

The NCV qualification, Internships and work readiness. The case of a TVET college in the  
Western Cape.

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UNIVERSITY *of the*  
WESTERN CAPE

A research paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the Masters in Education (Adult Learning and Global Change)

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November 2020

Word Count: 24 2010

Keywords

Human Capital Theory

National Certificate Vocational (NCV) Soft Skills

Work-Readiness Internships

Work-based training Communication Life Orientation Dual Labour Market Employability

Tripartite

TVET Colleges Learning Theory Model Teamwork

Critical thinking Problem solving Communication NEET



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## Abstract

The study investigates a Western Cape Technical Vocational and Education and Training (TVET) college internship programmes and how the curriculum prepare students for the workplace. The research utilizes and applies the Human Capital Theory (HCT) to student employability and college internships to generate new theoretical insights into the possibilities and limitations of an internship in preparing college students for the workplace.

The study is motivated by observations of students in the workplaces who had completed the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) course with regard to hospitality and office administration who were participating in its associated internships. The research question underlines the relationship between the NCV qualification, HCT and internships.

The research methodology takes the form of a qualitative and quantitative approach using a survey questionnaire to gather information. Questions use the deductive method to deduce theoretical perspectives through applying existing theory to the answers. The empirical phenomographic approach was utilized to gain new knowledge.



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## Acknowledgements

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor Professor Zelda Groener, whose expertise, understanding and patience added considerably to my graduate experience.

Special thanks go to my parents who, from a young age, instilled a culture of learning and always encouraged me to simply do my best. A special thanks to my family, who has supported me throughout all my studies. To all the people who helped type, edit and proofread my thesis, a special thanks to all of you. Your assistance was invaluable to me and it is much appreciated. A special thanks to my colleague, Karen Jeyes for her attention to detail and assistance with the setting out of the thesis.

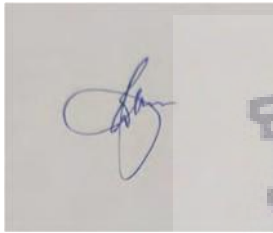
Last but not least, to our heavenly Father who by His Grace carries me through and has made this all possible.



## Declaration

I declare that the research paper on NCV programmes, internship and work readiness pertaining to the case of a TVET College in the Western Cape is my own work and has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university. The services of a professional writing coach and editor were employed for the final submission of the paper.

I am submitting this paper in fulfilment of the requirements for the Masters in Adult Education and Global Change at the University of the Western Cape. All the sources I have used or quoted from have been carefully and correctly academically indicated, acknowledged and completely referenced.



Antonio John Alistair Mitcham November 2020



## Acronyms

BBBEE: Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment BC: British Council  
CSD: City & Guilds Centre for Skills Development DHET: Department of Higher Education and Training DoE: Department of Education  
DoL: Department of Labour  
EU: European Union  
FETA: Further Education and Training Act GAP: Graduate Asset Programme  
GDP: Gross Domestic Product  
HCT: Human Capital Theory  
HRDC: Human Resource Development Council HSRC: Human Sciences Research Council  
IMF: International Monetary Fund  
JIPSA: Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition LWE: Lecturer Workshop Experience  
MDGs: Millennium Development Goals NCV: National Certificate Vocational  
NEET: Not in Employment Education or Training NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation  
NGP: National Growth Plan NI: National Initiative  
NQF: National Qualifications Framework NSA: National Skills Act  
NSC: National Senior Certificate  
NSDS: National Skills Development Strategy NSF: National Skills Fund  
OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development  
SAGDA: South African Graduate Development Association  
SAIVCET: South African Institute for Vocational and Continuing Education and Training  
SAQA: South African Qualifications Authority  
SDA: Skills Development Act  
SDLA: Skills Development Levies Act  
SETA: Sector Education and Training Authority  
SSACI: Swiss South African Co-operation Initiative SSP: Sector Skills Plan  
TVET: Technical and Vocational Education and Training  
UTC: University Technical Colleges  
WB: World Bank  
WBE: Workplace-based Experience WRP: Work Readiness Programme



## 1. Introduction

Whilst being employed as an educator at a Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), in the Western Cape, I observed students who were registered for the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) experiencing difficulty in securing employment and during their internships, as well as in successfully completing their final year.

According to the DHET (2014, p. 37),

“... the average national completion rate for NC(V) Level 2 to 4 was 31.7% for Level 2, 30.4%, for Level 3, and 34.4% for Level 4 indicating that Level 4 students performed slightly better than those on Levels 2 and 3.”

These challenges seemed to be exacerbated by a lack of skills among students during their internships.

The above statistics do not include private colleges. Only public colleges were taken into account. When both private and public colleges are taken into account, there is a higher failure rate (including non-completion rate). The high NCV graduate out-of-employment rate prompted an investigation and interrogation of the root causes of the above-mentioned issues, to determine if internships are really fit for purpose, in that they lead to employability.

Despite South Africa's transition to democracy in 1994 and a progressive constitution, severe inequalities still exist within the workplace, corporate sector and the education system. This is entrenched by depressing socio-economic conditions such as unemployment, abject poverty and the educational inequalities.

A journalist for the Cape Times (Vallette, 2016)) wrote on the anniversary of the June 16 student protests that,

“Apartheid's legacy in education lives on, and the poor are still getting a poorer education, according to education expert Graeme Bloch. In 1953, finances for black and white schools were separated, and black children were given significantly less than white children. In 1975/76 the state spent R644 annually on each white pupil, R189 per Indian pupil, R139 on coloured pupil, and only R42 on an African pupil.”

The above is an indication of how the Apartheid government favoured one group over the other. This means that post-1994, for many, little had changed. The majority of black people within South Africa were given minimum resources and infrastructure when it came to education.

Black people were excluded from the mainstream economy of the country and from 1960 till

the late 1980's many blacks were used for manual labour for employment, largely in the mines on the West and East Rand in Gauteng. There was a demand for manual labour and the government needed to sustain the workforce in order to service different industries within the South African economy.

It is alarming to see that the unemployment rate is at an all-time high among the youth of South Africa, creating what many perceive to be “a ticking time-bomb” according to the Mail and Guardian, (September, 2010). These sentiments were echoed by Stephanie Moya in her blog Trading Economics:

“South Africa’s unemployment rate to date stands at 29% in the second quarter of 2019, an increase from 27.6% in the previous quarter. It is the highest it has been since the first quarter of 2003.”

According to Moya (2019), the number of unemployed in South Africa rose from 455 000 to 6.65 million, while employment rose by only 21 000 to 16.31 million mainly due to the fact that graduates don't qualify due lack of workplaces as well as a lack of workplace skills. This is evident during engagement with present and past students who qualified in hospitality, engineering and tourism.

These statistics paint a dire picture of a country where almost a quarter of its workforce is unemployed and nearly half of all youth, whether graduates or unskilled workers, are also unemployed. Drastic action needs to be taken to avoid a disaster.

According to the Mail and Guardian, (November, 2012) David Fine, a director of McKinsey South Africa and co-author of Africa at Work: Job Creation and Inclusive Growth, a report based on interviews with 1 373 African business leaders, “Job creation requires that governments identify one or more labour-intensive subsectors in which the country has a global competitive advantage and enjoys strong domestic demand, and provide access to finance and suitable infrastructure and skills for those subsectors.”

In my opinion, government and industries across all spheres should be tasked to create job opportunities in conjunction with TVET colleges. Entrepreneurial skills which students lack are also an essential part of increasing employment – both for graduates, and for the unemployed with the required skills. I believe that small, medium and large companies, the public sector, and other government departments should all be compelled by law to offer internships and apprenticeships to TVET college students in order to qualify them as artisans and to enable them to gain valuable workplace experience.

Students who do not qualify and do not complete their final internship add to the high youth unemployment rate of the country.

The NCV qualification, introduced in January 2007 to counter high unemployment and cater to the needs of young people drawn to artisanal as well as hospitality, office management, as well as Information Technology careers.

However, according to the DHET's (2014), Annual Statistics on Post School Education and Training in South Africa:

“Almost 128 000 students registered for Report 190/1 (N3 and N6) and NCV Level 4 examinations in public TVET colleges in 2014 of which 121 000 wrote examinations and of those who wrote, only 55 431 completed a qualification at public TVET colleges.” (DHET, 2014, p. 36)

The NCV pass rate has been consistently low, and the lack of opportunities for graduates has been a persistent problem despite the government's high hopes for the programmes (Buthelezi, 2015).

Meanwhile, industries have raised concerns about the skills shortages of graduates and over time expressed cynicism at course and testing frameworks at TVET colleges, while government has conceded that lecturers are often poorly qualified (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2015). These weaknesses, in turn, cause industries to be slow to offer internship opportunities, and the result is a downward spiral, where students are set up for failure.

Prior to 1994, apprenticeship programmes, which were once closely linked to industries and required students to complete practical training in the workplace. When apprenticeships were phased out, a distance opened between industry and colleges. This has posed several problems for those seeking to improve the NCV programmes, not least of all that the current data claiming employability of TVET college graduates is highly unreliable (Kraak, Paterson, & Boka, 2010).

It is in this context that this research paper seeks to gain clarity on the effectiveness of college internships in increasing the employability of TVET graduates.

## **2. Rationale**

As the City Press newspaper (Anon, 2012) has stated:

“According to independent educational analyst Dr Andre Kraak, FET colleges are “no longer Cinderella institutions, partnership with industry has been a mess”. He said colleges were once

closely partnered with industry under the old apprenticeship system, which required that students conduct their practical training in the workplace. But when this system was phased out after apartheid, these relationships declined and have been difficult to replace. A recent study by the Human Sciences Research Council reveals that only 18 of South Africa's 50 public FET colleges keep data on where their graduates end up. 'This lack of key data renders claims of employability of FET graduates highly unreliable,' the report notes." (Anon, 2012, para 7-11) <sup>1</sup>

However, more recently, Nkosi (2020) has reported for The Star newspaper, that:

"After many years of calling on private employers to extend employment opportunities to technical and vocation education and training (TVET) college graduates, the higher education department has led by example. Its graduate internship programme has invited TVET graduates to apply for nearly 300 internship posts. The invitation to TVET graduates holding the N6 certificate was ground- breaking as they were rarely provided the internship opportunities in both the public and private sectors." (Nkosi, 2020, para 1-5)

From this it appears that the TVET NCV programmes are somewhat of a flagship for the government, however, not all colleges have kept records of graduate internships and as such this could limit the analysis and applicability of this paper. Upon enquiring from colleges if records are kept of graduates and their employment, I can concur that not all colleges keep accurate records of their graduates after graduating and finding employment.

Structures from the Colleges and the DHET, as well as relevant industries should have data available of graduates who have successfully completed their internships and are qualified as well as employed, together with those students that for some reason or the other did not graduate or are not working.

It is within this environment that this study seeks to contribute recommendations, after seeking to highlight the degree of effectiveness of one particular TVET college in preparing students to qualify and complete their internships, and thereafter gain work. It is hoped this will contribute to a better understanding of what needs to be improved.

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<sup>1</sup> FET colleges was the old name given and changed to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). FET colleges mainly concentrated on the vocational and occupational aspects including career orientated training. TVET colleges prepare students for the job market with skills and practical learning and they can qualify for the University of Technology after the completion of the NCV qualification whereas FET students do not qualify. Careersportal (14 February 2020).

### **3. Research Aim**

This study seeks to highlight the degree of effectiveness of one particular TVET college in the Western Cape and if an internship enable students to develop skills for the workplace.

The purpose of the research is to establish if internships can prepare students for the workplace, and if they have the required skills to perform their respective jobs within the workplace.

### **4. Research Problem**

The lack of available data poses difficulties for this research. The lack of informed opinions in this subject area proves that much more research on the topic of internships and work readiness needs to be done, to get a holistic answer to the research question.

Too many TVET, NCV and Nated graduates are still unemployed. Companies and business organisations are also prejudiced against the NCV qualifications and are skeptical about employing students with NCV qualifications. It is regarded as sub-standard, compared to the National Certificate (Nated qualification).

#### **4.1 Research Question**

This paper aims to answer the question: How, if at all, does an internship enable TVET college students to develop skills for employability?

This question is further explored by breaking down the subject into sub questions, including:

What are the successes and limitations of college internship programmes in preparing students for work?

What are the skills needed to gain suitable employment?

#### **4.2 Anticipated Findings**

The responses gathered from the research cohort of 20 TVET students may go some way towards giving a reflection of the problems TVET graduates are experiencing in securing internships and employment within their respective qualifications, but it will not be entirely representative.

This is due in large part to the current South African context, which blurs the picture considerably. Structures that were put in place by government like the National Skills Development Sector (NSDS I, II and III) and the Sector Education and Training Authority (Seta's) were tasked to facilitate internships/apprenticeships between government, TVET colleges and the private sector across all industries.

In citing the department of Labour (2005) Groener (2014) asserts that:

“The programmes created by government (NSDS1-111 and Seta's) in 2001 *inter alia*, learnerships, learning programmes and skills programmes. Initial targets of 125 000 learners were to be placed into learning programmes between 2001 to 2010. The programme was targeted at both unemployed and employed learners. By the end of March 2005, 134 223 learnership agreements had been entered into. Of this 45813 were employed workers and 88410 were employed learners.” (Groener, 2014, p. 49).

Due to the current high rate of unemployment for graduates much more can be done to alleviate graduate unemployment which will lower the national unemployment rate. There is room for improvement to lower the unemployment rate across the board if programmes are implemented to train the unemployed and create job opportunities.

Graduates who could do their internships never qualified, since completing the 18-month internship is required to graduate. The lack of internship opportunities is expected to be one of the main reasons why NCV graduates are unemployed. This factor impacts employment numbers beyond the scope of the perimeters drawn by the research question.

## **5. Limitations**

Time constraints due to rescheduling of examination timetable and lack of willingness amongst students to participate without remuneration. There were challenges with the online questionnaire as some students did not have access to a laptop and the internet. To address this challenge, I had to ensure the participation of the participants by providing them a questionnaire. Only 20 participants participated in this study due to limited time available (time factor) As such, the small numbers of participants provide a constraint when identifying trends.



Ideally, this research should be done in greater depth over a longer period of time to achieve a deeper theoretical insight. In addition, the college environment itself restricts the freedom of participants' responses.

## **5.1 Overview**

Section 2 will discuss the conceptual framework underpinning this research, the research design and methodology.

In Section 3, the research site, approach, and method will be presented. Thereafter, the research instrument, research participants and their selection will be discussed, followed by the method of data capturing and data analysis. Finally, the ethical considerations of the study will be presented.

Section 4 consists of the presentation of all the collected data analysed for the study.

Section 5 ends the paper with a summary and presents the findings and a list of recommendations.

Finally, a conclusion is drawn.

