

Talent Management Tool for Attracting, Developing and Retaining W&R Scarce Skills.

Final Report

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ABSTRACT

University graduates stand at the dawn of their careers, seeking meaningful employment in a labour market that is characterised by volatile change and globalisation. This new world of work requires flexibility, versatility, and creativity – skills not traditionally required of an employee. Graduates today are required to develop a skills-set that enables pro-active career behaviour and, furthermore, aid the employer to utilise such abilities as business solutions. There is a lack of consensual scientific knowledge available on employability, despite the rise in its importance to the 21st century employer and graduate employee. This is especially true for the South African context. Accordingly, the main aim of this study was to investigate the employability and psychological career resources of graduate students to identify the strengths and development areas of the sample. A self-administered questionnaire consisting of standardised instruments, specifically the Psychological Career Resources Inventory (PCRI, developed by Coetzee, 2008) and the Graduate Employability Measure (GEM, developed by Bezuidenhout, 2011), was distributed to a random sample of 113 final-year students from the Faculty of Economic and Management Science of the University of Pretoria. The results indicate a strong employability profile with few clear-cut development areas. Students believe themselves to have high levels of *career resilience* (mean = 4.94; SD 0.75), whilst also having a strong inclination to the *openness to change* dimension (mean = 4.86; SD = 0.59), pointing to an overall all adaptable orientation to their careers. In terms of the psychological career resources profile, the sample presented with high scores on all dimensions namely: career preferences, career values, career purpose, career harmonisers, and career drivers. This prevailing positive perception regarding psychological career resources can be seen as balanced, and thus facilitates adaptive, proactive career behaviour, which, in turn, influences general employability. This result is validated by the high mean scores on all employability dimensions. It is also evident that there are no significant differences to be observed between men and women across all dimensions measured, indicating that men and women are equally likely to be proactively involved in their career-management in order to develop the skills required to be seen as employable. Furthermore, there is evidence of significant relationships between the majority of psychological career resources dimensions and those of the graduate employability dimensions. These results are expected to add valuable insights to the field of career management literature and human resources practices alike, which, in turn, will inform graduates regarding their prospects.

(NICOLA SYMINGTON: Investigating Graduate Employability and Psychological Career Resources; Research submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Mcom)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research investigated the wholesale and retail sector youths and graduate employability, strategies for job creation, Skills development and retention. The research is based on a wide and broad literature review of the latest trends in the wholesale and retail industry, followed and supplemented by both qualitative and quantitative research of the top wholesalers and retailers in the country. The purpose of this research was also to identify drivers of change and related factors that have a bearing and influence on youths and graduate employment, job creation, Skills development and retention strategies, based on the emerging opportunities and threats (e.g. Technology and labor) to job creation within the wholesale retail sector and to provide an assessment of job creation and employment possibilities in the SMME wholesale and retail sector.

The findings are an indication of the multi-faceted and dynamic challenges facing the wholesale and retail sector locally and internationally. The global changes have a rippling effect on the wholesale and retail sector in South Africa and the shift from permanent jobs to seasonal temporary and contract employees being the resultant effect.

The union influence is also another influencing factor as casual and contract jobs are mostly distributed by labour brokers in South Africa.

The study also revealed the volatility of the retail sector when there are unprecedented developments like economic meltdown; the sector is forced by prevailing circumstances to shed jobs and this results in retrenchments and job losses and reduces any previous gains in employment.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 Background

Ebus-Tech Consulting was contracted by Wholesale & Retail Sector Training Authority (W&RSETA) to conduct research on Talent Management Tool for Attracting, Developing and Retaining Wholesale & Retail Sector Scarce Skills as advertised in their terms of references with the intention (s) of achieving the following objectives.

- Identify employability opportunities for the unemployed youth and people having an interest in entering the W&R sector.
- Enhance and improve highly skilled graduate retention in order to professionalize the W&R sector.
- Inform sector skills planning processes within the Wholesale and Retail sector
- Contribute into producing new knowledge to address the National imperatives as highlighted in the NSDS III
- To assist the W&RSETA in identifying sector priorities that are informed by research
- The priorities set out in the Research Agenda will also be used to guide sectoral research undertaken by academics and independent research institutes and organizations within the Wholesale and Retail sector
- Contribute into the professionalization of the wholesale and retail sector

The main aim of the research is to produce a position paper on the wholesale and retail industry's contribution and strategies for youth and graduate employability, job creation, skills development and retention in the W&R Sector.

The paper will provide an overview of the job creation requirements as spelled out in the National Development Plan, with specific reference to the wholesale and retail industry, employment trends in the wholesale and retail industry including the differences between large formal businesses, informal businesses and SMME's. It will investigate the impact of skills development programmes on preparing graduates for the workplace and the contribution made to employment.

The paper will provide the findings and make recommendations that will impact on the decision makers of the wholesale and retail sector by highlighting the main areas in creating opportunities for job creation and skills retention.

1.2. Research problem

The research aims at investigating the challenges faced by the wholesale and retail sector with regards to employability, sourcing the right kind of skills, creating jobs, developing skills and retaining them.

The research aims at investigating the factors affecting Large, Medium and small wholesale and retail operation in creating jobs and retaining them.

One of the key elements of conducting this research is to identify the main opportunities and threats (e.g. Technology and labour) to job creation within the wholesale and retail sector and provide an assessment of job creation possibilities within the SMME in the wholesale and retail sector.

1.3. Research questions

The research aims at investigating the following questions;

- i. What is the role of the wholesale and retail sector in creating and retaining the available jobs in the sector?
- ii. What are the factor structure, discriminant validity and the internal consistency of talent management tool/s in the W&R Sector?
- iii. What are the outlook/s on youths, graduates employability and skills retention in the W&R Sector?
- iv. What relationship, if any, exists between career choice and employability in the W&R sector?
- v. How do the gender groups differ regarding the employability and career choice dimensions in the W&R sector?
- vi. What are the implications of races regarding the employability and career choices dimensions in the W&R sector?
- vii. How does the rural setting vs urban setting differ regarding the employability and career choices dimensions in the W&R sector?
- viii. What is the employer's concept of a good employee in the W&R sector?
- ix. What are the employer's thoughts on skills shortages and available remedies in the W&R sector?
- x. What are the effects of exiting government policies on youths and graduate's employment and how does these policies affects the W&R sector?
- xi. What Incentives are there for youths and graduate's to seek employment in W&R sector?
- xii. What incentives are available for jobs creation, skills development and retention in the W&R sector?

1.4. Objectives

The research on talent management tool for attracting, developing and retaining W&R scarce skills aims to achieve the following key objectives:

- To provide an overview of Youths, Tvet Colleges and University Graduate, Employability Opportunities, Skills Development and Retention in the W&R sector.
- To provide an overview of the job creation requirements as spelled out in the National Development Plan, with specific reference to the wholesale and retail industry.
- To provide an overview of employment trends in the wholesale and retail industry including the differences between large formal businesses, informal businesses and SMME's.
- To provide overview of employment trends in metropolitan city vs rural setup in the wholesale and retail sector.

- To provide an analysis of permanent (full time and flexi hour) seasonal and broker employment figures.
- To provide an overview of growth patterns in the wholesale and retail industry.
- To provide an analysis of growth strategies employed by major retail companies with an analysis of how such strategies may impact employment figures.
- To provide an analysis of the demand for specific (scarce) skills in retail as visualized by the major companies and how they address the problem.
- To provide an analysis of the impact of new technologies on employment and skills requirements.
- To provide overview of the trends in wholesale and retail strategies and technology developments which may impact job creation.
- To identify the main opportunities and threats (e.g. Technology and labour) to job creation within the retail sector.
- To provide an assessment of job creation possibilities in the SMME retail sector.
- The influence of skills development and work readiness programmes on preparing graduates for the workplace and its impact on the employment of graduates.

1.5. Issues to be studied

The study also provided an overview of growth patterns in the retail industry by providing an analysis of:

- The effects of labour broker activities with regards to creation of employment and skills retention in the wholesale and retail sector.
- Employee sourcing strategies employed by major retail companies with an analysis of how such strategies may impact employment figures.
- The outlook on demand for specific skills in wholesale and retail sector as seen by the major companies and how these problems are address.
- The impact of new technologies on employability and skills requirements.

1.6 Study Delimitations

The study was curtailed by time constraints.

1.7 Rationale

The research aims to provide international trends in wholesale and retail strategies and technology developments that may impact on job creation, the Wholesale and Retail Sector is a very large sector. It is almost everywhere, although it is largely in the big metropolitan and urban areas. The supply and demand at the retail level results in job creation and retention as many workers work in different

fields and areas of this large sector, the research has dealt with the challenges of creating sustainable jobs and opportunities in the Retail Sector, which is contributing a substantial percentage of jobs in the South African labour market sector, although many of them are of a casual nature, the unions are not impressed by the usage of labour brokers by employers in all sectors, the retail sector seems to specialize in casualization of labour, this situation sets it on a collision course with the unions who are vociferous about such employment.

1.8 Chapter summary

Chapter 1, Introduction and background to the wholesale and retail sector and problem statement.

Chapter 2, reviewing the available literature on employability and skills retention in the wholesale and retail sector.

Chapter 3, Research Methodology, the approach is mixed methods with both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Chapter 4, Analysis and findings, the analysis of the questionnaire and interviews.

Chapter 5, Recommendations and conclusion, the final outcome of the research and proposed recommendations.

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Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

To review available literature for the validity of researches done on talent management tool for attracting, developing and retaining W&R scarce skills and to confirm if some of the question posed below in method regarding unemployed Youths, Tvet Colleges and University Graduate, Employability Opportunities, Skills Development and Retention in the W&R sector are suitably address, if not what is the way forward.

A review of the nine (9) identified research papers with over three hundred and two (302+) pages that was performed to address the following questions:

- xiii. What are the factor structure, discriminant validity and the internal consistency of talent management tool/s in the W&R Sector?
- xiv. What are the outlook/s on youths, graduates employability and skills retention in the W&R Sector?
- xv. What relationship, if any, exists between career choice and employability in the W&R sector?
- xvi. How do the gender groups differ regarding the employability and career choice dimensions in the W&R sector?
- xvii. What are the implications of races regarding the employability and career choices dimensions in the W&R sector?
- xviii. How does the rural setting vs urban setting differ regarding the employability and career choices dimensions in the W&R sector?
- xix. What is the employer's concept of a good employee in the W&R sector?
- xx. What are the employer's thoughts on skills shortages and available remedies in the W&R sector?
- xxi. What are the effects of exiting government policies on youths and graduate's employment and how does these policies affect the W&R sector?
- xxii. What Incentives are there for youths and graduate's to seek employment in W&R sector?
- xxiii. What incentives are available for jobs creation, skills development and retention in the W&R sector?

The W&RSETA has been implementing various programmes since its inception which seek to address the scarce and critical skills within the sector and improve the skills of both unemployed and employed South Africans – encouraging young people to consider a career path in the wholesale and retail (W&R) sector, and professionalizing the sector through facilitating affordable and accessible training programmes to meet the needs of the sector.

This literature review undertaken was directed at finding out if there are talent management tool for attracting, developing and retaining scarce skills in the wholesale and retail sectors particularly out there, and if it has been developed in other countries.

In order to define the boundaries, we used the Business Dictionary.com's definition of all the construct in the argument for and against proposed theory (accessed on 01 January 2018), and all the definitions will be found on the section on definition, furthermore, in order to expand our definition, we borrowed from articles penned by experts using search engines, such as Google, Yahoo..... etc.

We reviewed a number of articles from some literature on talent management tool, employability, skills development and retention in the wholesale and retail sectors in the UK and the USA. The two countries though different from South Africa, both have histories of racial and social segregation based on slavery and social class distinction, which during the period of social emancipation triggered the need for transformation to address historical inequalities.

We hoped examples from these countries would give us lessons on how they have or are trying to overcome challenges of talent management issues in the wholesale and retail industry.

Furthermore, a summary of the most pertinent studies relating to talent management, employability, skills development and retention is presented to build a national view of what constitutes an employable person, finally, the interaction and influence of various factor's on employability are discussed, allowing us to draw meaningful conclusions from the reviews.

2.2. Origin and Development of Employability

In the following section, a discussion of the origin and development of Talent management tool, employability, Skills development & retention will be offered. A definition of each construct will give an idea of the vast number of differences between prior researches studies conducted; however, it provides a much broader understanding of the origin and development of employability, Skills development & retention.

Employability as construct has enjoyed much international attention over the past decade (de Grip et al., 2004; McQuaid, Green & Danson, 2005), yet the topic made its appearance in the scientific arena as early as 1909. Indeed, Mansfield (2001) notes that Sir William Beveridge first noted the concept of employability in a book called *Unemployment: A Problem of Industry*. Employability has, however, changed considerably over the years, which is mainly attributable to changing labour market conditions and government policies.

The changes have been set out by Gazier (2001) who proposes that employability has moved through the seven operational versions/stages set out below.

2.3 . Definitions

- 2.3.1. Talent management** refers to the anticipation of required human capital for an organization and the planning to meet those needs. ... **Talent management** is the science of using strategic human resource planning to improve business value and to make it possible for companies and organizations to reach their goals.
- 2.3.2. Tool** a device or implement, especially one held in the hand, used to carry out a particular function.
- 2.3.3. Employability:** skills have been **defined** as: "A set of achievements, understandings and personal attributes that make individuals more likely to gain employment and to be successful in their chosen occupations". Peter Knight & Mantz Yorke (HEFCE/DfES ESECT group).
- 2.3.4.** Employability is "The continuous fulfilling, acquiring or creating of work through the optimal use of competencies" (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006, p. 453);
- 2.3.5.** It is "... the relative chances of acquiring and maintaining different kinds of employment" (Brown et al., 2003, p.111);
- 2.3.6. Skills Development:** The **Skills Development** Act aims to **develop** the **skills** of the South African workforce and to improve the quality of life of workers and their prospects of work, thereby improving productivity in the workplace and the competitiveness of employers and to promote self-employment.(Skills Development Act of SA).
- 2.3.7. Skills Retention:** Classical definitions of **retention** emphasize the degree to which people are able to remember (or perform) some previously practiced material (or **skill**) after an elapsed period of time. Thus, **retention** likely depends on an individual's memory of the material or **skill** in question.
- 2.3.8.** Coetzee and Esterhuizen (2010) define Skills development & retention as a set of **career-related preferences, values, attitudes, abilities, and attributes that lead to self-empowering, proactive career behaviour that promotes general employability**. In addition to this, Skills development & retention consist of those career preferences, career values, attributes, skills, and attitudes that are linked to the individual experience of intrinsic/subjective career success (Gunz & Heslin, 2005).
- 2.3.9.** The essence of Skills development & retention is, however, that these inherent resources (meta-competencies) ultimately equip the individual to adapt to the changing world of work and attain success within a particular socio-cultural context (Coetzee, 2008). These definitions offer a starting point for understanding the concept of employability and Skills development & retention. Consideration will now be given to the greater body of knowledge, including the origins and development, as well as relevant models

The above definitions indicate that employability is a broad construct that relates to skills, the attainment of a job, and the ability to move between jobs. It relates to pro-active and responsible

behaviour on the part of the individual employee. Barnett (Nilsson, 2010) argues that it is becoming increasingly difficult to determine which competences will secure and retain a position. As such, managing one's employability is also becoming more difficult.

