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The influence of recruiters perspectives on the employability of recent graduates in the quantity surveying field

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PrQS firms' perspectives impacting on the employability of quantity surveying graduates

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to provide insight into the employability of recent Quantity Surveying graduates in the construction industry. The main aim is to establish employers' perspectives on the effect of higher education institution levels on the employability of these graduates. This can be achieved through understanding employers' perceptions affecting QS graduates' employability. Furthermore, the research will elaborate factors that affect QS graduate employability and how it can be improved. This research adopted a qualitative approach through interviewing graduate employers within Quantity Surveying firms. A total of ten interviews were carried out with the relevant subjects for the study and data was analysed through identifying common trends among responses. The findings revealed that employers valued a combination of academic qualifications, practical skills, and soft attributes like communication and adaptability. Bridging the gap between university education and workplace demands through practical experiences was seen as crucial for enhancing graduate employability. The research is limited to Quantity Surveying graduates on the path to professional registration with SACQSP Council. Further studies on how university degrees are aligned to the performance of graduates in practical industry could be explored. This paper will be able to assist graduates in reflecting on their employability in the industry. This helps them to identify what employers require from graduates, therefore improving their career path.

Keywords: Graduate Employability, Quantity Surveying Profession, QS competencies

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent times, the entry of university graduates into the job market has become increasingly challenging due to factors such as the expansion of higher education, intensified global competition, and unfavourable economic conditions (Hou et al., 2021). This phenomenon has resulted in heightened underemployment and dissatisfaction among employers which the underlying cause is often attributed to the mismatch between the skills possessed by graduates and the evolving demands of the labour market (Osmani et al., 2019; Bogonko and Bosibori, 2018; Hou et al., 2021; Karunasena and Perera, 2017). In the context of South Africa, although the graduate unemployment rate remains comparatively lower than that of other nations, the issue of youth unemployment persists across educational levels (du Toit et al., 2018; Llale, 2021). The job market's imbalance affects young individuals, leading to a higher unemployment rate among them than the national average, thus, ensuring the employment, education, or training participation of young people is imperative for their empowerment and self-sufficiency (Statistics South Africa, 2022).

Research concerning unemployment experiences has predominantly focused on advanced economies, with limited exploration in developing African nations (Hou et al., 2021; Karunasena and Perera, 2017; Ching, 2016). Consequently, there exists a gap in

understanding the dynamics of youth unemployment in contexts like South Africa (du Toit et al., 2018). Youth across the globe are disproportionately affected by escalating unemployment rates (Karunasena and Perera, 2017), this trend holds true for South Africa, where despite efforts such as the allocation of R52 billion in tax relief and incentives for youth employment in the 2022 South African National Budget, youth unemployment continues to be a pressing concern (Statistics South Africa, 2022). As depicted in Figure 1 below, compiled by Statistics South Africa (2022), the unemployment rates among graduates of different age groups in South Africa between 2021 and 2022 indicate that recent graduates (aged 15 to 24) experience the highest unemployment rate across educational levels.

