasks are done by machines. Finch, Hamilton, Baldwin, and Zehner (2013) associate graduate employability with the general economic health of the world economies. According to Finch, Hamilton, Baldwi,n and Zehner (2013), if an economy is facing dire economic conditions, its ability of it to create sufficient jobs to absorb graduates is diminished. Furthermore, they argue that countries experiencing a high rate of graduate unemployment are those that have failed to create sustainable economies to support the demographic changes in their population sizes. Most developing countries experience brain drain because they fail to create sustainable economies that support job creation (Finch, Hamilton, Baldwin & Zehner, 2013). Based on the above, one can infer that, for graduates to be easily absorbed into the labour market, the economy should be functioning positively and growing at a rate that is sufficient to absorb all or the majority of graduates produced by institutions of higher learning.

2.4.3 Field of Specialisation

Furthermore, the factors influencing graduate employability relate to the field of study and the field of specialization. The study conducted by Jun (2017) in China, established that economics and management and engineering graduates secure jobs more easily than graduates who specialised in social sciences and teaching courses. Another study conducted by Kong and Fan

(2013) in China established that it was very difficult for graduates with bach bachelor's rees in law, computer science, and English education to find jobs in China. According to Hosseini and Rezaei (2010), the courses and fields of specialization pursued by students while at the university determine their rate of employability upon completion. Although no course or specialization is completely irrelevant, some courses are less marketable than others. Moreover, students who pursue courses that the labour market demands are quickly and easily, absorbed into employment as opposed to students who graduated in disciplines that are saturated and experience limited demand in the labour market (Hosseini & Rezaei, 2010). They further posit that a mismatch between supply and demand for labour in the job market greatly affects graduate employability (Hosseini & Rezaei, 2010). From the above, it can be inferred that graduates who graduated in disciplines that are oversaturated are most likely to take a long before being absorbed into the labour market while those who graduated in disciplines that are demanded and easily absorbed into the labour market.

2.4.4 Level of Qualifications

Another factor that influences the level of graduate employability is the level of qualifications that graduates have. A study by Aida, Norailis, and Rozaini (2015) confirmed that it was easier for graduates with a master's degree to secure a job than for those with bachelor's degrees in Malaysia. The same study found that Master of Information Systems students in America have adopted aggressive approaches such as double majors to secure employment. The above findings suggest that more education and more training enhance the success of employment of graduates. This is because students with master's degrees find it easy to get jobs than graduates with bachelor's degrees.

2.5 Effects of Personal and educational characteristics on graduate employability

Every organisation whether big or small has specific objectives that it strives to achieve the desired objectives, there is a need to have the right quality and quantity of employees. Armstrong and Taylor (2014) consider employees the most treasured asset that an organisation can possess. According to Armstrong and Taylor (2014), the attainment of organisational objectives depends heavily on the workforce. Therefore, the personal characteristics and educational qualifications of employees play a pivotal role in the selection of employees since the future of the organisation depends on the shoulders of the employees that an organisation decides to hire. The discussion that follows explores the effects of personal and educational characteristics on graduate employability.

Lorenz (2014) points out that the employability of graduates depends on the transferable skills that graduates take to the job. According to Lorenz (2014), graduates who can demonstrate to employers that they have the necessary skills needed to do specific tasks get absorbed easily into employment, unlike those graduates who have no specific skills that are of interest to the employers. According to Shafie and Nayan (2015), personal attributes such as enthusiasm, interpersonal skills, teamwork, oral communication, flexibility and adaptability, initiative, productivity, problem-solving, planning, and organisation, managing own development and written communication are some of the skills and values that employers value when considering graduates for employment. Therefore, graduates with the above-mentioned attributes find it easy to be absorbed into the labour market than those who do not have such attributes.

Besides the soft skills that graduates should possess, Lorenz (2014) also advocates for graduates to have hard skills to be absorbed into employment. According to Lorenzo (2014), hard skills are the professional knowledge, tools, or techniques that make employees effective

in carrying out their tasks. Without basic competencies, Lorenz (2014) argues that it is difficult for graduates to secure employment in the competitive labour market. Lorenz (2014), further opines that hard skills help graduates to be effective and efficient in carrying out specific job tasks. Based on the above argument presented by Lorenz (2014), it is therefore imperative for institutions of higher learning to ensure that graduates acquire the hard skills that the job market demands. This can for example be achieved through hands-on training that enables students in institutions of higher learning to acquire the required skills. Therefore, emphasis on practical work as opposed to mastery of theory should be encouraged in institutions of higher learning.

Besides the transferable skills that graduates should possess to increase the likelihood of their employability, Finch, Hamilton, Baldwin, and Zehner (2013) points out that the personal qualities of graduates also determine their employability. Personal qualities such as willingness to work, self-confidence, and accepting and learning from their mistakes. According to Finch, Hamilton, Baldwin, and Zehner (2013), employers feel comfortable employing graduates who demonstrate self-confidence. Finch et al. (2013) hold the view that self-confident employees are more productive and tend to make rational decisions.

2.6 GraduEmployabilitylity in developed countries

The challenge of graduate employability transcends across the globe. The economic divide between developed and developing countries affects differences in the employability of university graduates. Vuksanovic, Santa, Moisender, Tuskila, and Leen (2014) note that in Europe there is a harmonized European Higher Education system hence graduate employability is shared across the nations. While European countries are not the same in terms of economic strengths, employability is also not the same but as indicated by Vuksanovic et al (2014) graduates can move across the nations in seek of employment. However, Martinez-Pastor (2017) reports that there is a close link between university education and industry including

public service organisations. Instead of employability challenges, there are cases of unemployment. Unemployment of university graduates has led to some graduates doing work that they did not specialize in (Martinez-pastor, 2017). Thus, skills acquired at college are wasted and it may affect the graduate's psychological well-being.

In the United States of America (USA) graduates' employability differs across the federal states. James (2021) and Ince (2019) report that graduates' employability ratings are compiled annually. The University of Cambridge and Massachusetts Institute of Technology are always on top concerning graduate employability.

China has a dual approach to graduate employability. It has local graduates who are trained according to the needs of the nation (Rothwell & Rothwell, 2017). Some Chinese students received university education outside of China and these foreign-trained Chinese are unemployable because of the foreign curriculum (Tran, Blackmore, & Rabimi, 2021). Therefore, according to Tran et al (2021), foreign-trained graduates are further trained to fit the local needs.

Rothwell and Rothwell (2017) question the practice of assessing and measuring employability. They argue that it seems as if universities are the ones creating employment. Further, if 100% of university graduates are employed, James (2021) argues that it does not mean that the university graduate is 100% employable. The fact is that not all graduates have all the requisite skills needed in the industry. Being a complex phenomenon, Rothwell and Rothwell (2017) argue that employability needs to be customized.

2.7 Graduate Employability in Developing Countries.

Pita and Muller (2020) contend that graduate employment in Africa is linked to the state of economic development of nations. Generally, the state of university education is responsive to the economic status hence limited financing affects the employability of university graduates.

Sawahel (2021) singles out South Africa, Kenya, and Egypt as a few countries whose university curriculum speaks to the general industry. In contrast, Baah-Baoteng (2020) notes that graduates from Ghana have severe employability challenges because the curriculum does not expose students to the field of work. Similarly, Mgaiwa (2021) notes that Zimbabwean tertiary education is disconnected from addressing industry requirements. Though there is a lot of quality discourse, Zimbabwean tertiary education is producing graduates who do not fit into the industry, thus making the graduates highly unemployable. This has led most graduates to engage in informal trading and ongoing teaching that they were never trained for.

Pitan and Muller (2020) conducted a study in South African universities. The study focused on investigating the extent to which universities support student employability development opportunities. The results of the study found two employability development opportunities being adequately addressed. The study thus recommended the engagement of curriculum designers and industry. The government was requested to play the facilitation role, to ensure employers engage in curriculum design.