## **6. Conceptual Framework**

The National Certificate Vocational (NCV), the Human Capital Theory (HCT), and the concepts of “workplace learning” and “employability” form the conceptual framework of this paper.

This study will investigate the existing relevant literature relating to the formation of, and reasons for, the implementation of the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) programme. Literature related to the Human Capital Theory (HCT), employability, internships, and the work readiness of Technical Vocational (TVET) college students/graduates in South Africa, is also evaluated.

### **6.1 The National Certificate Vocational (NCV) programmes**

The DHET 2013 White Paper from the Department of Higher Education and Training outlines the vision of Technical, Vocational Education and Training Colleges (TVET) as aiming to

upskill young school leavers in both knowledge and attitude, so they are employable (Rasool & Mahembe, 2014).

In 2007, according to Statistics South Africa (2019), the unemployment rate in South Africa was 25.5%. By February 2019, it had increased to 29.1%. Youth employment was 53.18% for South Africans between the ages of 14 and 24 years old.

The introduction of the NCV programmes was meant to combat youth unemployment through encouraging skills development through TVET colleges, while meeting the challenges raised by companies who were reluctant to hire graduates or individuals with no work experience, or who was not workplace ready. The NCV aimed to provide general post school vocational qualifications to many people, and thereafter it was envisioned that graduates would develop their skills in the workplace. (Gewe, 2010).

However, although the NCV was introduced to solve problems of poor quality associated with South Africa's vocational training system that existed at the time, which lacked relevance to the economy, and was associated with graduates deficient in key skills, it did not deliver on these expectations (Van der Bijl & Lawrence, 2019).

## **6.2 Human Capital Theory**

Human Capital Theory (HCT) was formulated by Theodore Schultz. Schultz viewed education as a form of investment in human capital. This was based on his theory stating that people obtain useful skills and knowledge as they live in a modern knowledge economy society and, that this knowledge and skill base is a form of capital. As such, it should be seen as a product of deliberate investment (Schultz, 1960).

Early research (Kiker, 1966) has traced the initial idea behind HCT to have appeared in the early 19th century when William Farr proposed that a person's net future earnings –after expenses – constituted wealth and so it should be considered taxable in the same way as property. This led to a direct link between employability and economy, and it was only up to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century economists Theodore Schultz (1960) and Gary Becker (1964) to then develop a theory of human capital.

Schultz (1960) believed that human capital was a particular form of capital, and as a result posited that countries should “treat education as an investment in man, and to treat its



consequence as a form of capital”. He stated that although “it cannot be bought or sold, since it has become an integral part of a person ... it is a form of capital if it renders a productive service of value to the economy” (Schultz, T, 1960, p. 571).

He also maintains that HCT is reinforced by the fact that people invest in themselves, and that they do so in large amounts, coining the term self-capitalization, and defining it as the personal investment of an individual driven by socio-economic factors (Schultz, 1961). Driven by the HCT, economists have developed and attempted to quantify the concept of human capital and apply it to education, whether it be academic studies or on-the-job training (Kiker, 1966).

More recently, Woodall has noted that “education is now universally recognized as a form of investment in human capital that yields enormous economic benefits and contributes to a country’s future wealth by increasing the productivity of its people” (Woodall, 2004, p. 23).

Moreover, HCT has impacted education policy the world over and opens three large policy domains. These include policies related to a country’s stock of skills as being related to the potential for economic growth; policies related to the distribution of human capital since it is a key determinant of income inequality; the fact that a person’s human capital can be largely determined by their background as it determines social mobility and thus can perpetuate notions of disadvantage; and the effectiveness of an education system (Burgess, 2016).

The strategy utilized to create/measure human capital can be categorized into two types. The primary is to use humans as a work force, through a classical financial viewpoint. This is based on the presumption that the venture of physical capital may be harnessed with the same adequacy as human capital through instruction (Little, 2000). However, later research concluded that HCT is both an economic concept and a technique used to access a range of human interests in order to design a corresponding framework. This connects HCT to production, innovation and creativity (Tan, 2014).

### **6.2.1 Criticism of HCT**

The OECD regularly recommends to countries to reform their education and training systems. Economists often refer to this as improving of “human capital”. (Botev and Egert, Smidova and Turner, 2019).

According to Duale, Ali Muse of Somalia who was cited in the report of Unesco-Unevoc (2017, p. 6) he is of the opinion that in Somalia “we are facing huge financial problems because of our weak

and unsettled government which cannot reach all the regions, except the capital. The financing agents are very limited and the number of youngsters who are eager to get such training are increasing day by day. [...] I recommend that: 1) financing strategies should be based on equity and equality approaches; 2) more resources are needed for needy countries to improve the number of skilled persons.”

This is what Nigeria is experiencing in regards to TVET funding from the World Bank / Unesco. Akpokiniovo Duke Ejaita of Nigeria who was cited in the Unesco report (2017, p. 6) as saying “there is little or no funding in Nigeria because the attention of priorities are not placed on skills development. Right now funding of TVET remains a mirage due to the economic recession that has engulfed the country.”

Nigeria also uses HCT with regards to their TVET colleges like South Africa. As a result Nigeria is struggling to come to terms in dealing with HCT and the fact that they cannot or did not accommodate all spheres of industry when dealing with HCT (bursaries to students to complete internships which accommodate scarce skills required by industry). South Africa in comparison will be reaping the benefits of investment in education, through providing bursaries to students who will be doing scarce skills and trades needed to improve the requirements of the economy. Nigeria on the other hand imports labour from Malaysia to work on the oil rigs whereas South Africa have a specific trade available for homegrown offshore workers.

In conclusion, South Africa on the other hand does receive funding from the World Bank for TVET colleges and can make money available for students to study. The South African government in conjunction with industry should prioritise what are scarce skills that are needed to train the youth for industry. South Africa will reap the benefit of human capital by granting students bursaries to complete their TVET studies.

Another criticism of HCT is that the assumption it makes concerning productivity is that education causes higher productivity, and this correlates directly with raised pay levels. However, the theory, in the context of education, has virtually no ability to distinguish this correlation. At first glance, HCT might seem to be a valuable way of measuring economic performance in relation to breadth and quality of education, however there are many other indicators applicable to economic expansion. Any assertion that economic growth arises from

improved and increased education needs to include both a manufacturing theory, as well as societal reproduction (Bowles & Gintis, 1975). Other research (Blaug, 1987) has stated that, in evaluating investment in education, what must be illustrated is not simply growth, but what type of education contributes more to growth, especially in areas of health, housing and infrastructure such as roads and transport. As such, HCT has been termed a best-case scenario equivocal.

Also, by focusing purely on the formal educational sector, HCT also does not take into account more broad-based ongoing human resource development, which is a major contributor to economic growth (Briggs, 1987). It also sets up a culture of blame, where lack of education is blamed for not supplying the skills business needs, and the blame for unemployment in general, is put at solely at the door of the educational sector (Klees, 2016).

Despite these criticisms of HCT, a major positive is that the theory at its basic assumptions enables policymakers and researchers to verify the connection between schooling and training as inputs and economics, and in-depth studies inside the HCT framework endorse the basic notion that high standards of schooling are positively associated with male and female wages, GDP increases, greater earnings through participation in the workforce and decreases in crime. This evaluation allows policymakers a lens for evaluating public investments in programmes that inspires better public schooling. This framework allows policymakers to understand what types of training and education are required to reach merited results, such as support of and participation in the economy (Netcoh, 2016)

### **6.2.3 The application of HCT to education in South Africa**

The South African government applied HCT by offering students of TVET colleges' bursaries to complete their studies. Government's rate of return on this investment in human capital is meant to be realised by graduates, who will work across industries, thereby boosting the country's economic growth and GDP, while lowering the unemployment rate.

This echoes Schultz's propositions which state that Western investment in human capital has been happening at a much faster rate than investment in non-human capital, and that its manifestation may well be the most distinctive feature of our present economic system. This also explains the exponential increases in national output in countries that shaped policies that met the principles of HCT (Schultz, 1960).

Despite the advancement of educational ideas, HCT remains a popular tool for future-proofing governmental education planning. The World Bank has been a prominent proponent of human capital on education and has believed in the rates of return on its investment, among the numerous and varied proponents of HCT. (World Bank, October 2017).

HCT's best attribute is that it helps legislators and scholars confirm the connection between education and mentoring as indicators of socioeconomic outcomes. Extensive research throughout the HCT system implies that better academic levels are associated with higher individual income, GDP growth, reduced crime and even better health outcomes. The research presents legislators with a mechanism for evaluating the relative value of public investment in services that support public vocational training, and to define the extent and characteristics of education and instruction in a manner that supports national economic goals.

The application of HCT has even more appeal in the context of a country such as South Africa, which is struggling to eradicate historical inequalities. Recent research posits that HCT has been applied to further the notion that formal education is central in determining the marginal productivity of labour, earnings and life, rather than socio-economic background. This supports research that has concluded that the formation of knowledge and intellectuality as it is considered in economic terms, is a defining factor in economic capital, that higher education is a necessary precursor for employment and a successful life, and that primary education more than secondary education determines graduates' outcomes over and above social background (Marginson, 2017).

If we accept the above, HCT may also provide a lens through which to examine the link between education, economic process and social well-being, since it posits that state expenditure on two key aspects of human well-being, namely education and health, are capital investments that may yield economic and social returns for individuals, communities and countries.

Early applications highlighted the link between the amount of education and economic and social returns. However, recent developments within the literature state that the standard of education is an essential consideration in human capital formation. This is underlined by the fact that higher aggregated levels of education in a country support faster national economic growth, since growth requires educated citizens. This is especially the case in the modern world, in a technological age with high demands for innovation, invention and maintenance. As such the current global economy demands higher levels of intellectuality, and the ability to apply

theoretical knowledge in a creative and innovative way (Goldin & Katz, 2008).

This has been greeted with a further shift in South African education policy towards linking the quality of education with economic growth. A strong emphasis on the efficiency of the education system is crucial for South Africa, which has a relatively high spend on education, but experiences poor returns on its measurable outcomes.

Human capital theorists suggest a market-orientated solution to raising the standard of educational provision, which equates often to students taking out high interest loans to access quality education based on their perception of it being a long term investment and thus in their economic best interest. However, what this has resulted in is a short-term “solution” with many students attending colleges, who are then forced into any employment to pay back debt. Hence, the number of students at college is not a real indication of government success.

For the purposes of this research, HCT is a key part of the conceptual framework. Many students in the vocational education sector require government bursaries to finish their tertiary training, and education providers in turn need graduates to support their wide range offerings. This means turning out the required number of alumni consistently, in a manner that demonstrates a good rate of return for government investment. In this, one sees HCT at work.

## **7. HCT and TVET in South Africa**

It can be argued that HCT was in existence for a long time before it was implemented in the early 1800s. This approach is now being applied in vocational colleges worldwide, with the sole purpose of producing artisans needed by different industries across the globe. A major financial contributor providing financial backing to this endeavour is the World Bank. The World Bank in turn, earns interest from countries on the monies lent to them, while countries obtain artisans to service their industries, which in turn spurs economic growth. As a developing country South Africa is one of the developmental states that is applying the World Bank’s neo-liberal system and ideals in order to gain funding for education.

This is underlined by the fact that TVET (Technical Vocational Education and Training) colleges in South Africa were established in 2007, replacing the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system, to align it with an international approach that would bring the national education system up to date with international trends of post-school systems in Europe.

The Human Resources Development Council of South Africa (HRDCSA) criticized the South African FET which became the TVET colleges which was not on par with the European TVET education system. The OECD asserts that the theoretical contestation on the role of TVET is based on neo-liberal assumptions embedded with HCT, that training is linked to productivity which in turn, leads to economic growth. The HRDCSA have suggested that rather than HCT, South Africa should rather employ the human development theory, since it is more applicable here, and would mean that TVETs should be concerned more about sustainable development of individuals and their long-term livelihood, rather than being mere workers in an economy. As such, South Africa should take its cue from the Far East regarding TVET Colleges (notably South Korea and Singapore) as well as Germany and the UK, and create a TVET model that considers employability more broadly in terms of socio-economic development and student and community expectations, rather than simply honing in on national economic growth (Rasool & Mahembe, 2014).

This is being done to some degree and in theory. TVET colleges are essentially created to promote education and training to youth as well as well as unemployed adults giving different generations an opportunity to access tertiary education, when otherwise they would not have been able to. By accessing tertiary education and acquiring skills for employability, graduates thereby uplift themselves, and add to the GDP, in the process lowering the unemployment rate of the country, as well as contributing to nation building and economic growth.

However, the fact remains that investing in education, including TVET in South Africa, continues within the framework of HCT, as attested in the World Bank and DFID literature, since it remains based on the assumption that a variety of skills within a citizenry can contribute to national economic growth (Tikly, 2013). As referenced earlier, HCT assumes the essential baseline concept in both instruction and administration of TVET colleges in South Africa. Without financial support and the implementation of the neo-liberal beliefs of the World Bank, there will be no rates of profit for the administration, no interest in aptitudes advancement, and no resultant economic development of the nation. HCT is therefore the established theory on which free enterprise and neo-progressivism are based. In this, there is a price associated with an individual and what they can offer industry, since it is the deciding element of their earnings and their ability to participate in the economy of South Africa.

As such, TVET institutions ought to be at the core of all skilled work training, coupling talent with the skills and needs of business and industry. The viability and effectiveness of this



depends largely on whether the education is of good quality or not. The TVET curriculum must be in line with industry needs, whereby certain scarce and important skills are taught, ensuring students are employable after the completion of their studies. This will allow government to get a return on their investment in bursaries, and all working graduates can improve their lives.

## **8. Time for a new application of HCT in the TVET sector**

With shifts taking place in corporate, secondary and post-school basic levels of education, idle youth are a growing proportion of the unemployed population. Given this situation, and despite the theories and bold aims behind TVET, economists at the World Bank have queried the cost effectiveness of South Africa's vocational education system, based largely on the low rate of return on investment in TVET colleges. Tikly (2013), citing Mclean, reveals:

Within the South African context, according to the Millennium Development Goals, (Tikly, 2013, p. 3)

“It was argued that investment in basic education provided a much higher rate of return than did investment in secondary (including vocational) and post-basic education, and this shift in emphasis provided an economic rationale for emphasizing primary education in the Millennium Development Goals. As a consequence of these criticisms, funding for TVET dried up, with TVET accounting for just eight to nine percent of World Bank spending.”

Further research has advocated that human capital value should be assessed by focusing on students' standardized behaviour throughout their educational careers, since this has been seen to be linked to their economic pathway more profoundly than years of vocational training (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2007). The latest World Bank education strategy argues that growth development and poverty reduction depend on knowledge and skills that people acquire, not the time they sit in a classroom (World Bank, 2011).

