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Chapter 8

**STRENGTHENING GRADUATE
EMPLOYABILITY IN A DEVELOPING
ECONOMY THROUGH
SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS**

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ABSTRACT

South African university graduates face numerous challenges in their bid to secure relevant employment; obtaining a qualification does not in itself guarantee employment or employability. The labour market no longer relies on one's qualification but also demands a set of skills that would bring about positive performance and the consistent promise of future development and success to the industry. Importantly also, given the dearth of relevant expertise for businesses, employers are reluctant to hire

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graduates but instead they go for well-rounded, experienced people. As a result, graduate unemployment in South Africa continues to rise. While a call has been made by the government of South Africa for social entrepreneurs to participate in reducing the escalating unemployment rate, there is yet to be a concrete approach to determining (1) how they can do so; and (2) if they really can, why they are not doing it? Considering these, this chapter attempts to reveal how social entrepreneurs can contribute to improving graduate employability. Data were obtained from 92 social entrepreneurs using the mixed methods strategy. The findings indicate that graduate employability is not merely about a graduate securing a spot in the workplace; but also about the graduate having the capacity to apply what was learnt at university. The findings informed recommendations that may benefit social entrepreneurs, education providers and policy makers.

Keywords: social entrepreneurship, employability, South Africa, graduate unemployment, graduate attributes

INTRODUCTION

Concerns have been raised by civil society and employers, including government regarding the unemployability of university graduates in South Africa. These concerns are usually met with myriad of reasons for the scourge but seldom matched with solutions. Some of the reasons for the high levels of graduate unemployability include incompatibility of curriculum with industry needs; lecturers' inability to teach, and the lowered standard of basic education. There have, however been attempts to improve graduate employability including aptitude development programmes and bursaries offered by the Wholesale & Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (W&R SETA), and the government's national skills development programmes. Regardless of these endeavors, unemployment keeps rising. The issue of unemployment is far more negative for individuals who have accomplished advanced education.

According to Tomlinson (2012), the issue of graduate employability remains a priority which demands intense focus from both the public and private sector including higher education strategists. Basically, this is a message that says universities must offer programmes that meet the

challenges of a versatile workplace. In this regard it is important that universities consider the employability of graduates as the centrepiece of their academic project (Nabi and Bagley, 1999) and by so doing offer programmes that are beneficial to society. After all, the responsibility of higher education institutions is to keep abreast of changes in society, offer relevant programmes and build relationships with businesses (Rateau and Kaufman, 2009). The issue of tailoring university programmes to suit industry needs has remained a focal point in scholarly literature. Fields, Hoiberg and Othman (2003:5) and Garton and Robinson (2006:552) believe that educational programmes must align with the dynamism of society. Owens and Tibby (2014) agree with the notion that for universities to remain valuable, their programmes must blend with the needs of industry.

Nonetheless, the contribution of universities by simply offering what they regard as relevant programmes may not solve the problem of unemployability of graduates whether in the public or private sector. Requisite skills may be honed outside the university in the form of internships and mentoring opportunities. As Mandyoli, Iwu and Nxopo (2017: 61) note “...*government alone cannot provide the much needed jobs for every graduate in any society.*”

The private sector, nevertheless, is known to have very stringent conditions for employment. Some of these conditions are very restrictive and demanding for fresh university graduates who are considered ill-equipped for the world of work. To this end, Mair and Marti (2006) and Welsh (2012) consider the work of social entrepreneurs as inspiring enough to warrant their inclusion in the search for graduate employability opportunities.

Social entrepreneurship research has gained intensity over the years and generated a great deal of both theoretical and empirical literature. Much of what has been produced has focused extensively on Western societies with very little effort channeled towards developing economies where the triplets of unemployment, poverty and inequality are rife. In relation to developing economies, it is crucial for scholarly efforts to focus on how these challenges can be dealt with. In these economies, it is common knowledge that public goods and services are in short supply. However, the private sector on the

other hand charges exorbitant prices for their goods and services. Against the backdrop of Weisbrod's (1975) model of non-profit organisation, this paper argues that the view of non-profit organisations as providers of goods and services, which are undersupplied by government to a variety of people, remains pertinent for developing countries because they have poorly functioning institutions and as a result constantly experience socioeconomic challenges.