On a different note, a study conducted in Zimbabwe by Mufumbate, Gondo, and Mutekwe (2014) found the university curriculum very different from the needs of the current Zimbabwean economic environment. The result of curriculum mismatch resulted in many graduates working in jobs they never trained for. To illustrate, an engineer takes up teaching because employers doubt the quality of the skills. The study recommended social dialogue between universities and industry.

2.8 Graduates' Employability in Namibia

Just like any other African country, Namibia has a challenge of university graduate employability. Studies by Kristings (2011) and Ikela (2018) both established high-level employability of Namibian university graduates. While Namibia has a mixed economy and is

dominated by the informal sector, the university curriculum is general (Shivoro, 2018). For this matter, there is no match between the curriculum and what exists in the industry. The graduates find themselves with qualifications that do not work; hence, the ere is universities'versities' serious engagement with industry. There is a need to know the skills, knowledge, activities,s and other qualities expected by employers. Without that knowledge, it is difficult to design a curriculum that addresses the needs of the industry. Hence, this study intends to fill this gap by conducting a study of asassessmployers' expectations for enhanced graduate employability in Namibia.

2.9 How employers engage graduates

How employers recruit, graduates vary from company to company. However, Pollard, Hirsh, Williams, and, Buzzoe (2015) contend that perceptions of employers towards graduates' employability influence the recruitment process. Concurring and sharing similar observations, Succi and Canovi (2019) indicate that the way employers pay attention to other skills and qualities than the degree knowledge shows that employers perc the graduate to possess personnel and academic skills. The perceptions employers have of graduates determine the recruitment and selection modes.

Pollard et al. (2015) note that employers who perceive work experience as the most important factor in graduate employability prioritize work experience when selecting graduates. Such employers make efforts to engage with universities. The employer requests students in a specific trade to be attached to the workplace. These students undergo a rigorous attachment program where they acquire practical skills. Succi and Canovi (2019) view this approach as reasonable. A study by Su and Wang (2015) found that the dynamic business environment may change businesses and acquired skills may become obsolete. On the other hand, the company may need fewer graduates for employment than the number who were on attachment, hence

others may be left out. However, despite weaknesses or challenges that may be encountered in the attachment model, Connor, Hirsh, and Barber (2013) argue that it is the best way of gaining work experience that makes the graduate employable.

Some employers use the traditional approaches of recruitment where candidates go through the recruitment process. The traditional process of selection such as interviews is described by Vender-Velden (2020). as offering the employee to assess the graduate in person. The argument is that interviews enable the employer to assess the behaviour of the candidate. This is in contrast with online recruitment and selection where no physical contact may take place and it is difficult to observe the behaviour of the graduate.

Whatever approactoof recruitment and selection of graduates, Rothwell (2017) note that the emphasis on skills expected by employers is a common phenomenon n..? Be it an oral interview or paper written, employers find ways of including questions, which focus on both hard and soft skills. According to Connor et al. (2013), the employer requires graduate skills, attitudes, es and abilities that make him or her fit into the business. The employer is interested in the graduate becoming productive within a short period.

The other group of employers accepts to take graduates with skill gaps. This group according to Stoica (2017), Succi, and Canovi (2019) engages graduates and provides some long-term induction. The induction may last six months to one year and during this period the graduates will be trained in work-related skills and other skills required to fit into the specific organisations. Pollard et al. (2015) describe the induction approach as providing the employer with adequate time to learn about the graduate's personality and other attributes that are required in the workplace. The induction period is normally termed probation which some may fail to go through and because it is contractual, a graduate who fails to meet the expected work expectations is rejected (Pollard et al. 2015).

There is also alternative recruitment of graduates done by external recruitment houses or consultants. The approach as noted by Vender-Velden (2020),. puts the responsibility in the hands of the recruiting agent to hire someone who will fit into the company. Being specialists in recruitment and selection, the agent exposes the applicant graduate to a process of tests and interviews. The company outsources the recruitment and selection process on assumptions that the employment agency is a specialist and would hire someone who will become productive soon and merge into the company team.

2.10 Strategies for increasing graduate employability

A study by Finch, Hamilton, Baldw, n, and Zehner (2013) that aimed at exploring factors that affect graduate employability recommends that to increase graduate employability, there is a need for universities to develop and include courses that develop soft skills in graduates. According to Finch, Hamilton, Bald,w in, and Zehner (2013), soft skills are a cluster of personal qualities, habits, attic use, ss, and social graces that make someone a good employee and a compatible co-worker. Finch, Hamilton, Baldwi,n and Zehner (2013) point out that possession of soft skills makes it easy for graduates to be easily absorbed into the labour market. Furthermore, employers nowadays are looking for problem solvers and if institutions of higher learning can produce those skills in their graduates, then graduate employability rates would be high (Finch, Hamilton, Baldwin & Zehner, 2013). Based on the above, the current rate of unemployment among university graduates can be attributed to the failure of universities to produce problem solvers. The world is full of problems that need solutions and the solutions that the world needs can be found if universities equip their graduates with the necessary skills that the labour market desires.

To increase the rate of graduate absorption into the labour market, Carroll (2014) encourages proper labour planning where institutions of higher learning emphasized balancing between

labour demand and labour supply. By producing the number of graduates that the labour market demandincreaseses the employability of graduates.

Khan and Law (2015) recommend a deliberate effort by university curriculum designers and the industry in establishing a partnership. The partnership can have more stakeholders but the basic plan is that industry and higher education curriculum planners need to work together. Sharing similar views, Manev (2018) states that universities are the highest research institutions hence the research should focus on economic development and link with industry. In essence, industry and university should be integrated to promote the economic development of the nation (Manev, 2018). Therefore, the university curriculum should reflect the needs of the industry.

If industry-university partnerships are maintained, there will be fewer challenges to graduates' employability (Erkarsian & Aykul, 2018). Industry and university would be speaking with one voice and the soft skills that the industry claims graduates lack will be shared and integrated into the university curriculum (Erkarsian & Aykul, 2018). These views reveal that the operation in parallel between industry and universities causes the challenges of graduate employability because of a mismatch between the university curriculum and industry needs. Therefore, there is a need to form a permanent partnership between industry and universities. In addition, research conducted at the university should add value to the industry (Belasubramani, 2014).

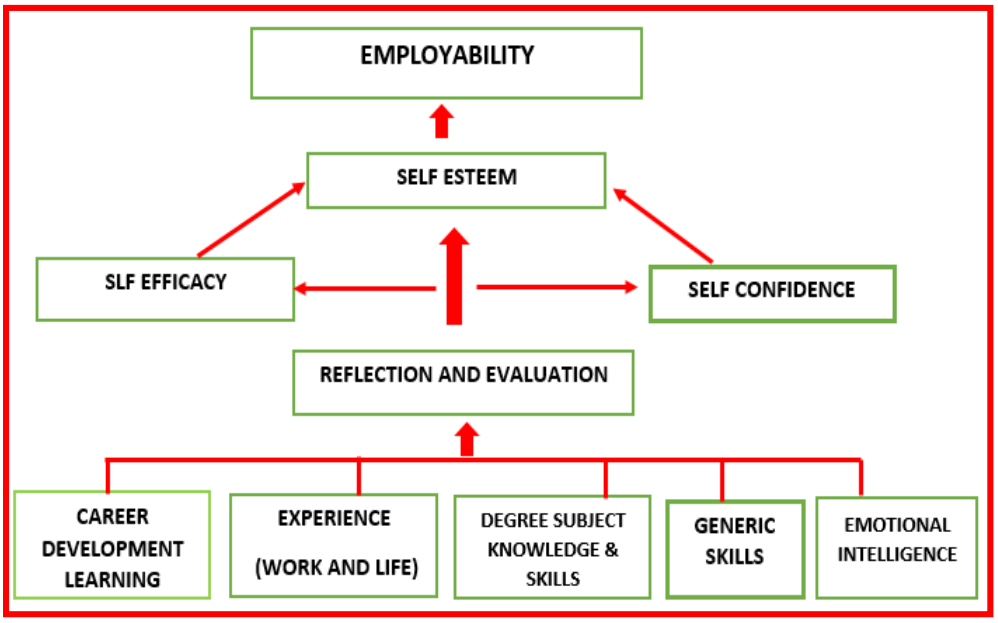
Khan and Law (2015) note that it has been since Memorial, organisations complaining about a lack of soft skills among graduates. The shortcomings should long have been corrected by integrating soft skills into the university curriculum (Khan & Law, 2018). It is simply creating committees compromised of higher education officials; industry representatives and other interested parties who regularly meet and review the curriculum. Continuous evaluations are made and adjustments are done accordingly. The views expressed by Khan and Law (2018)