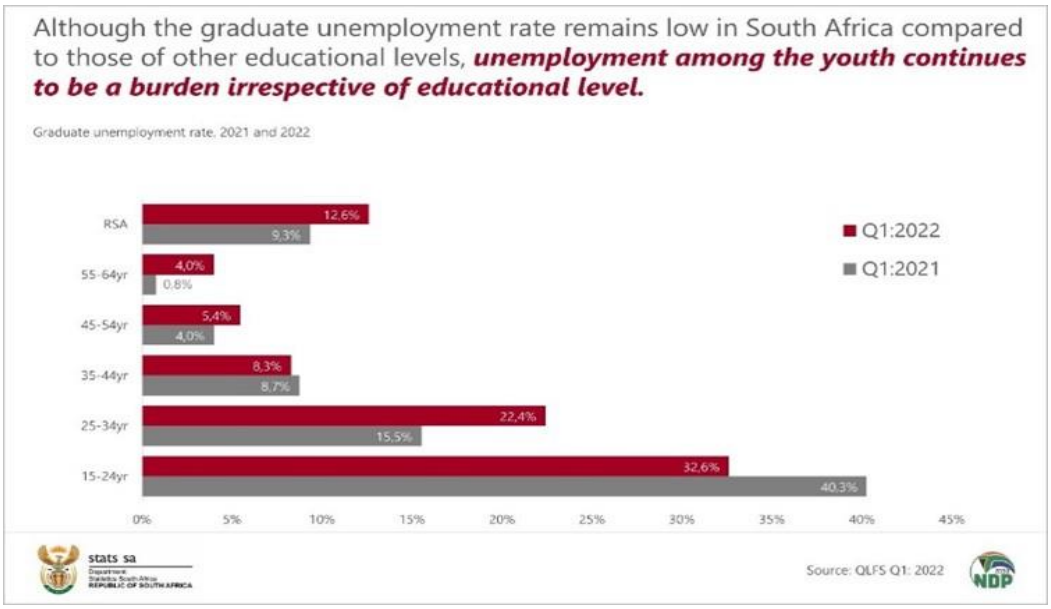

Figure 1: Graduate unemployment rate (Statistics South Africa, 2022)

This observation highlights a significant challenge for the youth of South Africa, who have been grappling with elevated unemployment rates in recent years. Factors such as work experience and prevailing economic conditions likely contribute to the unemployment experienced by this demographic. Considering these circumstances, this study aims to delve into the complexities of youth unemployment in South Africa, focusing on the factors that contribute to the high unemployment rates among recent Quantity Surveying graduates looking to penetrate the professional field. By examining the relationship between skills acquisition, labour market demands, and economic conditions, the research seeks to provide insights that can inform policy decisions and interventions aimed at alleviating youth unemployment and fostering sustainable career pathways.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The labour market within the construction industry has undergone significant transformations, extending far beyond the traditional realm of cost management, as of recently, Quantity Surveyors encounter a diverse spectrum of career opportunities, including value engineering, risk management, and arbitration (Karunasena and Perera, 2017). This evolution is driven by the industry's growing emphasis on sustainability, reflecting global trends and challenges (Ching, 2016). Consequently, today's graduates must possess not only the fundamental skills but also a heightened awareness of sustainability to thrive in this dynamic and competitive landscape (Sarkar et al., 2016). In this contemporary environment,

the role of the modern Quantity Surveyor extends beyond traditional boundaries. They are tasked with integrating sustainable practices and addressing current challenges, making their profession more multifaceted and demanding (Karunasena and Perera, 2017).

2.1 Impact of HEI on the employability of quantity surveying graduates

In the South African context, where graduate unemployment is rising (Statistics South Africa,2022), curriculum alignment with employers' expectations is crucial for improving graduate employability (Gamer Eldeen et al., 2018). Issues such as curriculum misalignment with industry needs, inadequate teaching, and the lower standard of basic education have been identified as contributing factors to the dissatisfaction of both employers and graduates (Gamer Eldeen et al., 2018; Hou et al., 2021; Mahbub, 2017; Devaney and Roberts 2012). Students often have negative perceptions of factors affecting employability within the curriculum, possibly due to a misalignment between academic programs and real-world job requirements (Hou et al., 2021; Gamer Eldeen et al., 2018). Despite efforts like aptitude development programs and skills development initiatives, graduate unemployment continues to rise (Mahbub, 2017). Edayi (2015) identifies constraints faced by university graduates in Johannesburg, South Africa, regarding career guidance, work experience, contextual factors, and employability and has concluded that graduates receive insufficient career guidance during their studies, lack awareness of the importance of gaining work experience, and experience a significant association between contextual factors and graduate unemployment

Aliu and Aigbavboa (2020) recommend that universities establish University-Industry Collaborations (UICs) through conferences, workshops, and training opportunities. They underscore the role of mentorship by industry professionals and work experience in shaping students' skills and confidence. Collaboration between universities and the industry leads to well-rounded graduates equipped to address industry challenges and enhance productivity (Aliu and Aigbavboa, 2020). Osmani et al. (2019) emphasise the significance of graduate attributes and skills in the context of a competitive and dynamic job market. They argue that universities face the challenge of not only keeping their programs up to date but also aligning them with the demands of the job market.