Consequently, the key research question for this study is: how can social entrepreneurs contribute to reducing graduate unemployability? An important subsidiary question is: what are the challenges faced by social entrepreneurs with respect to improving graduate employability?

Significance of the Study

Currently, the term graduate attributes is part of the vernacular of the South African higher education space; the ever-increasing rate of graduate unemployment lies at the heart of it all. Heads of programmes and units are now required to furnish authorities with their expected graduate attributes to inform funders about the kind of graduate they hope to produce. In many instances, this is a way to assess the worthiness of a programme in the larger scheme of society. In the main, tertiary institutions ought to supply the requisite human resource needs to industry and this informs the constant review of programmes in institutions of higher learning. Considering that many graduates are produced by tertiary institutions, but only few of these can be absorbed by organisations for possessing the qualifications that employers need, it becomes necessary to source other employment opportunities for those who will not get employed. This is a significant value that this paper brings, that is to understand how social entrepreneurs can assist in improving graduate employability. Beyond this however, other interesting questions that this paper addresses are: Are our graduates adequately prepared for industry? What is the effect of lack of preparedness of our graduates in the economy?

LITERATURE REVIEW

As stated earlier, the focus of this chapter is on social entrepreneurs. Social entrepreneurs are known to concentrate on broad scale issues with mass offerings that everyone is particularly aware of, for example, unemployment. They roll out courses of action to manage the issues. Considering the acute need for economic growth, this study investigates how social entrepreneurs can alleviate unemployability. Karanda (2012) acknowledges that social entrepreneurs make unique contributions to society which comes in various forms, namely improved access to health care; focus on poverty reduction; managing issues of child abuse, and working towards general social improvement.

The rest of this section dwells on South Africa's graduate unemployment status, likely role of universities in graduate employability, and the roles of social entrepreneurs in socioeconomic development.

Nature of Unemployment in South Africa

Around the world, the subject of graduate unemployment is a major concern and this is evident in numerous scholarly and non-scholarly publications that are circulated. In these publications, questions have been raised regarding how best this problem can be handled. South Africa is one of many countries grappling with this problem. With unemployment surpassing 25 percent, the Cape Higher Education Consortium (CHEC, 2010) acknowledges that the figures of unemployed youth (including those with higher education) will continue to rise. In fact, the nature of unemployment is such that the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) (2015) decried the low level of entrepreneurial activity among the youth in South Africa. This is a further indication that the challenge is not simply about providing job opportunities, but also preparing students for the world of work through education.

Education plays a vital role because it is expected that employers - both public and private - make use of the knowledge, skills and abilities graduates

gain during higher education. StatsSA (2013) reveals that, of the 4.7 million individuals that were unemployed in the second quarter of 2013; one in each two had not completed matriculation. Having a tertiary qualification, especially a degree, improves one's chances of gainful employment. This, according to Graham and de Lannoy (2017), means that “those with a post-secondary qualification are far more likely to find employment than those with only a matric certificate.” However, Graham and de Lannoy also argue that the South African labor market would rather hire highly skilled employees. This affirms the commonly held view among scholars and society at large that a tertiary qualification no longer guarantees employment. The unemployment rate among graduates was 5.2 percent and that of people with other tertiary qualifications (testaments or confirmations) was 12.6 percent. Then again, the rate was 30.3 percent among those without matriculation certificate (StatsSA, 2013).

In the Western Cape, the growth in the economy has seen a near commensurate advancement in jobs (The Western Cape Government, 2013). The disparity, though, can be seen in the number of those with no education and training. Interestingly, a CHEC (2010) report noted that graduate unemployment could be described using race; institution of study; area of schooling, and matriculation grades. It was CHEC's view that unemployment rates for graduates of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) and the University of the Western Cape (UWC) were higher than for graduates of the University of Cape Town (UCT) and Stellenbosch University. Unemployment rates measured three years after graduation were also higher for Africans by 23 percent than Whites, or Coloured graduates by 9 percent (CHEC, 2010). Graham and de Lannoy (2017) also affirm this by stating that “African and Coloured youth are far more vulnerable to unemployment than their White or Indian counterparts.” This disclosure brings a different debate to the discourse, albeit the focus of the chapter is somewhat different. However, what is critical in the sources cited above is that without jobs, citizens are more likely to rely on social grants for child support, disability and frail care. In South Africa, there are

over 17 million people on social grants. This continues to put pressure on the economy, thus emphasising the need for a concerted effort to curb graduate unemployment.