imply that society, the authorities, and the industry are experiencing the challenges of graduates' employability but no action is being taken. Action should be taken to tackle this challenge.

2.11 The Theoretical Framework

The career EDGE model informs the study. Figure 1 illustrates the career EDGE model.

Figure 1: The Career EDGE model



Source: Pool (2016, p.2)

The career EDGE employability was introduced in 2007 as a follow-up to traditional models (Pool, 2016). The previous models were not that elaborate and practical hence the career EDGE filled this gap. Career EDGE, EDGE represents Experience; Degree knowledge and skills; Generic sk, il, ls, and Emotional Intelligence.

The career EDGE model postulates that students should be allowed to experience the EDGE factors so that they develop high levels of self-esteem, self-confidence,e, and self-efficacy. These three factors are linked to employability. As shown by the career EDGE model

employability is a result of a combination of these factors (Pool, 2016). A combination of life experiences, university degree subject knowledge and skills, generic skills, and emotional intelligence all equip the graduate with the ability to employability. All the skills of these four factors contribute to student employability and subject skills, as the only qualification for employment does not make a graduate employable. Pool (2016) opines that t EDGE model considers confidenceconditionions thenhancesnce employability. Crucial to note is that these three intrinsic factors are a result of the balance of the EDGE factors.

The common practice is that most job interviews focus on degree subject knowledge that is contrary to the career EDGE employability model. Acknowledging this truth, Pool (2016) indicates that most employment consultants and employers question job applicants about university subject knowledge and skills. Only to discover that when the person is employed, he/she fails to fit into the organisation. This teus fills that subject knowledge and skills are not the only requirements for graduate employability. This reveals the intelligence behind the career EDGE model

The current study is informed by the career development-learning model. The model consists of learning, work-life experiences, university skills and knowledge, generic skills, and emotional skills (Rajaram, 2014). These components lead to learning outcomes that in turn lead to employability. The university's reputation also contributes to learning outcomes and employability. The model, therefore, shows that t employability of a graduate is not premised on qualification only but also on soft skills.

2.12 Conclusion

This chapter explored literature related to graduate employability. The first section of the chapter discussed the concept of employability. This section emphasized the possession of both soft and hard skills as a condition of being considered employable. The chapter also explored

graduate employability in developed countries in Africa and in locally in Namibia. The literature review of graduate employability in this hissree environments revealed diversified results influenced by the economic development of the regions. However, despite the different challenges of graduate employability, the discourse indicated the existence of some university curriculum mismatches with industry requirements. The concluding part of this chapter presented and discussed the theoretical framework. This section highlighted the concept of graduate employability as the existence of a combination of soft and hard skills among graduates. The next chapter presents and justifies the research methodology adopted for this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and justifies the research methodology employed for this study. The chapter first presents the research philosophy followed by the research approach and research design. The next section presents the study population and then explains how the sample was selected. The chapter then presents the research instrument, data collection procedure,s and how data was analyzed. Four dimensions of trustworthiness are described to illustrate how they were addressed. Finally, the chapter presents ethical principles and explains how each was addressed.

3.2 Research Philosophy

Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018) define research philosophy as a worldview of pursuing knowledge that shapes how one perceives research should be conducted. The same concept (research philosophy) is viewed by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019) as assumptions researchers hold on epistemology. Saunders et al. (2019) identify five research philosophies namely positivism, postmodernism, pragmatism, interpretivism, and critical realization. Out of these five, this study adopted an interpretivism philosophy. Cohen et al. (2018) describe interpretivism as a research philosophy that believes that the best way to understand social facts is to engage subjects and let them express and explain their views, Interpretivism, thus, postulates that researchers can discern facts from the lived experiences of the participants. This study focused on engaging employers to voice what they regard as graduate employability. The study,t thereforethereforeinterpretivismst the philosophy in that the employees narrated their views and experienaboutd to graduate employability. Supporting the interpretive paradigm in such a study, Cohen et al. (2018) state that participants are unique and have different experiences, and the interpretivism research philosophy of being open and flexible offers

participants the to explain their unique experiences. This is in contrast to structured instruments that force participants to respond to the same questions. In addition, the use of words describing the experiences and expectations suits the interpretive research philosophy.

3.3 Research Approach

Creswell and Creswell (2018) identify three basic approaches to research namely qualitative quantitative and mixed research. The quantitative research approach believes in scientific research and that social facts can be measured, quantified, ed, and anaanalyzedatistically (Bless et al., 2013). In contrast, qualitative research refutes the claims of quantitative views and postulates that social facts are best understood by engaging participants to express themselves and data is presented in word description (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Mixed research uses both quantitative and qualitative aspects since the study adopted the interpretivism philosophy, the qualitative research approach was employed. Explaining the suitability of the qualitative approach Creswell and Creswell, (2018) state that it is compatible with interpretivism and hence allows participants to describe their views, experiences, and opinions. The qualitative research approach allowed the participants (employers) to explain their expectations of graduate employability.

3.4 Research Design

A research design is a blueprint for the research r used in collecting and analyzing data to answer the research questions (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). According to Bless et al. (2013), research designs are compatible with research approaches and the aim of the study. Since this study focused on enquiring from employers what they expect from graduates about employability, the study adopted the exploratory research design. The exploratory research design allowed profound interviewing of employers to extrapolate the deeply held expectations of graduate employability.

3.5 Study Population

Sekaran and Bougie (2016) view the population as people who have certain comcharacteristicsstic that are of interest to the researcher. However, the researcher may not engage all individuals make making the population dependent on the focus of the study (Saunders et al., 2019). Thustarget thee ing population enables selecting a representative that makes generalisations possible. In this study, the population consisted of 69 human resources managers of companies operating in Windhoek. The assumption was that the 69 human resource managers represent companies that are political employers of university graduates in Windhoek, Namibia. The Human resources managers were regarded d sources a source of data on University graduate employability.

3.6 Sampling Strategy and Sample Size

Saunders et al. (2019) define a sample as a subgroup of the target population. The sub-group group is representative of the population hence generalization can be drawn using results obtained from the sample. There are two broad sampling methods namely probability and non-probability (Maree, 2016). Saunders et al. (2019) define non-probability as a sampling approach where the sample is determined by the purpose of the study and the unique participants who provide the required data. In contrast, in probability samp, ling every member of the pollution has an equal chance of being selected. Probability sampling is based on randomness.

This study employed a non-probability and specifically purposive sampling. Saunders et al. (2019) view the purposive technique as used to select unique participants who are a rich source of data for the phenomenon under investigation. The study selected 20 large companies from a sample framework of 69 companies obtained from BIPA. These 20 companies were selected using purposive sampling. The 20 companies were considered to have the potential of

employing university graduates. The human resource managers of these companies were purposively selected because they were considered a rich source of data, considering that they have regular interactions with university graduates.