This review will discuss relevant models of employability that touch on the subject of managing one's employability, but it is important to note that the definition of "Peter Knight & Mantz Yorke (HEFCE/DfES ESECT group)" has been used as a base definition pertinent to the employability Model embodiment of all skills/competences and individual factors that relate to careers in general.

2.4. Opportunities in Wholesale and Retail Sector in South African.

In the summary section of (**Job Opportunities in the Wholesale and Retail Sector in the South African Labour Market; Job Opportunity Index Report** W&RSeta Research Business Unit "28/10/2011" Executive Summary), Skills shortages was identified as the main factor to jobless crisis in South Africa, contribution from "Ursula Fear" of Deloitte Human Capital, stated that "More than half a million jobs in South Africa cannot be filled because the appropriate skills do not exist.",

"Skills shortages are the main factor to jobless crisis in South Africa. Job creation is a top priority for the government but this will not happen overnight. According to Ursula Fear from the Deloitte Human Capital, "More than half a million jobs in South Africa cannot be filled because the appropriate skills do not exist." It is vital that training and skills development interventions bridge gaps between tertiary education and workplace.

Conspicuously, many companies both private and public lack proper recruitment strategy, job creation programmes and organisational development strategy. This further creates impasse to effectively deal and addressing the unemployment problem in South Africa. In October 2011, there were approximately 513 jobs opportunities in the FMCG, Wholesale & Retail sector. The employment opportunities in the sector have dropped by 5% from the last month employment opportunities. Evidently, recruiters find it difficult to source suitable and qualified candidates due to low search of career seekers with relevant and appropriate skills. This report presents the job opportunities in the W & R sector within the South African labour market".

We are of the opinion that lack of skills have mostly be blame for youth joblessness in all sphere of the labour market although this is true to some extent, but what is of interest here is the non-consideration of the past government and related agencies massive investment in developing potential candidates who might have met some of the requirements for these positions.

It was stated that "there were approximately 513 jobs opportunities in the FMCG, Wholesale & Retail sector, but that the employment opportunities in the sector have dropped by 5% from the previous month's employment opportunities", Therefore concluding that recruiters are finding it difficult to source suitable and qualified candidates due to career seekers not having the relevant and appropriate

skills, this particular research was done in three major metro of the Gauteng, Kwa-zulu Natal and Western Cape province of the country through mediums which is popularly classify as the recruitment agency base (News Media advertising (electronics & Prints), Internet Technology, Social Media) a very good medium to access the urbanized populace who have easy access to these platforms leaving out their counterparts in both semi urban and rural dwelling and the potential contribution of six province and rural setting where access to these platform are still in its infancy stages to the discus.

It was noted that the W&R sector is changing rapidly worldwide: boundaries been blur, and that changes in the sector are now mostly driven by internationalisation, regionalisation, consolidation and intense price competition, regulation policies, e-commerce, and heterogeneous consumer and product trends, and some of these changes have altered the way in which business operates and the types of jobs for which there are demand in the sector, in South Africa for example, the W&R sector is one of largest and most diverse sectors, the question then arise as follow; could we conclude that due to the extensive nature of this report that it is valid? the answer is partially yes, but we still have to provide avenue for the interrogation of the unheard voices to this discus, which happen to be in this case the majority, and other questions need to be asked such as is this views applicable to the areas not included in this research activities?, nature of the proposed employment on offer?, which are the factors under consideration by this research, including the effect of localization (urban vs rural), race, technology, globalization, development and incentives which are areas deserving of further studies.

2.5. Wholesale and Retail's Contribution to Job Creation.

Excerpt from a research paper titled **(Retail's Contribution and Strategies for Job Creation and Retention;** W&R Seta "Wholesale and retail chair Leadership" 1 June 2015), authored by Dr Burton MALGAS et al, *"the retail sector, with its large footprint in both urban and rural areas, has the potential to create more sustainable jobs in South Africa, something that is widely recognised as essential for the country's political and economic stability"*.

This literature set the tone by demystifying one of the most popular believes of the industry players why companies are not hiring which is the supposed restrictive labour environment in the opening pages, which I will explain here to mean government policies on employment (BCESA), this caught interest resulting in extensive search for the full research document to further add to my understanding, I then discovered that the research was extensive in nature covering the perceived reasons responsible for the wholesale and retail sector not creating enough jobs and the major factors responsible for their findings such as (technology and labour), the research could not explore other factors relating to the labour environment itself, such as effect of race, rural setting, small retailer, union & political activities, market forces due to limitations that were set by time constraints and resources, although in its conclusion it did made these sage observations.

“The creation and retention of jobs within the Wholesale & Retail Sector has shown that it is not based on one factor but requires a multi-factor approach; also the external environment plays a vital role in developing this sector, the PESTEL (political, economic, social, technological, environment and legal) model can help to understand this, the Political decisions have an impact on the Retail Sector direction, the NDP is a 45 classic example, the economic factors have a strong bearing in driving the Retail Sector to create jobs or shed jobs based on the supply and demand within the sector, the Social factors cannot be ignored as they also play a pivotal role in determining the Retail Sector contribution, especially regarding support of the SMME's and emerging small businesses in creating jobs or shedding jobs.

The power and influence of Technology cannot be overlooked by the Retail Sector as this is one of the key factors affecting the Retail sector, especially online shopping, ecommerce and e-marketing, which reduces the space of the shop floor and influences warehousing and transport logistics, mechanisation and automation in the sector is going to create new jobs and careers, the study has shown that a comprehensive and viable strategy which is actionable is crucial for alleviating unemployment in the sector, especially youth unemployment, the usage of different integrated strategies and methods by the Retail Sector and W&RSETA are an important factor in finding solutions to reduce unemployment through offering the youth entrepreneurial opportunities in the sector, the empowerment and transformation of the Retail Sector is an imperative, the retail Sector cannot afford to be an onlooker but must be an active stakeholder in changing and improving the entire Retail Sector”.

Which further serve to strength the believes that a way, tool or system is ripe for exploration/development to help bring together all the cited viewpoints for better understanding of the underling factors responsible for joblessness within the wholesale and retail sector especially in a country where youths unemployment have hit an alarming proportions.

2.6. Talent Management, Employability, Skills Development & Retention.

The literature on some aspect of talent management tool, employability, skills development and retention is vast, generally portraying the concepts as easily understood yet intricate in nature with little consensus on its true meaning, from the definitions presented above, it is evident that talent management tool, employability, skills development and retention can be broken up into four distinct parts.

- i. It is the ability to secure employment.
- ii. It is the ability to maintain this employment.
- iii. It includes the ability to move between various jobs and roles within the organisation.
- iv. It is the ability to secure a new role with an alternative organisation, if need be.

There is no known accepted definition yet of the phenomena (talent management, employability, skills development and retention as a whole part) but when broken into parts the accepted definition for

some of the bits are as stated above, the widely accepted definition for employability when considering the graduate student is offered by Yorke and Knight (2004, p. 5), stating that employability is “a set of achievements, understandings and personal attributes that make individuals more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations.” Yorke and Knight (2003, p. 3) also describe employability as a “blend of understanding, skilful practices, efficacy beliefs (or legitimate self-confidence) and reflectiveness (or metacognition).” The concept of employability has been popularized in recent years; however, its introduction can be traced to the 1900s, the origin and development of which will be discussed below. Following this introduction to employability, the various models that influence our understanding will be discussed, bringing the focus back to graduate employability and the possible relationship to Skills development & retention.

Influence of International Models

In our effort to address the skill gaps question in the wholesale and retail sector a review of the literature (**Addressing Skills Gaps in Wholesale and Retail: Development and Successful Implementation of Structured Apprenticeship Model**) was undertaken, unfortunately this is one of those literature where the authored is anonymous either by choice or omission, a huge portion of the research paper was devoted to the effect of apprenticeship on reduction of employment in the countries where the studies was carried out.

Extensive studies have been devoted to investigate the contribution of skills development programmes to enhance intermediate skills among graduates, or participants and to reduce the unemployment (e.g. Fersterer, Pischke & Winter-Ebmer, 2008; Kost, 2008; Backus, Keegan, Gluck & Gulick, 2010). Also, the apprenticeship systems have been claimed to deliver relative low unemployment rates in Japan (Madon, 1998) and other countries like Germany, Austria and Switzerland (Ryan, 2001). However, there is evidence that industries find the apprenticeship program as unpopular where they prefer to recruit skilled workers and have their own in-house upgrade training (Beckmann, 2002; Lewis, Ryan & Gospel, 2008).

These findings indicate that the successful of the apprenticeship program is heterogeneous, influenced by the quality of the program and the strength of engagement between government, industries and education institutions.

The wholesale and retail industry is today the fourth biggest contributor to the Malaysia gross national income (GNI), the industry contributes about RM83 billion (USD27.3 billion) in 2010 (PEMANDU, 2011) and keeps on growing, It is projected that 595 thousand new jobs creation from the industry by year 2020 (Malaysia Ministry of Higher Education, 2012).

The industry has witness's considerable changes in recent years, influenced by the accessibility of internet and sophisticated communication tools and new socialization, large wholesalers and retailers have undergone considerable structural change, with traditional hierarchical systems of management being replaced by dynamic structures and involve responsibility being devolved more widely through organization, besides, official ministries have given serious attention and support to transform local wholesalers and retailers under the along themes of "Modernise, Globalise and Revolutionalise", such changes require for employees with higher skill levels to exploit such momentum, this need is said to have been accentuated by the fact that workers must be able among other things to work more flexibly, able to take a broader variety of roles, able to communicate effectively and demonstrate good problem solving skills.

The launched of national economic transformation has driven the Ministry of Higher Education to launch the Graduate Employability Blueprint for 2012-2017. The blueprint attempts to boost the level of graduates' marketability and to fulfil the needs of the professional and skilled manpower especially towards the 12 National Key Economic Areas which includes wholesale and retail, the blueprint among others highlights the needs to enhance technical skills and soft skills among graduates which have been determined as crucial by employers, the list of skills includes poor command in English, attitude or personality towards jobs, low demonstrate ability to solve problems, insufficient job skills and general knowledge (Malaysia Ministry of Higher Education, 2012).

Studies report that universities incorporate both technical and soft skills into academic curriculum which cover experience learn in workplace learning through internship or structured parttime job, embed industry input into existing curriculum, supporting programs in students' development career management skill, laboratory experience and academicians experience in workplace (Bilkinsoy, 2007; Lewis et al., 2008). However, the implementations of the programs are rather in contested space (*red ocean*) where some agencies, departments and universities competing each other to execute "effective skills development" and enhancement apprenticeship programs, Meanwhile, few private or government listed companies engage with the programs, hence there are some issues with manpower supply-chain from university to industry.

This paper aims to discuss the refinement made on an apprenticeship program that was developed based on blue ocean strategy, under the support of some official ministries, Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) take a lead to bring in other universities, employers and agencies to structure a continuous teaching and learning process via apprenticeship program specifically for wholesale and retail industry. The benefits of the program will be outlined and some areas of up-skilling graduates' skills for meeting employers' demand in wholesale and retail industry will be highlighted, the present discussion

implements the practice of blue ocean strategy to fully utilise resources in the university. Then, the refinements on the existing skills enhancement programs allocate each centre/ department to focus on their speciality.

These arrangements promise for continuous talent development, where at the bottom line, graduates meet the specifications required by the enthusiastic employer for employability, the engagement between CUIIC-industry is important as change of information is always take place and the main results are: first, the proposed apprenticeship program minimises the duplication of work between centres or departments in the university and secondly, the knowledge and skill development are properly addressed in semester academic and semester break towards meeting the job specification of the employers.

Finally, the model may be not much different from other existing apprenticeship models, but this study addresses the (i) information of manpower supply-chain between university and industry, (ii) responsibility of each provider in creating a strong consortium to execute the program.

This paper promotes the practice of blue ocean strategy in creating a good manpower supply-chain between university-industry.

To conclude our literature review we reviewed the proposed priority research needs of the wholesale and retail sector authored by JN Steyn and W Sewell of CPUT, where the focus of the study was to find ways and means through research of professionalising the wholesale and retail sector through the following.

- Talent management, employment equity – shortage of skills that want to work in rural areas.
- Wholesale predominately male orientated – difficulty to have women accepted into the sector.
- Need for more effective analysis of skills supply and demand how to get retail staff motivated and more disciplined were all on top of the list for future research needs which goes to show that the W&RSeta understand perfectly the dilemma of employability in the sector.

2.7. Access to jobs for young people

Increasing employment and employability is the goals of every government, while obtaining gainful employment are the goals of every job seeker, internships and workplace experiential training, paid or unpaid, serve as a rite of passage to a job or a career, and they do play an important role for their constituents (students/interns, employers and academic institutions), the nation's society, labour force and economy.

From the employers' and academic institutions' perspective, there are numerous benefits with low or non-existent costs. From the student interns' perspective, when comparing the costs and benefits of unpaid to paid internships, it appears that the unpaid ones come with high opportunity costs and contribute substantially less to the interns' success and goal of securing gainful employment, additionally, the current setup allows for some employers to take advantage of the lack of strict monitoring and enforcement of the labour laws, which results in intern exploitation and from the societal and economic perspectives, unpaid internships restrict access and opportunity to good jobs for people of disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, constrict social and economic mobility, and have a negative impact on the economy at both the microeconomic and macroeconomic levels (Pologeorgis, 2012).

2.8. Graduate Employability

In the research report done in the United Kingdom regarding Graduate Employability by Michael Tomlinson (Graduate Employability: A Review of Conceptual and Empirical Themes Higher Education Policy (2012) 25, 407–431) which provided an overview of some of the dominant empirical and conceptual themes in the area of graduate employment and employability over the past decade. The researchers looked at the wider context of higher education (HE), labour market change, and the policy thinking towards graduate employability, the research draws upon various studies to highlight the different labour market perceptions, experiences and outcomes of graduates in the United Kingdom and other national contexts of like, it further draws upon research that has explored the ways in which students and graduates construct their employability and begin to manage the transition from HE to work.