The study by Moore and Morton (2017) suggests a shift in perspective, emphasising the need for universities to focus on teaching students how to learn rather than just developing job-ready skills. Osmani et al. (2019) highlight that a mismatch between academic and practitioner perspectives on graduate attributes exists because universities and employers have different demands. They propose a focus on how employability is instilled rather than on specific skills. To bridge the skill gap, it is imperative to strengthen the collaboration between academia and industry (Ayodele et al., 2021; Aliu and Aigbavboa, 2020). Institutions should emphasise practical knowledge acquisition by encouraging students to gain hands-on work experience, possibly for academic credit. The integration of essential soft skills into the curriculum should be a conscious effort, ensuring that students are aware of the importance of these skills in enhancing their employability (Aliu and Aigbavboa, 2020). Moreover, professional organisations can contribute by organising training and mentorship programs tailored to graduate students' needs (Ayodele et al., 2021).

There exists a disconnect between the skills university education imparts and the skills employers expect thus hindering the smooth transition from education to the workforce for graduates (Hou et al., 2021). Employers highlight the need for educational institutions to instil organised teaching strategies and employability-related initiatives (Bogonko and Bosibori, 2018). Gamer Eldeen et al. (2018) recommend exposing students to the world of work, developing work-related attitudes, improving communication skills, and enhancing computer skills. To enhance students' employability, Pitan and Muller (2019) expressed that South African universities should provide additional support to boost self-confidence and awareness of opportunities, especially among female students. The study also recommended

the implementation of measures to mitigate gender discrimination in the workplace and the continued monitoring of employment equity policies by the government.

On the other hand, Edayi (2015) motivated the introduction of compulsory career guidance modules at universities, encouraging graduates to acquire work experience before seeking higher salaries and aligning graduates' skills with industry requirements. Aliu and Aigbavboa (2020) have denoted that to address the issue of poor work-readiness among South African graduates, universities must establish formal arrangements to provide students with employability development opportunities, including real-world activities like work placements and internships. Collaboration between universities, industry, and government can enhance the connection between education and work, ultimately benefiting both students and employers (Aliu and Aigbavboa, 2020).

2.2 Quantity Surveying graduates' perspectives on their employability

The concept of employability is multifaceted and extends beyond mere employment outcomes. Yorke (2010) distinguishes between Work-Readiness, the conditions sufficient for initial employment, and employability, a broader set of skills necessary for gainful employment but not sufficient by themselves. This perspective highlights the importance of a holistic approach, considering graduates as both employable and work-ready (Sachs, Rowe, & Wilson, 2017; Yorke, 2010). Employability comprises a mix of generic and discipline-specific skills and personal attributes (Oliver, 2015; Smith, Ferns, & Russell, 2014). Bridgstock (2009) notes that universities focus on developing individual skills and attributes that are desirable to employers to secure and succeed in employment and that employability skills often include teamwork, communication, self-confidence, and problem-solving, among others.

Soft skills are vital for employability in specific fields like Quantity Surveying (Joseph, Yetunde, and Aina, 2020). Joseph, Yetunde, and Aina (2020) stress the importance of balancing technical skills with soft skills and offer recommendations for curriculum improvements. Social entrepreneurs are seen as potential contributors to improving graduate employability, with a focus on developing skills such as analytical and critical thinking, commitment, communication, problem-solving, and flexibility (Mahbub, 2017). However, social entrepreneurs alone cannot address this challenge. Collaboration between social entrepreneurs, education providers, and students is essential. Social entrepreneurs need guidance from education providers on what skills to offer, while students must demonstrate a willingness to learn from these experiences (Mahbub, 2017).

2.3 Quantity Surveying labour market in South Africa

The Quantity Surveying career path encompasses various roles, such as consulting and contractor Quantity Surveyors and plays distinct roles in building projects and adapting client briefs and contract documents with multidisciplinary skills (Ching, 2016; Obi, Hampton, and Awuzie, 2020). Proficiency in technical knowledge and analytical skills is crucial for successful Quantity Surveying, ensuring that professionals adhere to discipline requirements (Yusop et al., 2018). Graduate employability and the skills required to be a well-performing Quantity Surveyor, new graduates must be equipped with the necessary technical skills, as the lack of necessary technical skills affects the performance of newly employed graduates (Yusop et al., 2018). A QS needs the expertise to carry out the quantification work in accordance with the essential disciplinary requirements, and without strong technical abilities, Quantity Surveyor experts can feel insecure in their abilities, which would lower the quality of their job (Obi, Hampton and Awuzie, 2020).