The need for a new application of HCT to TVET was underlined at the TVET Forum in Abu Dhabi (UAE) in January 2017. James Calleja, director of Cedefop, which supports European vocational education and training, stressed the need for a new approach that should blend further education with theoretical learning, and blend with the policies of the employer. The fact that vocational education is often not the first choice of potential learners but the last resort,

especially after being unsuccessful in gaining entrance to a university, should be a notion of the past with the advent of Information Technology, which has the potential to increase levels of learning and improve career paths (Cedefop, 2017).

High quality TVET will be costly, and TVET colleges need to have a curriculum that is demanded by industry. This should be coupled by strong emphasis on entrepreneurship throughout school. Post-school, partnerships between the private and public sectors should be explored to ensure that useable infrastructure is provided so that learning can occur. There needs to be an adjunct between the workplace and education; more solid partnerships between places of employment and education and training centres will result in a significantly lower rate of unemployment (Cedefop, 2017). This assertion has relevance for this study, since it relates to apprenticeships, internships and learnerships.

## **9. Employability**

Employability is linked to workplace learning. TVET colleges are tasked to train and prepare students with the required skills to be ready for the job market. This is generally termed “employability”. TVET colleges and industries across the economic spectrum need to formulate employability skills needed by students for the job market, and they need to be revised every two years. (Groener, 2014) By doing the above we can be sure that employability of graduates are generally high.

In my opinion we measure employability with the number of employed graduates in the work place, not forgetting those entrepreneurial skilled graduates who are self-employed. We must also bear in mind the effects of the economic down turn which will have a negative impact on employability.

The levels referred to in the NVC programmes and qualifications which can be linked to employability providing, that these students are taught what is required in the internships so that there will not be a mismatch of what is learnt and what is taught in the workplace. It is evident that the small sample used in this paper is not a true reflection of the college as a whole, as we are using only twenty students from the two different programmes.

Research has revealed that employability is an extremely complex concept, but also vague and context specific. However, graduate employability can be assessed based on the measurement of key transferable soft skills and competencies (Harvey, 2010). Despite remaining a contested



concept, the notion of employability is a key informant of labour market policy in Europe (McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005). Others have defined employability from the view of the individual concerned, stating that it defines the extent to which an individual possesses the skills and the attributes to find and stay in their preferred work – as such it should be a key goal for an individual’s career management, and for organizations to foster among their workforces (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007).

The best starting point for a working definition of employability is the degree to which an individual is capable of attaining and retaining fulfilling work and being able “to move self-sufficiently within the labour market to realise their potential” (Hillage & Pollard, 1998, p.2)

.Under this definition, employability consists of four main elements. The first of these is a person’s employability assets, which consist of their knowledge, skills and attitudes. The second is deployment, which includes their career management skills, including their job search skills. The third element is presentation, which is concerned with their job getting skills such as CV writing, work experience and interview techniques. Lastly, is the ability to manage personal circumstances such as family responsibilities, as well as external factors like the current level of opportunity presented in the job market (Hillage & Pollard, 1998).

This leads to the definition of employability as being a set of skills that are not job specific, but which run horizontally across all industries, as well as having a vertical consistency from entry to senior management levels” (Sherer & Eadie, 1987). Indeed, employability encompasses not only the skills required to gain employment, but also to progress within an enterprise, in order to benefit both oneself, in achieving one’s potential, and to contribute successfully to an organisation or enterprise. As such, employability should be measured constantly through an individual’ career; this underlines the need for business to develop employability among its employees to succeed in a competitive environment (Bailey & Mitchell, 2006).

For the purposes of this research, and from the employer’s point of view, employability tends to refer to “employment readiness”, which is the degree to which a graduate is in possession of the relevant skills, knowledge, attitudes and business understanding that will enable them to make productive contributions to the objectives of corporations soon after the creation of jobs (Mason, Williams, & Cranmer, 2006). Employability is therefore a set of factors, including previous achievements, skills, understanding and personal attributes that combine to indicate whether graduates will get work, and advance in their chosen occupations (Knight & Yorke, 2004).

Some mention should be made of measuring employability. If employability is measured based on whether a graduate has found employment within six months of graduating from college, it provides only a vague and imprecise indication. Questions need to be asked as to whether graduates use the knowledge and skills they gained in their studies, which in turn, opens another discussion on what graduate-level work requires and entails. Moreover, estimates of employability based on the first destination do not account for the fact that some graduates take a job to alleviate financial pressures, especially since they may have incurred student debt (those who are not eligible for government loans). This provides a strong reason why there is often a skills mismatch with graduate job placement. This means the notion of employability is more critical than job placement when measuring the success of college programmes.

#### **10. Employability in the college sector: A comparative study of England and South Africa.**

The following highlights the problems that South Africa and the UK experience with regards to employability of graduates in the workplace. It can be said that they need to re-look and restructure the apprenticeship and reintroduce it as internships within the South African context. This differs to the British FET/TVET college system which appears to be more workable when students do internships.

The changing nature of employability is one of the manifestations of the rapid changes associated with globalisation. The decline of industrial production and the rise of a service and knowledge-based economy means that graduates need to be prepared in new and different ways for work. In addition, the dominance of neo-liberalism has made even those loyal to the 'left' abandon the concept of a welfare state and turn to education and employment to end poverty and social exclusion. Lastly, the link between lifelong learning and the notion of boundary-less careers portrays the new world of work as one of exciting opportunities for all those who embrace it. All of this, however, still depends on a graduate's ability to secure a stable and satisfactory first job, maintain employment, and as he or she progresses, move between roles, even secure new employment and in this way secure stable and fulfilling work in the long term. As such, employability is a more important determinant of capital return than simply having a job (Hillage & Pollard, 1998).

For TVET colleges within the South African context the challenge in developing employability in students has been especially tough, as increasing demands of employability in graduates has

been met with the demise of apprenticeships and a related collapse of their old business partners.

The above trend has been globally evident. This has resulted in high youth unemployment around the world; in the UK, 20% for under 25s during 2005 to 2009 compared with 8% amongst the general population, while in the same period, South African youth unemployment (for ages 15 to 34) was also typically double that of the general population, oscillating at around 50% of youth and 25% in general (Altman, 2008).

Globally, at FET level, there is a move away from the old views of vocational education curricula as featuring a combination of trade theory and practical skills development towards one that should hone in on core skills and attitude, job-seeking skills and a repackaged set of vocational skills and occupational knowledge. A comparative study of colleges in the UK and South Africa concludes that the failure of vocational education in both countries is due to a lack of relevant skills developed, and providers and their staff being distant from current industrial realities (McGrath, et al., 2010).

McGrath et.al (2010) have also noted there is a nostalgia among certain South African employers for the NATED artisan qualifications that were phased out, only to be reintroduced after the NCV programmes was launched. They said that the skills developed in the NATED qualifications remained recognized by industry, perhaps because they tend to trust familiar qualifications. Other employers expressed support for the NCV programmes, saying it did facilitate readiness for further learning, thus increasing longer-term employability. Other employers complained that NCV graduates need two years of work experience after graduating, before being able to progress to basic first level trade tests.

Furthermore, the study evidences a wide reluctance amongst employers to take in young students (15-17 years old) for placements. The report recommended that the finishing grade for school leavers be Grade 10, or aged 16, for all those students who want to study at TVET colleges doing an NCV course and that admission requirements should be changed by the DHET. It also recommended that Grade 10 should be the lowest compulsory grade that learners are allowed to leave high school in order to go to college or to seek work. By enacting this into law, South Africa would also reduce illiteracy, and decrease the number of school leavers prior to Grade 10 (McGrath, et al., 2010).

In conclusion, both the South African and British FET/TVET college systems are in dire need

of upgrading in order to make the graduates more marketable and skilled to meet global demands in the respective workplaces.

### **10.1 Employability and work-integrated learning (WIL)**

The core function of the TVET college work placement office is to place successful graduates in the industry upon exit level, via the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) internships, also known as work-integrated learning. A key question for educators in TVET colleges is whether South African graduates are capable of performing job-related tasks and assuming work responsibility at this stage of their studies. Additional research (Griesel & Parker, 2009) on South African graduates from the perspective of employers, again reveals a mismatch between employer expectation and graduate readiness, despite the fact that many tertiary institutions are focused on producing graduates fully prepared for the workplace.

Research consistently shows that most graduates lack work experience, and training is not sufficient to meet the requirements and expectations of organizations. In the context of employability, then, this notion should be taken to indicate the capacity of a graduate to function in a job, and be complete distinctive from his or her ability to acquire a job (Yorke, 2006). Other definitions of employability within the framework of today's knowledge-driven economy imply a degree of flexibility and transferability of skills since employability today relates to an ability to maintain different kinds of employment (Brown, Hesketh, & Williams, 2003). This ensures a degree of job security that distinguishes being simply "employed" from being employable (Hawkins, 1999).

This means that NCV training at TVET colleges, work-integrated learning (WIL), comprised of internships and employability cannot be separated. Students need training and internships that prepare them for the world of work. For employers, it is beneficial to have a skilled student working on a temporary basis, as it saves money and can assist with future recruitment. This combined effect is the rate of return on investment by government for their investment in the creation of employees for the country's economic growth.

## **11. Internships**

An internship is the bridge between the student's career path and on-the-job training. This

training forms part of the student's professional development and it is a required part of TVET curricula, being completed within a specific semester of the year. Internships can be on a voluntary basis or part-time (in some instances only travelling allowance is given). Internships provide valuable work experience under the guide of a mentor. While being an intern, students and graduates can achieve their own learning goals, be they short term or long term, while getting a feel for different industries.

Internships provide many benefits. It is noted that interns' communication skills improve drastically when they interact with co-workers in the workplace. Interns also learn more about their field of study or industry of choice. Other benefits that assist graduates to become fully fledged artisans include:

It provides face-to-face, hands-on experience in the workplace, which is invaluable and cannot be obtained in the classroom.

A graduate can familiarize themselves with their field of interest.

College graduates with internship experience stand a better chance of being employed than those without any industry experience. Companies have to provide less training, which in the long run saves them money.

Interns can learn a lot about their strengths and weaknesses from feedback from their supervisors in the workplace. Asking questions and taking risks enable them to utilize their internship to the maximum benefit.

Interns are generally paid. This means they can obtain valuable work experience while at the same time earning.

Internships provide a chance to network with and learn from accomplished mentors, placing an individual further in front of the line for a full-time job after graduating.

Situational internships are useful to test those skills that interns have gained in the classroom.

Internships are used by companies to recruit. Companies might decide to hire interns' right at the end of their internship. Interns who impress their supervisors with favourable work ethics could receive a work offer.

Internships are regarded by many academic researchers as to be so integral as to be a sandwich programmes, which should be done over six months to a year (Beck & Halim, 2008). In North American technical high schools and community colleges, curriculum design centres on internships; they are the training and experience component of the curriculum and are career-

orientated endeavors that are there to make learning real. Internships are based on sound education and philosophical bases, as outlined in table 1 below (Littke, 2004).

**Table 1: *The educational and philosophical foundations for internships***

Pedagogical	Description Domain
Curriculum	Activity - orientated, career-orientated, direct experience, innovative, integrated, practical application, project based, work-based, youth development, service/social action.
Placement	Appropriate, assigned field of interest, personalised, realistic.
Environments	Community, non-classroom, non-traditional, off-campus, out of school, professional, structured.
Instruction	Advising, coaching, counselling, expertise-orientated, guidance, mentoring, on-the-job-training, professional, supervision.
Learning	Active, applied, community-based, cooperative, engaging, experimental, hands-on, independent, individualised, interdisciplinary, real-work service.
Evaluation& Assessment	Authentic, competency-based, exhibitions, performance-based, portfolios.
Outcomes	Experience - applied, hands-on, in-depth, practical work-based skills, basic communications, computer literacy, interpersonal-relations, job-readiness, leadership, organisational, problem-solving, professional, researching, report writing, team working technology, workplace.  Attitudinal and behaviour – autonomy, collegial, cooperation, dependability, independence, initiative, positive, professional, self-confidence, self-motivation, work ethics, work values.

(Merritt, 2008 page 3)

Internships in different disciplines involve projects and activities that are meaningful for



students and that advance their academic programmes. Students occasionally find internships on their own, but these typically involve fewer and lower-quality learning opportunities, although it is important that students participate in the planning of their own education, connecting them more deeply to their chosen career, post school and adult life (Haimson & Ballotti, 2001).

The necessity of securing quality internships is underlined by the unemployment statistics associated with South African TVET colleges. Unemployment of TVET graduates in 2017 was at a third of the total graduate totals (Nkosi, 2017). Huge disparity exists between tertiary graduates: 7% of those from tertiary institutions will be unemployed, while a significantly higher 33% of TVET graduates will find themselves unemployed – a situation that can and does last for up to five years. Applying HCT, the Director General of Higher Education and Training, has reiterated that the former Minister of Higher Education and Training 2009 DHET budget speech warning that the return on the amount invested in bursaries for higher education, in particular, TVET colleges has been poor.

It is important for students to understand the value offered by quality practical vocational training. A situation exists in South Africa whereby students, in particular black students, would rather attend private colleges that offer unrecognized and unaccredited programmes, than study in a publicly funded vocational college. The prevailing assumption is that in earning an ‘academic’ qualification – even if it is unrecognized – one is put in a better position than earning a vocational certificate. But these academic qualifications have no employability value, and the graduates from these institutions often cannot successfully find gainful employment. At the same time, government rates of return at TVET college level are also low, even though the aims of the system may comply with those of HCT.

All in all, graduates are put in a difficult position and have been forced to take matters into their own hands. As the government purports to do very little to place them in internships, or help them find employment, it is not uncommon to see graduates who have been unemployed for up to five years demonstrating at traffic lights with placards advertising their skills and qualifications to prospective future employers. This has generated some effort on the part of government agencies as well as the private sector, to help students find meaningful employment (Nkosi, 2017).

The largest criticism of the TVET system centres on the lack of employability of TVET graduates, which is due to a mismatch in their abilities with the needs of industry. A noteworthy conclusion of this is that business enterprise skills are perhaps another inadequate provision in

TVET College educational programmes and could also be linked with mentored internships. By introducing entrepreneurship training, graduates may create their own employment and employ others. This would drastically improve their employability based on the broader definition of the term.

In response to the important relationship between HCT, employability and internships, the Department of Labour in 2001 embarked on a broad-based effort to develop learnership and skills programmes. An initial target of 125 000 learners were to be placed into learning programmes between 2001 and 2010. The programmes were targeted at both unemployed and employed learners. By the end of March 2005, 134 223 learnership agreements had been secured. Of this, 45 813 were employed workers and 88 410 were unemployed learners (Groener, 2014).