How Can Universities Improve Graduate Employability?

A university is considered a place of learning where knowledge is shared among members of the community and it can therefore be assumed that teaching and learning as well as research and community engagement, are avenues for knowledge sharing. It is expected that members of a university community would be enriched by the various interactions that go on in the community; in that way a wholesome graduate is produced. In fact, many regard the main business of a university as keeping abreast with changes in society, which should be reflected in their teaching and learning plans, but more importantly building relationships with businesses (Rateau and Kaufman, 2009). This view is shared by Fields, Hoiberg and Othman (2003) and Garton and Robinson (2006) who highlight the importance of keeping educational programmes in line with socioeconomic dynamics of society. This practice ensures that the employability of graduates is somewhat guaranteed (Nabi and Bagley, 1999).

Harvey (2005) proposes that, to prepare undergraduates for the world of work, institutions of higher learning should introduce innovative teaching styles so as to achieve what Rae (2007) describes as ‘important abilities’ required for the workplace. In fact, Garton and Robinson (2006), warned that higher education institutions needed to assess and change their educational programmes consistently to address undergraduate issues.

Archer and Davison’s (2008) sample of the needs and perceptions of graduate recruiters showed that most employers consider good communication skills to be important while soft skills (such as working effectively in a team) and hard skills (such as numeracy and literacy) are of equal importance. Other findings indicate that previous work experience may increase the chances of successful employment. While these findings

are not particularly new, they highlight the necessity “to equip graduates with deep intellectual capabilities and a battery of applied practical skills, which make them more work-ready” (Archer and Davison, 2008).

The Place of Social Entrepreneurs in Graduate Employability

Mair and Noboa’s (2006) definition of entrepreneurship is a combination of resources used for the benefit of society that suggests they can also be useful in curbing unemployment. South Africa’s socioeconomic problems include unemployment, inequality and poverty. The three are intertwined. If one is solved, there is a good chance of managing the other. Little or no education can be a disadvantage to anyone as the chances of gainful employment are low.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2013) affirms that specific social undertakings should focus on the rehabilitation of disadvantaged groups so as to create both social and fiscal significance for an entire community. Education has been considered as a means to gain not only employment, but also social integration and financial freedom. Graham and de Lannoy (2017) suggest that most unemployed youth in South Africa “are neither improving their skills through education nor gaining the work experience needed to progress in the labour market.” This is similar to Archer and Davison’s (2008) view on unemployment: that the competencies needed in the workplace are obtainable through good quality education which can be acquired from education and training institutions. Interestingly, attempts have been made over the years in South Africa to reduce graduate unemployment with little or no success. A more focused intervention has been called for and that is why this study looks at social entrepreneurs for possible succor. This view relies on the potential of social entrepreneurs to offer what Owens and Tibby (2014) and Helyer (2010) refer to as “opportunities for community engagement, work-integrated learning, experiential learning and job shadowing.”

In fact, Owens and Tibby (2014) specifically contend that “enterprise education” is one of the employability approaches that allow graduates to improve desired qualities, and talents, as well as abilities that they can take to the labor market and communities. Wilson (2012) adds that enterprise training is important for graduates because it prepares them with the capacity to think differently and to gain practical skills that can enhance their employability and get them to be business-minded. Social entrepreneurs are able to offer job opportunities through enterprise training to those with high unemployment, for example, the long-term unemployed, the physically challenged, the needy, and “at risk youth and gender-discriminated women” (Alter, 2006). In short, the literature indicates that social entrepreneurs “identify systemic problems such as unemployment or entrenched poverty within a social system and then find ways to address them” (Mandyoli, Iwu and Nxopo, 2017).

METHODOLOGY

Two types of research methods were used namely quantitative and qualitative methods. For the quantitative approach, the consideration to access the large number of identified participants led to our adopting a questionnaire for data collection. Some of the participants received the data collection instrument in person while other respondents received the questionnaire via email. Respondents were allowed to complete the questionnaire at their convenience and inform the researchers to collect them upon completion, while others scanned and emailed the completed questionnaire.

The qualitative approach was adopted to throw more light on the challenges the social entrepreneurs encountered while working with interns/graduates, and generally reveal their lived experience. This approach facilitated a much profound understanding of the participants’ lived experiences (Creswell, 2009). As Guba and Lincoln (1994) note, this approach allows for the collection of situational information and extrapolating information that accompanies human actions and decisions.