The labour market is a dynamic and evolving entity influenced by various factors, including education, skills, and demographic characteristics. In South Africa, Mavundla's (2017) study on labour market inequality reveals that graduates tend to have higher employment rates and earnings compared to diplomates, even after controlling for factors

like age, gender, race, and field of study. Llale (2021) underlines the impact of technological advancements and increased competition, raising questions about the adaptability of traditional roles. These challenges resonate with the changing landscape of labour markets, where automation and technological disruptions are reshaping job requirements and expectations. On the other hand, Horwitz (2013) analyses the skills development in a transitional economy, specifically in South Africa, and emphasises the importance of adequate skills for global competitiveness. The study highlights the need for a balanced approach to skills development, considering both high-level and low-level skills, echoing the concept of segmented labour markets.

2.4 Employers' perspectives on quantity surveying graduate employability

Mtebula (2014) explored the perceptions of employers and graduates regarding the employability and preparedness of graduates from the School of Construction Economics and Management at the University of the Witwatersrand. This study uncovered disparities in perceptions, with graduates feeling more prepared for employment than employers believed. Key factors contributing to these disparities include work experience, management skills, and entitlement. This research emphasised the complexity of employability and the need for better alignment between graduates' and employers' expectations. Quantity Surveyors play a vital role in shaping project scope and costs, managing stakeholders' needs and contract documents (Ching, 2016).

The ability to adapt to evolving industry demands is crucial, as is possessing the necessary skills to execute tasks effectively (Obi, Hampton, and Awuzie, 2020). Qualifications serve as indicators of competence, but disparities in recruitment and development processes persist (Dada, 2018). Considering the advent of the fourth industrial revolution, which involves increased automation in many organisations, there is an anticipation of substantial repercussions on the transformation of graduate skills. Although the specific graduate skill offerings vary among university faculties, they consistently influence the preparedness of graduates for employment and the quality of their skill development outcomes. Educational activities such as extracurricular programs, internships facilitated by universities, collaborative group projects, university-sponsored workshops, and seminars all contribute significantly to improving graduates' employability and the effectiveness of their skill development (Chigbu and Nekhwevha, 2022).

Graduates' employability relies on a comprehensive skill set that transcends technical expertise. Critical thinking, interpersonal skills, and adaptability are highly sought after by employers (Karunasena and Perera, 2017). Employers emphasise applicants' abilities to handle complex content, manage interpersonal relationships, and exhibit an entrepreneurial mindset (Karunasena and Perera, 2017). The construction industry thrives on effective interpersonal connections, necessitating graduates with strong, soft skills that foster positive interactions (Ayodele et al., 2021). Employers seek graduates with a wide array of talents, including the ability to adapt to workplace culture, apply knowledge to organisational progress, and contribute effectively to creative teams soft skills like critical analysis, reflection, and adaptability are highly valued for innovation and managing change (Karunasena and Perera, 2017).

Employers now expect graduates not only to possess subject knowledge but also additional skills to navigate the corporate world effectively (Gamer Eldeen et al., 2018). Graduate employability has become a priority for both the public and private sectors, emphasising the need for universities to offer programs that meet the evolving demands of the workplace (Mahbub, 2017). Employers have expressed concerns that many graduates lack essential soft skills, practical experience, and work readiness, resulting in limited employability (Ohei and Brink, 2019). The unemployment rate among South African youths, particularly graduates, remains high, making the development of employability skills a pressing concern (Statistics South Africa, 2019). A comprehensive model of employability

specific to graduate students has been proposed (Chhinzer and Russo, 2018). Chhinzer and Russo (2018) identified key attributes valued by employers, including professional maturity, soft skills, problem-solving ability, and subject-specific knowledge. Gamer Eldeen et al. (2018) highlighted the changing expectations of employers, especially in industries like construction, where graduates are expected to adapt to rapidly evolving technologies and tools. Specific skills and attributes in demand include construction knowledge, time management, teamwork, communication skills, and adaptability (Gamer Eldeen et al., 2018). Ameh, Camillus, and Chukwujekwu (2020) emphasised the importance of practical experience, a balance between hard and soft skills, and increased investment in education and training.