The paper explores some of the conceptual notions that have informed understandings of graduate employability, and argues for a broader understanding of employability than that offered by policymakers, this research was spot-on with regard to policy development to manage graduating students to workplace, the short coming of this research is that it lack our national special uniqueness with regard to our national history of race relation problems and its attendant effect on employability or the employable person and equally it was looking at one aspect of our proposed topics which is graduate employability and was deemed not sufficient for the purpose of this discuss.

2.9. Employers' Perceptions of the Employability Skills.

In the research report commissioned by Edge Foundation (Employers' Perceptions Of The Employability Skills Of New Graduates: Authored by: Kevin Lowden, Stuart Hall, et al), it cited the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education in United Kingdom (NIACE) in 1998 saying that

employability is better understood as a social construct and stressed that to see it as only an individual issue was to miss important aspects of the concept.

Therefore, NIACE believes that employability is a responsibility shared more equally between:

- individuals who must be responsible for accepting the consequences of choices they make;
- Businesses which, in employing a workforce and serving customers, inculcate particular values and attitudes as well as shaping behaviours. (In many senses what makes “employability” is determined by employers). Employers have a particular responsibility to develop the employability of their staff – for business reasons more than altruistic ones;
- Public bodies (schools, colleges, universities, the benefits agency, local and national government agencies) which have a duty to secure the employability of all citizens.
- NIACE stressed the relative nature of the concept of employability and highlighted that particular attitudes and values may be highly contextual. For example ‘what are appropriate values in foreign exchange dealing may be less so in healthcare’.

The literature indicates that employers want graduates who can adapt to the workplace culture, (same can be said for all other employee required by most employers) use their abilities and skills to evolve the organisation and participate in innovative teamwork.

Employers also value critical thinking (reflection) as this is required for innovation and anticipating and leading change (Harvey *et al*, 1997; Little 2001 in Lees 2002), this particular section of the report is indicative of our current research questions except to say the focus of the discussion is very much different from the situation we are undertaking to study but all the expostulated ideas here is in line with what our research intend to address.

The literature findings equally cited overwhelmingly that employers, students, graduates and HEI representatives’ value work-based learning such as placements and internships which is a model of our current system of Learnerships, apprenticeships and Internship as particularly effective approaches to promote the employability of graduates.

The literature also quoted “UKCES (2009a) as stating that opportunities such as placements and internships not only seem to offer an effective applied method of inculcating appropriate awareness, skills and abilities in graduates but can also promote productive

Collaboration and partnerships between Higher education and employers, building greater understanding between these stakeholders.

The importance of placements and internships has been recognised by policymakers and supported by funding and their value is also evidenced(UKCES (2009a)), this is important to our construct as a similar process is already in place here in South Africa to address all the aspect mentioned, like I argued earlier the only issue with this research is that it was done in a country with a different background to ours

and the key focus was undergraduate, the need of our research is slightly different as we seek to include all other element that might have been overlook or not applicable to the research environment although the idea is to import the different construct mention here and apply it to our own unique situation and therefore determine the outcome.

2.10. Employment and Economic Growth

In a paper publish by the Development Policy Research Unit School of Economics University of Cape town titled: Higher Education, Employment and Economic Growth: Exploring the Interactions authored by Haroon Bhorat et al, in the section on labour market outcome it noted that there was Highest employment growth for the better educated and declining employment growth for those with less education, relating to the increasingly capital intensive growth path and growth in medium and semi-skilled occupation, and It further went on to say that workers with low levels of qualifications are clustered around occupational types that demand low skills, while high-level jobs are mostly filled by workers with high skills and education and that mixed employment growth for certificate holders- high skilled as well as low skilled employment growth, grade-Hiring inflation where better educated workers are doing work previously reserved for workers with lower skills.

Understandably so, but the underling factors responsible for this situation was not explore I could only discern from this literature a policy focus exploration or an attempt to uncover the factors responsible for the current woeful unemployment data.

2.11. Skills for success

Any strategy to grow employment is based on the availability of the requisite skills in the labour market. South Africa is characterised by a very large pool of relatively low skilled workers and as one moves to higher skill levels, the number of available workers falls. In the traditional high employment industries, this would not be problematic as the mix of skills demanded follows a similar profile. According to the W&RSETA Sector Skills Plan (SSP 2013), the wholesale and retail sector follows an even more exaggerated mix with a greater proportion of low skill occupations than the economy as a whole.

The question remains that if one is to consider the future skills mix of the sector, will it remain unchanged or will it follow the same profile as it has historically? In general, as the world evolves into the knowledge economy, the employment growth is no longer organic. Structural changes affect the basic mix of skills required with the proportion of low skilled jobs decreasing and mid to high level skilled jobs increasing. Furthermore, technological innovation increases the productivity per worker and also the entry level skills demanded per post. While the retail sector may not be as susceptible to this phenomenon as sectors such as mining or manufacturing, it is likely to have an effect in the future. This is borne out by analysing the drivers of change which indicate a movement towards a more skills intensive environment.

If one considers the shifting trends highlighted in this document, the skills implications of these are likely to be more skewed towards the higher order, more complex skills.

The key areas of focus are likely to be:

- ICT skills
- Logistics and SCM skills
- Management Skills

This is reflected by the analysis conducted by W&RSETA and reported in their SSP (2013).

They identified the skills implications of the key drivers to be:

- Skills related to working in increasingly complex supply chains
- Soft skills relating to customer engagement
- Continuing upskilling and a move away from casualization
- Knowledge relating to African trading environment
- ICT related skills for mobile retailing, digital media and social networking
- Management skills to manage multi-pronged approaches

This is further supported by the list of most urgent skills listed in the scarce skills list.

They are:

- Retail store manager
- Food and Beverage Scientist
- General / Company Buyer
- Finance Manager
- Finance Business Analyst
- Fuel retail analyst / administrator
- Service station supervisor / manager

Since the focus of this study is employment growth, the reality is that the biggest impact will be felt in the lower skilled occupations and therefore, additional study needs to consider what would be required at these levels to stimulate employment.

2.12. Transformation in Wholesale and Retail Sector:

In a research paper published by the Wholesale & Retail Leadership Chair at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology Cape Town, (Interventions to Achieve Employment Equity Objectives in the Wholesale & Retail Sector : 30-08-2015) authored by Dr. Leon Roman and Prof R B Mason, An attempt was made to explain the reasons for lack of equity representation in the workplace, government and greater society responses to redress the situation through enactment of policies and formation of trade unions as quoted below.

“The notion of creating policies to remove discriminatory practices and create redress for the previously disadvantaged existed before the 1994 elections. Bezuidenhout et al. (2008) provide a comprehensive overview of the lead up to the EEA, 1998: the struggle against apartheid was characterised by a deep need to oppose discrimination against black2 people (Africans, Indians and coloureds) and fight for equality, and resulted in the Freedom Charter’s sentiment “Equality for all”, becoming a tenet of South African identity.

Typical of South African society, discrimination was (and still is) predominantly manifested in racial terms, and other forms of discrimination were hardly taken into account, including in the labour market.

The South African economy, based largely on mining and agriculture, had required a large workforce of low- and semi-skilled workers; this role was largely allocated to black (most often, African) workers, and enforced through apartheid policies.

The 1970s witnessed an increase in black labour unions which sought to achieve equality in wages, working conditions and rights in the workplace, and the creation of organizations such as the Black Management Forum (in 1976), the struggle for equality continued and eventually greater recognition was given to other previously disadvantaged groups, such as women, people with HIV (human immunodeficiency virus), and the disabled. Various academic institutions, non-governmental organizations, and the International Labour Organisation participated in the journey leading to the creation of the Employment Equity Act, 1998; it formalised EE as a strategic initiative through the recognition of “the pronounced disadvantages for certain categories of people that they cannot redress by simply repealing discriminatory laws” (EEA, 1998: 1). The EEA, 1998 identifies and targets groups of employees and ‘designated’ employers and seeks to ensure that these employers set Human Resources (HR) policies and practices that reflect EE principles.

The Department of Labour (DoL) focuses on addressing four essential elements for staff development with regard to EE:

- *General employment equity;*
- *Sexual harassment/bullying;*
- *HIV/Aids in the workplace; and*
- *Cultural sensitivity/managing diversity.*

The EEA, 1998 outlines objectives and strategies to remove the barriers to equity in organisations, but according to research done by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), Development Policy Research Unit and Sociology of Work Unit imbalances still exist between actual practices and the objectives of the EEA, 1998 (Bezuidenhout et al., 2008). However, overall, little research has been done on the EEA implementation and its legislative impact in South Africa.

Therefore, this study adds to the small body of research in this area, including Janse van Rensburg and Roodt (2005); Oosthuizen and Naidoo (2010) and Maboho, (2014).

This report argues that the nature of the EEA, 1998 favours a 'numbers game' over competency, and interventions should be made to achieve EE objectives without derailing core business goals. It analyses the EEA and EEAA, 2013 and seeks to illustrate the impact of these Acts on the W&R sector; it also highlights key areas for potential change that will be beneficial for other sectors as well.

If progress is towards full equality is to occur it is imperative that EE objectives are met and implemented successfully.

To bring about change and transformation, including successful management of diversity in the workplace, businesses need support from government and not a new penal code.

While barriers to equity do exist in organisations, this should be seen as an opportunity to create a competent, skilled workforce that could overcome the barriers."

This literature was spot on with regard to the malaise of discrimination and its attendant effect on the majority race of South Africa, however what was never fully discussed/explored is what we would like to term the ladder of discrimination which is out there but rarely talk about, the notion that Indian, colored, Asian and Black Africa were discriminated against equally is not true hence the term ladder of discrimination, what we are saying here is that it is a common knowledge that the darker you skin color (ask our ex-Labour Minister and Reserve Bank Governor Mr. Tito Mboweni he was once in the news saying that police arresting his son was based on skin color profiling and that how high it goes, discussion on yellow bone syndrome in labour is here deferred) the more likely you will be discriminated against heavily, ideally it would make sense if researches are commission to look at level of discrimination, because it weight disproportionately in disadvantaging some in the grouping, especially the darker skin African populace so by classifying the grouping of Asian, Indian, colored and Blacks as African for the purpose of affirmative action was never really going to help reduce the unemployment situation within the black African community, because to meet the legislated affirmative requirement of government the hiring managers only just need to apply their own level of biases which is still evidence today in some establishment if you take the pain and make a close visual observation of some workplaces, the tendency to hire almost look like us have rob a lot of deserving people jobs especially at lower level where little or no qualification is required.

According to these excerpts from a research paper undertaking by the wholesale and retail chair leadership CPUT (**Transformation: Evaluation of the role of the W&RSETA in the last 10 years and the way forward**) authored by Dr. Siphokazi Koyana SIYAZITHANDA PROJECTS and Professor Roger B Mason.

“ The W&RSETA been established in 2000 in terms of the Skills Development Act (as amended) as a public entity, its aims is to facilitate the skills development needs of the W & R sector through the implementation of learning programmes, disbursement grants, and monitoring of education and training as outlined in the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS). The SETA has therefore been supporting and sponsoring numerous development and capacity building programmes to increase skills levels in the sector.

The main stakeholders involved include the following:

- a) Organized labour,
- b) Organized employers,
- c) Government departments,
- d) Skills development and training providers (both public and private)
- e) Professional bodies, bargaining councils, and other organizations stipulated in the ACT.

The findings are that the interventions play an important role in empowering black, women, rural, and people with disabilities, all being individuals who were previously disadvantaged and therefore unable to participate meaningfully in the sector.

The Bursaries Programme creates a growing cohort of graduates who are qualified to work as professionals within the sector or elsewhere.

Most beneficiaries admitted that they would not have been able to pursue a tertiary education had the SETA not funded them, however, the lack of sufficient administrative staff dedicated to this programme at the Head Office to monitor progress and provide value-adding support is a serious limitation.

The Graduate Placement Programme, while benefitting graduates by providing relevant work experience in the retail environment, could become more significant if more companies participated, mentoring was standardized, stipends were increased, and career planning was monitored, in both programmes the beneficiaries had no distinct awareness of the SETA's role in transformation, even though they were grateful for the opportunities the SETA had provided them.

The learnerships of the Rural Development Programme provide unemployed rural people with no tertiary qualification an opportunity to obtain the basic yet critical skills needed to start a successful micro-enterprise, and it is effectively implemented, but the small number of participants is a limitation. Given the extensive poverty prevalent in many rural communities, the number of participants and stipends must be increased significantly, in addition, learners need mentoring (incubation) or exposure to more established businesses to put theory into practice and access to finance in order to grow sustainable and diverse businesses.

The Disabilities Programme contributes to transforming the sector while it was implemented, a few Learners obtained work experience and even permanent employment in the retail sector.

This would have been almost impossible for many, as they often have to compete with able-bodied counterparts, who also tend to be generally more educated, the most pressing limitation, also applicable to the Bursaries and Graduate Placement Programmes, is the lack of access to finance for those who are entrepreneurial.

Exposure to the retail environment gives ambitious, independent, and talented learners the desire and confidence to start their own businesses, therefore SETA must exploit all possible partnerships with its stakeholders to grow the number of businesses owned by the previously disadvantaged as these will help create jobs thus enabling even more meaningful participation in the sector.

In short, given the high rate of unemployment in South Africa, for all four interventions, the SETA needs to drastically increase the number of participants, raise stipends (except for bursaries), assist beneficiaries obtain higher qualifications, provide access to finance for qualifying potential entrepreneurs to become successful retailers, enhance mentorship, implement effective monitoring systems to ensure sustainability, create public awareness of and communicate its transformation agenda with all its stakeholders, and capacitate these programmes with the relevant human resources at the head office, if true transformation is to be realised, skills development should be seen as just the beginning--a means to enable Previously Disadvantaged Individuals to participate more meaningfully in the Wholesale and Retail Sector.

In closing, the W&RSETA's intervention of awarding bursaries, stipends, and learnerships to educate beneficiaries can partially contribute to increased levels of education, which may be transformative in itself (because it increases numbers of qualified participants and attempts to level the playing field), but it currently does not have much influence in terms of the job placements of these graduates or the sustainability of their micro-enterprises, secondly, because all four programmes have only been running for less than eight years, it might be unrealistic at present to expect large cohorts of black personnel at the top echelons, when it takes about 10 years to have a fully-fledged and experienced executive director, who can make truly influential decisions within the organisation. Nevertheless, the W&RSETA should insist that retailers set realistic targets that maximize the opportunities for designated candidates who demonstrate potential to become managers and senior executives in the near future.

It is evident from our findings that where there are successful black senior executives, retail graduates can realistically aspire to fully-fledged, sustainable, and fulfilling careers in the retail sector.

This confirms the evidence from our literature review that tangible changes in the organisation's management culture have a much more meaningful impact on the organization than skills development training and policies alone.