3.7 Research Instrument

Research instruments are tools used for gathering data and the selection of research instruments is influenced by the research approach. This study was qualitative and engaged participants to express themselves. The study used a semi-structured interview guide. The instrument was constructed to answer the research questions. Defending the suitability of a semi-structured interview schedule in such a study keeps the study focused and data aligned with the research questions are elected (Saunders et al., 2019). Data cThe detected is aligned with the research questions and analysis is made easier.

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

After being cleared by the University of Namibia Ethics Committee, permission was sought to engage the selected companies from BIPA. Then I approached the 20 companies. I emailed the ethics clearance letter from the University of Namibia and a permission letter from the Ministry of Industry to the 20 companies. Included was a letter seeking permission to engage the Human Resources Manager or any member involved in recruitment. The companies were also sent the consent form to familiarise themselves with the ethics to be observed during the study. Appointments were made and two participants were interviewed per day. Interviews were conducted on the Zoom platform. The responses were automatically recorded on the Zoom platform.

3.9 Data Analysis Procedure

Data analysis is the process of treating and reducing amounts of data into a manageable and easy to comprehend format (Bless et al., 203). Thematic analysis is a process whereby non-

numerical data is categorized into themes and sub-themes. In this data, the following steps were taken. The audio data recorded was transcribed and tyintWordn Word. The data was edited so that it conveyed meaning. The data was transcribed and presented under each of the four research questions. The transcribed data was loaded into Atlas tanalyzedalysed. The Atlas ti generated themes. The themes and sub-themes were extracted and described, linking them to research questions. The data was interpreted, dis, cussed and linked to related literature.

3.10 Data Trustworthiness

Creswell and Creswell (2018) and Cohen et al. (2018) note that Guba (1985) created dimensions of trustworthiness that are equivalent to validity and reliability. The dimensions are confirmability, cred, ability, and transferability. These dimensions were addressed as follows:

3.10.1 Confirmability

Confirmability concerns different researchers replicating the same study and confirming similar results (Yin, 2016). Detailed (thick) descriptions of the results were presented to ensure that other researchers could easily understand how the study was conducted. In addition, the results of the study were presented to the research participants to confirm whether the results were a true reflection of what they represented. The participants confirmed that the results reflected what they had contributed to the study.

3.10.2 Transferability

Saunders et al. (2019, p.450) view the transferability of findings in qualitative research as generalisability where findings can be applied to a similar situation. A research audit trail was conducted to ensure that all steps of the study were complied with.

3.10.3 Credibility

Credibility is the equivalent of interveinal validity in quantitative research (Bless et al., 2013). The researcher adhered to qualitative study protocols. All steps of the qualitative study were complied with. Verbatim quotes were used to show exactly what the participants indicated. The findings were taken for participant validation and the participants confirmed that the results were accurate.

3.10.4 Dependability

Dependability is the equivalent of reliability in quantitative studies. A dependability audit trail was conducted to indicate that every stage of the research process was succinctly followed. Detailed descriptions of the results were presented to indicate that all details were captured, and verbatim quotes were presented to indicate what participants directly stated.

3.11. Ethical Considerations

Saunders et al. (2019, p.253) describe research ethics as standards of conduct that focus on respecting the rights of participants. Research ethics, thus, restrict researchers from avoiding human abuses and they promote acting professionally in research. The following research ethics were addressed in this study.

3.11.1. None-maleficence

Bless et al. (2013) consider not harming participants as a basic research ethic. In this study, questions that violate the private life of the participants were not posed. Sensitive information was not requested. No threatening statements were made and interviews were of a reasonable length to avoid sitting over a long period.

3.11.2. Benefice

According to Bless et al. (2013), it is also ethical to ensure the research benefits the participants. In this study, the participants (employers) were to benefit from improved qualified graduates

(employable graduates). The study suggested engagement and communication between industry and university, an initiative that benefits both partners.

3.11.3. Informed Consent

Saunders et al. (2019) indicate that participants should be provided with all information about the research and their role so that they voluntarily participate. In this study, participants were debriefed about their role, the ethical principles to be compiled, and, the purpose of the study. Based on this information, they informed me that participation was voluntary.

3.11.4. Confidentiality, Privacy, and Anonymity

Saunders et al. (2019) consider the three ethical principles (confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity) to be closely related. No names or any form of identification was used on research instruments. All data were kept anonymous. Data in computers was protected with a password known to the researcher only. The results of the study were not accessible to unauthorized persons.

3.11.5. The Right to Withdraw

Participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any stage during the research process (Bless et al. 2013). Participants were informed about this right and were told that they needed not to explain the reasons for withdrawal if they decided to do so.

3.12 Conclusion

This chapter presented and justified the research methodology adopted for this study. First, the chapter presented and justified the use of the interpretive philosophy. This was followed by the justification of the adoption of the qualitative research approach. The exploratory research design was explained and its relevance was justified. The following sections presented and outlined the population, sampling, sample size, research instruments, research procedure, and data analysis. The last two sections explained how data trustworthiness and ethical principles

were addressed respectively. The next chapter presents data analysis and discusses the findings linked to related literature.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION, AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents analyses and interprets data. The data is presented under each of the three research questions. The data is presented in themes and the findings are linked to the research questions. The participants are identified using pseudo-names for ethical reasons. The presentation quotes the participants are identified using pseudo names for ethical reasons. The presentation quotes the participants to enhance the credibility and dependability of the findings. After analysis and interpretation of results, the data is discussed and supported by related literature. The chapter also compares findings with empirical studies in the field of graduate employability.

4.2 Demographics

Table 4.1 indicates the number of participants in each of the two sectors (private and public) and gender representation.

Table 4.1: Sectors and Partisans' gender representation

Type of organisation	Female	Male	Total
Public service	4	8	12
Private	2	6	8
Total	6	14	20

As illustrated in Table 4.1, 20 organisations participated in the study. The head of the human resources department participated in the interview. Females were 6 and males were 14. These statistics reveal that there were more males in managerial positions than females. Gender inequality in managerial positions was more in the Private sector where 33.3% of managerial

positions were females and 66.7% were males. This trend shows gender inequality in promotions.

Table 4.2: Graduates and Non-graduates in the organisations

Sector	**Qualifications**		**TOTAL**	**Experience as a manager for years**			**TOTAL**
	Non-degreed	**Degreed**		**Less than 5**	**5 to 10**	**11 to 15**	
Private	5	3	8	2	4	2	8
Public	4	8	12	2	5	5	12
Total	9	11	20	4	9	7	20

The first section of Table 4.2 shows the qualifications of the participants. Nine were non-degreed and 11 were degreed. These statistics reveal that in organisations there are employees appointed on degree qualifications and some who get promoted through service or experience. The second section shows years of experience as a manager and 16 (80%) of the participants had 5 years and more experience as managers. The study was assured of rich data from 80% of experienced managers.

4.3 Data Presentation

This section is presented in themes under the following research questions:

- What are the perceptions of employers on skills they expect from management science graduates?
- What methods are used by employers to assess graduate employability in the recruitment process?
- How can employers contribute to the employability of university graduates while training?

4.3.1 Perceptions of Employers on skills possessed by university graduate**s**

On perceptions of employers on skills possessed by university graduates, the participants expressed diversified views. The views were captured under the following themes.