In conclusion, employability in higher education extends beyond mere employment outcomes, emphasising the development of a diverse set of skills and attributes. Work-integrated learning programs, practical training, and internships provide opportunities for students to bridge the gap between theory and practice, enhancing their employability. However, challenges such as overeducation and a narrow focus on discipline-specific employment must also be addressed. A holistic approach to graduate employability that considers both individual skills and the wider socio-economic context is essential for universities to prepare graduates for the evolving job market and contribute to economic and social development. South Africa has grappled with rising unemployment rates, with a notable shift in labour market demands toward high-skilled workers. Graduate unemployment in South Africa is a complex issue influenced by various factors. It is closely linked to the broader problem of unemployment in the country. To address this challenge, a comprehensive approach is needed, including reforms in the educational system, policies to promote skills development, and measures to encourage employment in various sectors.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research philosophy used in this study is interpretivism because it emphasises that individuals' perceptions shape their understanding of reality, making reality and knowledge subjective. Researchers' own beliefs and values inevitably influence how they collect, evaluate, and analyse data, as complete detachment from their subjectivity is not possible (Ryan, 2018). In interpretivism, researchers acknowledge the importance of understanding how people differ from each other as social agents, and this philosophy recognises the distinction between researching human subjects and investigating inanimate objects, such as vehicles or tables (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2019). Interpretivism aligns with an epistemology that appreciates the importance of individual perspectives and experiences in constructing knowledge. This epistemological perspective contends that researchers must immerse themselves in the understanding of individuals' subjective realities to gain a holistic view of their world (Ryan, 2018).

Given the aim of this research - to explore the perspectives of recruiters in the Quantity Surveying field regarding the influence of education levels on graduate employability—the inductive approach is well-suited. This approach enabled the study to delve into the nuances of QS firms' opinions and experiences, gradually building an understanding of the phenomenon being investigated. The applied methodology for this study is qualitative research because it involves the collection and analysis of non-numeric information, aiming to understand the complex aspects of a subject in depth (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2019). This approach is particularly relevant for the study's objective of exploring the perspectives of QS firms in the Quantity Surveying field regarding the impact of education levels on graduate employability. Purposive sampling is best used with a small number of individuals/groups, which may be sufficient for understanding human perceptions, problems, needs, and behaviours (Karunasena and Perera, 2017). Thus, the purposive sampling technique has been used in this study as it is based on the perceptions of the respondents.

The study interviewed ten professional Quantity Surveying firms within South Africa. Ten respondents were appropriate to avoid saturation and the receipt of similar answers that led to the same conclusions and analysis (Karunasena and Perera, 2017). The qualitative descriptive design category includes topic analysis and qualitative content analysis. They are collections of methods for deciphering themes from textual material. Their primary trait is a methodical coding process, meaning analysis, and giving of a description of the social reality through the development of a theme (Vaismoradi et al., 2016).

All qualitative techniques include the description and analysis of participant perspectives. In other words, researchers pay more attention to the communication's clear description than its implicit meaning (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). Data collected from interviews were documented to provide a clear understanding of the respondents' points of views. To provide a documented (word-processed) report of a qualitative research interview, the interviews were conducted through Microsoft Teams with the option of transcribing the recordings. The primary goal of qualitative research is to provide detailed and informative data that contribute to a deeper understanding of the subject under investigation (Goertzen, 2017). Rather than focusing on quantifiable measures, qualitative research aims to delve into the intricacies of social relationships, interpretations, intentions, ambitions, ideas, and sentiments (Goertzen, 2017; Queirós, Faria, and Almeida, 2017). This aligns well with this study's objective of exploring the nuanced perspectives of QS firms on the employability of Quantity Surveying graduates.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study sought to understand employers' views on graduate employability in the context of different generations, particularly focusing on millennials and Gen Z graduates. Through qualitative interviews with employers from various industries in South Africa, several key themes emerged.