However, more recently, a Democratic Alliance MP, on Higher Education, in a speech delivered on 30th October 2018 in the National Assembly asserted that 60% of TVET colleges remain dysfunctional (Pretorius, 2018), and MPs agreed that our colleges are in serious need of attention. It must be noted that the data of the NCV graduate pass rate takes only NCV Level 4 into account when compiling data and does not count those students who completed one subject from the previous year and did not manage to complete their qualifications.

However, pass rate should not be emphasized over employability in the vocations. The South African Colleges Principal Organisation has also emphasized that pass rates are low because students are not ready when they get to TVET colleges, and are not academically inclined, having already opted out of mainstream schools to learn a trade and prefer to work with their hands. The NCV programmes is very intensive and students struggle with academic subjects like languages and math, which they are still required to pass. This means there is a misalignment due to the strong academic expectations at colleges, and curricula at colleges should be less academic and more practical and hands-on (Pretorius, 2018). Due cognizance should also be given to the fact that many students are having difficulties to make the transition from school to TVET colleges, just as they are struggling in universities. There are environmental and adjustment constraints impact on the performance of the first year, which then influences the subsequent year.

There are also the problems of student aptitude and commitment, and lecturer quality. Again, linking to HCT, because colleges are funded, they are pressurized into taking in large numbers



of students often to create the impression of a return on investment to funders. In this climate, many students are not making an active choice in the courses in which they enroll; they might sign up simply because a bursary is available, or it is their only option – and this affects their level of commitment level (Pretorius, 2018). Lecturer quality and qualifications are also in some cases not up to standard, and as such course delivers may also lack the skills to adequately support students.

All these factors feed into the trend that many students who finish the NCV programmes lack an internship. This contributes to the already high unemployment rate of graduates. Many of these graduates feel abandoned by the government, who did not see them through an internship and into the workplace as promised.

## **12. Summary**

It has been evidenced that HCT as a framework dominates South Africa's approach to education and TVET specifically. It is therefore highly relevant to this research. An understanding of the development of HCT and its application in South Africa has been provided. Some criticisms of HCT were discussed, and some of its positive aspects outlined. HCT posits that education and funding cannot be divorced from each other; this identifies students and graduates in investment terms, and as such, returns are expected. The measure of returns on investment is taken as an indicator of success of education, through the HCT.

The notion of employability was also explored in a broad sense, as well as applied to TVET programmes in South Africa specifically. The notion forms a part of the conceptual framework since it too provides a measure of the success of TVET colleges. Some aspects of employability were discussed, and the challenges of the South African context were shown.

Internships are related to employability, and as such the benefits of internships were explored. It was established that they should be an integral part of TVET college education. Some of the challenges that lead to a lack of internships were outlined. It was shown that lack of internships impact the employability of students, which impacts the perception of state return-on-investment according to the HCT.

## **13. Research Design and Methodology**

This section will outline the location of the research, the research approach and method, as well as the research instrument, and how the participants were chosen. The data capture and collection will be outlined, and finally, some ethical considerations in relation to this study will be discussed.

### **13.1 Research Site**

The research site was a TVET college in the Western Cape.

### **13.2 Research Approach**

The research for this paper follows a deductive approach, to determine whether the NCV programmes and internships specifically prepare students adequately for the workplace – in other words, whether they facilitate graduate employability. The use of a deductive approach allows the use of text data – in this case a survey design using a questionnaire was completed by the respondents. Deductive approach was used as it is more suited to this study based on the small sample as the college population amounts to one thousand six hundred active students in different programmes.

### **13.3 Survey Methodology**

A survey in the form of a questionnaire was distributed online to participants through the campus manager. After getting no response from students since they were busy with their mid-term exams, appointments were arranged with them at the college after their exams. This process was repeated several times. It was preferable that the students complete the questionnaire on campus, since if they did it at home, they might not return the questionnaire. A convenience sample was conducted before administering the questionnaire, which allowed for the improvement and elimination of some questions. A graph will be used to determine certain trends/answers in response to the questions posed within the questionnaire which will then be deductive as well as using the qualitative and quantitative research approach, bearing in mind that the results will be inconclusive due to the small sample size (twenty students) which is not a true reflection of the number of students registered at the college (one thousand six hundred

students). The questionnaire consisted of both open-ended and closed-ended questions (Bryman, 2008) that attempted to answer the research questions:

How does an internship enable TVET college students to develop skills for employability?

What are the successes and limitations of a college internship programme in preparing students for work?

What are the skills needed to gain suitable employment?

#### **13.4 Research Instrument**

A survey questionnaire was used to collect data from participants and to allow for the systematic collection of information from different individuals, using pre-set questions to gather data necessary to answer the research question (Emelda, 2011).

#### **14. Research Participants and Selection**

Since it is against college policy to share the contact details of students, the survey had to be administered through the campus manager, as well as the placement officer. Twenty NCV students completed the questionnaires. There were logistical problems in getting students to complete the questionnaires, which prevented most of the students from completing it online.

The student population of NCV and NATED students according to the Manager amounts to one thousand six hundred students that are registered in different programmes at the college.

The following criteria were used in selecting participants:

Consideration was given to the selection of the following programmes, namely Hospitality, and Office Management in determining the sample due to the high unemployment rate amongst final year students and graduates.

Of the two hundred students requested to participate in the research, only thirty students responded positively to be part of the sample. They responded by coming to the scheduled venue at the college to complete the questionnaire, some decided not to complete when they heard it was voluntary no monetary stipend. Of these students, 5 males and 15 females from different racial demographics responded. This is a purposive sample due to the small amount of participants.

## **15. Data Capturing**

Data was captured on the survey questionnaire, after which it was analyzed and transformed into new evidence that would ultimately support the credibility of the research questions. However, the data obtained is not sufficient to reach a definitive conclusion.

### **15.1 Data Collection**

A survey methodology was used and allowed for the use of text data, in this case a questionnaire. Themes were identified from the participants' answers to the questionnaire. The data was processed and coded under named themes (Bryman, 2008). The data was colour-coded according to the identified themes. Four themes emerged, with two sub-themes and nine questions. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. A theory emerged through the deductive approach using the qualitative and quantitative approach, bearing in mind that the results will be inconclusive due to the purposive sample.

Students answered nine related questions under the main themes, which were then analysed to form new theoretical evidence.

## **16. Ethical Considerations**

It is important to adhere to ethical norms in studies since they endorse the aims of research. To gain information and truth, and to avoid errors, requires adherence to ethical standards that promote the values needed for successful collaboration between researcher and participants. These values include trust, accountability, mutual respect and fairness (Bryman, 2008).

Understanding voluntary participation, ensuring informed consent, identifying risk of harm, and assuring confidentiality and anonymity were important to this study. Informed consent includes consent from individual participants, as well as from the college (Bryman, 2008). To facilitate this, a formal letter was sent to the institution, seeking permission to conduct a research study on the NCV programmes and the students' preparedness for work (Appendix B).

In negotiating permission, the terms of the research agreement were made clear and the purpose of the study explained in the information letter (Appendix C). This letter stressed that participation was entirely voluntary and emphasised that participants were free to withdraw at any time, and in such an event, there would be no consequences for them, and their information would be destroyed and omitted from the research paper. A consent form (Appendix D) was signed to indicate they had agreed to complete the questionnaire. To ensure confidentiality, the analysed information was captured and stored on a computer file and on an external hard drive, which was stored in a safety cabinet.

The research project was registered at the University of the Western Cape and conducted in accordance with the ethical and professional guidelines, as specified by the University of the Western Cape Research Ethics Policy. (Refer to consent forms)

## **17. Data Analysis**

In this section, the data gathered from the research conducted at a TVET College in the Western Cape is analysed and transformed into new evidence to support the credibility of the research question. A survey methodology in the form of a questionnaire was used to analyse the data and identify themes. Once again the results of this research will be inconclusive due to the purposive sample.

The Human Capital Theory (HCT) was used to analyse the data, as well as the literature related to employability and internships. The following four themes were used to complete the data analysis, with two sub-themes and nine questions: (1) The NCV programme, (2) Internships, (3) Employability (generic skills) and (4) Human Capital. The two sub-themes are (1) TVET graduate unemployment and (2) Accidental Learning.

Participants were asked the following nine question subject areas:

Internships and duties

NCV and preparedness for employment

NCV employability and 'soft skills' training

NCV, Life Orientation and 'soft skills' training

NCV, Life Orientation and applied 'soft skills' in the workplace

NCV, Life Orientation and the gaps in the soft skills training

What are the skills you can bring to the workplace?

Was your internship/work-based assignment relevant to your academic subjects?

Did you gain 'new skills and knowledge' during your internship/work-based experience?

The developments of the following generic skills as part of the participants' college programmes were also discussed: (1) communication, (2) teamwork, (3) critical thinking skills and (4) problem solving.

The TVET College granted permission for the use of the institution as the research site. There were numerous logistical problems and management was reluctant to assist, however they did agree to email questionnaires to participants. Unfortunately, none of the participants completed the questionnaire in this manner, citing that they had no access to computers. As such, this method of data gathering was a failure. Several attempts were made over four months to allow participants to complete the questionnaires, and with the consent of the Campus Manager, students were eventually approached in a lecture room which is permitted according to the Code of Ethics of the University of the Western Cape. . On more than four occasions venues were not available, and surveys had to be completed in the cafeteria. Finally, with the help of the placement officer, 20 questionnaires were completed.

### **17.1 The participants / demographics**

The participants are NCV students who are in their final year of studies and are studying aspects of Hospitality, and Office Administration. They are residents of the Western Cape, who use public transport to commute from home to college. All participants are from middle to low income backgrounds and live on the Cape Flats and in informal settlements such as Gugulethu and Khayelitsha.

### **17.2 Profiles**

Mandise is a 25-year-old single female who lives in Philippi East. She completed Grade 10, after which she enrolled in the NCV course. She has no other qualifications. She has prior work experience as a shop assistant. She has completed her final year in Hospitality Studies.

Kyle is a 19-year-old single male who lives in Retreat. He completed Grade 10, after which he enrolled in the NCV course. He has no other qualifications. He has no prior work experience.



He decided to attend an FET college to get the necessary training to work in the hospitality industry. He has completed his final year in Hospitality Studies.

Shepard is a 22-year-old single male who lives in Khayelitsha. He completed Grade 9, after which he enrolled for the NCV course. He has no other qualifications. He has prior work experience of working in a bakery on weekends. He decided to attend an FET college in order to better his baking skills and work in the hospitality industry. He has completed his final year in Hospitality Studies.

Zahraa is a 20-year-old single female who lives in Ottery. She completed Grade 10 and enrolled for the NCV course. She has no other qualifications. She has prior work experience as a pastry chef at The Capetonian Hotel. She decided to attend an FET college and has completed her Hospitality Studies.

Leonette is a 20-year-old single female who lives in Mitchells Plain. She completed Grade 12, after which she enrolled in the NCV course. She has no other qualifications. She has no other prior work experience. She decided to attend an FET college because of her love of cooking as well as working in the hotel industry. She has completed her Hospitality Studies.

Jade is a 21-year-old single female who lives in Athlone. She completed Grade 10, after which she enrolled in the NCV course. She has no other qualification. She has prior work experience as a front desk receptionist. She decided to attend an FET college in order to get her Diploma in Office Administration.

Melissa is a 23-year-old single female who lives in Wynberg. She completed Grade 10, after which she enrolled in the NCV course. She has no other qualifications. She has prior work experience as a commis chef at The Park Inn Hotel. She decided to attend an FET college in order to get her hospitality diploma. She has completed her Hospitality Diploma.

Lee-Ann is a 19-year-old single female from Bonteheuwel. She completed Grade 12, after which she enrolled in the NCV course. She has no other qualifications. She has no prior work experience. She decided to attend an FET college because she was interested in the hospitality environment and she has completed a qualification in hospitality.

Nozuko is a 39-year-old single mother of two who lives in Langa. She completed her Grade 12 at night school, after which she enrolled for the NCV course. She has no other qualifications. She has no prior work experience. She decided to attend an FET college to improve her qualifications in the hospitality industry and has completed a hospitality qualification.

Nabeelah is a 20-year-old single female from Mitchell's Plain. She completed her Grade 12, after

which she enrolled in the NCV course. She has no other qualifications. She has prior work experience in the production and customer service industry. She decided to attend an FET college to improve her people skills in the hospitality industry.

Olwethu is a 22-year-old single female from Delft. She completed her Grade 12, after which she enrolled in the NCV course. She has no other qualifications. She has prior work experience working as a sales lady at a Jet clothing store. Since her interest lay in the hospitality industry, she decided to study hospitality to have a better opportunity to find employment.

Yolanda is a 29-year-old single female from Steenberg. She completed her Grade 12 and went on to do Public Management at college, which she completed successfully. She then enrolled in the NCV course to do Office Management. She has prior work experience as an Administrative Clerk for the Love Life Project for the City of Cape Town. She decided to attend an FET college because she needed the training in Office Management. She has completed her final year.

Imraan is a 23-year-old single male from Mowbray. He completed Grade 12 and did a certificate in Public Management. After not finding employment, he enrolled in the NCV course to improve his knowledge of Office Administration. He has prior work experience as a technician assistant in the fabricating industry. He decided to attend an FET college to improve his administrative skills and to find an admin clerk job. He has completed his final year in Office Management.

Wesley is a 23-year-old single male from Somerset West. He completed Grade 12, after which he enrolled in the NCV course. He has no other qualifications. He has no prior work experience. He decided to attend an FET college because of his interest in Office Management/HR. He has completed his final year in Office Management.

Zamunzi is a 25-year-old single male from Grabouw. He completed Grade 12, after which he enrolled in the NCV course. He has a qualification in Environmental Management. Upon not finding employment he proceeded to enrol in the NCV Office Administration course. He has completed his final year in Office Management.

Willene is a 23-year-old single female from Atlantis. She completed Grade 12, after which she enrolled in the NCV course. She has no other qualifications. She has prior work experience in a call centre and doing administration duties. She decided to attend an FET college because she was interested in Office Administration. She has completed her Diploma in Office Administration.



Sisanda is a 24-year-old single female from Gugulethu. She completed Grade 12 before enrolling for the NCV course. She worked as a receptionist at a hotel in Cape Town. She has no other qualifications. She decided to attend an FET college because of her love for Office Administration. She has completed her Diploma in Office Administration.

Phakama is a 33-year-old single mother of one who resides in Vrygrond. She started working at SAB on the production line. After working for a few years there, she enrolled in the NCV course. She has graduated in Office Management/Business Management.

Siphosihle is a 24-year-old married female from Crossroads. She completed Grade 12 and did a short course in short term insurance. Her prior work experience consists of her being a sales agent selling Hollard insurance. She decided to attend an FET college because she wanted to improve on her Office Administration skills. She has completed her Diploma in Office Administration.

Shamiema is a 42-year-old single parent of two from Crawford. She completed Grade 12 and went to work for a few years in a call centre. She decided to attend an FET college because she saw it as an opportunity to improve herself. She has completed her Diploma in Office Management.