Theme One: Diversified Skills

The participants unanimously indicated that they expected a diversified repertoire of skills from university graduates. The skills expected by employers varied among different industries. However, the following indications by Employers 2; 6; 12, and 15 reveal uniformity in employer expectations:

> *"In this organization, we expect someone who knows the job being offered and possesses personal relationship skills to be able to into the team," (*Employer *2)*
>
> *"While job-related skills are a priority, we also expect the graduate to possess interpersonal skills. Teamwork is critical for the survival of this company hence for the survival of this company employee relationships are key to healthy co-existence. (*Employer, *6).*
>
> *"We expect both hard and soft skills. The graduate should know the technical component of the job and as well be able to communicate and relate to workmates well," (*Employer, *12).*
>
> "*Here we require someone with computer skills, communication skills, analytic skills, and work ethics. The graduate should be prepared to learn and fit into the team," (*Employer *15).*

The majority of the participants shared the specific expectations expressed by the four participants. An important point to note is that all participants expressed the need for graduates

to have both soft and hard skills, a requirement that Shafie and Nayan (2015) consider necessary to fit into the organisation.

The participants were requested to provide other skills that they expected university graduates to have apart from the hard and soft skills. The following views were expressed.

Theme Two: Emotional Intelligence

Quite several attributes were explained under the theme of emotional intelligence as shown by the responses from Employers 4 and 7 respectively:

> *"All skills, technical and interpersonal are quite important. However, we also expect an individual who reads the situation and responds accordingly. We need someone who reacts in a way that does not put employees and the company at risk," (*Employer *4).*

> *"A graduate who can read between the lines, who is flexible and who accepts individual differences is an asset to this organization he/she promotes peace and harmony, hence reduces conflicts," (*Employer *7).*

The characteristic of emotional intelligence was described as critical in addressing conflict and risk in the workplace. In addition, some participants described emotional intelligence as a quality of reason where an employee weighs the pros and cons before making decisions. Decision-making is noted by Curtis (2013) and Lorenz (2014) who regard it as an attribute that drives the organization's competitiveness. Informed calculated decisions drive the organization's strategy while weak decisions cost the company (Finch et al., 2018).

In addition to emotional intelligence participant (Employer 10) raised the expectation of creativity and innovativeness in his company by stating.

> *"The company is technological-based and innovativeness is the major quality we expect graduates to possess. We have the tools but require someone who can thank out of the box. Creativity is the priority characteristic we need here," (*Employer *10).*

TAdditionalskills such as creativity and innovation were indicated by participants. Innovation according to Rothwell and Rothwell (2017) is the hallmark of product growth and company competitiveness. Therefore, the expectation of university graduates to be innovative is a core requirement for an industry dealing with goods production.

The preceding section presented the participants' expectations of university graduates. The participants were then requested to indicate whether their expectations were met and if not what lacks among university graduates. The following responses described under the themes were obtained:

Theme Three: Soft Skills

University graduates were described as lacking soft skills. Soft skills were described as attributes that concern interpersonal relationships. Explaining how a lack of social skills affects the employability of university graduates, the following responses were provided.

> *"Graduates may have work-related knowledge and without interpersonal skills, they fail to fit into the organization team. Lack of human skills compromises their appointment into organisations because they may negatively affect the existing peace'" (*Employer *5)*

> *"Lack of teamwork attitudes makes employers hesitant to employ graduates. The success of this company is hinged on teamwork. Graduates from*

*universities lack this component hence we explore other opportunities of getting someone who has teamwork experience," (*Employer 9*)*

*"There are cases when university graduates display superiority attitudes. The superior attitudes affect their relationships with the old employees. The tension affects productivity hence the company may opt to employ an experienced person who understands that they're interdependent among the employees," (*Employer *13)*

The views expressed by the above participants were unanimously supported by the participants who indicated that a lack of soft skills results in conflict and tension among employeeconflictsts described as counter-productive. Lack of soft skills was also describcounter-productivitytivity. Lack of soft skills was also described as having effects on communication and teamwork. As indicatEmployerployer 13, where some university graduates display superior attitudes, studies were reported. Such attitudes were found to result in strained relationships. The issue of soft skill deficiency among university graduates has been noted in studies advocated by Mufumbate et al. (2014), Pitman, and Muller (2020) whose results indicated that the absence of soft skills among university graduates compromised their ability to blend into organisation culture, hence it affected their employability.

Theme Four: Practical Skills

Lack of practical skills among university graduates was the major indicated shortcoming that affects the employability of university graduates. The major shortcoming that was raised is the lack of compatibility between what the graduate possesses with what is practically required in the workplace. The following responses from four participants reveal how a lack of practical applicability of graduate qualifications is a barrier to employability.

*"Many a time graduates possess theoretical knowledge which does not apply to the work environment. Lack of practical relevance results in the employability of the graduates," (*Employer 6*).*

*"As an organization focus is on securing productivity from the university graduate in the shortest period from engagement. Lack of practical skills affects productivity and employability of the graduate is compromised," (*Employer *10).*

*"Most university graduates may require a year's training to become productive hence organizations may find it costly. In such a situation where there is a mismatch between the skills and knowledge the graduate possess and what the workplace requires, the organization opts for experienced personnel," (*Employer *14).*

*"Graduates, for example, may have done a human resources management course, when it comes to the work environment reality work situation requires the application of the skills that the graduate lacks. Lack of practical application of skills acquired at university makes graduates unemployable," (*Employer *8).*

The indication by the four participants illustrates that a lack of practical skills compromises the employability of university graduates in Namibia. While Succi and Cannovi (2018) acknowledge attachment and inteprogramsgrammes, in some cases programs are not intensive and graduate trainees may be attached to a different work environment from where he/she will get employment after completing the university degree. The lack of a link between theory and practice was raised as the most significant barrier to university graduate employability.

Theme Five: Creativity/Problem-Solving

Lack of creativity to solve work-related problems was raised as another shortcoming among university graduates. According to employers 14 and 19 respectively,

> *"The real job is fraught with many challenges, for example, an organisation may experience high absenteeism or employee late coming. While there are specific rules to such challenges, it may require human resources personnel to think out of the box to solve the challenges, something which lacks among graduates," (*Employer *4).*

> *"Graduates lack foresight, are not flexible, and fail to read the work environment and how it may be affected by external and internal forces. Lack of creativity and focused mind compromises effective decisions, hence lack of work alertness compromises the employability of university graduates," (*Employer *19).*

The participants indicated that under normal situations, graduates are regarded as specialists in their areas of study, hence are expected to be independent decision-makers. Failure to think out of routine work-related problems was described as a weakness that casts doubt on the quality of their qualifications. Being the highest qualification in society, Pollard et al. (2015) note that graduates are expected to perform at a high level and a lack of creativity to solve organisation challenges compromises the employability of graduates.

4.3.2. Methods Used by Employers to assess graduate employability

The participants presented and explained the traditional approaches they use to recruit and select graduates. The following selection approaches were indicated:

Theme Six: Merit

Dimensions of meritocracy were raised by most of the participants. The participants indicated that they shortlist candidates, conduct interviews and select the best performer. The shortlists are guided by the graduate area of specialization. When questioned about how they ensure graduates with the right skills are selected, several strategies were presented:

> *"The organisation uses employments agents for recruitment and selection. We are confident of the expertise and specialist knowledge and skills of the agents. In addition, the agents are not biased," (Employer 1).*
>
> *"We use more than one method of selection. We use psychometric tests and interviews to ensure the best graduates are selected. Also we check on consistent performance over the years of training," (*Employer *6).*
>
> *"After going through the selection process, the newly employed graduates are put on contractual probation. The contract specifies the expected quality of performance and failure to meet these within the specified probation period leads to termination of employment," (*Employer *9).*

The responses on how the organisations decide to employ graduates with the right skills reveal the l priority of hiring an employee who adds value to the organisation. The initiative to hire the right employee is acknowledged by Stoica (2017) who describes it as the source of organizational competitiveness.