Description of Instrument (Questionnaire)

The questionnaire used to gather data had four sections:

- Section A concentrated on demographic information to get an overview of respondents' profiles.
- Section B focused on the likely contribution of social entrepreneurs to graduate employability.
- Section C listed the significant graduate skills.
- Section D listed the assumptions of social entrepreneurs in relation to the abilities of graduates.

Sections B, C and D of the questionnaire were developed with the help of literature.

Validation of the Questionnaire

Once the drafting of the questionnaire was concluded, we considered it essential to carry out a pilot. But first, we sought an evaluation of the items by some colleagues whose areas of research included social entrepreneurship and enterprise development. This was done in order to determine the usefulness of the items with respect to what was to be measured (McIntyre, 2006). Subsequently, the questionnaire was presented to a select team of social entrepreneurs for testing. Pilots are ideal to “test a questionnaire” (Burnham, Lutz, Grant and Layton-Henry, 2008) and also to “test the accuracy of the sampling frame” (Burnham et al, 2008). These steps revealed a few necessary changes that were effected. For instance, feedback received from academics suggested that we ask questions about challenges that the participants may have experienced with hiring graduates and whether graduates added value to their organisation.

Population and Sample

The population for this study was restricted to Cape Town-based social entrepreneurs, which consisted of 187 subjects listed on the Western Cape Charity SA database over the period of the study. The researchers utilised a simple random sampling method to select 160 respondents from the sampling frame of 187 subjects. Consent was sought using telephone and email. The subjects were informed about the advantages of conducting the study and other ethical issues that the researchers would observe during and after the study. A few social entrepreneurs sought clarity and subsequent to meeting the participants, follow-up calls and emails were exchanged with definite dates and times. The anxiety created by our knowledge that a low response rate negatively affects a study was high, although we are aware that only a certain proportion of a sample will be ‘cooperative’. We however relied upon Sekaran’s (2003) view that obtaining 30% full participation was justifiable for a sample less than 200. Of 160 questionnaires that were returned, only 92 (57.5%) of them were usable. The others were poorly completed and were therefore discarded.

Ethics

A sound ethical practice was followed in this study. For example, a consent letter to lead this inquiry was requested and obtained from the participants. There was also an undertaking not to disclose participants’ identities and they were at liberty to withdraw at any time of their choosing.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

SPSS version 23 was used in capturing data collected through the questionnaire. The results are hereunder presented and discussed. In the Figure 1, it is clear that the majority of the respondents (44.6%) indicated that they find it difficult to employ graduates because of insufficient work

experience, while 32.6 percent asserted that the skills levels of graduates were poor. This shows that, even though the majority of social entrepreneurs employ graduates, they struggle with graduates who are not fit enough to adapt to the workplace, indicating that graduates do not have abilities that match their desired skills levels.

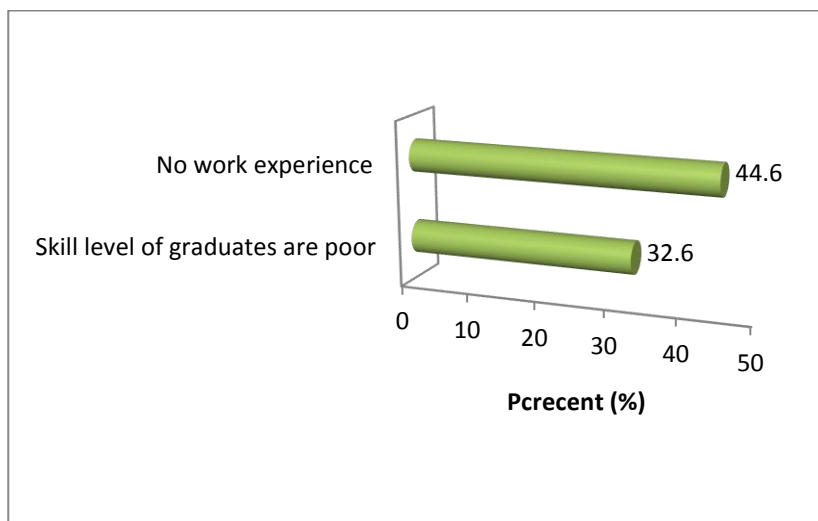


Figure 1. Difficulty with hiring graduates.