### **17.3 Participants and their Internships**

The United States is the first recorded country to have initiated formal internships linked to education. This began in the early 1900s, where internships were introduced as “work-based educational experiences”, a term now widely and commonly used throughout the world. Due to their affinity with the concept, American technical schools and community colleges plan and design their curricula around internships to ensure they are career-orientated and of practical application. (Merritt, 2008) As previously discussed, there is a correlation between internship quality and graduate employability. As such, details of participants’ internships are core to this research paper.

Only five of the 15 men that were approached completed the questionnaire. Of the five males, two are classified as African and three are classified as Coloured. Of the 15 women who completed the survey, five are classified as African and ten as Coloured.

Participants for this study had been placed in their respective internships (work-based training) and tasked to apply their respective skills. It is crucial to complete an internship at the TVET College that is the subject of this study, because without it, students cannot graduate. All participants had been successfully placed in internships/work-based employment and had worked at different private companies and local government departments in the Western Cape. All participants responded to the questions of where they worked and what they did. All had different responsibilities attached to their positions. Their experiences varied, and they applied what they had learned where possible, and gained new skills to enhance their prospects of finding suitable employment upon graduating.

When internships were organised through the college, they were done with the assistance of the college placement officer and were also facilitated by the Graduate Asset Programme (GAP), a private initiative by Fotola, which works with the DHET. According to the GAP, about 70% of the internships they have facilitated have been converted into longer term employment. (Fetola, 2014) The GAP works directly with education institutions and placement officers at GAP network with NGOs, whose main task it is to equip students with the necessary skills before they go into the workplace. Partnerships of this kind are beneficial to both students and colleges. Private institutions, such as retirement homes, have also approached the GAP to offer work-based experience to students, as has the hotel industry, which needs seasonal workers during busy periods. This collaboration bodes well for graduate employment opportunities.

## **18. Survey Responses**

Based on the respondents' answers, the study broadly considers how well the NCV programmes at the TVET College prepare graduates to enter the workplace. Thereafter, more detailed investigations into the levels of employability (generic skills) attempt to ascertain if current curricula adequately prepare students for work. Analysis is conducted into how well internships assisted participants in gaining employment. Lastly, some exploration is made into whether the NCV programmes are in touch with the demands and expectations of different industries, in the context of the South African economy.

To what extent the NCV Programmes prepare students for the workplace.

Of the 20 participants, 12 agreed that the NCV programmes had prepared them well for the workplace, while eight of the participants disagreed, stating that the NCV programmes did not prepare them well for the workplace. The positive responses follow below:

I feel that the NCV programme prepared me for the workplace and everything I studied was relevant to my work (Phakama, June 1, 2017).

The NCV prepared me well for the workplace. Working and communicating with the public as well as working with difficult clients (Yolanda, May 29, 2017).

The theory I learnt in the class helped me to be better prepared when I started cooking in the workplace (Leonette, August 16, 2017).

I believe that the NCV programme I studied was very relevant to my job as it improved my self-discipline and motivation. I work much better within my department as a team (Jade, July 11, 2017).

The NCV programme I studied prepared me well for my future work and it helped me to obtain my internship at the City of Cape Town by doing my own CV as well as improving my time management at the workplace (Wesley, March 30, 2017).

I was able to apply all the skills I learnt in the NCV programme like time management, to stick to deadlines given to me in the workplace (Shepard, July 11, 2017).

As can be seen from the quotes above, the reasons respondents cited included that their NCV programmes had especially helped them with communication skills and time management skills. The first respondent stated in particular that the programmes had been relevant to the workplace.

However, eight responded negatively, saying that the NCV programme had not adequately prepared them for the workplace. Of the eight who responded negatively, all of them cited a significant lack of practical experience given. As such, they were unprepared and “confused” during their internships.

Their responses follow:

The NCV did not help me. We only do basic foods like muffins and when we do our internships it is totally different as well as very confusing (Olwethu, August, 24, 2017).

I did not receive any skills which helped me during my internship (Zamumzi, June, 1, 2017).

I did not get enough practical exposure to function positively in the workplace (Zahraa, August,

16, 2017).

In industry it's 1000 times more difficult than at college. Practicals were once a week and that wasn't enough to apply the theory we received (Melissa, August, 17, 2017).

We are not given enough practical time in the kitchen to apply our theory we have learnt (Lee-Ann, August, 17, 2017).

It is thus evident that the NCV in its present format has succeeded partially in preparing students for the workplace, but there is still considerable work to be done in nurturing practical skills. This means that the NCV programmes in its current form lacks the necessary practical skills-based learning aspect, to prepare students to be employable. This includes the building of skills such as on-the-job problem solving, critical thinking, and practical knowledge required by industries.

### **The NCV Programme, Employability and Soft Skills Training**

Hillage and Pollard (1998, p.1) suggest that "employability is about having the capability to gain initial employment, maintain employment and obtain new employment if required." As such employability is the key to security (Hawkins, 1999) for the individual and for the wider community and economy.

Increasing employability entails increasing graduates' ability to utilise all the required soft and hard skills learned in college appropriately in the workplace. It also means being able to be exposed to the daily operations of the company and apply these skills in a manner that satisfies the employer and is productive for the individual concerned and the company. This links to HCT, which has its focal point in individual resources, particularly in the contribution of individual, state or company 'investment' in education. It is therefore crucial that policymakers find a balance between education, employment and the labour market; only when lessons are applied will there be an increase in graduate employment. The credibility of the college system also needs to be addressed.

The fact that some students disagreed with the assertion that the NCV programme increases employability could be due to poor quality lecturers, or a lack of training in the necessary 'soft skills' required for them to be employable. Most participants agreed that the NCV programme prepared them well for the workplace in theory.

## **The Role of Life Orientation in Soft Skills Training**

The soft skills taught to the students in Life Orientation were beneficial in equipping them with the skills required for internships and subsequent job market after graduating. Below is some of the responses in this regard.

I feel that the NCV programme prepared me for the workplace and everything I studied was relevant to my work (Phakama, June 1, 2017).

The NCV prepared me well for the workplace. Working and communicating with the public as well as working with difficult clients (Yolanda, May 29, 2017).

The theory I learnt in the class helped me to be better prepared when I started cooking in the workplace (Leonette, August 16, 2017).

I believe that the NCV programme I studied was very relevant to my job as it improved my self-discipline and motivation. I work much better within my department as a team (Jade, July 11, 2017).

Countries put emphasis on more development to accelerate economic growth by devoting necessary time and effort (manpower and training) based on HCT. But HCT goes beyond just graduate training; it underlines employees' on-going improvement under a broader, more humane definition of human capital. The OECD (2001) citing Rastogi (2000) has stated that human capital is "the knowledge, skills competencies and attributes embodied in individuals that facilitate the creation of personal, social and economic well-being" (OECD, 2011, p.18).

The Life Orientation curriculum at TVET colleges is meant to prepare students for the workplace; but it seems that educators are not aware of the importance of generic skills needed for the workplace, or they do not take it very seriously, or they are just not qualified enough to bring these transferable skills across to students. Furthermore, due to the ever-changing economy, industries need to adapt and change their skill sets to meet the demands of the economy. In this regard it is important that government, educators and industry establish what skills are required for graduates to be employable. This is not only for the benefit of graduates, but because employers will share in the returns of these skills, which should be laid down in colleges, since employers would rather invest in hard skills, than invest in training in soft skills. In turn, government invests heavily in students for vocational training. Together with colleges, they must ensure that graduates are well trained in soft and hard skills for the workplace.

By doing that, government is ensured of a return on their investment in the form of employment

and economic growth.

### **18.1 What are hard skills?**

Hard skills are specific abilities or capabilities that an individual can possess and demonstrate in a measured way, possessing a hard skill connotes mastery and expertise for the individual to perform a specific task or series of tasks to complete a job.

Hard skills include:

Technical skills

Computer skills

Microsoft office skills

Analytical skills

Marketing skills

Presentation skills

Management skills

Project Management skills

Writing skills

Language skills

Design skills

Certification skills



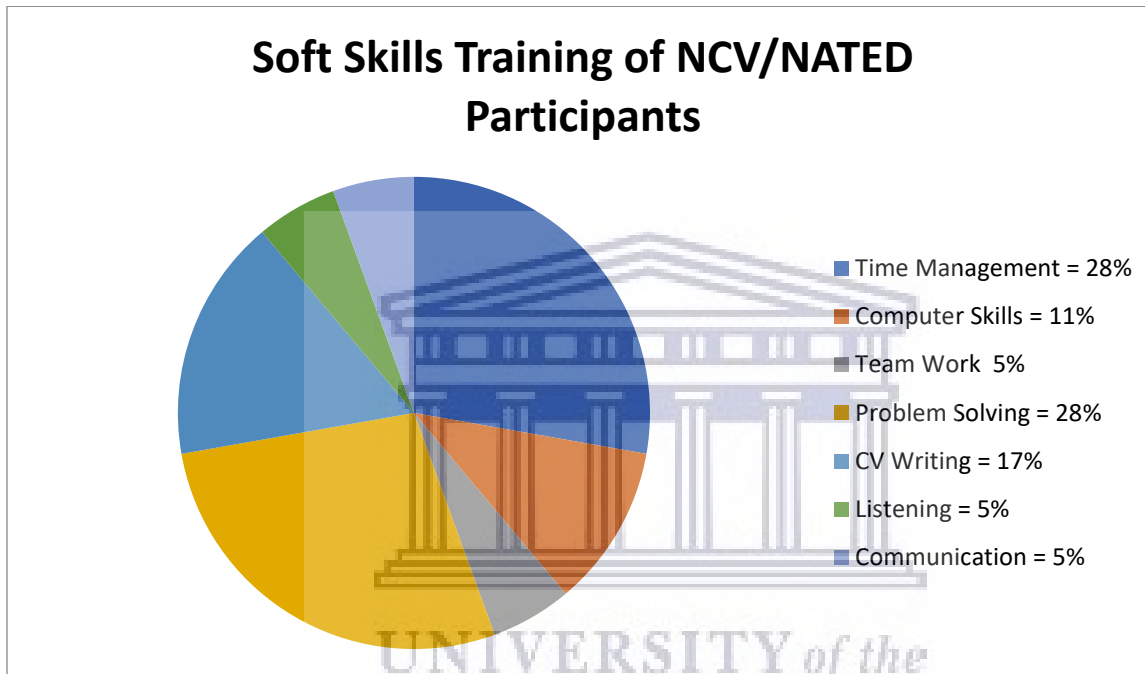
### **18.2 What are soft skills?**

According to Wikipedia, soft skills also known as common skills are skills which are desirable in all professions, for example: Leadership skills, Communication skills, Problem-solving skills, Work ethics, Flexibility / Adaptability, Interpersonal skills, Teamwork and Conflict management.

With the purposive sample of twenty participants we will never get to a conclusive answer until we have a much bigger sample (50% of the total student population in their final year).

The Life Orientation programme offered at college level has the task of teaching learners all the ‘soft skills’ they will need to function properly in the work environment. These ‘soft skills’ are supposed to make these graduates employable. It is the duty of TVET colleges in conjunction with the Minister of Higher Education to ensure that the Life Orientation curriculum for NCV

students is in line with the needs of industries across the board and that certain ‘soft skills’ weightings should differ from sector to sector depending on what ‘soft skills’ are required by a particular industry. Colleges should liaise with industry regarding ‘soft skills’ needed for employment. This process must be repeated every two years. For the purposes of this research paper, it is noteworthy that the Life Orientation programme was partly influenced by HCT and the curriculum was designed with human capital in mind.



What soft skills training did the NCV programme provide?

The Life Orientation programme, as per the placement officer, should prepare graduates well enough for the world of work and make them employable and ready for work. Below is the breakdown of the soft skills that graduates used in their internships.

Time Management – 28%

Computer Skills – 11%

Team Work – 5%

Problem Solving – 28%

CV Writing – 17%

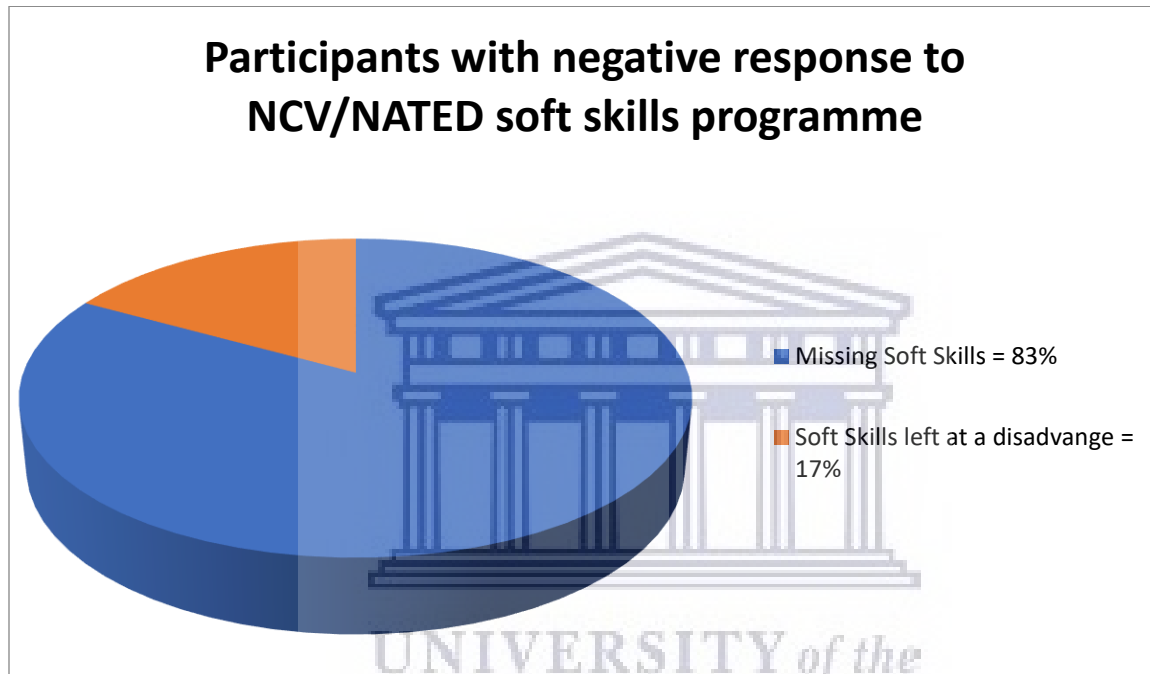
Listening – 5%



Communication – 5%

It is evident that ‘soft skills’ were interpreted by the respondents to mainly be interview skills, CV writing skills, teamwork skills, communication skills and time management.