While employers may aspire to engage the right skills, it may not always be the case. The following results from this study indicate some of the challenges employers experience to engage recruits with the right skills.

*"Sometimes a recruit does exceptionally well in an interview but when it comes to actual work, the performance is dismal. In such cases the company conducts in-house training," (*Employer *13).*

*"As a company, we expect to get recruits who lack practical skills and we have an induction process for six months. The induction process prepares and exposes the recruits to the practical job environment," (*Employer *11).*

*"It is common that recruitment and selection fail to match with work performance. We engage the recruits for probation while they undergo some training. Putting them on probation allows dropping those who fail to cope with the actual work," (*Employer *3).*

Thesepost-recruitmentt and selection challenges expressed by the participants reveal the sgapsl gap among university graduates. Baldwin and Zahaer (2013) note that the skill gap in recruits is something expected and that is why organizations have induction programs. During the induction period, the graduate with the right skills should perform and fit into the job requirements. These challenges expressed by the participants indicate the quality of graduate employability.

4.3.3. Interventions to Enhance the Employability of university graduates

The questions under this section required participants to suggest how the challenge of graduate employability can be solved. Since employers are directly affected by the quality of graduates, they needed to suggest ways of increasing the employability of university graduates. The following themes were generated from the participants' responses:

Theme Seven: Stakeholder Engagement

The participants overwhelmingly supported stakeholder partnership and engagement in contributing to the university curriculum. The following views expressedemployersoyer 8; 14 and 18 respectively were supported by all participants:

> *"All key stakeholders should join hands in coming up with university curriculum. Partnership will improve the quality of the curriculum and produce graduates with skills expected in the workplace," (*Employer *8).*
>
> *"Industry including private and public, the government represented by the Ministry of Labour and Employment, and the universities should work together to influence courses offered at university. Pooling ideas help to come up with training in skills which are relevant to the workplace," (*Employer *14).*
>
> *"The universities, professional organisations, industry, and the Ministry of Higher Education should work together to design a curriculum that is responsive to the needs of industry, both private and public sector. Often industry is left out in university curriculum design hence the mismatch between industry and what the graduate possess," (*Employer *18).*

In addition to stakeholder partnership and engagement, employer 11 expressed:

> *"The Ministry of Labour and Employment should create a research team made up of representatives from the universities, professional organizations, non-government organisations, public sector,r, and private sector. This sector should conduct skill needs research on a continuoubasisic. The skill needs analysis will then inform tertiary institutions of skills to be addressed during training," (*Employer *11).*

The views expressed indicate agreement on the need to engage key stakeholders in the design of the university curriculum. It is important to note that the suggestiemphasizesise inclusion of industry and the Ministry of Employment and Labour as key partners in leading the university curriculum. The engagement and inclusion of all key stakeholders in the university curriculum are acknowledged by Khan and Law (2015) as common practice in countries such as Germany and the Netherlands where unemployed graduates are very few. Als,o the need to research national skill needs, is critical in making decisions based on concrete data, an initiative that Manev (2018) states enable institutions of high learning to train graduates in various skills based on market needs.

Theme Eight: Supervised Work-Based Learning

Participants expressed a lack of importance on graduate attachment and internship programs. The observation of laxity in the process of graduate work-based learning was revealed by the following:

> *"Graduate attachment is not taken seriously by the universities, organization, and the graduate trainee. In some cases graduates complete forms of attachment without attending any work-based learning," (*Employer *17).*

> *"Trainees on attachments sometimes are never visited by lectures from their universities. Lack of seriousness results in regarding work-based learning as a formality. Graduates treat the program as securing the signature of the organisation to complete the course," (*Employer *9).*

> *"Because of lack of policy which specifies the standard requirement of attachment, graduate trainees may complete forms indicating non-existent organisations. Forms are processed and the trainee is considered to have*

*one through work-based learning. Such cheating outcomes are observed when the graduate joins the industry," (*Employer *5).*

The observation indicated above reveals the laxity of attention to work-based learning, a situation that results in cheating. The suggestion of having a policy that binds all stakeholders involved to work-based learning is acknowledged by Carroll (2014) as required to ensure that all players fulfill their part. Work attachment should be considered beneficial to all stakeholders hence commitment is needed by all (Carroll, 2014).

4.4. Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study are discussed in this section. They are discussed under the respective research objectives.

4.4.1. Research Objective One: Skills employers expect from university graduates

The findings show a unanimous indication of employers expect students to possess both hard and soft skills. Hard skills were described as professional or trade skills. Hard skills enable the graduate to perform the tasks of the job. Explaining the importance of hard skills Hosseini and Zahaer (2013) indicate that hard skills enable the graduate to carry out job tasks effectively. In support, Armstrong and Taylor (2014) state that technical skills are basic requirements because the job is described by technical job attributes, hence the possession of these enables one to meet the job requirements.

In addition to hard skills, the study established an overwhelming indication of the requirement for a variety of soft skills. In this study, soft skills were regarded as relationship skills. The identified soft skills were interpersonal skills, teamwork, respect, cooperation, and communication. These soft skills were described as mainly concerned with relationships among employees. The study established that soft skills were necessary to promote co-existence, interpersonal relationships, effective communication,n and maintain harmony in the

workplace. Supporting the significance of soft skills, Finch et al. (2013) describe interpersonal skills as the bedrock of teamwork and cooperation. Expressing similar views, Shafie and Nayan (2015) explain that without interpersonal skills, job tasks cannot be accomplished because relationships enable employees to collaborate. Therefore, the expectation of employers to possession of soft skills has theoretical and practical support.

The third attribute employers expected was emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence was viewed as the ability to read the work environment and act accordingly to the needs of the work environment. According to employers, emotional intelligence enhances maintaining a conflict-free environment. According to Curtis (2013) and Finch et al. (2013), emotional intelligence is not only the ability to respond to work pressure but also the ability to contain threats that may disturb the work environment. Therefore, this study established that in addition to technical and soft skills that, employers expect graduates to possess emotional intelligence attributes.

The fourth expectation from university graduates indicated by employers was the ability to solve problems. The employers emphemphasizedt they expected graduates to be agile, creative, and innovative. The employers indicated that the work environment experiences challenges that require sound decision-making. Supervisors according to the study findings, are not always available, hence the need for employees to have creative attributes. Supporting the need for graduates to have creative attributes. Rothwell and Rothwell (2017) state that employers value university education and hence look forward to innovative attitudes among graduates.

The study, therefore, established that employers not only expect job-related or technical skills but also valued interpersonal, emotional intelligence, and problem-solving skills. Commenting on employer expectations of skills Curtis (2013) and Lorenz (2014) concur that the workplace is dependent on teamwork hence soft skills enhance cohesion among the team members. The

expectations of the employers are justified. However, this study found that the expectations of employers are rarely met.

The study established that while employers expected graduates to possess soft and hard skills, they lacked these. University graduates were indicated to have theoretical knowledge, hence lacked practical skills. This was described as the highest limitation that affected the employability of the graduates. The findings reveal that a lack of handhands-onlls is a cost to the employer because the graduate takes a long time before being productive. This challenge is noted by Suca and Canovi (2018) who state that the time the graduate takes to fit into the organisation and achieve productivity maybmay beg and this costs the company. A study by Bao-Baotang (2020) conducted in Ghana established that the induction of university gragraduates'st is quite high regarding time and funds spent during training.

The study also found a lack of interpersonal skills, weak creativity, and problem-solving among university graduates. According to the findings, graduates were described as passive, withdrawn, lacking creativity, ty, and lacking emotional intelligence. Lack of interpersonal skills, results in isolation of the student. Pollard et al. (2015) note such deficiencies and indicate that employers improve graduate skill deficiencies by exposing them to rigorous induction programs.