Similarly, the small businesses that the SETA has helped to establish can only thrive if retailers are willing to assist, as an example, white exhibitors can help more rural entrepreneurs display at their expos and actively encourage sales by helping them with e-marketing and online sales.

Bigger retailers can put them in their supplier chain and procure from them, so they can have secure target markets and more established local retailers can take them for experiential learning and mentoring. Industries can build factories and firms in rural communities and link the local small enterprises to their Enterprise Development programmes.

All these interventions would need immense stakeholder engagement and a fair amount of co-ordination and this can only be achieved if the SETA consults widely, gets commitment from key stakeholders, and develops a comprehensive communication strategy for its vision of transformation. Significant areas that demand urgent attention, therefore, are (i) the SETA's staffing needs (human capital); (ii) its ability to communicate its transformation agenda with all its stakeholders; (iii) exponentially increasing the number of participants in the Graduate Placement, Rural Development, and Disabilities programmes; and (iv) collaborating with other entities to ensure that qualifying participants who complete SETA-sponsored skills development qualifications do indeed become retailers.

This will help them create jobs while retaining them and ensuring their optimal participation within the sector. The W & R sector needs to systematically increase the number of high-growth businesses that are owned by those who were previously excluded from meaningful economic activity (i.e. blacks, women, rural communities, and people with disabilities, comprehensive strategies need to be developed for all the above.

In addition, the fifth area demanding urgent attention is monitoring and evaluation, strengthening the implementation of the various W&RSETA programmes through the establishment of appropriate results-based monitoring and evaluation logical frames will increase efficiency and contribute a lot more to the process of transformation", a deeper inspection of the key points mention here will alert you to the state of transformational changes require in the sector from ownership, management and cultural perspective there by creating enabling environment for growth and its attendant effect of jobs creation in the W&R sector

Finally, It suffice to say although research have being done on talent management with the focus on attracting, developing and retaining skills in the workplace none have actually been done with the focus define in this research, this report have therefore attempted to provide a review of the literature that has thus far shaped the understanding of employability (youths, graduate's) and skills development and

retention, our extensive knowledge repository search for previous literature on the specific subject of “talent management tool, for Attracting, Developing and Retaining W&R Scarce Skills ” unfortunately did not yield any result, although as mentioned earlier in this review vast repository of materials were found on the components that make up the entirety of the research subject, so we resorted to a piece meal approach to unlock the wealth of knowledge already in the space where it was then discovered that issues of Race, Technology, Labour Practices, Government Policies...etc need to be investigated/study for complicities in the current situation at W&R sector, it is therefore imperative that the W&RSETA undertakes to engage the sector on how to transform cultural mindsets that are currently delaying change.

In other words, the SETA must develop strategies in consultation with the relevant stakeholders on how best to make white males appreciate the benefits of a workforce that is truly diversified and Industry leaders must be challenged to come up with creative but implementable solutions and to commit to change the playing fields if the programmes are to succeed, clear career paths for managers and diversity management training for white managers and senior executives are critical.

Such training must ask the tough questions and deal with those of race, privilege, and empowerment issues that are sometimes awkward and uncomfortable to confront and this means that in implementing the required change management processes, white male executives must not longer be rewarded for maintaining the status quo, because business as usual from employability perspective will not transform the wholesale retail sector, unions operation in the wholesale and retail sector should also actively assist in monitoring the inclusion of PDIs on the retail corporate Boards.

Government investment vehicle to equally assist in this regards by doing their due diligence before making investment decisions (not profit consideration only).

This is one of the important pillars of the BEE Codes on which retail corporates are intentionally refusing to entertain the national transformation agenda, perhaps that is because many retailers, especially in the clothing and footwear category, do not need government tenders to succeed, and so are not strictly monitored for compliance, many of the white-owned retail companies are so well-established and the barrier to newcomer's entrance into this market is often so high, that their companies are guaranteed of sales from PDIs, even if they implement no changes.

In light of the success that the recent student protests have had on forcing government and Higher education to review tertiary student funding, their management structures, and their labour broking practices, South African consumers might do well to follow suit, thus assisting the unions and the SETA to force the sector to transform and organizing of peaceful stay-aways (wallet protest) and protest marches must focus not only on salary increases for the masses of underpaid retail workers but also on

demanding the implementation of concrete diversity enhancing plans and representativeness in senior management and executive structures, and skills Development and Training must be seen as the means to an end and not the end in itself.

Several models regarding the conceptualisation of employability were presented in this review, given the scope of the study, those sources deemed most relevant to employability were utilised in order to identify the skills that need to be seen in potential employees both of the non-graduate and graduates at university level, those desired by employers, and those that are lacking according to employers.

From the literature, it is evident that there is indeed little consensus on the construct of employability, but that its importance cannot be overstated, the literature review also shown that career choice/lack of thereof, cultural issues, race, localization, technology access/lack of, have contribute to general employability or lack of by means of the competencies they encompass.

An analysis of the articles from different parts of the world has indicated that successful transformation is a result of carefully designed and interconnected interventions at different levels. We have seen how policy legislation alone failed to overcome the entrenched racial boundaries and some achievements could only be realized in areas where the companies accepted and agreed to the objectives of transformation.

Transformation works where a number of interventions are in place to create an enabling environment, potentiate the individual through education and raised self-esteem, and the creation of opportunities for the individual to succeed, ultimately while an enabling environment is being created for the previously disadvantaged individuals, care should be taken to ensure that the historically privileged who have potential are not excluded from the development process, moreover, the W&RSETA should set realistic targets that do not limit the number of designated candidates who demonstrate potential. So, the targets set should reflect the minimum number of previously disadvantaged individuals required and no maximum.

Information from the literature that was reviewed, therefore, indicates that while the provision of educational support may be useful in contributing to transformation, on its own it is not adequate to achieve transformation as there are other forces that need to be addressed and W&RSETA's intervention of awarding bursaries to educate beneficiaries can partially contribute to increased levels of education, which may be transformative in itself (because it increases numbers and attempts to level the playing field), but it does not have much influence in terms of the job placements of these graduates. Within the context of organizational change there were nuances of the positive role of mentoring relationships and culturing of the 'I belong to the organization' to combat the problematic attitudinal

and racial mind-sets and well-prepared mentors, committed to promoting and managing diversity, can be enablers in the acquisition of workplace skills and prepare candidates to higher levels of responsibility, while studies pointed to the need to have a holistic approach when implementing rural interventions, emphasis were mostly limited to on-going support for development.

This study will investigate further by looking to see what other factors might enable the WRSETA participants' metro-urban-rural-large-medium-small micro-enterprises to grow in the context of employability, skills development and retention within an enabling economic environment.

Chapter 3: Design and Methodology.

3.1. Introduction

Identifying and examining the variables relating to youths (youth being define in terms of this research as anybody between the age of 16 - 35years), unemployed (unemployed being define in terms of this research as anybody without full and gainful employment), employability opportunities and skills retention and the contribution of these variables to the improvement of employability opportunities, skills retention and skills development in the W&R sector demands a dynamic research approach that is firmly rooted in both qualitative and quantitative epistemology. This is necessary to ensure that the respondents (Youths, Unemployed, Colleges Graduate, Business Managers, Business Owners and Human Resources) in a study of this magnitude and complexity are not denied their subjective views on the phenomena being studied, while the objectivity of the entire research enterprise is guaranteed. In line with this thinking, this study will be based on a mixed methods research approach which is explained in detail in the following sections.

3.2. Research Design and Methodology

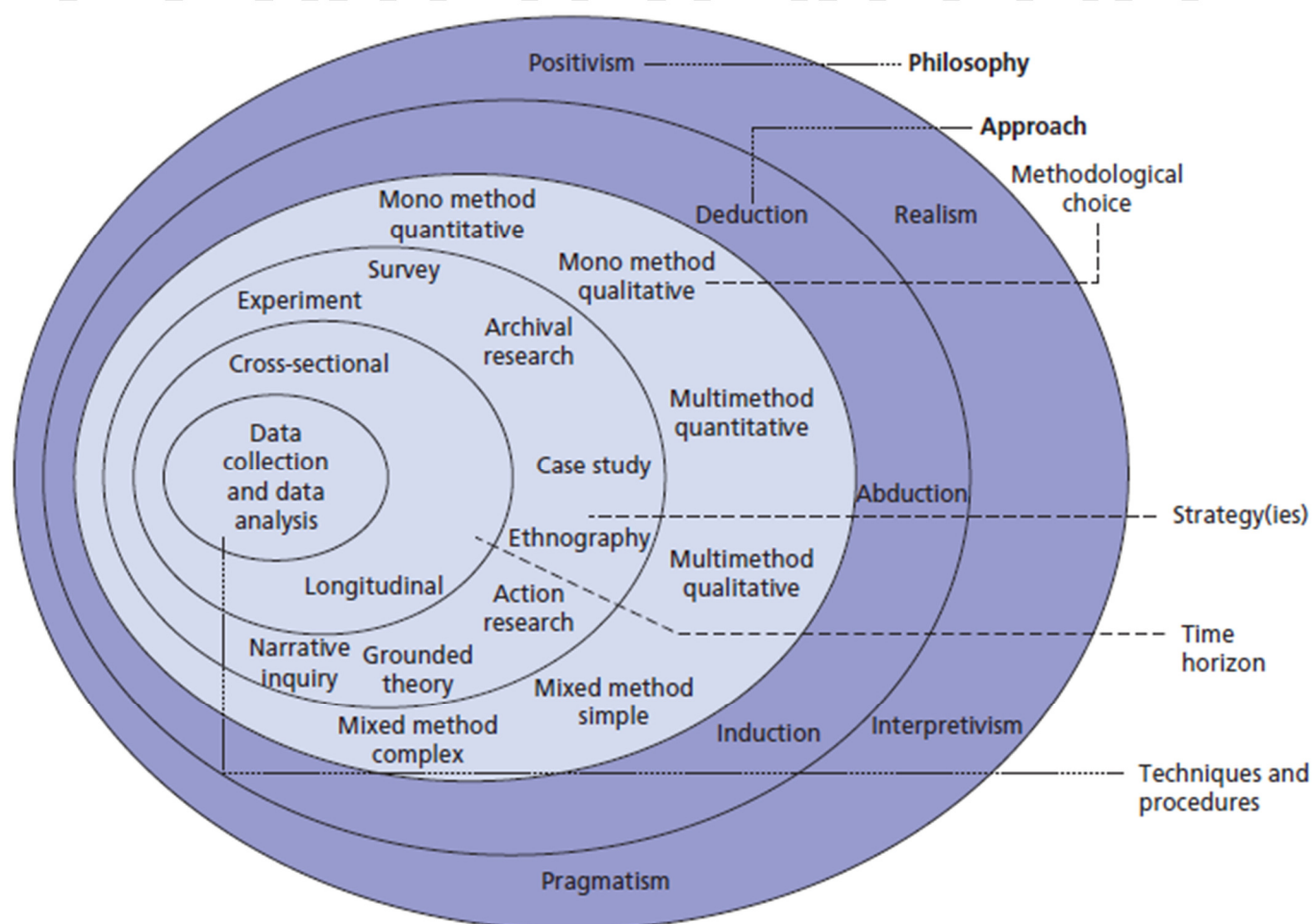
The two concepts *research design* and *research methodology* need to be clarified firstly, in order to clear the confusion that is often associated with their usage, particularly by emerging researchers. Each of these concepts is presented as a compound word, with the concepts *design* and *methodology* attached to the noun *research*. It is appropriate to first answer the question: —What is research?

Research is define by a number of sources as follows, (1.) Oxford Advanced Learners 'Dictionary of Current English (1986:720), research is defined as "*systematic investigation undertaken in order to discover new facts, get additional information*". (2.) Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2003) define research as "*...something that people undertake in order to find out new things in a systematic way, thereby increasing their knowledge...*" from the definitions of research provided above, it follows that research is a planned activity, aimed at establishing new facts and information about a particular phenomenon. The research process involves the identification of a particular problem or area of interest, translating that problem into a research problem, collecting data, analysing the data and

reporting the findings of the research, a number of sources defines research design as a plan for a study, providing the overall framework for collecting data, and/or as a plan for selecting subjects, research sites, and data collection procedures to answer the research question(s) (References: Leedy (1997:195)&MacMillan and Schumacher (2001:166), further indicating that the goal of a sound research design is to provide results that are judged to be credible.

Research methodology is defines as a theory of how an inquiry should proceed. It involves analysis of the assumptions, principles and procedures in a particular approach to inquiry.(references: Schwardt (2007:195)) According to Schwardt (2007), methodologies analyse and develop (an idea or principle) in detail and define the kinds of problems that are worth investigating; what constitutes a researchable problem; testable hypotheses; how to frame a problem in such a way that it can be investigated using particular designs and procedures; and how to select and develop appropriate means of collecting data. As indicated under the analysis of the definition of research above, after identifying the research problem or an area of interest, the researcher has to identify appropriate method(s) to approach the problem. In order to give direction to this study, the research process —onion of Saunders *et al.* (2003:83) will be adopted. This onion illustrates the range of choices, paradigms, strategies and steps that will follow by researchers during the research process — (see figure.1 below).

FIGURE 1: The research process



The research process above provides a summary of the important issues that need to be taken into consideration and reviewed before undertaking any research. The different stages serve as a basis from which to consider the following: the research approach adopted; appropriate research strategies; the research time lines that are under review; and the data collection techniques employed by the researcher.