In response to the question of whether the NCV programmes had equipped them with soft skills suited to the workplace, six respondents replied in the negative, with one participant stating this had left her at a disadvantage.



Of the twenty participants 83% alleged that they were missing soft skills in the workplace while 17% alleged to be left at a disadvantage with soft skills in the workplace.

It must be emphasized that in revisiting the NCV programme, different industries within the South African economy need different weightings for different skills, depending on the industry involved. We need to bear in mind that we have a small purposive sample which is not a true reflection of the college as a whole. Thus it is inconclusive.

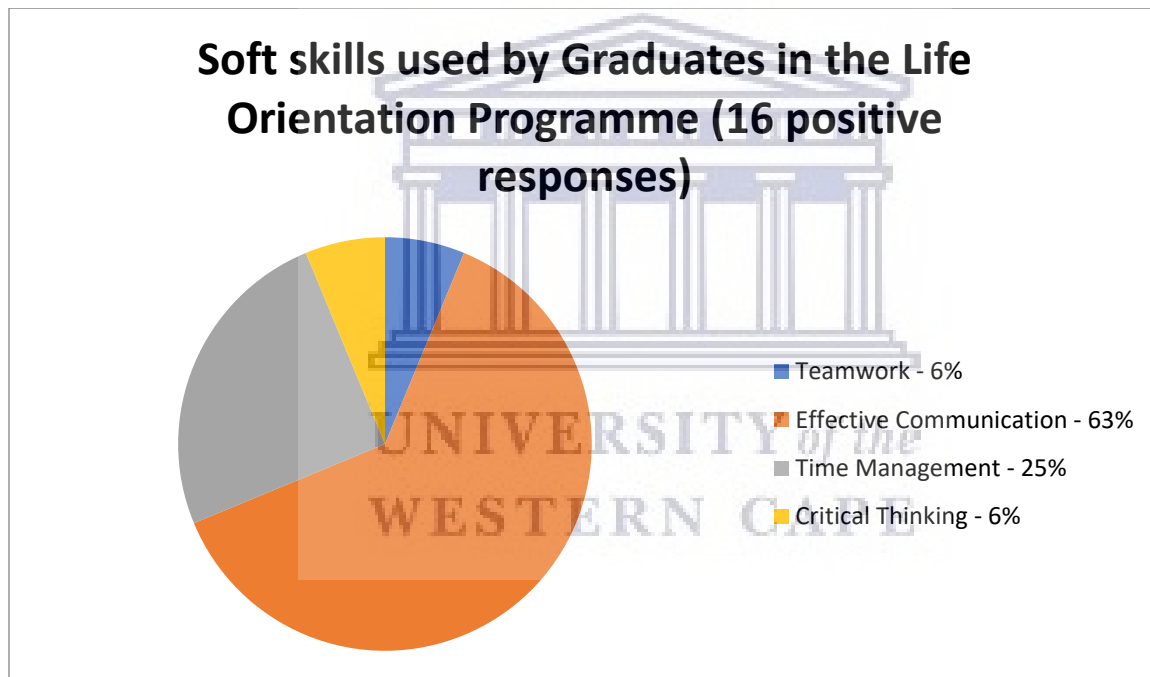
### **The NCV programmes, Life Orientation and Applied Soft Skills in the Workplace**

Employers give preference to graduates having ‘soft skills’ such as verbal and written communication skills, as well as the ability to work in and/or lead a team, problem-solving and

good time management skills, to name a few. If graduates possess at least two important soft skills, they are at an advantage in the hiring process. This is especially true in times of economic restructuring, which implies workplace restructuring and a change in economic and industry needs – as these change, so do the soft skills needed for graduates to be employable (Chappell, 2010).

Several participants mentioned a skill or two of some kind that they applied during their internships. What can be determined is that even though the Life Orientation curriculum has its flaws and shortcomings, students were able to apply the knowledge in the workplace.

### **The NCV Programmes, Internships, Soft Skills Training and Employability**

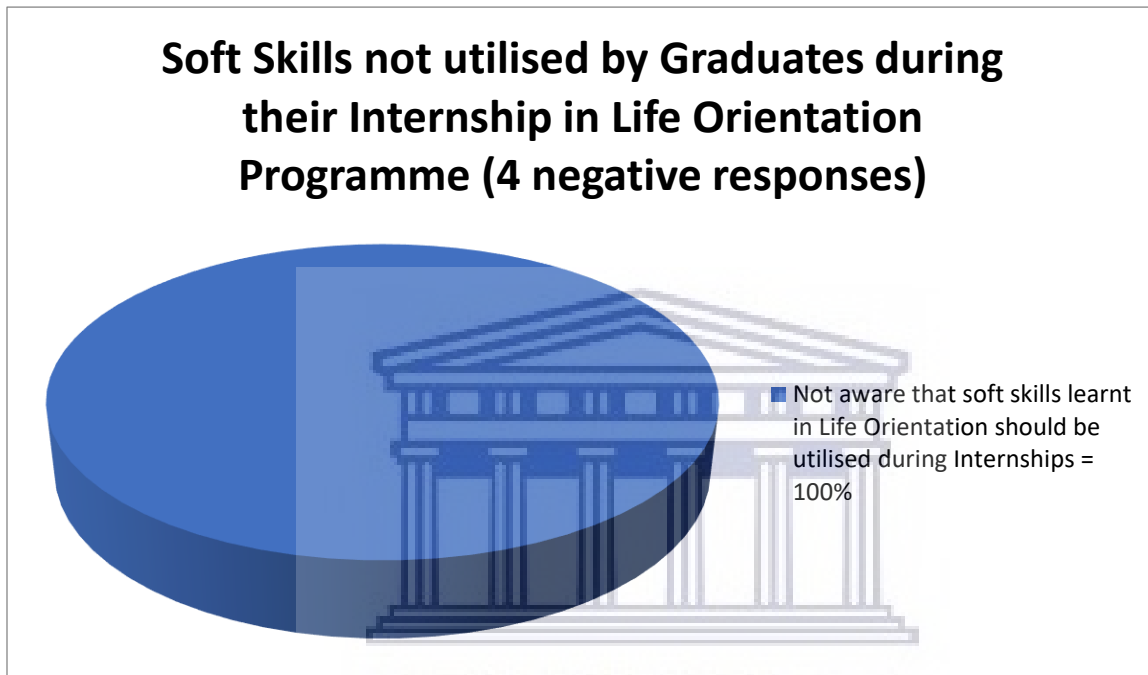


The following soft skills were used during the internships of participants: Teamwork – 6%; Effective Communication – 63%; Time Management – 25%; Critical Thinking – 6%. This breakdown of soft skills used by graduates is inconclusive due to the small purposive sample.

Of the 16 participants who responded positively to using Life Orientation skills at the workplace the following skills were identified: teamwork, communication skills, time management skills and one mentioned using critical thinking skills to solve work-related

problems. Evidence suggests that most participants need all the required skills to become employable. Only one participant mentioned ‘critical thinking’, whereas this is mentioned as one of the critical skills that most employers need.

Below are some of the responses of participants who said they did not get skills training in the Life Orientation programme:

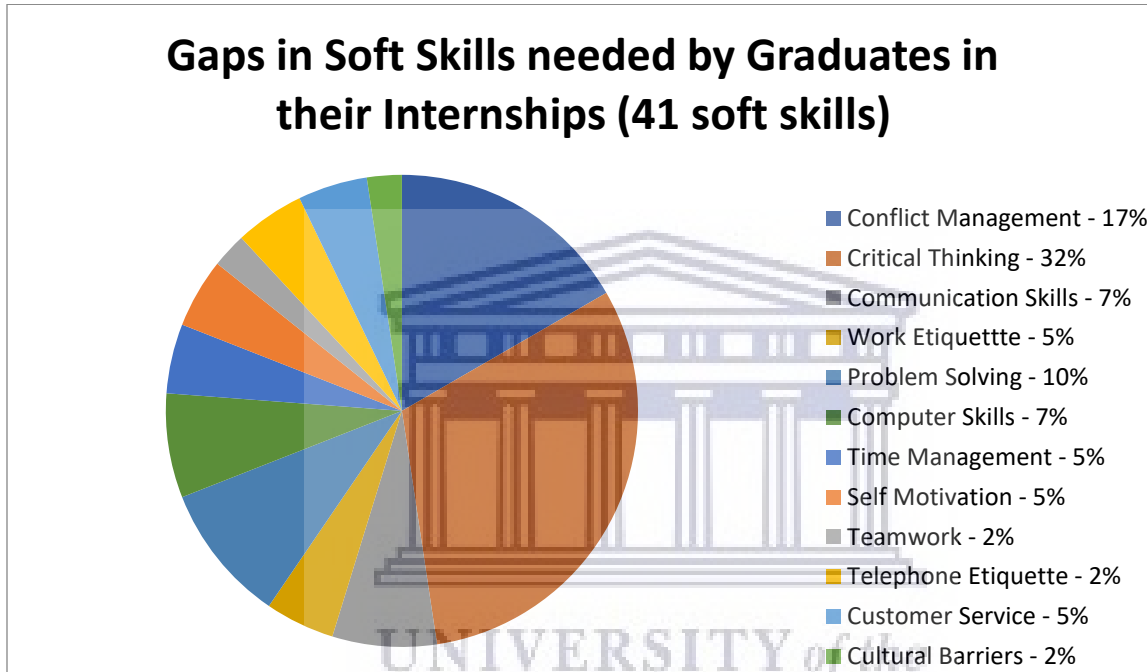


Graduates were not aware that all the skills taught in the Life Orientation programme can be utilized in their internships. Lecturers have a duty to inform graduates about the skills (soft and hard skills) needed for their internships and the job market.

### **The NCV programme, Life Orientation and gaps in the Soft Skills training**

It is important in graduate education to cover all aspects of the ‘soft skills’ such as teamwork, communication skills, problem-solving, critical thinking, willingness to learn and empathy as required by employers, since this impacts graduate employability. TVET colleges should be in touch with the needs of industry and should make sure that what is taught in Life Orientation is relevant to the needs of industry. In this, researchers advise educators to identify and take serious account of the contextual factors that affect organisations in their workplace settings (Fuller, 2007).

Some of these contextual factors include the company skills- policy, legislation on employment equity policies, how ‘new’ knowledge had been implemented and practised, which impacts workplace pedagogy and learning. Soft skills like communication skills, conflict management, and time management are a few of the important ‘soft skills’ that the participants in this study lack but which they need to be employable. The following are the responses of the participants who lacked certain ‘soft skills’ training for the workplace:



The gaps identified by students are the following:

Conflict Management – 17%

Critical Thinking – 32%

Communication Skills – 7%

Work Etiquette – 5%

Problem Solving – 10%

Computer Skills – 7%

Time Management – 5%

Self-Motivation – 5%

Teamwork – 2%

Telephone Etiquette – 2%

Customer Service – 5%

Cultural Barriers – 2%

Almost all the participants are lacking in the core soft skills that are required for them to be employable. This is a clear indication to government and industry that the curricula relevant to

the development of soft skills in graduates needs to be relooked at and adapted to suit the needs of industry and to make graduates more employable.

Graduates who possess certain soft skills before entering the job market stand a better chance of being employed. Employers in these cases do not have to train interns in ‘soft skills’ and therefore can save money and hire more interns. While employers in the past were willing to train graduates who lacked certain skills, as the economy and industries have changed and became knowledge economies, they have tended to go after graduates who have all the skills required to do the job. As such, it is important for graduates to present the skills they can offer.

The following responses were gathered when participants were asked what they could contribute to the workplace, after completing their internships as part of their NCV programmes:

I can work well under pressure (time management) and my computer skills and critical thinking skills as well as communication skills are good (Imraan, May 29, 2017).

I am a good communicator, as well as a problem solver and I work well in a team as well as independently (Wesley, March 30, 2017).

I am good at conflict management as well as good in time management, and I possess strong problem-solving skills. I am also a team player (Willene, May 29, 2017).

My time management is good (Zamumzi, June 1, 2017).

I have excellent time management skills (Nabeelah, August 24, 2017).

I possess great time management and problem-solving skills (Siphosihle, May 31, 2017).

Being self-motivated with good time management skills as well as minute taking skills that helped me during my internship (Shahiema, May 29, 2017).

Apart from being self-motivated, I have a positive mind-set and good housekeeping skills (Nozuko, August 22, 2017).

Always open to learn and positive disposition with good time management skills (Lee-Ann, August 17, 2017).

My time management is excellent, working well under pressure, running a kitchen with my team (Zahraa, August 16, 2017).

I am well organised with good time management skills and good communication skills (Jade, July 11, 2017).

Self-management skills together with a positive attitude (Sisanda, July 11, 2017).

My interpersonal skills are good as well as my communication skills especially listening skills

(Phakama, June 1, 2017).

I have the following skills, a positive attitude and good communication skills with good teamwork (Mandise, July 11, 2017).

I am a problem solver with good time management skills, and is always well organised (Leonette, August 16, 2017).

I am a team player with good communication skills (Melissa, August 17, 2017).