The study also established a lack of motivation as a critical concern in the employability of a graduate. The graduates were described as withdrawn and lacked interest in their areas of specialization. Such behaviour, according to Shafie and Nayan (2015) could be a manifestation of a lack of confidence. In addition, Pitan and Muller (2020) state that weak skill possession may result in a lack of confidence hence the graduate does not enjoy the work. These observations are an indication of a lack of adequate job-related skills; hence, the graduate finds the work situation threatening.

These deficiencies among university graduates were indicated as affecting their employability. This resulted in employers selecting non-graduates, who have experience and practical exposure.

4.4.2 Objective Two: Recruitment and selection of graduates with the right skills.

This section aimed to establish how employers ensure that they select graduates with the right skills. The first recruitment and selection strategy was indicated as a short listing based on results and then written tests and oral interviews. The second approach was described as based on practical skills/where applicants are given a practical test.

The third approach is where employers use employment agents. Employment agents were described as specialists and not affected by bias. Finally, the use of referrals was also mentioned as one of the approaches to recruiting and selecting graduates with the right skills. Polland et al (2015) and Rothwell and Rothwell (2017) share the observation that recruitment and selection approaches have strengths and limitations, hence a mixed approach is recommended. Making similar observations, Succi and Canovi (2019) propose that whatever approach is used for the selection of employees, induction should be used to socialize and equip the recruit with practical skills. The study established that despite the method used for recruitment and selection, the recruit still needs some induction. Induction improves the employability of the graduates.

4.4.3 Objective Three: Strategies to Enhance the Employability of university graduates

The study proposed aligning the university curriculum to industry needs including public service skill needs. According to the study, this could be done by engaging key stakeholders of education. The Ministry of Higher Education, industry, universities, and professional bodies were named as key stakeholders to be involved in aligning the curriculum with industry needs. Supporting the stakeholder-inclusive approach to university curriculum design, Khan and Law

(2015) indicate that the stakeholder approach enhances pooling curriculum needs to create a design that appeals to the needs of the industry. Erkarsian and Aykul (2018) note that in university curriculum design n, the industry is not seriously considered a key stakeholder yet universities prepare students for industry. The gov, therefore, theds to take the chairpersonship position and bring together all key stakeholders and work towards a creindustry-centricy centric curriculum. This will increase the employability of graduates.

The study further established hed that a student attachment policy that outlines all the modalities of implementation should be drafted. Not only policy formulation but also methods of enforcing it to ensure it is complied with. The need to consider attachment as an approach to developing practical skills functions when a robust focused program is adhered to. The study established the need to have a tertiary education attachment policy that is supervised, evaluated, and continuously improved.

The study also raised the need for the Ministry of Labour and Employment to partner with the Ministry of Higher Education and universities. The partners should focus on skill needs research. Such research will generate concrete data on skill needs and such statistics guide the training of university students. Areas of high skill need will receive higher enrolments. Carroll (2014) and Khan and Law (2015) view the creation of a skill database as a way of ensuring that universities train students according to national demands. When students are trained in skills that are in demand, it increases employability.

The fact that soft skills are needed in all work environments, the study raised the need to include aspects of interpersonal skills in all courses. Finch et al. (2013) and Manev (2018) believe that the inclusion of a soft skill curriculum in courses prepares graduates to fit in workplace teams. The study established that soft skills training should be included as a component of the

university curriculum despite the course the student is taking. It prepares the graduate for interpersonal engagement with the workplteammatesates

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter presenteanalyzed, sed, and interpreted data obtained from primary research. First to be presented was demographic data showing the top type of business, the number of years in operand action, and the number of graduates employed. The second section presented data themes under each of the three research objectives. The third section discussed the findings. The chapter indicated that employees expected both technical and soft skills among university graduates. On the expectations, the study established that graduates lacked practical and soft skills. The chapter also revealed approaches used to capture skills possessed by graduates accurately. The study established that despite the effectiveness of the selection process, the graduate still requires induction. The last section of this chapter presented a partnership in University curriculum design, attachment, creation of skill ne, eds database, and inclusion of soft skills training in all courses at the university as approaches to enhancing graduate employability. The next chapter summarizes the findings, draws conclusions, and provides recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the findings from both literature and primary research, concludes, and provides recommendations. The summary of the findings is presented under each of the three objectives. Recommendations are provided based on the findingsThe conclusion is drawn from the findings of the study. The last section of this chapter presents recommendations for further research.

5.2 SummaFindingsndings from the literature

The summary of findings from the literature was presented under the respective research objectives

5.2.1 Perceptions of Employers on the Employability of university graduates

Employability was described as a state whereby the graduate is expected to leave university with skills that enable them to be productive within a short period. The literature revealed that there is coma mon consensus among employers that the graduate should possess both technical and soft skills (Lorenz, 2014). However, the same literature indicated that in most cases graduates lack soft skills, hence, it presents challenges for them to fit into the workplace (Finch et al., 2013). The literature further pointed out that because of a lack of confidence in skills that graduates leave with from university; many employers are skeptical about employing the graduates. Employers who take graduates, induct them for a quite long period so that they gain practical skills (Mgaiwa, 2021).

5.2.2 Recruitment and Selection to determine university graduates' Skills

The literature revealed that most employers apply traditional recruitment methods though there is about the effectiveness of the recruitment and selection in securing the graduate with the

required skills (Williams & Buzzoe, 2015). The literature also indicated a few employers who engage recruitment consultants. Pollard et al. (2015) raised experience as one of the requirements by employers when recruiting graduates though they know that the graduates are e from university. Discussion around the experience challenge revealed that the solution was to expose the graduates to the attachment for a long period.

5.2.3 InEnhanceions to Enhance the Employability of university graduates

Finch et al. (2012) and Carroll (2014) contend that an inclusive multisector approach is the most total approach to designing a university curriculum that is aligned with the workplace. The majority of the participants supported these views. They literaturemphasizedemphasised that industry in most cases is left out of tertiary education curriculum design inducteduthestoryy is key to the employability of university graduates. The literature also indicated the value of supervised attachment and internship as strategies that can increase the employability of graduates. The practical work exposure enables them to acquire practical skills (Manev, 2018).

5.3 Summary of Findings from qualitative data

The study was conducted to investigate the expectations of employers on graduates and enhance the employability of university graduates in Namibia. The study was initiated by the increasing number of university graduates who are shunned by employees who prefer people without degrees. The study sought to establish the expectations of employers on graduates and strategies used by employers to determine the skills of graduates during recruitment and selection and to establish what interventions need to be implemented to enhance the employability of university graduates. The following results were obtained.

5.3Employerstions of Employers on the Employability of university graduates

On the perceptions of employees on the employability of university graduates, the study established that employers perceive graduates to lack practical skills. Lack of practical skills

for the trades the graduates are trained in was indicated as a cost to the company about the extended time they take to be productive. The study also established that the induction of graduates takes a long time which was also indicated as a cost to the company. Secondly, the study established that employers perceived university graduates as lacking interpersonal skills, emotionally intelligent,enceproblem-solvinglving skills. The employers indicated that a lack of soft compromise promise graduates' ability to fit into the organisation team. Lack of emotional intelligence among graduates results in a lack of confidence and poor adjustments to the work environment.

5.3. Skills 2 Recruitment and selection to determine university graduates'

The study established t of that employers apply the traditional approaches of recruitment and selection, that is, shortlisting and then providing written tests of interviewing. Few employers indicated that they engage employment agents to do the recruitment and selection on behalf of the organisation. However, the study found that despite the method employed to recruit and select graduates, the challenge of lack of practical and soft skills still exists. The study thus concludes that the recruitment and selection approaches selected the best candidates but the lack of skills expected by the employers exists. The observation is predominant among university graduates. This section also established that employers indicated that recruitment and selection enablselectioning the best graduates, who would learn fast during induction and therefore become productive within a short period.