Mixed Methods Research Methodology

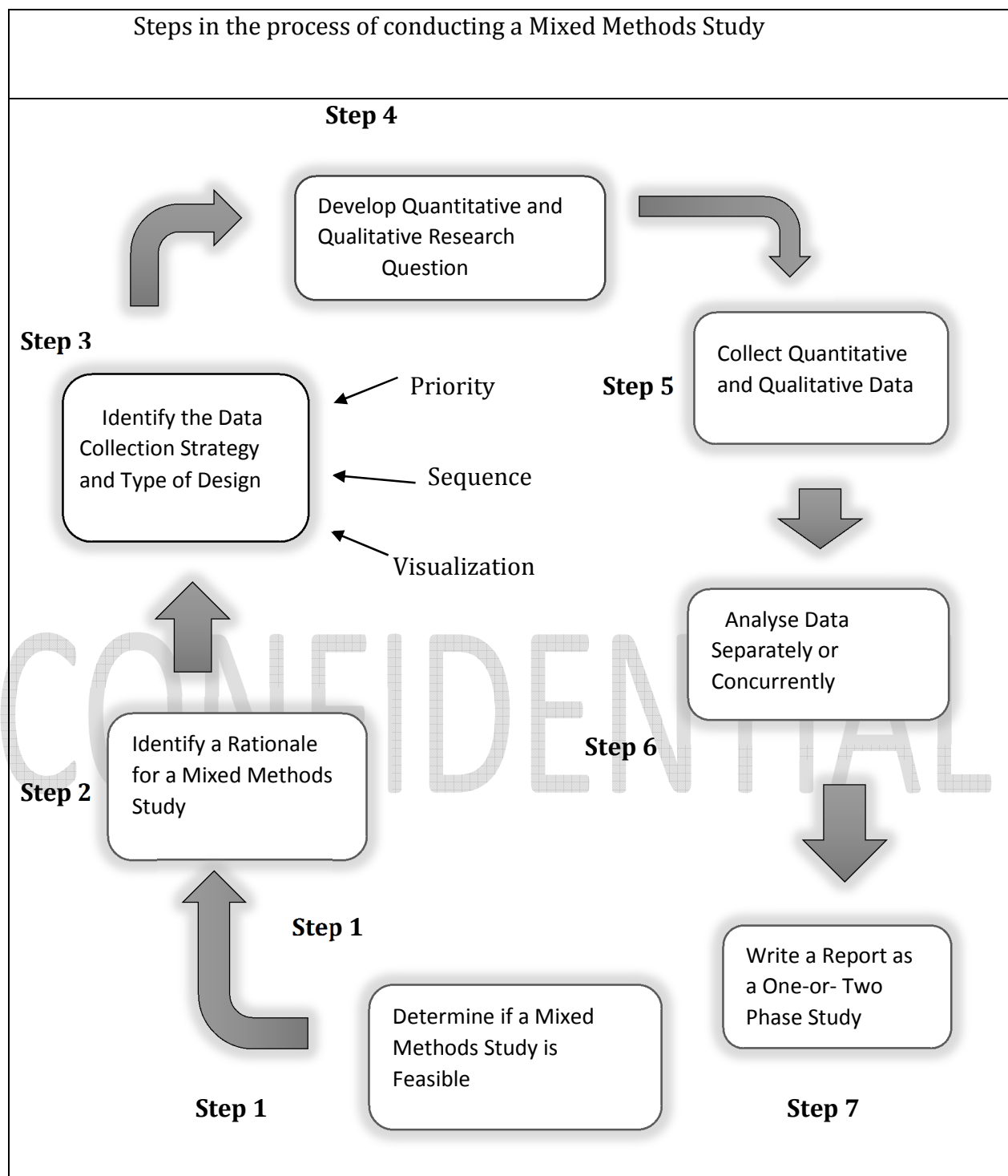
As indicated above, this study will adopt a mixed methods research approach. Kemper, Springfield and Teddlie (2003) define mixed methods design as a method that includes both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis in parallel form (concurrent mixed method design in which two types of data are collected and analyzed in sequential form). Bazely (2003) defines this method as the use of mixed data (numerical and text) and alternative tools (statistics and analysis), but apply the same method. It is a type of research in which a researcher uses the qualitative research paradigm for one phase of a study and a quantitative research paradigm for another phase of the study.

This will be a mixed methods research study of the variables relating to youths, unemployed, employability opportunities and skills retention in the W&R sector. Given this focus, literature reviews, questionnaires and interviews will be used to collect data.

The following figure shows the steps in the process of conducting a mixed methods study.

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FIGURE 2: Steps in the process of conducting a mixed methods study (Adapted from Cannon, 2004)



The seven steps indicated in the above figure is being observe from the planning stage of this research and will continue through to the data analysis stage. Figure 2 above emphasizes the fact that rather than viewing various research methods as part of an incompatible quantitative/qualitative dichotomy, in this study, we will approached them as complementary modes of investigation, resulting in a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Herman & Egri, 2003). The following section discusses in detail, the qualitative and quantitative research methods that were used in this study and, later the phases in the data collection and analysis are tabulated.

Quantitative Research Methodology

Quantitative research, according to Van der Merwe (1996), is a research approach aimed at testing theories, determining facts, demonstrating relationships between variables, and predicting outcomes. Quantitative research uses methods from the natural sciences that are designed to ensure objectivity, generalizability and reliability (Weinreich, 2009).

The techniques used in quantitative research include random selection of research participants from the study population in an unbiased manner, the standardized questionnaire or intervention they receive, and statistical methods used to test predetermined hypotheses regarding the relationship between specific variables. The researcher in quantitative research, unlike in the qualitative paradigm where he/she is regarded as a great research instrument due to his/her active participation in the research process, is considered as being external to the actual research, and results are expected to be replicable, no matter who conducts the research.

Qualitative Research Methodology

Qualitative research, according to Van der Merwe (cited by Garbers, 1996) is a research approach aimed at the development of theories and understanding, qualitative research is define as a situated activity which locates the observer in the world. It involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world, i.e. qualitative researchers study phenomena in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpreting phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:10).

With regard to the assumptions, the quantitative mode assumes that social facts have an objective reality and the researcher does not identify with the researched phenomenon. The qualitative mode, on the other hand, assumes that reality is socially constructed and the researcher's point of view matters because he/she identifies with the phenomenon being studied. The purpose of quantitative research is to predict, explain and generalize the outcomes of the research, whereas the purpose of qualitative research is to contextualize, interpret and understand the perspective of the actors.

With regard to the approach, quantitative research begins with hypotheses and theories, using formal instruments such as questionnaires, and reduces the data to numerical indices. Qualitative research, on the other hand, ends with hypotheses and grounded theory and makes minor use of numerical indices. The role of the researcher in quantitative research, as indicated under the assumptions, is that of a distant observer, i.e. the researcher is detached from the research setting to ensure impartiality and objectivity, whereas in qualitative research, the researcher identifies fully with the researched phenomenon and this may possibly lead to partiality and bias.

Literature Review

This study will focus on variables relating to youths, unemployed, employability opportunities and skills retention and their contribution to the improvement in employability opportunities, skills retention and skills development in the W&R sector. For this purpose, an extensive and relevant literature review will be conducted in an attempt to provide a theoretical foundation for the research project. The literature review will provide scientific explanations for the research question(s), and enabled us to verify our findings and to compare these with the work of other Researchers in the field of Employability, Skills Retentions and Skills Development.

Literature review is based on the assumption that knowledge accumulates and that we learn from, and build on, what others have done. Literature reviews can take various forms, namely: contextual, historical, theoretical, integrative, methodological and meta-analysis. Each type of review has a specific goal. indicates that the goals of a literature review are: demonstrating the researcher's familiarity with a body of knowledge that already exists about the subjects of research and establishing the credibility of such knowledge; showing the path of prior research and how the current project is linked to already completed research; integrating and summarizing what is known in and about his/her area of research; learning from others; and stimulating new ideas (References: Neuman (1997:89),).

This study will use existing literature to investigate employability, skills retentions and skills development in the W&R sector.

Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a form containing a set of questions, especially addressed to a statistically significant number of subjects, and is a way of gathering information for a survey. It is used to collect statistical information or opinions about people.

For the purpose of this study, the questionnaire will be our second data collection method and its content will be guided by the literature review.

Construction and Structure of the Questionnaires

Structured questionnaires will be used as research instruments for the first section of this study. The literature review will be used to construct three different questionnaires, one for business managers/owners, one for the youths and unemployed and finally one for further education and university graduates.

1. The purpose of the questionnaire for business managers/owner is to obtain information about their business, employment rate, staff turnover/skills retention, skills shortages and skills development in the wholesale and retail industry sector.

2. The purpose of the questionnaire for youths and unemployed will be to gather information concerning their experiences and hindrances with regard to seeking employment in the wholesale and retail industry sector.
3. The purpose of the questionnaire for further education and university graduates will be to gather information concerning their perceptions and misgivings with regard to working for business in the wholesale and retail industry sector.

Each of the variables indicated above will consists of sub-questions with point scale to determine the extent to which the participants are contribute for the problems and how to address them.

Distribution and Collection of the Questionnaires

As indicated in the sample and sampling procedures described below, our target sample will be across the major retailer (supplied W&RSETA) in three major metro of Gauteng and other Province (Metro: Tshwane, Ekurhuleni and Johannesburg). The purpose of the questionnaire is to investigate and document the contribution of the independent variables which characterize employability and employment opportunities and its effect on the dependent variable, which is the unemployed youths and others.

The following methods will be used to distribute and collect the questionnaires:

1. Interns will be assigned to visit specific shopping malls with questionnaires package according to their assigned variables for completion by willing participants.
2. Appointment will be setup for project supervisor to visit business managers/owner where questionnaires will be completed and oral interviews conducted.
3. Workshops and roadshow will be held at specific colleges and university and Interns will distribute assigned questionnaires package according to their assigned variables for completion by willing participant.

Each questionnaire consignment consist of questionnaire designed for a specific variable and the target audience .

Interviews

Two types of interviews will be used in this study, namely focus group interviews and structured interviews. Interview is define an as a social encounter where speakers collaborate in producing retrospective and prospective accounts or versions of their past or future actions, experiences, feelings and thoughts (Seale, Giampietro, Gubrium and Silverman (2004)).

Focus group interviews

The focus group interview will be used to achieve a myriad of objectives in our research, focus group interviews can be used to obtain general background information about a topic of interest for

generating research hypotheses that can be submitted to further research and testing using more quantitative approaches; to stimulate new ideas and creative concepts; to learn how respondents talk about the phenomenon of interest which may facilitate quantitative research tools; and to interpret previously obtained qualitative results.

Focus group interviews will be conducted first, followed by the one-on-one interviews. The purpose of this exercise is to assist us in formulating relevant questions for the one-on-one interviews.

Structured interviews

Structured interviews will be conducted with a minimum of Ten (10) business Managers/owners and their responses recorded with their permission. This will enable us to get first-hand information from the business managers/owners with regard to their experiences, challenges, frustrations and opinions. An interview schedule will be compiled in which the interview questions will be outlined.

The questions will mostly be open ended, making it possible for the interviewer to add new questions during the interviewing process, depending on the responses of the participants.

Collecting the structured interview data

Collection of the structured interview data involved interaction between the researcher and the respondents which needed to be documented. For the purpose of this study, the interviews will be tape recorded, and project supervisor will be advice to take not same time. After the interviews, the tape and notes will be reviewed, and direct quotes that are found to be relevant noted, each interview will be conducted in comfortable, secure, and private surroundings, preferably in the interviewees 'office or any place that is convenient for them, this is necessary to ensure noise are minimised.

Analyzing the structured interview data

For the purpose of this study, we will use two methods to analyze the data from the structured interviews, namely: an *interpretative phenomenological analysis*, and a *hermeneutical analysis*. The interpretative phenomenological analysis refers to the structure and essence of experience of the respondents with regard to the phenomenon being studied, in this case, employability opportunities and skills retention the business managers/owners responded to questions which required them to express themselves in terms of their experiences as business managers/owners.

The hermeneutical analysis is also an interpretative approach which emphasizes the importance of the views of the participants based on their experience and their standpoint (Ozkan, Davis & Johnson, and 2006:11).

3.3. Sampling Procedures for the Quantitative Research

The original intention of the research was to involve all the wholesale and retail business (as identified by W&RSETA) in Gauteng and other provinces but, due to the size of the Provinces, the time available to complete the research, and financial implications, it was decided to limit sampling to the three Major Metro in Gauteng, one Metro each in KZN and Western Cape and other provinces to be treated as Urban/Rural as indicated earlier, which will reduce our sampling load considerably.

Prior to the sampling procedures, the questionnaire will be piloted with a view to testing its validity and reliability. Since the interview questions are going to be the same as those on the questionnaire, the piloting of the questionnaire will include the interview questions. Pilot study is defined as the process whereby the research design for a prospective survey is tested De Vos (1998:179).

The researchers conducted a review of the practices of the top ten largest retailers in the country and other relevant sector. Extensive literature review was conducted and randomly chosen students who were participating or have participated, in Internships and work experience programmes were interviewed to get relevant data on strategies for job creation and job retention in the wholesale and retail sector.

Qualitative research is aimed at gaining an understanding of a specific organization or event, rather than surface descriptions of a large sample of a population. It aims to provide an explicit rendering of the structure, order, and broad patterns found among participants. It generates data about human groups in social settings (California State University, 2014).

Developing or sourcing a talent management tool for attracting, developing and retaining W&R Skills is complex, and every company's challenges in this regard are quite unique. However, this research seeks general patterns in the data, which can be used to make inferences about the possibility of such a journey. To acquire this information, a mixed approach was adopted within the qualitative and quantitative realm, in the qualitative realm in-depth interviews were held and in the quantitative realm survey questionnaires were distributed.

3.4. Research Sample

The sample was chosen from a database of 230 retailers nationally provided by the W&RSETA, which included both small, medium and large retailers. The research adopted purposive sampling for the interviews, to select Sample's based on knowledge of the population (Punch, 2005:187).

Respondents with expertise and direct involvement with Employment, Retention and Skills Development (i.e. HR Manager, Training Manager & SDF) in their companies or associated organizations were selected as key respondents. This selection was done with help from knowledgeable managers in the W&RSETA and other retail associations, all of the organizations involved in the research operate within the W&R sector and other respondents were members of the public deemed unemployed/undergraduate/graduate of university/Tvet/Fet colleges.

The majority of the respondents represented large organizations. The data was analysed according to the following:

- Profile of respondents according to position in company.
- The size of the organization.
- Provincial breakdown of respondents.
- Labour environment (geographical, Incentives and motivations).
- Legislative Compliance and bureaucracy.
- Base levels of skills.
- Youth employment in the retail sector.
- The role of technology on employment.

Of 1500 questionnaires emailed to all regions nationally where the W&RSETA has active Forums, only 15 completed responses were returned, from a mix of large-, medium and small retailers much better luck was had with active forum meeting where about 95 questionnaire were distributed and 65 completed responses were returned, sampling the unemployed/undergraduate/graduate was much better of 200 questionnaire distributed 120 completed responses were received. Completing the survey was voluntary – thus the method used for the survey was a self-selected convenience sample.

Table 1: Sample Composition and Techniques used.

Technique	Quantity	Details
Interviews	3	Wholesale / Retail Outlet Management / Owners / SDF
Questionnaires/surveys: Emailed	15	Mix of SMMEs/Medium/Large national retailers
Questionnaires/Surveys: Distributed in W&RSETA Forums	65	Wholesale / Retail Outlet Management /Owners/SDF
Questionnaires/surveys: Distributed in Employment Road show at colleges.	120	Unemployed/Undergraduate/Learners @ University/Tvet/Fet Colleges

The pilot study

The pilot study was a small scale replication of the actual study, targeting a small number of persons with characteristics similar to those of the target group of respondents, namely Business Owner, Management Staff and Human Resources, the construction of the questionnaire, as indicated above, was done with the assistance of Literature review.