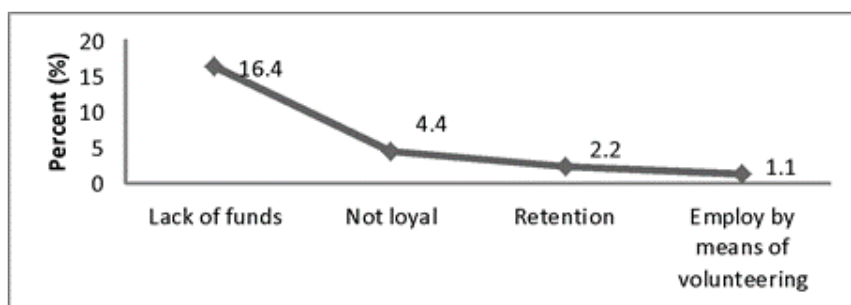


Figure 2. Other reasons social entrepreneurs find it difficult to hire graduates.

The Figure 2 above indicates that the majority of the organisations do not employ graduates owing to lack of funding from sponsors. A few participants (4.4% and 2.2%) claimed that graduates are not loyal and so

retaining them is a challenge and 1.1 percent said that they employ graduates by means of volunteering. Volunteers are often not remunerated (Maes, 2015). It is noteworthy that since social entrepreneurship is not about profitability, some of the organisations have been unable to contribute to graduate employability owing to a lack of funding. These findings are consistent with a study by Bruni, Gherardi and Poggio (2004) who found that one of the barriers that social entrepreneurs face is a lack of access to funds. Our reading of issues of loyalty somewhat relates to this: social entrepreneurs may not offer attractive salaries and are therefore unable to retain their employees.

The Figure 3 reveals that the majority of the participants gave the impression of being satisfied with the performance of graduates that their organisations had employed, followed by organisations (23.9 percent) that are not quite sure whether they are satisfied or not. Only 4.3 percent indicated low satisfaction with graduates' performance in the workplace. An important lesson to learn from this finding is: governments can start looking at social entrepreneurs as important partners for graduate placement. This benefit may be successfully reaped if social entrepreneurs are adequately funded. The case for adequate funding however needs to be matched by meaningful and implementable proposals from social entrepreneurs.

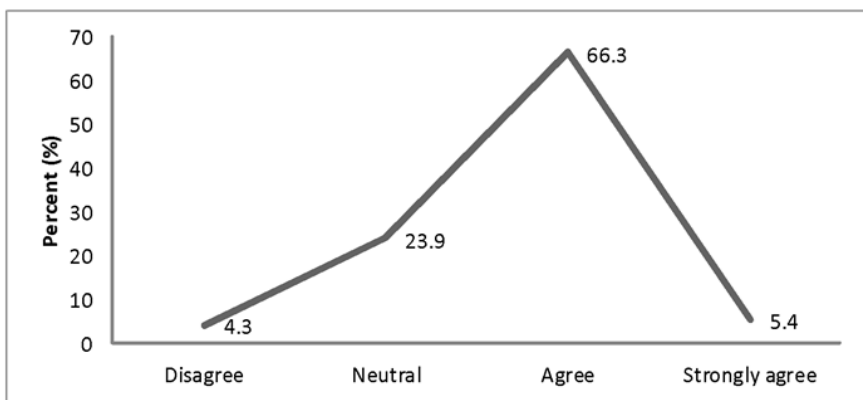


Figure 3. Is the organisation satisfied with the performance of graduates since their employment?