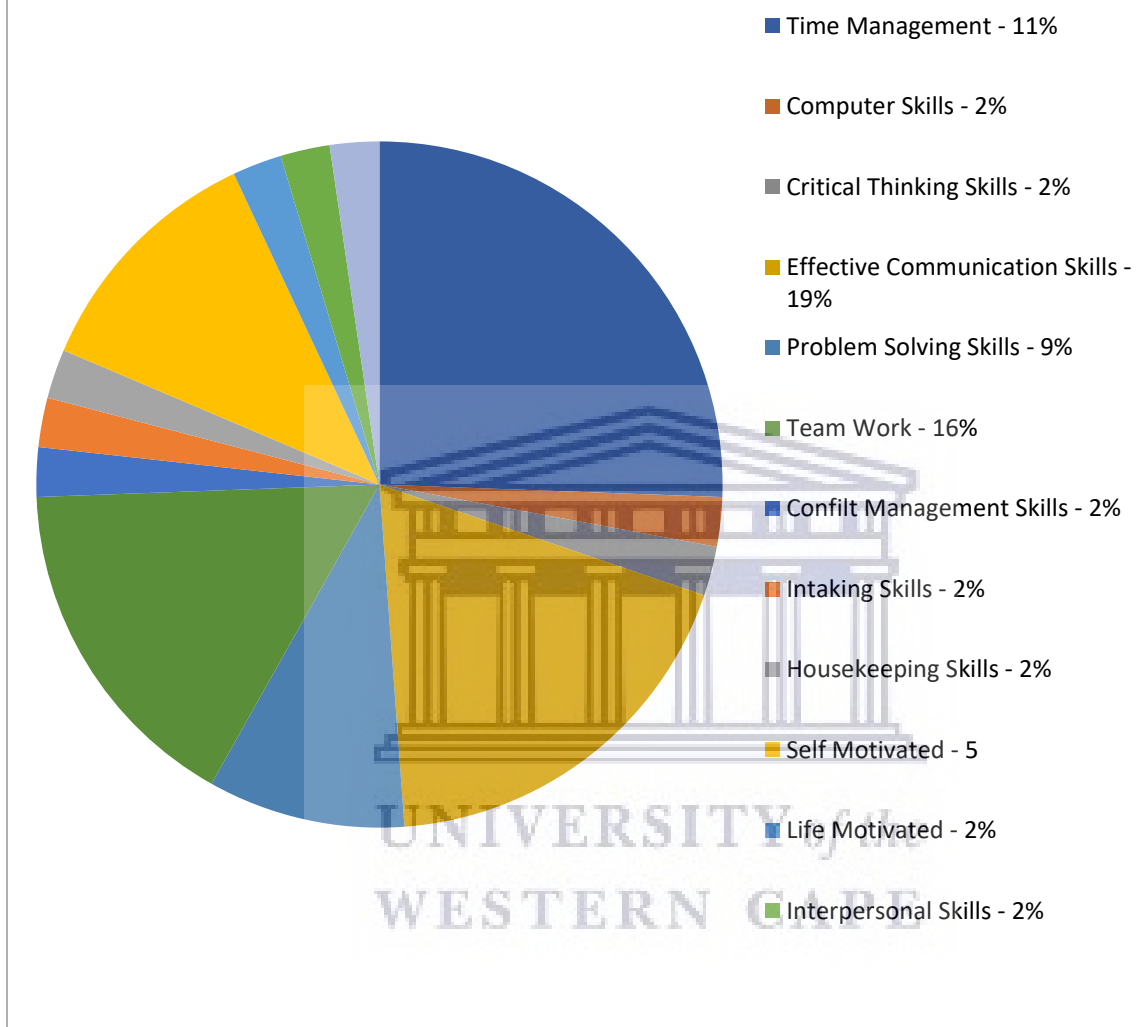
My communication skills as well time management skills is good as I am also a team player (Olwethu, August 24, 2017).

For me, the two main skills I possess are good communication skills and time management skills (Shepard, July 11, 2017).

Working in a team, as well as being a good problem solver amongst co-workers (conflict resolution) (Kyle, July 11, 2017).



## Soft Skills possessed by Graduates before entering Job Market



Here is the breakdown of soft skills possessed by graduates prior to entering the job market.

Time Management – 11%

In-taking Skills – 2%

Computer Skills – 2%

Housekeeping Skills – 2%

Critical Thinking Skills – 2%

Self-motivation – 5%

Effective Communication Skills – 19%

Life-motivation – 2%

Problem Solving Skills – 9%

Interpersonal Skills – 2%

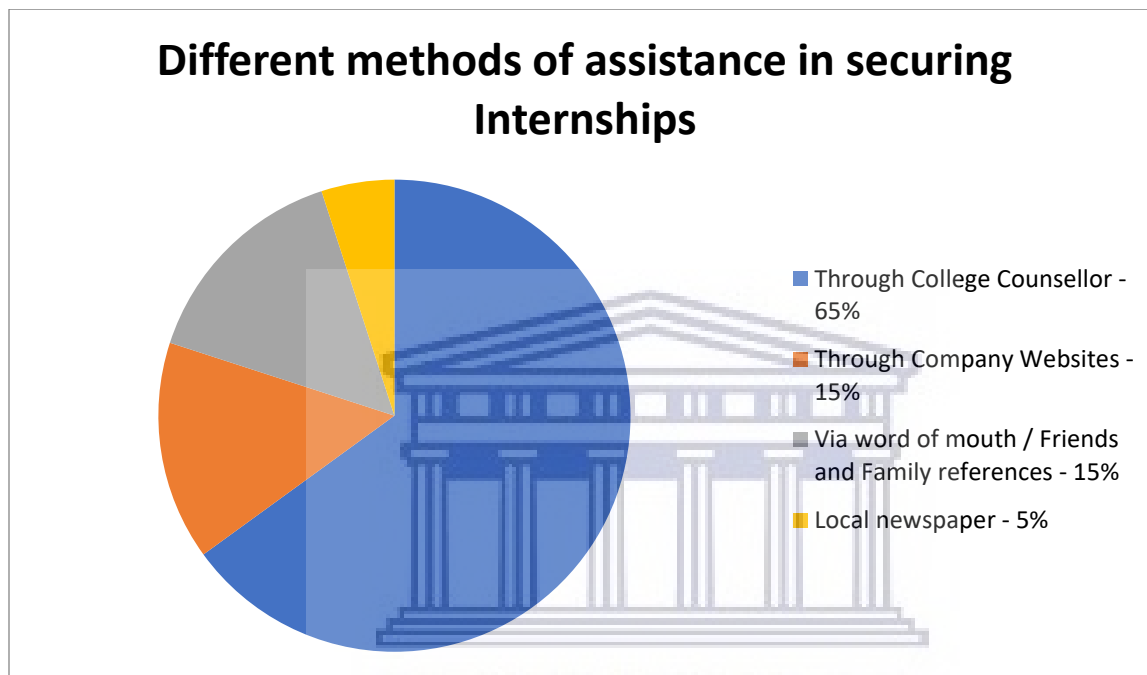
Team Work – 16%

Conflict Management Skills – 2%

Evidence suggests that several participants offered their communication skills in the workplace.



One participant mentioned using his conflict management skills as well as problem solving skills. A few participants mentioned their teamwork skills that they had used. The scarce skills that participants mentioned, which were not taught in the Life Orientation programme, included possessing a positive attitude as well as organisational skills.



Here is a breakdown of different methods of assisting and securing for internships by students.

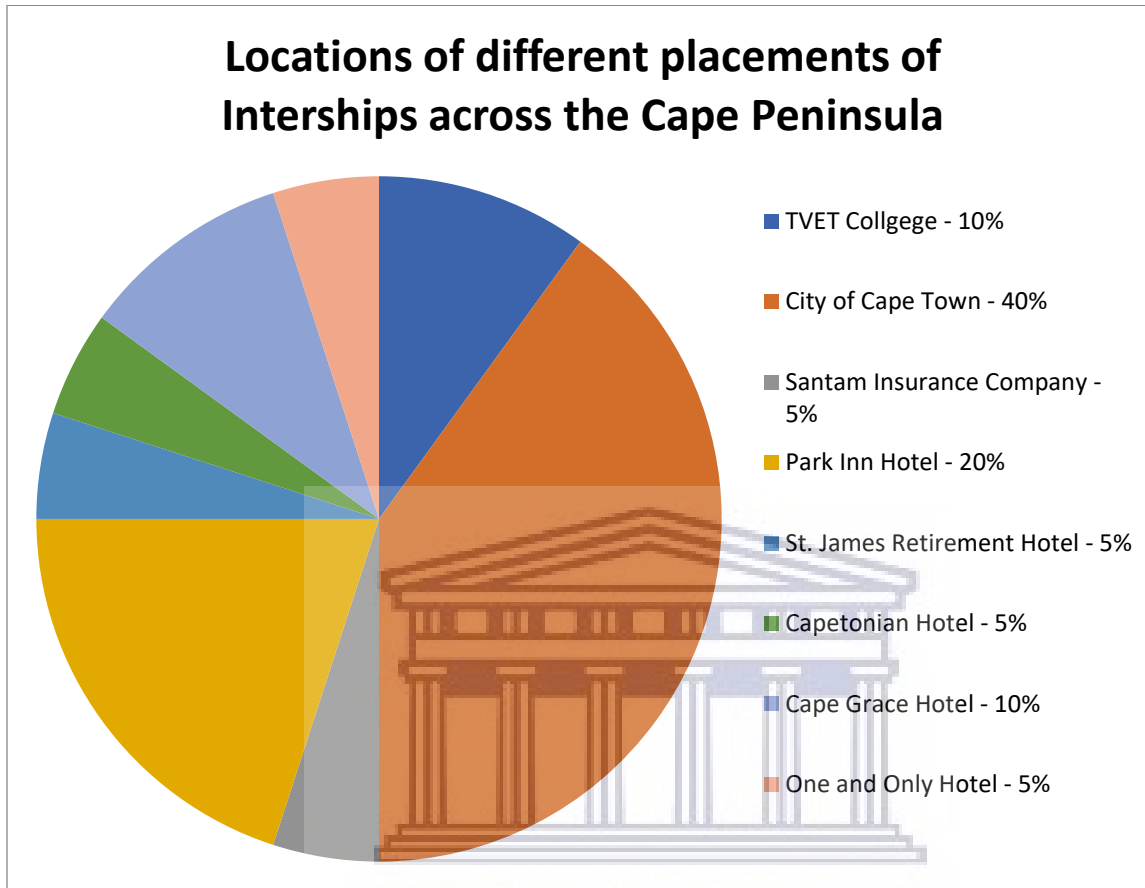
Through the College Counsellor – 65%

Through Company Websites – 15%

Via word of mouth / friends and family references – 15%

Local newspaper – 5%

## Location of Internships



Locations of different internship placements across the Cape Peninsula as outlined below:

TVET College – 10%

City of Cape Town – 40%

Santam Insurance Company – 5%

Park Inn Hotel – 20%

St. James Retirement Hotel – 5%

Capetonian Hotel – 5%

Cape Grace Hotel – 10%

One and Only Hotel – 5%

Participants were then asked to describe what their jobs entailed as interns, and what tasks they were required to perform.

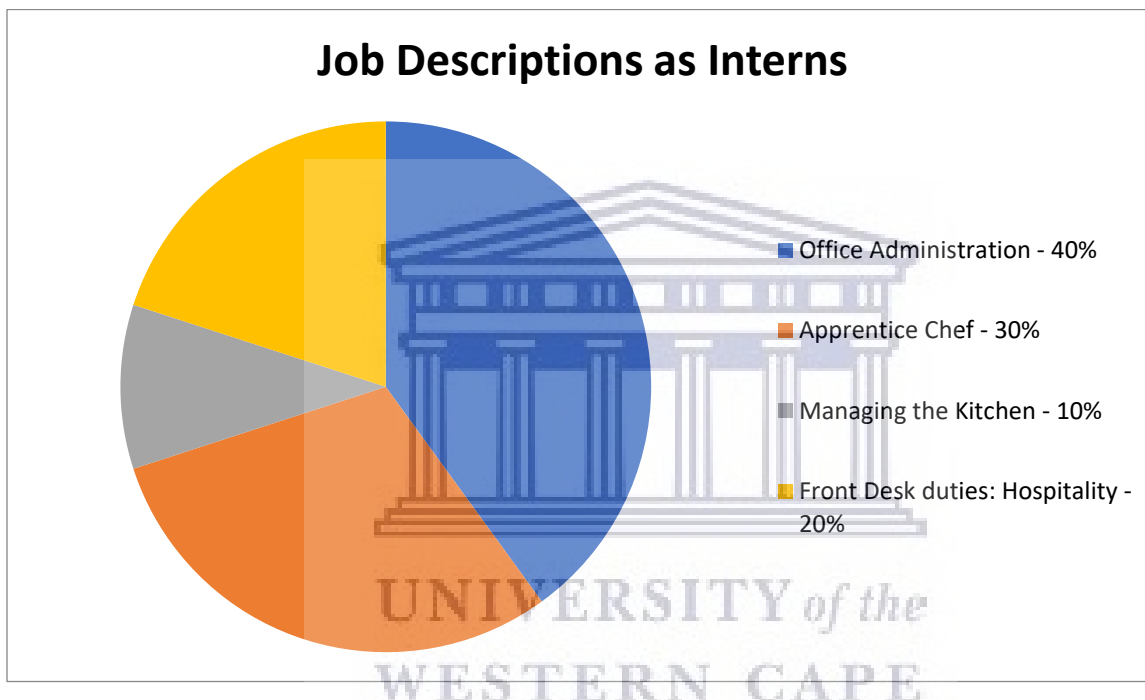
Their responses follow:

I worked for the City of Cape Town in the HR department doing Office Administration as part of my internship (Phakama, June 1, 2017).

I did front desk duty at the City of Cape Town in hospitality (Mandise, July 11, 2017).

Being an apprentice pastry chef at the Capetonian Hotel (Zahraa, August 16, 2017),

I did office management within the HR department of the City of Cape Town as well as doing customer service (Wesley, March 30, 2017).



It is evident that the majority of tasks required of graduates were administrative tasks, front desk tasks and supportive roles in the kitchen.

What did you like the most about your internship/work-based experience?

Respondents then shared what they enjoyed most about their internships:

The professional work environment at my workplace was what I enjoyed best (Phakama, June 1, 2017).

I liked the different team experiences, different responsibilities as well as the professional environment (Shahiema, May 29, 2017).

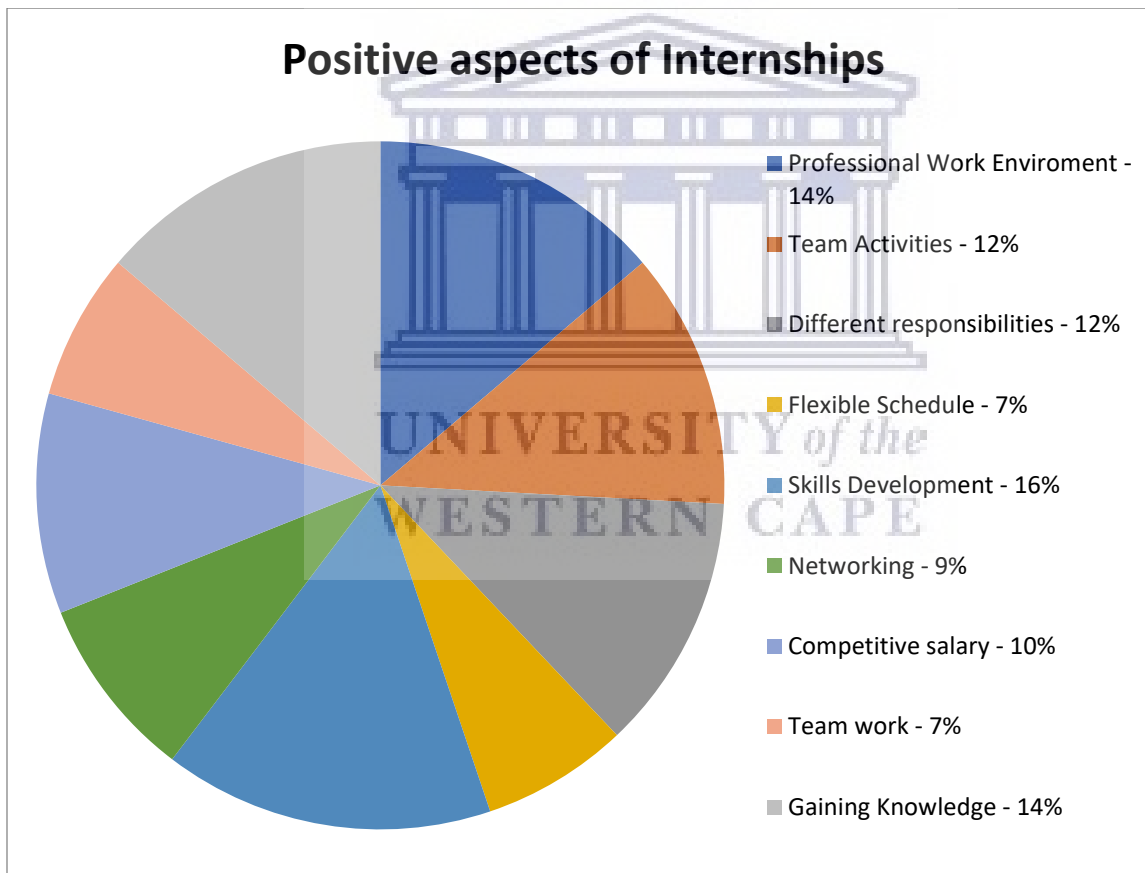
Being in a professional work environment, part of a team experience, flexible schedule and opportunity to develop skills, opportunity to create contacts (Shepard, July 11, 2017).