The pilot sample consisted of 10 respondents (5 Business Owner/Managers/Human resources personnel and 5 random unemployed youth) who were purposively sampled from Businesses and schools in the Johannesburg and West Rand Region of the Gauteng Province. The purpose of the pilot study was to determine the feasibility of the study; to test the reliability and validity of the instrument and trustworthiness of respondents for data collection in the main study; to establish how appropriate, understandable and practical the instrument is; to address any problems prior to the main study; and to check the time required for the completion of the questionnaire. The pilot study demonstrated that although the questionnaire did not contain any confusing items but, the responding audience to a while

to a while to complete it, after the completion of the questionnaires, the analysis of the data was performed, the findings from this pilot study informed the following;

1. Reformulation of the study objectives leading to reduction of number of question on the questionnaires thus eliminating and/or revision of ambiguous questions.
2. Consideration of the research population; and planning for the main research study.

3.5. Instrument

Lead researchers used Survey and questionnaire to solicit the answers and asked participants for explanations and their responses were captured electronically. The questions consisted of 15 questions and contained both open and closed ended questions (refer to Annexure 1 for the detailed questionnaire). Interviews were also held with youths and graduates. Each participating youths and graduates were asked a series of 10 questions. These questions can be found in annexure 2.

3.6. Data Collection

Data collection methods used included conducting one-on-one interviews with Three (3) business managers/owners and distributing questionnaires to the identified participants, questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data that will provide statistical descriptions, relationships and analysis. The one-on-one interviews with the ten business managers/owners will provide qualitative and exploratory data, Indication are that when working from a qualitative perspective, the researcher attempts a first-hand, holistic understanding of a phenomenon and data collection is shaped as the investigation proceeds.(De Vos (1998:358)).

The questionnaires were administered through the W&RSETA Forums and Email. The questionnaire was distributed to all relevant constituencies which comprised of small, medium and large constituencies. The responses were collected same day for the forums and via returning emails. There were 203 responses received and 2 were blank responses.

A series of schedule interviews were conducted with 10 unemployed youth. The purpose of the interviews was to solicit their knowledge, views and experiences as Jobseekers relating to the various organizations operating within the W&R Sector, and indicated in the preceding paragraphs, data collection methods included conducting one-on-one interviews with 3 management staff/owner and distributing questionnaires to 1795 management / owner/Unemployed, the questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data that provided statistical descriptions, relationships and analysis. The one-on-one interviews with the three management/Owners and 10 Unemployed Youths and Graduates provided qualitative and exploratory data. De Vos (1998:358) indicates that when working from a qualitative perspective, the researcher attempts a first-hand, holistic understanding of a phenomenon and data collection is shaped as the investigation proceeds.

As Table 1 illustrates, a mix of eighty-three small, medium and large (>100 EE) national retailers completed the questionnaires, on condition of anonymity. Three EE plans of National retailers were analysed and ten studies were conducted on the Employment, Retention and Skills Development plans of three large retailers. Interviews were held with Human resources managers (responsible for Labour hire) at the company offices in the Gauteng region, survey questionnaires were administered to a large population and they are a good way to obtain precise information through close-ended questions. This represents the qualitative approach as surveys function as a “fast and inexpensive way to collect a lot of information about a sample’s attitude, beliefs and self-reported behaviours” (Mitchell & Jolley, 2012: 286).

The questionnaire, based on the literature review and the study objectives, was designed to extract information about actual Employment, Retention and Skills Development practices of companies. It included direct questions asking what challenges they faced with the *Employment and Skills Development (Acts)*, 1998; whether they had an established Employment, Retention and Skills Development committee as stipulated by the *EEA*; and whether they had formal processes in place for talent management/ succession planning and other strategies. The questionnaire consisted of 15 questions, covering the requirements of the Employment and Skills Development (Acts), 1998 for employment and skills development planning and reporting. In addition questions were asked about the organisational importance of achieving numerical compliance or employment, retention and skills development competence imperatives. Its simplicity was designed to persuade respondents to complete it.

The questions were mixed, using open- and closed-formats, such as leading questions, importance questions, Likert-type questions, bipolar, and dichotomous questions, interviews provided a way to analyse data through inferences, the interactive nature of the interview process allows flexibility; the questions function as a guide, and enable the researcher to probe further when a point arise deem relevant to the objective and worth further exploration (Seale, 2004:184). Wengraf (quoted in Babbie & Mouton, 2001) also credits the interview technique because it enables the researcher to entice information from the interviewee that may not be on the list of questions but is pertinent to the study. The major disadvantage of qualitative interviews is that it limits the researcher to very few respondents because it is time consuming; consequently the sample size is not representative of the total population and results cannot not be taken as representative of all.

One-hour, in-depth interviews were conducted with representatives of the choosing retailers as the wealth of information they had would be better extracted through a one-on-one process and their input was invaluable to the process of understanding Employment, Retention And Skills Development

procedures, the final research method adopted was the use of secondary data. Extensive research was done on Employment, Retention And Skills Development through academic and scholarly journals (local and international), political viewpoints and critiques on Employment and Skills Development implementation, media releases and documented articles and books, all part of the literature review. Twenty Employment Equity Plans (Employment, Retention and Skills Development) of medium retailers were also studied, which provided good insight into what they employers deem important for their Employment, Retention and Skills Development objectives.

3.7. Data Analysis.

The data was collated in MS Word and MS Excel, and analysed using MS Excel. Themes were identified from the survey data and were used as an indication of the key findings. The in-depth interviews were analysed through content analysis, deconstruction of the conversations, reconstruction within the themes and drawing meanings from words and phrases used (Lee, 1999).

Responses are incorporated in the whole research to offer and give a balanced view of this research project, because most of the participants are occupying management positions.

3.8. Validity and reliability

The different methodological approaches assist in the triangulation process of the different outcomes. The Mixed Methods approach was used to be able to mix the quantitative approach in a form of a Survey and questionnaire to enhance personal interviews, the questionnaire also had open ended questions to provide qualitative responses. Peer review of the findings is been work on through focus group sampling from the respondents and this will further validate the study's findings.

The process has resulted in having a unit analysis team staff at different levels and is complemented by the Interns; this has created a broader survey in understanding the employability, job creation or retention within the Retail Sector.

TABLE 2: Seven steps in the data analysis process

Stages in the mixed methods data analysis process	Description of each stage	Application in quantitative data analysis	Application in qualitative data analysis
1. Data Reduction	Reducing the dimensionality of the qualitative and quantitative data	Via descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis and cluster analysis	Via exploratory thematic analysis
2. Data Display	Pictorially describing both the qualitative and quantitative data	Using tables and graphs	Using matrices, charts, graphs, networks, lists, rubrics, and Venn diagrams
3. Data Transformation		Quantitative data are converted into narrative data that can be analyzed qualitatively	Qualitative data are converted into numerical codes that can be represented statistically

4. Data Correlation		Quantitative data is correlated with qualitative data	Qualitative data is correlated with quantitative data
5. Data Consolidation	Both qualitative and quantitative data are combined to create new or consolidated variables		
6. Data Comparison	Involves comparing data from both the qualitative and quantitative data sources		
7. Data Integration	This is a final stage, wherein both qualitative and quantitative data are integrated into either a coherent whole or two separate sets of coherent wholes		

Ensuring Validity and Reliability

As this study entails the use of both qualitative and quantitative research data, the concepts used to express validity and reliability are broader than those traditionally associated with quantitative research. When working with qualitative data, the concepts of trustworthiness, dependability, transferability, and credibility are also used, so in order to ensure the validity and reliability of the content of the three questionnaires, the questionnaires are to be piloted, and the following processes for ensuring validity and reliability, legitimizing the data, and finally lending credibility to the research report are to be used for this study.

Triangulation

Triangulation is define as the use of two or more methods of data collection to study a particular phenomenon. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000:112) triangulation is viewed as a verification procedure whereby researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study. It is a system of sorting through the data to find common themes or categories by eliminating overlapping areas. Triangulation will be employed in this study.

The business managers/owners for the structured interviews will male and female from wholesale & retail business of different sizes, unemployed youth and colleges/university graduate identify to complete the questionnaires, will be from different community backgrounds, thus providing multiple sources of information from which to form themes.

For the purpose of this study, the three sources of data are placed at the points of a triangle, where each data source provides a philosophical starting point for the other data sources. The three data sources for this study, and how they will be triangulated, are represented in the diagram below.

FIGURE 3: Representation of the triangulation of data sources

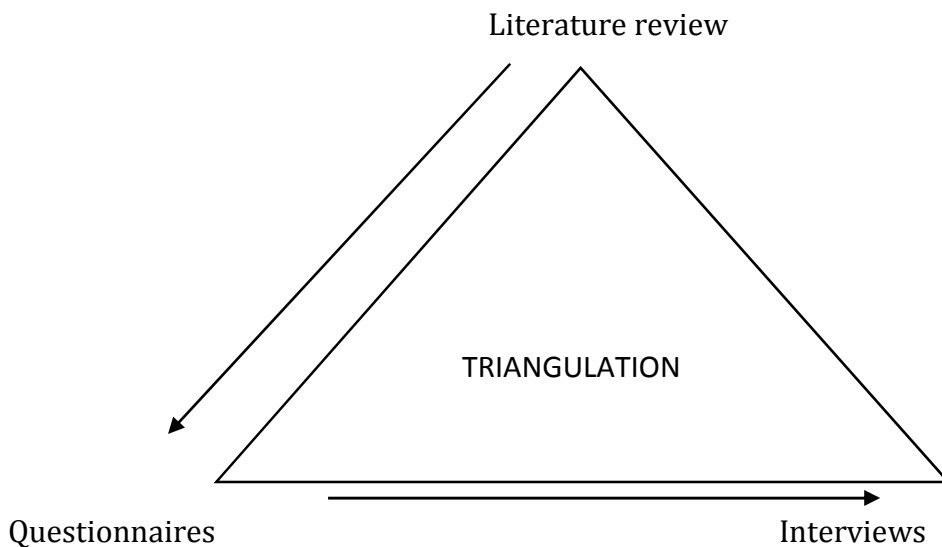


Figure 3. Represents the three data sources that will be used in this study, namely: literature review, questionnaires, and interviews. The literature review will be used to provide secondary data which will assist the researcher to formulate questions for the questionnaires; the questions for the business managers/owners' questionnaires will be drawn directly from the literature and Tor, the findings from the analyse questionnaires will informed the types of questions to be included in the interview schedule for business managers/owners.

Thick Description

Thick description is a procedure that is used in qualitative research to ensure validity and reliability. This procedure is concerned with describing the setting, the participants, and the themes of a qualitative study in rich detail. Thick description has been used in this study in the presentation of the qualitative research findings where the actual words of the participants have been used constantly. The purpose of thick description is that it creates —verisimilitude, that is, statements that produce for the readers the feeling that they have experienced, or could experience, the events being described in the study.

The purpose of reporting the findings using thick description is to provide as much detail as possible for the readers. It also enables the readers to make decisions about the applicability of the findings to other settings or similar contexts. In this study, which are employability opportunities and skills retention, the background of Gauteng where the research will tack place, and all the samples of participants will be thoroughly describe.

Peer Review

The third and last procedure for ensuring validity and reliability in this study will be peer review (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Peer review is the review of the data and research process by someone who is familiar with the research or the phenomena being explored. A peer reviewer provides support, plays

devil's advocate, challenges the researcher's assumptions, pushes the researcher to the next step, and asks in-depth questions about methods and interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This procedure will be used during both phases of data collection and interpretation.

The peer reviewer will be a researcher choosing by Ebus-Tech Consulting and agreed to by W&RSETA. In this document we try to putting together a research design and methodology that will underpin this study, detailed information regarding the mixed methods design, its origins, its relevance to this study and its general characteristics, were explored in this document and it build on the methodological propositions made in this document by employing the proposed data presentation and analysis approaches to analyze the quantitative and qualitative data.

Limitations

Surveys were distributed via emails, with the expectation that respondents could answer questions in the comfort of their offices/homes and thus would be willing to participate, however, only 15 out of 1500 surveys emailed, were completed and returned, representing a response rate of less than 1%. Contacting heads of Employment, Retention and Skills Development in companies for the interviews was difficult, again resulting in a smaller sample than desired. Given the small samples, the findings should be seen as explanatory only, being indicative of the situation in the W&R sector rather than capable of reliable generalization. However, the findings are generally believed to be credible and trustworthy because of methodological triangulation, the use of peer debriefing, and checking results with a focus group made up of industry experts and representatives of the respondents (Padgett, 1998).

Ethics

A letter of introduction accompanied each questionnaires emailed to companies. Respondents were informed that the information was for research and that the process was voluntary and confidential. Names of responding companies and individuals would not be divulged.

Chapter 4: Research Findings

4.1. Introduction

This study has shown that the problem of talent management, employability, skill development and retention maps strongly onto the shifting dynamic in the relationship between the prevailing environment and the labour market. This has tended to challenge some of the traditional ways of understanding jobseekers and their position in the labour market, not least classical theories of cultural reproduction. These changes have added increasing complexities to jobseekers transition into the labour market, as well as the traditional link between graduation and subsequent labour market reward. This review has highlighted how this shifting dynamic has reshaped the nature of jobseekers' transitions into the labour market, as well as the ways in which they begin to make sense of and align

themselves towards future labour market demands. Employability is clearly a problem that goes far wider than formal participation in training and skills development, and is heavily bound up in the coordination, regulation and management of jobseekers employment through the course of their working lives. Then graduates' increasing propensity towards lifelong learning appears to reflect a realization that the active management of their employability is a career-wide project that will prevail over their longer-term course of their employment.

The development of mass Training and Skills Development, together with a range of work-related changes, has placed considerably more attention upon the economic value and utility of both tvet colleges and university graduates.

These changes have had a number of effects, one has been a tightening grip over colleges and universities' activities from government and employers, under the wider goal of enhancing their outputs and the potential quality of future human resources. Training and Skills development entities have experienced heightened pressures to respond to an increasing range of internal and external market demands, reframing the perceived value of their activities and practices.

The issue of employability tends to rest within the increasing economization of higher education sector. The study has also highlighted the contested terrain around which debates on youths and graduates' employability and its development take place. As a wider policy narrative, employability maps onto some significant concerns about the shifting interplays between higher education, economy and state. Moreover, in terms of how governments and labour markets may attempt to coordinate and regulate the supply of graduates leaving systems of mass higher education. As higher education's role for regulating future professional talent becomes reshaped, questions prevail over whose responsibility it is for managing graduates' transitions and employment outcomes: universities, states, employers or individual graduates themselves?

Employability also encompasses significant equity issues. Wider structural changes have potentially reinforced positional differences and differential outcomes between jobseekers graduates or otherwise, not least those from different class-cultural backgrounds. While mass higher education potentially opens up opportunities for nontraditional graduates, new forms of cultural reproduction and social closure continue to empower some graduates more readily than others (Scott, 2005).