4.1 Impact of HEI on the preparation of quantity surveying graduates for the work environment

Participants were asked about their thoughts on the impact of higher education institutions in South Africa on the preparation of QS graduates for the work environment. The general theme was the gap between Higher Education Institutions and practice. Some participants expressed that whether a graduate is prepared by the HEI is the responsibility of the individuals themselves because as much as lecturers may do their best, students should exercise their duty to learn.

"…sometimes the students just want to pass, you know, and get to earning a salary. So sometimes lecturers can do the best job and with the best intentions. But if the students just want to get the 50%, then I don't know they are going to get a whole total view of how all of this fits together." P1

Another participant completely resonated with the above statement as they expressed that HEI is already doing a good job and, therefore, it is the responsibility of the graduates to make sure that they exit the institutions with the lessons that HEI teach.

"...and I don't think if I look back at my tertiary education and I'll look back and see what I see in front of me in the workplace, I think that's lacking a bit." P4.

Other participants expressed that graduates are often not prepared for the work environment. But other factors should also be considered in what it means for a graduate to be prepared for the work environment. Factors include the extent to which organisations are willing to provide enough support to take the graduates through the transition process.

4.2 Employers' perspectives on graduate employability

"Now, I wouldn't recommend that because most of the time the, hiring managers are going to look at where you study post metric, you understand it's like if you leave university and you go and study at UNISA, the chances of you being employed, rather let me rephrase employable lesson because the competition you're up against is people that went to WITs people that went to UCT, Stellenbosch, UFS, Nelson Mandela University that's not what I mean." P2.

"The people who had maybe better connections, who came recommended or whatever, so the big issue here is that we have a shortage of jobs and for you to be selected at any individual that the that it's only the cream of the crop which will be selected you your fight as a student you're fighting as a as an employee is always be amongst the top tier" p8.

More often, how employees perceive graduates is more important than having many graduates. It is a huge factor for these graduates to be competent and serve the industry well. Graduates are perceived as clueless and needing more time to be taught. Therefore, it is important for graduates to prove their competence to employers for them to be recognised. Studies done before have shown that graduates who are competent are better prepared to navigate change in the industry (Chigbu and Nekhwevha, 2022). The most common graduate competence identified by employers is their ability to quickly adapt to new technologies. This benefits both the graduate and the employer as it forms a give-and-take relationship where skills are transferred to both parties.

4.3 Factors hindering the employability quantity surveying graduates

When asked what advice participants would give to unemployed graduates struggling to find employment and seeking to improve their employability, the participants expressed that the graduates should approach liaison officers at their institutions as they are sometimes approached by companies to assist them with finding suitable candidates. The other advice was for the students to be open-minded in their approach to employment and willing to do things outside the scope of their qualifications.

"The student liaison offices that they have at universities, I think those are probably the best people for those students if they are serious and in finding employability is to go to them and say, you know, are they any companies that you may be?" P6.

"First of all, communication skills for me are critical and I'll give you an example. If you know, I've interviewed 5 students in one day, and there two or three of them that were quite verbal and spoke with a confident tone, even though there are nervous, you can still see when somebody is confident and they you know they have, they have enough volume and tone in their voice versus somebody who is and or somebody who doesn't have the confidence to speak up or say what they think." P3

4.4 Competencies required by quantity surveying graduate employers

The factors contributing to most skill gaps when recruiting graduates were identified as training and professional mentorship, remuneration, personal preferences, industry characteristics, curriculum, and faculties (Ayodele et al., 2021). In general, most employers mentioned professional registration as an important factor in determining one's employability. The skill gap then comes when graduates are unaware of the latest industry software and trends. It is important for graduates to understand these programmes as it will also assist them with adapting to the work environment. Registering with a professional body shows that one knows what is expected of them and how to practise professional conduct.

"Skills development depends on individuals, so not everyone is going to be proficient in certain areas. But skills such as interaction with other people, reading the room, and knowing when to talk or keep quiet are skills that I believe may not be taught in universities, so students need to learn those on their own. It is difficult to judge the education industry when

there are some things that cannot be directly taught to students, so I don't know if there is a way to teach people such soft skills" p4.