5.3.3 Interventions Enhancence tEmployabilityity of University graduates

The study raised four interventions that could be implemented to enhance the employability of university graduates formation partnershipsnership composed of the Ministry of Higher Education, the universities, industry and public service organisations, and professional organisations to collaborate on the design of tertiary education curriculum was suggested. The

stakeholder approach to curriculum development was viewed as an approach that could create a work orindustry-centricc curriculum and the intervention could enhance the employability of graduates.

The need to have a national skills database was also raised. The study proposed the need to research skill needs. The skill needs analysis would establish trades or profession-level demand. The statistic would guide enrolments and quality of training of university graduates.

The attachment of a graduate's national policy was suggested as an intervention that would make attachment mandatory and enforceable. The policy, as raised in this study, should be regarded as on-the-job learning. Supervision by local management and the university should be taken seriously and students who fail to meet the practical expectations should be penalized. If the attachment is extended and all stakeholders are engaged, graduates would acquire the practical skills which enhance employability.

The fourth intervention raised is the inclusion of soft skills training in all courses. These skills should be compulsory to all course inclusions of soft skills was considered an intervention that would help the work environment. Fitting into the work environment. Fitting into the work environment without challenges would make the graduate productive fast. Based on these findings, the following recommendations were made.

5.4 Recommendations

1. The Ministry of Education should implement the stakeholder approach in designing tertiary education curriculum. The inclusive approach will improve the quality of the curriculum and its rest he response to the industry.

2. Althe l courses at university should include a module on soft skills. The inclusion of soft skills training enables graduates to adjust and fit into work environments without difficulty.

3. The Ministry of Higher Education should dework attachments work-attachment specifying the roles of all stakeholders. The policy should be reinforced so that all involved are committed.

4. The Ministry of Labour and Employability should regularly conduct skill audits. A skills database enables the determination of skill demand so that tertiary institutions control enrolment for particular courses.

5. Employers should accept that graduates may not have skills to fit into the organisation but they can be trained. This will enhance the development of program induction programs.

6. The universities should orient final-year students and inform them of the dynamics of the world and workplace. The orientation may assist the graduates to prepare and accept the new environments they may find themselves in.

5.5 Conclusions

5.5Employerstions of employers towards the employability of university graduates

The perceptions of the employers that graduates lack practical skills to be productive as soon as they are engaged leads the study to conclude that employers may avoid engaging graduates. Employing graduates would cost the company. Avoiding the employment of graduates increases the number of graduates on the street and increases unemployment. The finding that graduates lack soft skills, leads the study to conclude that employers would induct graduates in soft skills when they employ them. Inducting the graduates into soft theirs would enhance their fitting into the work environment. The study also concludes that employers 'observation of a lack of soft skills among graduates, implies the need for university curriculum to include soft skills training.

5.5.2 Recruitment and anSelectionon determine the skills graduates

The study found that despite the approach used to select graduates, the challenge of lack of practical skills and soft skills still exists. Based on these findings, the study concludes that recruitment and selection should be used to select the best recruits, however, the successful applicants should still be inducted to enable them to fit into the organisation speedily. They become productive within a short period reducing costs to the organisation.

5.5.3 Interventions to Enhance the Employability of Graduates

Based on the interventions proposed the study concludes that employers are convinced that the challenge of graduate employability can be resolved. The study further concludes that employers are willing to be part of the solution to graduate employability. This was confirmed by suggesting that they become part of the contributors to the tertiary education curriculum.

5.6 Area for further study

The study engaged employers only. Further study involving all key stakeholders needs to be conducted. Views from key stakeholders on the employability of graduates could assist in designing comprehensive inclusive interventions.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHICS

Type of Business: _____

Number of years in operation: _____

Number of graduates employed: _____

Number of non-graduates employed: _____

SECTION B: GRADUATE QUALITIES EXPECTED BY EMPLOYERS

1. What skills do you expect university graduates to have to qualify to work for your organization?

2. What other skills do you expect graduates to have to fit into your organisation?

3. On the skill expectations you have made, which ones do current graduates have and do not have?

SECTION C: RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF UNIVERSITY GRADUATES

1. How do you select university graduates for your organisation?

2. How do you ensure that the graduates with the right skills have been selected?

3. Can you explain any experience of graduate recruitment and selection, highlighting the successes and challenges you encountered?

SECTION D: EMPLOYER ROLE IN EMPLOYABILITY OF GRADUATES

1. What do you suggest employers should do to enhance the employability of graduates?

2. Who else should be included in increasing the employability of university graduates?

3. Any other point you may wish to share on enhancing graduates' fit into the industry?

Thank you

(Please read the consent form on the next page)

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

My name is Victor P Nepando, a final year MBA in Strategic Management student at the University of Namibia. As part of the course, I am conducting research on the topic, **"An Assessment of Employers Expectations to Enhance the Employability of University Graduates in Namibia."** You are kindly requested to complete the consent form.

I, the undersigned, confirm that (please tick the box as appropriate):

1.	I have read and understood the information about the project, as provided to me	☐
2.	I have been allowed to ask questions about the project and my participation.	☐
3.	I voluntarily agree to participate in the project and my privacy will be respected.	☐
4.	The procedures regarding confidentiality have been clearly explained (e.g. use of names) to me.	☐
6.	The use of the data in research, publications, sharing and archiving has been explained to me.	☐

7.	I understand that other researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the data and if they agree to the terms I have specified in this form.	☐
8.	I understand the interview will last for approximately 30 to 40 minutes to complete	
9.	I, along with the Researcher, agree to sign and date this informed consent form.	☐

Participant:

_____ _____ _____

Name of Participant Signature Date

Researcher:

_____ _____ _____

Name of Researcher Signature Date

APPENDIX C: APPROVAL LETTER FROM MINISTRY TO CONDUCTING RESEARCH.

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF LABOUR, INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND EMPLOYMENT CREATION

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Tel.: (061) 206 6111
Fax: (061) 212 323
Enquiries: Mirjam Hamunyela E-mail: Mirjam.Hamunyela@mol.gov.na
Our Ref: PF

Private Bag 19005
32 Mercedes Street
Khomasdal
WINDHOEK

31 January 2022

Mr. Victor P NEPANDO
Senior Labour Inspector
Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation

Dear Mr. Nepando

RE: ETHICAL APPROVAL LETTER FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH

1. This is to refer to your letter of 25th instant, regarding the request for conducting research.

2 This is further to inform you that your request has been considered favourably. The Ministry is granting you permission to interview staff members within the different Offices/Directorates/Divisions.

3. For logistical arrangements, kindly liaise with Ms. M Hamunyela at 061-2066244.

Yours sincerely,

02/02/2022

LYDIA H. INDOMBO
ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

All official correspondence must be addressed to the Executive Director

APPENDIX:D APPROVAL LETTER FROM SCHOOL TO CONDUCTING RESEARCH

NBS
NAMIBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL
UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

25 January 2022

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Re: MBA Management Strategy , Student – Mr. Victor P Nepando Student Number 201400771

As part of our Masters Programme, students are expected to submit a research report after completion of their course-work. They need to explore in detail, some concepts and issues pertaining management strategies. To do that effectively, they need to conduct interviews and obtain practical examples.

Mr. Nepando has chosen your organization to approach for information. It is against this background that I wish to kindly request you to assist Mr. Nepando with the information he requires. Accept our assurance that the data will be used for academic purposes only. A copy of the completed document will be available at the Namibia Business School for perusal. His research synopsis indicates that his topic touches on "An assessment of employers expectations to enhance the employability of University graduates in Namibia".

Your kind assistance is highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

NAMIBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL
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UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA
Inspiring Minds & Shaping the Future

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