Using Bourdieusian concepts of capital and field to outline the changing dynamic between Higher Education and the labour market, Kupfer (2011) highlights the continued preponderance of structural and cultural inequalities through the existence of layered Higher Education and labour market structures, operating in differentiated fields of power and resources. The relative symbolic violence and capital that some institutions transfer onto different graduates may inevitably feed into their identities, shaping their perceived levels of personal or identity capital. Compelling evidence on employers' approaches to managing graduate talent (Brown and Hesketh, 2004) exposes this situation quite

starkly. The challenge, it seems, is for graduates to become adept at reading these signals and reframing both their expectations and behaviours.

While in the main graduates command higher wages and are able to access wider labour market opportunities, the picture is a complex and variable one and reflects marked differences among graduates in their labour market returns and experiences. The evidence suggests that some graduates assume the status of 'knowledge workers' more than others, as reflected in the differential range of outcomes and opportunities they experience. Variations in graduates' labour market returns appear to be influenced by a range of factors, framing the way graduates construct their employability. The differentiated and heterogeneous labour market that graduates enter means that there is likely to be little uniformity in the way students constructs employability, notionally and personally. Moreover, there is evidence of national variations between graduates from different countries, contingent on the modes of capitalism within different countries. This will largely shape how graduates perceive the linkage between their higher educational qualification and their future returns. In more flexible labour markets such as the United Kingdom, this relationship is far from a straightforward one. Research in the field also points to increasing awareness among graduates around the challenges of future employability. Again, graduates respond to the challenges of increasing flexibility, individualization and positional competition in different ways. They construct their individual employability in a relative and subjective manner. Moreover, this is likely to shape their orientations towards the labour market, potentially affecting their overall trajectories and outcomes. That graduates' employability is intimately related to personal identities and frames of reference reflects the socially constructed nature of employability more generally: it entails a negotiated ordering between the graduate and the wider social and economic structures through which they are navigating. These negotiations continue well into graduates' working lives, as they continue to strive towards establishing credible work identities. Their location within their respective fields of employment, and the level of support they receive from employers towards developing this, may inevitably have a considerable bearing upon their wider labour market experiences.

4.2 Profile of Respondents

The respondents were stakeholders of the Wholesale and Retail SETA (Owners/Management/SDF) (35%) and Unemployed Youths, Tvet Colleges and University Graduates (65%).

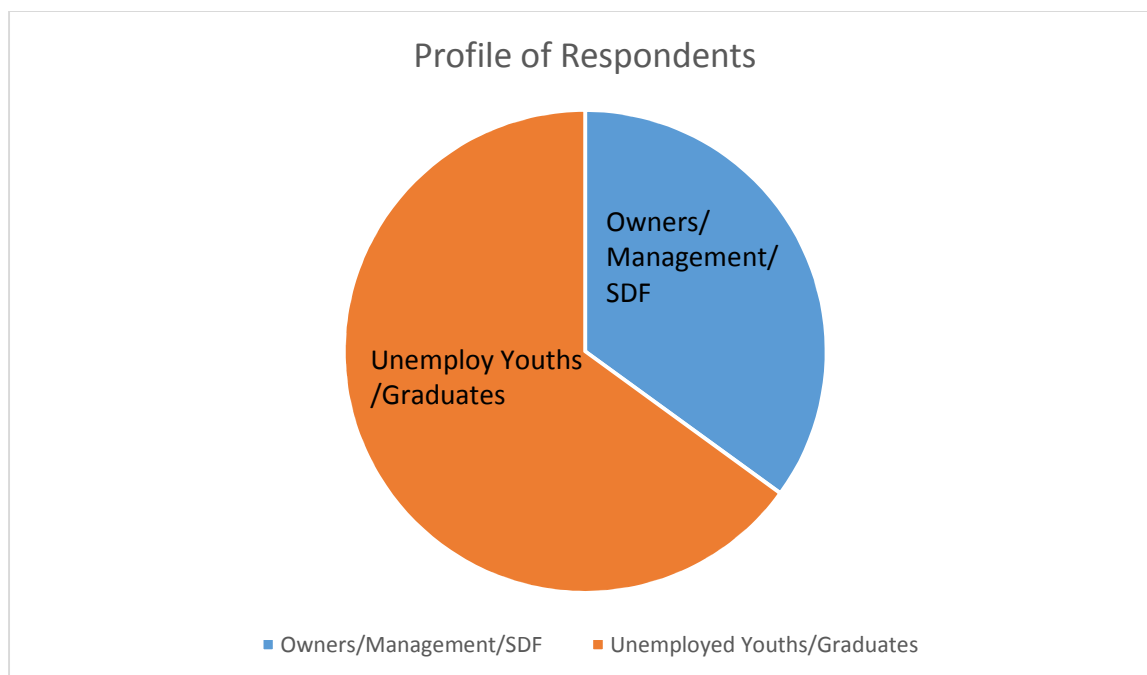


Figure 4

As shown in Figure 1 Owners/Management/SDF comprised 35%. Unemployed Youths, Tvet Colleges and University Graduates (65%).

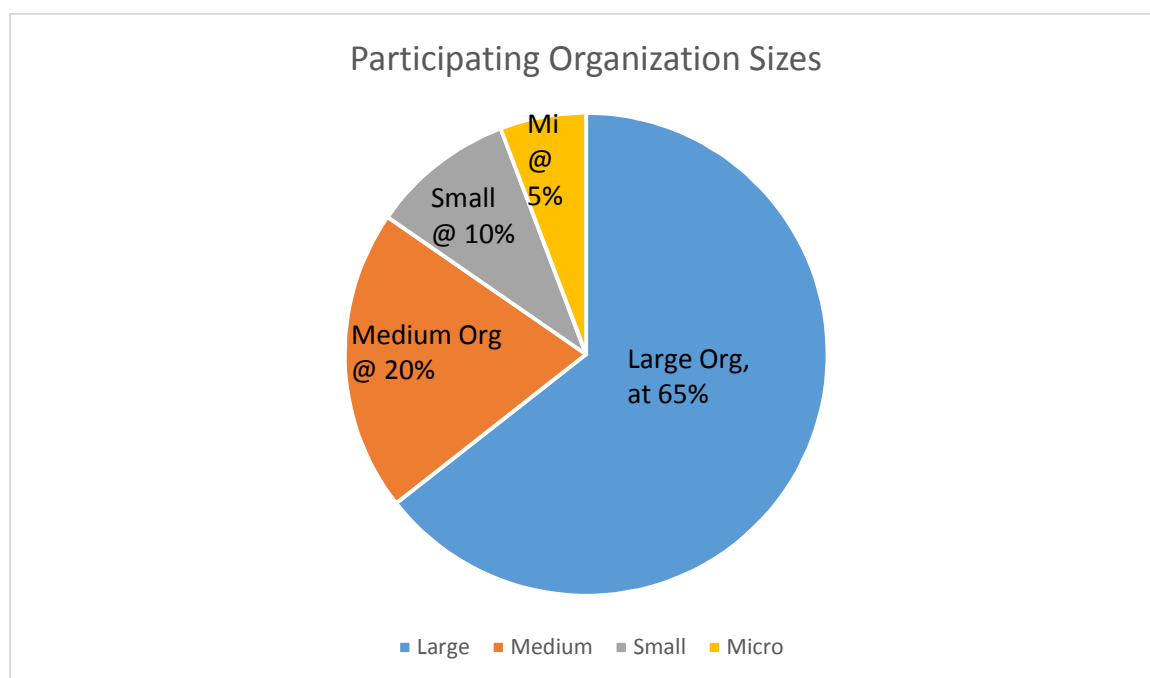


Figure 5.

The size of organizations that participated in the research were represented as follows; 65% were large organizations followed by medium size organizations 20% with 10% representing small organizations and 5% represent the micro organizations. The spread of different organization is important to understand the dynamics of the retail sector organizations and their impact across the spectrum.

Provincial Breakdown of Respondents (Owners/Management/SDF)

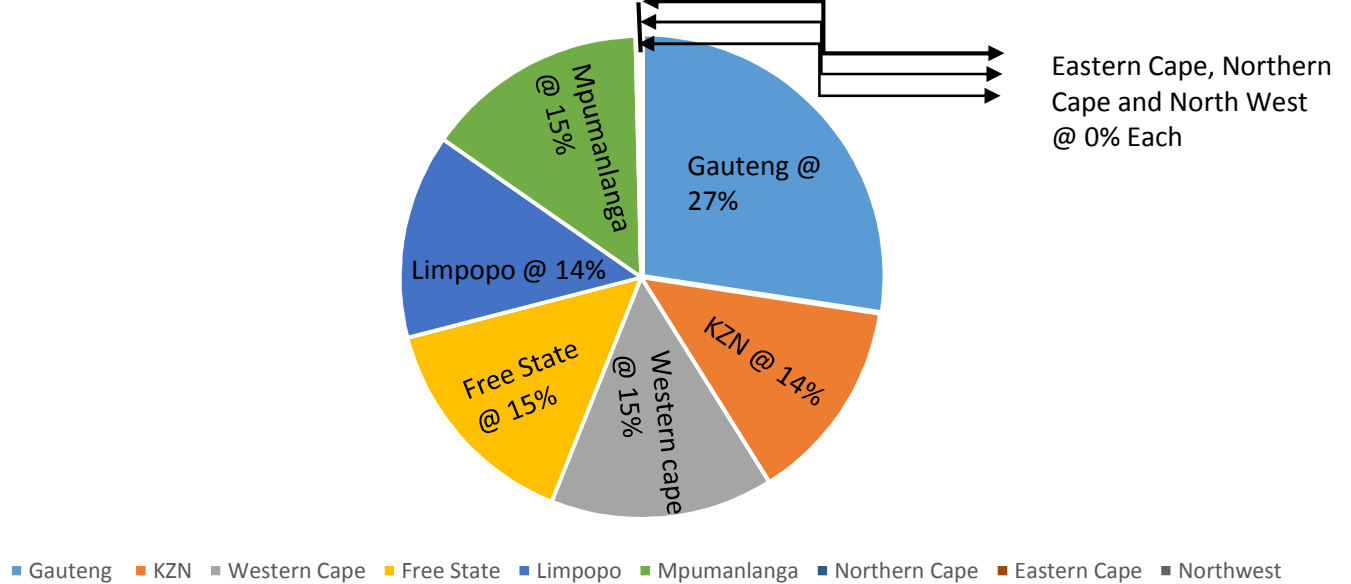


Figure 6

The provincial location of organizations that responded to the emailed and distributed questionnaire were as follows; 27% respondents were from Gauteng, followed by 15% from Western Cape, Free State, Mpumalanga and 14% from Kwa Zulu-Natal and Limpopo and there were nil returns from Eastern Cape, Northern Cape and North West provinces.

Provincial Breakdown of Respondents (Unemployed/Graduates)

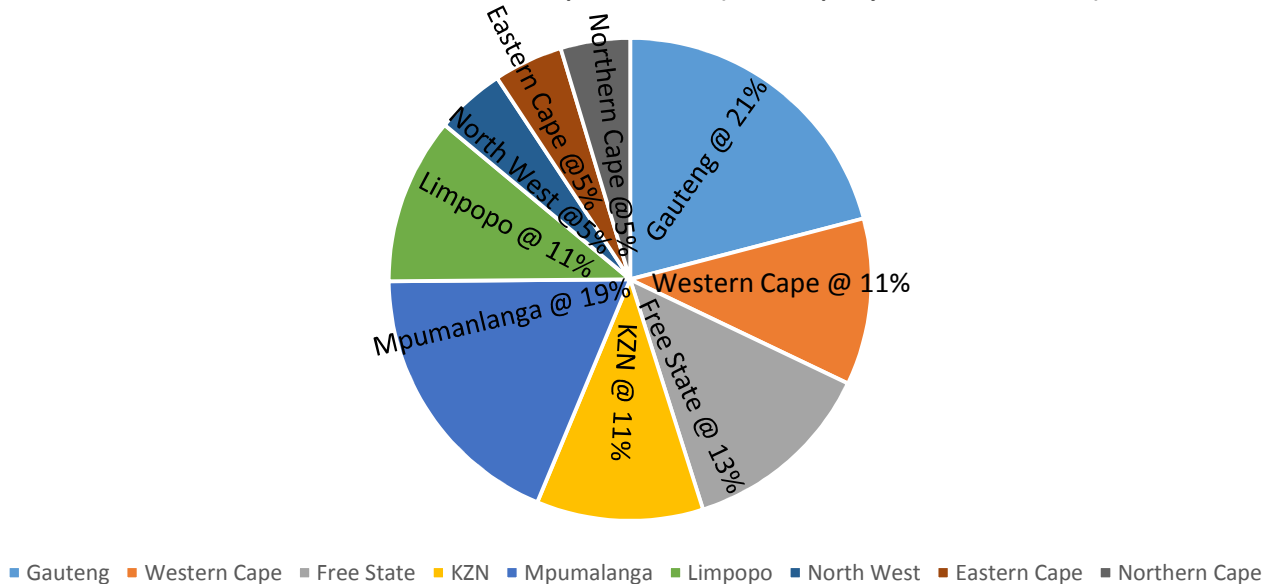


Figure 7

The provincial location of Unemployed Youths and Graduates that responded to the distributed questionnaire were as follows; 21% respondents were from Gauteng, followed by 19% from Mpumalanga, followed by 13% from Free State, followed by 11% from Kwa Zulu-Natal, Western Cape and Limpopo and 11% from Eastern Cape, Northern Cape and North West provinces.

4.3 Key Findings

This section deals with the key findings of the study, while there were issues that cut across questions and therefore the findings are grouped thematically. Not all responses to all questions are therefore represented. The full list of responses can be made available on request. It needs to be reiterated that these findings are qualitative, meaning that they represent nuances to the problems identified in the study but are not necessarily representative of the entire sector. It is recommended therefore that if required, points of interest from this study be tested by means of further quantitative research.

4.4 Effect of Policy in Labour environment

The single most cited reason that restricts companies from hiring more employees relates to the perceived restrictiveness of the current labour environment. This is not to say that the perceptions are valid but rather that they exist and are pervasive. The concerns relating to the labour environment relate to:

- Inability to fire poor performers.

Most employers mentioned that the difficulty in firing poor performers has implications on their propensity to hire full time staff. The ability to build a specific culture of high quality outputs and performance is difficult if employers have to carry those who are not willing or able to be a part of such a culture. The perception is that the Commission for conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) is overly favourable to the employee and as a result employers are nervous to increase their reliance on labour.

- Industrial action.

There is a perception that the frequency and nature of industrial action has a negative impact on the growth of employment. The word 'fear' was used to describe trade unions. A suggestion was made by a respondent that employers and unions should be incentivized by a 'Peace' clause in an attempt to solve labour disputes without strike action.