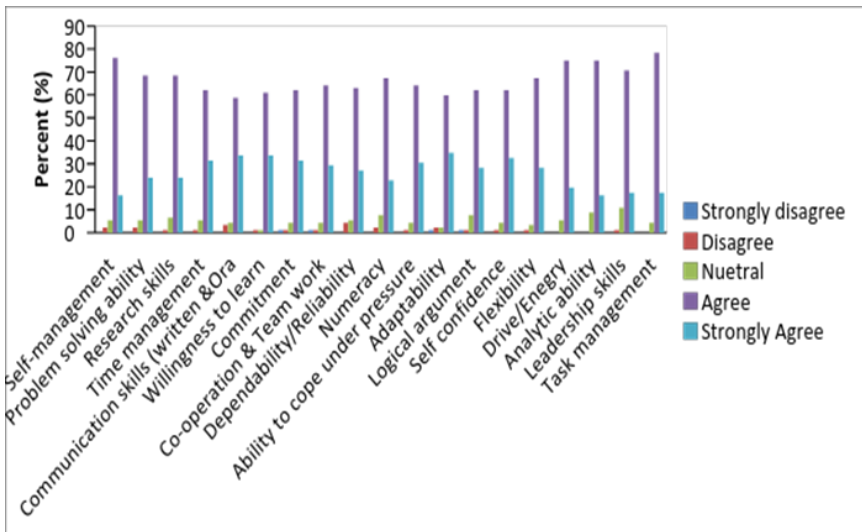


Figure 4. Desirable graduate attributes.

The Figure 4 above reveals that self-management and task management were considered to be very important in order for graduates to be employable. Altogether, about 80 percent of the respondents declared these aptitudes as being imperative.

The result in the Figure 4 basically reveals that a key part of the graduate portfolio was reflected mostly by means of self-management capacities. Such aptitudes demonstrate a level of growth and independence. Altogether 93.4 percent of the organisations stated that the capacity of graduates to show initiative was most essential. This further highlights the importance of analytical ability and leadership skills. The participants also singled out adaptability as a desirable graduate attribute. Numerous graduates are relied upon to work cross-culturally as well as simultaneously in various groups.

Self-management, task management, analytical ability and drive/energy had the most outstanding result of over 80 percent, indicating that respondents valued these attributes.

As can be seen from the outcomes, there seems, by all accounts, to be a huge scope for every single skill to be considered significant. This view is consistent with Archer and Davison's (2008) contention that both soft and

hard skills are important. However the degree of significance will depend on the specific needs of the employing organisation.

This is equally evident in Figure 5 where participants ranked the skills which they deemed important for graduates to be successful at work.

The Figure 5 indicates that skills preferences vary, in any case, with respect to their general significance for the employment decision. The dominant group of respondents (12 percent) regarded analysis and critical thinking as essential for graduates. Commitment also appeared to be regarded as being indispensable. Communication skills were amongst the most vital choices of skills considered by the respondents, with self-confidence and accountability as the least preferred.

It can be gathered from the Figure 5, that six skills were identified as top skills that social entrepreneurs look out for. Figure 6 displays the top skills.

The Figure 6 indicates that the top six skills favoured by the respondents were: analysis and critical thinking; commitment; communication skills; willingness to learn; problem solving, and flexibility. The majority of the participants would rather have graduates with these skills. These findings concur with Paadi (2014), who also found that businesses considered the specified skills as critical for graduates to possess for employability purposes as well as workplace success.

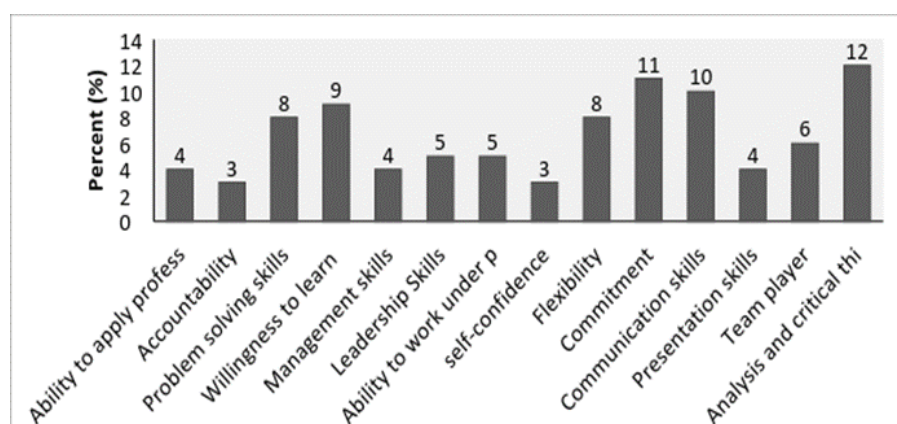


Figure 5. What attributes would you suggest a graduate must demonstrate effectively at work?