4.5 Discussion

Employers in South Africa expect more than just academic qualifications from graduates. They value a combination of soft skills, practical experience, and a genuine passion for the field. Bridging the gap between university education and workplace demands, integrating relevant skills into the curriculum, and emphasising soft skill development could help enhance graduate employability. By understanding employers' preferences, graduates can better prepare themselves to stand out in the competitive job market, leading to improved career prospects in their chosen fields. Participants in the study shared their perspectives on generational differences and employability. One participant noted, "Millennials seek instant gratification, leveraging technology to excel, while Gen Z's perspectives are shaped by the post-apartheid era".

The COVID-19 pandemic was also mentioned as influencing employability through remote work and artificial intelligence integration. Concerns about the gap between university education and workplace skills were raised. An employer emphasised, "Having a degree is a minimum, but some professions, like construction, require honours due to SACQSP regulations." However, advanced degrees were not universally required, with relevant skills and experience often prioritised. Employers emphasise the significance of attributes and skills that make graduates stand out. One participant highlighted, "Beyond academics, soft skills like effective communication, creativity, and critical thinking are highly valued. Passion for the field and a commitment to continuous learning are crucial". The importance of interpersonal skills in the workplace was underscored. An employer noted, "Confidence, approachability, and a pleasant personality are key in collaborative environments." Technical knowledge was not always prioritised during interviews, with adaptability and a willingness to learn valued.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The research aimed to comprehensively analyse different levels of higher education institutions within the context of quantity surveying, explore the diverse perspectives held by PrQS firms influencing the employability of quantity surveying graduates and investigate the intricate factors shaping their employability. The objectives sought to provide insights into the educational landscape, employer expectations, and the dynamics influencing graduates' readiness for employment in the quantity surveying field. The study ultimately contributes to understanding the connections between higher education, employer perspectives, and graduate employability.

The study reveals that employers in the quantity surveying field hold diverse views on how different types of higher education institutions impact the employability of graduates. While some prioritise prestigious institutions, others value practical skills and a balanced mix of theory and practice. Accreditation and industry connections also significantly influence employer preferences. Moreover, the findings emphasise the importance of graduates' adaptability and commitment to continuous learning in securing employment. These insights suggest the need for curriculum adjustments, strengthened industry partnerships, and considerations in accreditation criteria within quantity surveying education to better align with employer expectations and enhance graduates' employability prospects

In examining employers' perspectives on graduate employability in South Africa, this research highlighted crucial factors that influence hiring decisions. Employers value graduates with academic qualifications, relevant skills, and soft attributes such as effective communication, critical thinking, and adaptability. Bridging the gap between university

education and workplace demands through practical experiences integrated into the curriculum is a huge factor in enhancing graduate employability. To succeed in a competitive job market, graduates must focus on standing out by showcasing passion for their field, a willingness to learn, and a strong commitment to continuous self-improvement. By aligning educational offerings with employers' expectations, South Africa can better equip its graduates for career success and economic growth. Further research could be explored on the following areas,

Curriculum Development: Examine the efficacy of incorporating work-integrated learning and soft skill development within academic curricula. Investigate how such initiatives impact graduate employability and workplace readiness.

Graduate Success Metrics: Develop comprehensive graduate success metrics that consider not only initial job placements but also job retention, career advancement, and overall job satisfaction. This would provide a holistic understanding of the impact of employability factors on graduates' overall career outcomes.

Institutional Partnerships: Investigate the potential benefits of fostering stronger partnerships between educational institutions and employers. This research could assess the effectiveness of collaborative efforts in aligning curricula with industry needs and enhancing graduate employability.

To advance the understanding of the factors influencing the employability of quantity surveying graduates, future research avenues should be explored. This could involve:

Graduates' Perspectives: Gather the perceptions and experiences of recent quantity surveying graduates regarding employability, including how the reputation of their institution impacted their job search and career.

Industry Demands: Investigate current and future industry demands for quantity surveying professionals, including emerging trends and specialties. This information can help institutions align their programs with evolving industry needs.

By exploring these avenues for further research, scholars can continue to deepen our understanding of factors influencing the employability of quantity surveying graduates, contributing valuable insights to both academia and the industry.

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