- Minimum wage.

There was a common request to be able to hire employees outside of minimum wage. The argument being that more people can be absorbed if wages were lower.

There was a perception amongst respondents that the bureaucratic burdens on businesses are onerous. From SARS to Employment Equity Reporting to BBBEE audits, compliance to the various arms of government adds to the cost of doing business. This is particularly prevalent within the small to medium organisations where one respondent indicated that there is a deliberate attempt to remain below the various thresholds and not grow so that the additional requirements are avoided. This obviously can affect job creation and is discussed further under finding 4.2.6. in 'Small businesses to grow

employment', and it was also mentioned that those retailers who are non-compliant have a cost advantage over the compliant organisations and as a result, in the absence of enforcement, represents an incentive to be non-compliant. A suggestion was made by a respondent that a channel be established whereby owners could report known illegal traders and that government should swiftly act. This would create a level (and legal) playing field for participants in the sector.

4.5 Employers Basic Skills Requirements for Employment.

The wholesale and retail sector can be considered an 'entry level' sector in that there are a large number of posts that are not skills intensive and could absorb high number of low / semi-skilled unemployed in the country, however, it was noted by respondents that the base level of competence in terms of literacy and numeracy is poor and that training needs to be done, which is rather expensive, secondly another comment which was interesting relates to the understanding of business ethics within the sector, much of the difficulties facing retailers relate to the unethical behaviour of employees and as a result ongoing training on the approach to employment, ethics and a couple of soft skills could make a notable difference to performance, it was also suggested that business ethics be taught at school to improve the work readiness of graduates.

4.6 Youth and Graduates Employment in the Wholesale and Retail

Government need to explore how careers services can be enhanced and resourced to promote employability activities more effectively, our research indicates that strategy-led, rather than ad-hoc, project-led, employability measures are likely to have a greater and more sustained impact on graduate employability, measuring employability need to be systematic and embedded into departmental otherwise they are vulnerable to changes in functionary personnel.

Government should consider ways of reflecting and promoting the employability skills and attributes in funding mechanisms such as the skills development acts, to date funding systems have not placed employability at the centre of colleges and universities' vision and strategic planning, and this seems certain to have influenced their behavior, funding streams therefore need to encourage an institutional culture supportive of employability skills. It is recommended that part of the profile for the award of funding grants should be on the basis of the demonstrable benefits (impact) of colleges and universities' research on the economy, society, public policy, culture and quality of life, this could, perhaps, be matched by a parallel measure of the demonstrable benefits of higher education' efforts to develop and support students' employability, developing graduate employability skills and attributes should be included in higher education' strategic *and* faculty/departmental level planning. Universities need to reflect the promotion of employability skills and attributes in their mission statements, learning and teaching strategies, course frameworks, strategic documents and practical guidance.

Employability also needs to be supported at senior management level in Higher education and reflected in policies that are translated into action across all levels, the research findings reveal that while university careers services will typically seek to promote the employability of students, the scope and depth of such efforts varies greatly across faculties and departments, a factor in this is the attitude of some staff to explicitly addressing employability skills and attributes in their courses, Staff should be encouraged to recognize that these objectives are compatible with promoting academic capacity and wider life skills. Appropriate incentives for higher education staff should be used as a driver for change in promoting employability measures at faculty/ departmental level.

The major points arising from data collected through interviews and distributed questionnaires from the Unemployed Youths and College graduates with regards to seeking employment in the wholesale and retail sector were;

- Lack of knowledge of the career opportunities available in the sector.
- Discriminatory tendencies of the sector as indicated earlier in this study.
- Lack of job stability in the sector.
- Recruitment agencies activities/attitude.
- Low wages.

4.6.1. The Importance of Placements and Recognizing Experiential Learning.

Higher education and employers should continue to promote and expand opportunities for students to access work-based learning. One of the most crucial measures Higher education can adopt to promote employability is to include appropriate integrated placements, internships and work based learning opportunities of significant duration into their courses. . Some of the more 'vocational' and business-orientated courses already make use of these approaches but humanities courses could also benefit from greater use of such measures.

- These experiential opportunities require careful planning and time for reflection must be built in if they are to be an effective way of providing university students with relevant employment skills, knowledge and awareness of employer culture. They also call for effective, sustained and equitable partnerships between Higher education and employers.
- Other systematic programmes to develop and accredit or recognise students' experiential and work-related learning are recommended.

For example, the presence of graduate award programmes across many universities appears to be highly valued by graduates and employers. These programmes are seen as valuable because they facilitate students' access to work-related learning activities in universities and work-based opportunities such as placements. However, placements and work related and work-based experiences need to be documented so that students can offer employers evidence of their capacities and skills.

4.6.2. Reflecting wider economic needs in Higher Education courses.

Those responsible for Higher Education provision should take into account students' employment needs including the generic skills and abilities needed in the workplace and reflect them in the curriculum and course design. The design of degree courses and student experience in general should articulate with the needs of business and emerge from a strong working partnership with employer organisations, at the same time academic quality, content, focus and the integrity of courses should not be compromised, however, an important caveat should be that Higher Education also needs to provide learning that addresses broader social issues and needs.

4.6.3. Meaningful Employer Participation on Higher Education committees

Higher education and employer partnerships should be encouraged and strengthened with employers having a more active role in higher education employability strategies and policies, while research on employer involvement in government-funded work related education and training indicates that it is difficult to secure employer engagement in education programmes, but It is possible that Higher education will have to be the initiators of partnerships with employers, our research reveal that where partnerships are sustained employers can have an impact on employability approaches, particularly when involved in course design, employers' presence on higher education committees should not be a token measure but allowed to facilitate a meaningful contribution. Our study found that employers' perceive that their views on course design as often disregarded.

4.7 Effect of Recruitment Technology and Agencies

Technological advances have impacted every segment of society, including the process of looking for employment. Rather than spending hours thumbing through classified ads, job seekers now are able to use social media and job sites to not only look for jobs but also narrow their searches down to specific industries or even companies.

The internet has also made it easier for job seekers to put themselves out there, showcasing their own resumes and skills, technology has not only made it easier for job seekers to find job advertisements, but job seekers can now – through personal branding – more easily become their own advertisements. Below are four ways technology has affected job hunting.

The job search

Technology has helped make searching for jobs more convenient than ever. With an internet connection and a phone, job seekers are able to look for jobs anywhere in the world, from anywhere in the world. It's not only also easier to look, but also apply for jobs at the click of a button. This tends to present an issue for not only employers looking for standout candidates, but also job seekers themselves who are competing with hundreds or thousands of other job seekers. One way to hack this problem is by

thoroughly reading job descriptions and including those keywords to align with your resume, experience and skills.

Interview Anywhere – You made it through the screening process and have been called for an interview. However, the job you are interviewing for is thousands of miles away. Traditionally, this would require a cross-country road trip and a phone interview. Technological advances such as video calls have made it easier to conduct face-to-face interviews with people on opposite sides of the world.

Not only are one-on-one video calls possible, but panel interviews – through video conferencing technology – are able to be conducted between multiple people spread across different parts of the world. The advent of video technology has also cut down on the time it takes for companies to find and hire potential employees.

Social media and the job search

Social media now has a huge impact on job searches. In fact, if you're not using your social media profiles to attract employers, you're overlooking a great opportunity. LinkedIn is the most important platform for getting noticed by potential employers. Make sure you leverage your profile with a professional photo and a thorough description of your experience and abilities. Keywords are also extremely powerful on LinkedIn so make sure you use every possible term that employers in your industry might search for.

All these Technology Innovations and improvement mention above would have been a boon for all job seeker except that most of this technology although readily available in the urban area can sometimes be difficult to access in the rural area and computer usage Knowledge among the unemployed youths is still at a very basic level.

Our investigation found that for some business related reasons some recruitment agencies operating in the W&R sector in some of the provinces tends to discriminate against applicants from certain ethnic group in those provinces, and if the current economic downturn continues, more and more agencies may be prepared to follow suit, what risks do employers and recruitment agencies run in these situations and how should W&RSETA and DOL handle/redress any issues arising from this illegal practices and equally they strongly believe in loyalty which means if you have left their employment for greener pastures and later return to them for placement you are less likely to be placed.

4.8 Technology as a Disruptor

Macdonald SA recently unveiled a new type of automated service to order food at their shop one that doesn't require cashiers/till clerks at all (something of interest noted by a colleague and myself while out on lunch during the writing of this study report), the brick-and-mortar location uses sensors and gates to automatically charge you for your purchases after you order. It gets rids of pesky long lines in front of cashiers, which may also more or less eradicates the need for checkout counters altogether.

While that's exciting for hater of long queue (like myself), it also sounds like it could cause a decline in employment, just as automation wiped out millions of manufacturing jobs over the past couple of decades.

Increased productivity has traditionally been linked to improvements in technology, which enables more output without adding more workers, it's unclear what this could mean for jobs in the retail sector. While it's easy to assume that this automated-checkout system could replace human cashiers, many believe that existing staff could be repurposed for other positions in stores.

Therefore in effort to combat online shopping, brick-and-mortar stores may emphasize customer service to improve sales (which could lead to more hiring). "Traditional retail stores should hire more sales workers to provide this service," human workers are also more versatile, and they are able to perform a broad range of job duties that include helping customers find items, operating a cash register and re-stocking shelves. "Because retail sales workers have this versatile range of functions, their usage should also increase," It's important to note, though, that most stores today already employ stockers and customer service attendants, so it's not clear if companies will increase hires in those areas enough to compensate.

Of course, a lot of this is speculation sparked by the introduction of a new technology retail format, Even if this cashier-free system takes off, though, there are ways to maintain the number of jobs in retail. The rise of online shopping did not appear to severely impact the number of jobs in the industry between the years 2004 and 2013, although employment did suffer between 2007 and 2010 because of the overall economic downturn.

"A technology driven increase in productivity should not cost any net jobs," says Josh Bivens, director of research and policy at the Economic Policy Institute. "The faster productivity growth we've ever seen came between 1945 and 1970 and 1995 and 2001 -- and job growth in these periods was the fastest, not slowest, on record," he says.

Bivens believes that managing the macro economy to ensure enough growth in demand to soak up the extra productive capacity is key to maintaining the number of jobs. Of course, that's easier said than done, and it requires the injection of more money into the economy. That means more than just increasing GDP; it means growing a base of consumers through increasing wages and creating new jobs. And those jobs can't be focused entirely in high-skilled fields.

Regardless of the feasibility though, Bivens reiterates that technological advancements are not to be shunned. "The policy bungling is what's to be feared, not the productivity growth," he says. In other words, while it is possible that developments in tech, such as Cashier free system, and the resulting bump in productivity could kill jobs, it's up to economists and politicians to make sure that they don't.

Chapter 5: Conclusion & Recommendations

This study found that the notion of Employment, Retention and Skills Development is supported by a majority of W&Rseta Stakeholders, the question lies in the general awareness of key available legislated incentives and their implementation.

5.1 Summary of Findings

“The creation and retention of jobs within the W&R sector is based on several factors, not least the external Environment. Political decisions, economic and social factors all have an impact.

An important driver of change in the sector is technology, which has influence on how organization are doing business, reduce shop Floor space, increase warehousing and transport logistics – with the resultant shedding of low-skill jobs and the positive side have also to create new jobs and careers.

A comprehensive and viable reponse strategy on the part of the wholesale and retail sector and the W&RSETA is required to alleviate unemployment, in particular unskilled youth unemployment.

5.2 Recommendations

1. A comparative analysis of international trends in Employability, Skills Development and Retention is needed
2. **Educating Stakeholders:** There is needs to be involve in active education of stakeholders in the W&R sector in the areas of Tax incentives for employment of youths, which is not been explored by the Small to Medium enterprise in the sector, but is likely to create jobs and improve the overall employment in the sector.
3. **Helping the SMME:** The sector needs to come up with a workable strategy to develop small businesses in order to grow employment opportunities. Strategies to be developed with the W&RSETA should include creating portals for cooperation, shared service centers, better business linkages, and less bureaucracy.
4. **Employability and Discrimination:** The W&R sector is still steep in discrimination educating the stakeholders especially the shop floor hiring decision makers through Forum meetings and roadshow is recommended.
 - 4.1. The retail sector needs to develop a viable and workable strategy for youth employment including pre-work programmes at school, encouraging entrepreneurial thinking and the use of internships and learnerships linked to defined career paths, which should be mapped by W&RSETA.
 - 4.2. The retail sector needs to support learnerships and work with TVET colleges and universities to create a pipeline of students and prospective students into the industry. The W&RSETA must engage the levy and non-levy paying organisations on their contributions to learnerships.

5. **Technology Disruption:** The W&R sector needs to be mindful of the role and impact of technology on marketplace and employment opportunities so as to develop proper responses in skills development, the W&RSETA must remain up to date in terms of evolving the skills retailers need.
6. **Monitoring the Activities of Employment Agencies:** The W&R Sector need DOL to monitor and evaluate the activities of employment agencies in the sector as they do not play fair.
7. **Educating the Employment Seeker:** Technology skills and Business ethics should be included in learner programmes, these should include End-User computing (i.e. Internet, Email and Web Browsers), a practical guide to ethical behaviour and the expectations of how employees should behave in the workplace.

5.3 Conclusion

Employability and talent management is not about hiring unqualified candidates, or about having an organisation suffer undue hardship. Rather, it is about taking the steps necessary to ensure that employable persons in the designated group members are hired, promoted and retained equitably, this research illustrates that the solutions to the challenges encountered by organisations in the W&R sector are complex, and there is no single solution. It is the onus of each organisation to approach these recommendations as suggestions that, if implemented, need to be accompanied with precise steps and a plan to ensure their success, efforts to achieve Youths and Graduate employability should not be the sole responsibility of the HR managers but a combined effort from all levels of Line management. However, a lower requirement for entry level jobs in the sector must be encourage by the management and managers tasked with its implementation must be monitored to ensure adequate adherence.

Although as of 2012 white males still comprised 65.4% of top management positions the wholesale and retail sector, six times the portion of the economically active population they represent, there are some signs of improvement.

Donnelley (2012) noted that progress was visible in the national population distribution trends in terms of race at the professionally qualified level:

- African representation rose from 24.4% in 2007 to 36.35% in 2011;
- Coloured and Indian representation grew from 8.5% to 10.2% and from 8.7% to 9.1% respectively; and
- White representation declined from 57.2% in 2007 to 42.3% in 2011.

The workforce profile at the skilled level has also shown some improvement in terms of race:

- African representation was at 57%,
- White at 24%,
- Coloured at 11.5% and
- Indian at 6.2% (Donnelley, 2012).

The research also shows how some companies have moved towards managing diversity, as measured in dimensions such as gender equity, disability management, and fairness of policies and procedures.

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