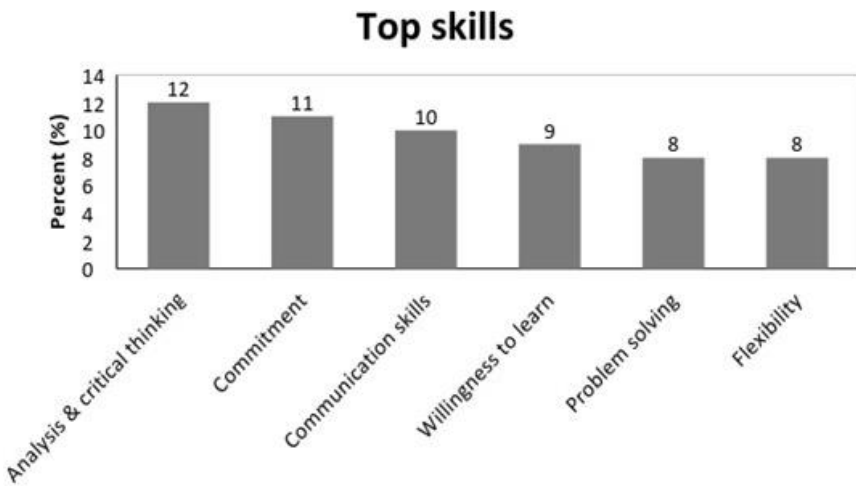


Figure 6. Top skills.

Description of the Qualitative Approach

The researchers were of the opinion following Maree (2007) that the semi-structured interview style would serve the need for the free exchange of views among the subjects. We were able to hold interviews with 22 of the participants. Participants chosen to be interviewed had indicated that they had hired or offered internship opportunities to university students and/or graduates. This approach fits the description of convenience sampling by Creswell (2009). Our intention was specifically to get answers to the following questions: (1) What was your experience of working with interns/graduates? (2) How did they (interns/graduates) attend to their responsibilities/duties? Basically verbal data was thought to be useful in comparing and contrasting the data.

The interviews were recorded using voice recorders. Notes were also taken. Permission was first sought with regard to note taking and recording the responses. This is in line with Doody and Noonan (2013), who advise that researchers should, if possible, try not to be distracted by note taking.

Table 1. Themes and aligned responses

Themes	Description of theme	Illustrating quotes
<i>Attitude to work</i>	How did the interns/graduates treat their responsibilities – scope of work	The few I have had was like fish out of water.
		I am not sure whether they played so much because I don't pay them or what.
		I think they liked what we said they must do
		Those children don't have a good sense of time management.
		They were on the phone a lot.
		They were always late for work.
		I enjoyed working with them because they showed compassion when we visited our beneficiaries.
		It is important for the idea of work we do that anyone who comes here must understand what we do. We have had several people come and go including students. I am not sure I want to work with students. Anyone who comes here for work must understand we care about the people we look after.
		You can see this place is not fancy so you must want to work here to come here
		I depend on support from many people. So we don't pay much. They help us from time to time.
		I like them. They assisted us
		I enjoyed working with mine. Was able to manage our diary and write reports

Table 1. (Continued)

Themes	Description of theme	Illustrating quotes
<i>Challenges faced by social entrepreneurs</i>	In working with interns/graduates, what were those 'pains' suffered as a result of hiring students/fresh graduates?	They want to come and leave anytime they want.
		They wanted to be left alone.
		I didn't see them take initiative. They always wanted me to say you must do this, you must do that. I didn't like it.
		I want someone who can run our office because we are not always here. But they leave immediately we go to site.
		The one I worked with has no sense of time.
<i>Overall experiences of the social entrepreneur</i>	How would you classify your experience working with interns/graduates?	I can work with them.
		It was difficult to understand how to deal with them.
		I didn't enjoy them that much.
		I will be happy to offer more to them if they are willing to be part of us
		She seemed underprepared. May be I should have told her what to do more

Qualitative Analysis

The analysis of the interviews was done thematically. Thematic analysis basically means identifying themes within data (Ezzy 2002). The use of themes in analysing qualitative data is recommended by scholars (for example (Hillenbrand and Money, 2000) who posit that clustering data allows for clearer understanding of a study because data is grouped according to its similarity, thus helping to identify high level themes. In view of this, content analysis was used owing to its value in analysing verbal responses (Cole, 1988) and attaining a condensed description of a situation (Elo and Kyngas 2007). Finally, the various responses were categorised into three themes which include attitude to work, challenges faced by social entrepreneurs, overall experiences of the social entrepreneur. The themes and illustrating quotes are depicted in the Table 1.

It is noticeable from the interviews that there is an overall feeling of dissatisfaction with interns/graduates among the participants despite a very small fraction expressing ‘slight’ dissatisfaction (for example: *I can work with them; I like them. They assisted us; I enjoyed working with mine; was able to manage our diary and write reports; I enjoyed working with them because they showed compassion when we visited our beneficiaries*). This finding contradicts what the Figure 3 depicts. Could this be because one-on-one interviews elicit opinions clearer? More importantly however, it is clear from the findings that graduate employability is not merely about a graduate securing a spot in the workplace; but also about having the capacity to apply what was learnt at university. It is also evident that different social entrepreneurs are on the lookout for different aptitudes. Some of the comments from the participants such as *she seemed underprepared. May be I should have told her what to do more; I want someone who can run our office because we are not always here. But they leave immediately we go to site* suggest that they (i.e., the social entrepreneurs) could have been a bit more hands-on in dealing with the interns/graduates. These comments somewhat confirm the views of Rae (2007) and Gracia (2010) that internships, part-time work and in-service training are significant opportunities for preparing graduates for the world of work and therefore

those who provide these opportunities must show compassion and interest in the interns' future. An interesting corollary to this is that more resources should be committed to work experience, internships and placements, with the specific goal of sustainably effecting graduate employability improvements (Kinash et al., 2014). In fact, The Gallup Report (2010) suggests that one of the ways to enrich interns is for providers of internships and workplace learning to collaborate with education providers so as to understand how they can assist in molding the intern.

CONCLUSION

It is noteworthy that the absolutely most sought after aptitudes in the work environment, according to the findings, are analytical and critical thinking; commitment; communication skills; willingness to learn; problem-solving, and flexibility. While there are various attributes associated with employability, there is a wide understanding of the qualities, attributes, abilities and information that constitute employability as a whole, specifically for graduates who are expected to have specialised and discipline-specific capabilities because of their qualifications, yet employers additionally require graduates to show a more extensive scope of abilities and characteristics. Nonetheless, we note quite significantly that social entrepreneurs are unable to sufficiently assist with graduate employability without the involvement of education providers and the interns/graduates themselves. Social entrepreneurs need to know, in collaboration with education providers, the kinds of things they need to offer to the interns, while the interns themselves must show willingness and display genuine interest in learning from the social entrepreneurs.

Social entrepreneurship research is growing along with the never-ending list of socioeconomic challenges. Using the mixed method, this study was able to (1) distil a number of skills which social enterprises consider crucial for their operations, and (2) reveal the lived experiences of social entrepreneurs in dealing with interns/graduates. From a public policy position, what this means is that key stakeholders including government and

higher education institutions can start tailoring their policies and programmes accordingly especially against the backdrop of the current state of the South African economy of whose unemployment figures continue to rise. If this is not addressed urgently, the country will continue to experience serious socioeconomic challenges. Given that education is considered as a way out of poverty, it is vital to ensure that graduates are armed with employability skills so as to reduce the cycle of poverty. As a result of unemployment, societal ills are also on the rise which results in continued dependence on government's social grants.

Our use of descriptive statistics should not in any way devalue the practical significance and innovative value of this study. This is because as both literature and our findings have shown, the role of social entrepreneurs in improving employability opportunities is pivotal to the growth of any developing economy and therefore needs more research. To this end, we suggest a more extensive study between or possibly among different sectors in South Africa using a significantly refined mixed methods strategy which may offer better understanding, in this regard. This suggestion also comes on the heels of Archer and Davison's (2008) suggestion that different sectors demand different skills and abilities from graduates. Consequently, a clear understanding of the needs of different sectors can help to shape the curricula of higher education institutions to meet industry expectations. Another important suggestion is to undertake a similar study that will involve interns/graduates who have worked with social entrepreneurs. The benefit of this will be to find out whether working with social entrepreneurs constitutes a valuable experience for them or not. This could help in not only determining the necessity of social entrepreneurs in improving graduate employability but, also reveal the interns or graduates' expectations while on the programme. After all, social entrepreneurs are described as those who utilise a set of entrepreneurial skills to change the lives of the less privileged and marginalised communities by offering them value-targeted programmes. Drawing from Jonker, Saayman and De Klerk (2009), a developing economy such as South Africa will benefit immensely from social entrepreneurs because government alone is unable to cater for the diverse needs of its citizens.

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