I enjoyed the teamwork as well as the experience, good salary and professional work environment (Wesley, March 30, 2017).

The team experience, the flexible schedule, good co-workers and different responsibilities (Sisanda, July 11, 2017).

Good pay, professional environment, opportunity to develop skills and the different responsibilities is what drove me (Willene, May 29, 2017).

Evidence suggests that when students are exposed to the workplace, they ultimately experience the positive aspects of the world of work.



Students reported positive aspects of internships acquired in the workplace.

Professional Work Environment – 14%

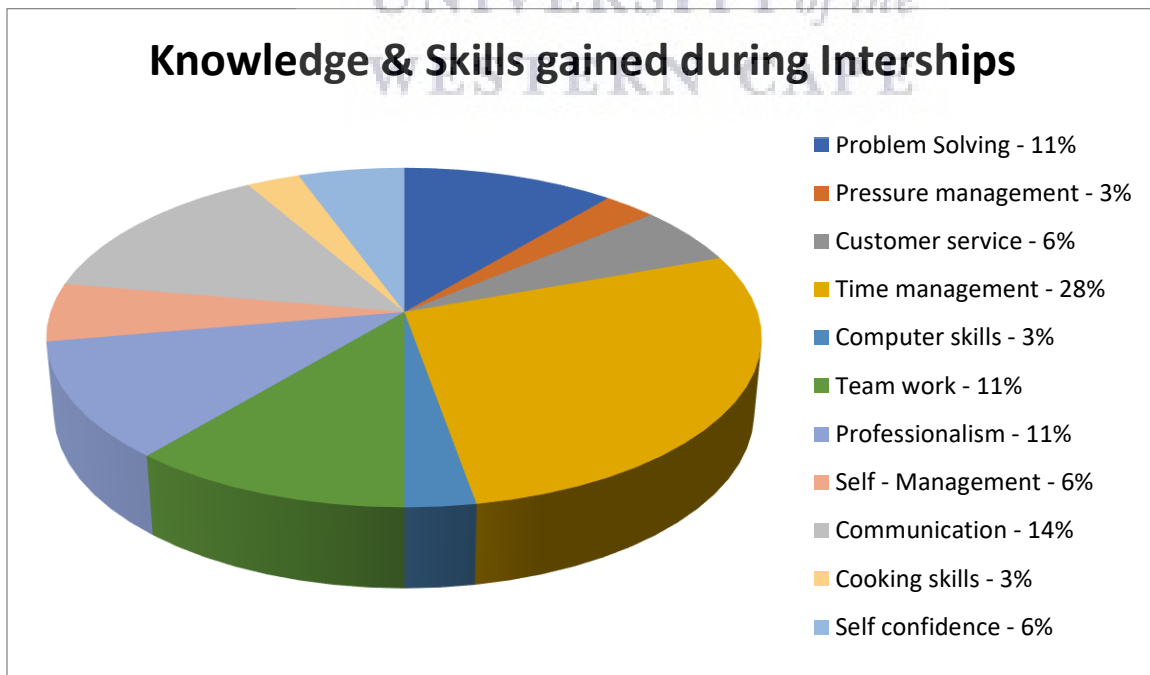
Team Activities – 12%

Different responsibilities – 12%

- Flexible Schedule – 7%
- Skills Development – 16%
- Networking – 9%
- Competitive salary – 10%
- Teamwork – 7%
- Gaining knowledge – 14%

It is evident that when students do work-based internships they are bound to learn new skills that are not necessarily taught in the classroom environment. In this research study, one participant learned to act in a very professional manner while interacting with staff as well as with the public.

In conclusion, it is evident that certain core skills are missing when students are sent into the workplace learning environment. Some participants had to implement problem-solving skills they had not learned, and others needed critical thinking to enhance their employability prospects. This underlines how crucial it is for all scarce soft skills to be taught in the Life Orientation programme, in addition to new scarce soft skills that arise. Different workplace situations should be simulated to allow students to work through the different required scarce skills that may be needed in real workplace situations.



Knowledge and skills gained during internships.

Problem-Solving – 11%

Teamwork – 11%

Pressure Management – 3%

Professionalism – 11%

Customer Service – 6%

Self-Management – 6%

Time Management – 28%

Communication – 14%

Computer Skills – 3%

Cooking skills – 3%

Self-confidence – 6%

### **Employment Prospects after Internship**

Despite several challenges, many participants were offered further employment opportunities as a result of their internships:

I was offered the opportunity to work at the Cape Town Jazz Festival (Lee-Ann, August 17, 2017).

Yes, I am working at a guesthouse over weekends (Jade, July 11, 2017).

Yes, I was working weekends and holidays for solid waste for the City of Cape Town (Yolanda, May 29, 2017).

Yes, I job shadowed at a hotel to get the hang of things (Sisanda, July 11, 2017).

Yes, I have been included in the work-based programme of the college in completion of my NCV qualifications (Kyle, July 11, 2017).

Yes, I was job shadowing at South African Breweries (Phakama, June 1, 2017).

Yes, I did a three-month course in my field of studies at a hotel (Shepard, July 11, 2017).

Yes, I worked part time at a guesthouse (Mandise, July 11, 2017).

None, I did not get any offers for employment (Nozuko, August 22, 2017).

No, I did not (Zamumzi, June 1, 2017).

I was not offered anything (Olwethu, August 24, 2017).

No, I did not get any offers (Leonette, August 16, 2017).

No, job offers never materialised (Melissa, August 17, 2017).

No, I did not get any work offers (Shahiema, May 29, 2017).

No, nothing came my way (Imraan, May 29, 2017).

No work-related offers were made to me (Willene, May 29, 2017).

No, due to layoffs at the workplace no offers were made to me (Wesley, March 30, 2017).

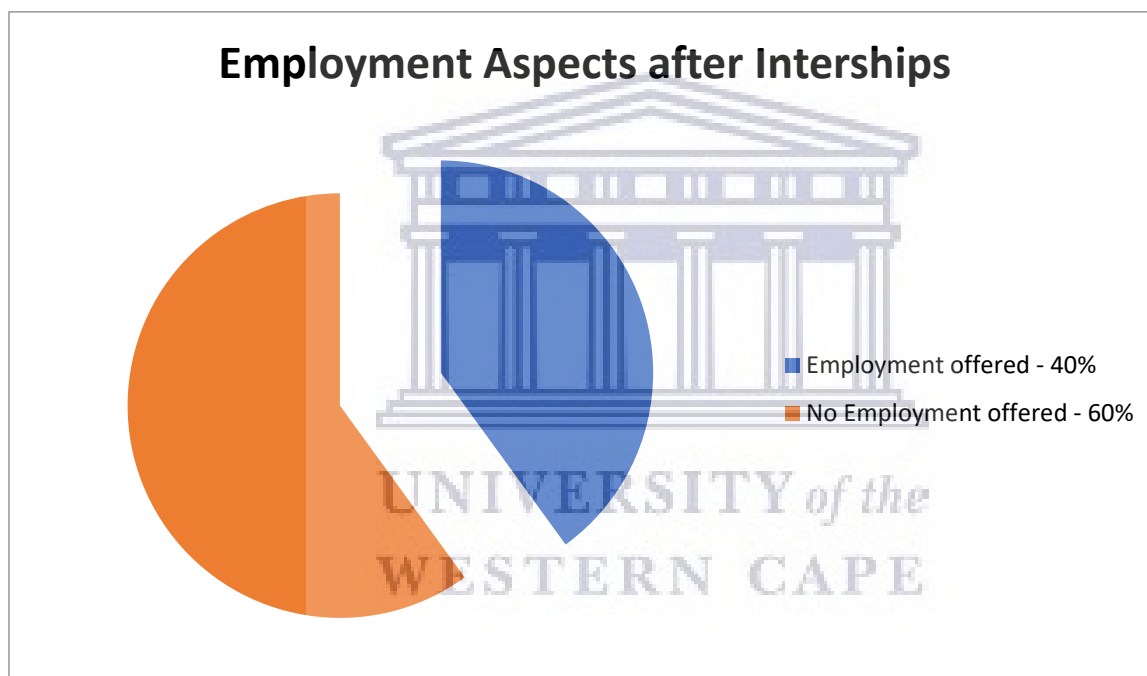
No, I did not get any job offers (Siphosihle, May 31, 2017).

No job offers were made with me (Nabeelah, August 24, 2017).

No, I was not approached with any job offers (Zahraa, August 16, 2017).

It is evident that eight out of the 20 participants were offered some form of employment after their internship was complete.

When students are fully prepared with all the required scarce skills, there is a willingness in industry to offer graduates positions. This will increase as more graduates have acquired all the skills needed by industry to be employable.



40% of the purposive sample was offered employment after the internship while 60% of interns were not offered any employment. Due to the small purposive sample this is not reflective of the college population. More research needs to be done with a bigger sample.

### **Ways of Seeking Employment after Internship**

Participants were then asked to discuss their plans for the future in terms of how they would go about looking for work. They offered these responses:

I will seek employment through word of mouth via social media, print media and electronic



media as well as online and through the college job placement officer (Shepard, July 11, 2017).  
I will find employment through word of mouth, electronic media as well as print media (Wesley, March 30, 2017).

I will search for employment via social media only (Phakama, June 1, 2017).

Social media, electronic media and online is where I will look for employment (Leonette, August 16, 2017).

I will search for employment via word of mouth, in newspapers as well as electronic media (radio, TV) and online (Yolanda, May 29, 2017).

Methods of seeking employment after completing internships.

Word of mouth – 23%

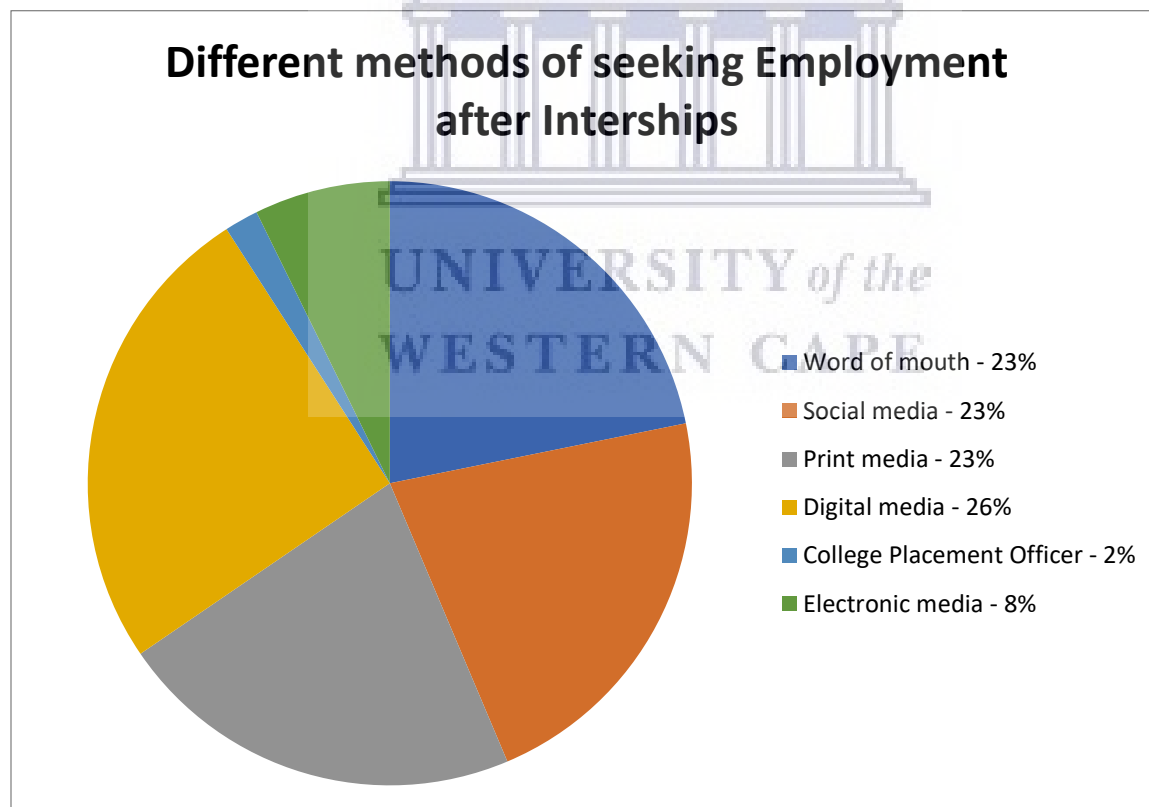
Digital media – 26%

Social media – 23%

College Placement Officer – 2%

Print media – 23%

Electronic media – 8%



It is evident from the responses that government colleges and private companies should have databases of entry jobs available for graduates to seek employment. This would lessen the

likelihood of unemployed graduates roaming the streets of South Africa in search of jobs.

How well the stipend covers expenses.

Yes	No
5	15

Below is the response of the graduates as whether the stipend is sufficient or not to cover travelling expenses.

No (Lee-Ann, August 17, 2017).

Yes, it does (Zahraa, August 16, 2017).

No (Yolanda, May 29, 2017).

No (Olwethu, August 24, 2017)

Yes, it covers my traveling for the year as I do not live too far from college (Melissa, August 17, 2017).

No, as it covers only travelling and not food (Sisanda, July 11, 2017).

Yes, stipend only covers travelling (Mandise, July 11, 2017).

No, it only covers travelling, nothing else (Leonette, August 16, 2017).

No, it only covers transport (Jade, July 11, 2017).

No, only just covers transport to college (Phakama, June 1, 2017).

No, only travelling (Nozuko, August 22, 2017).

No, only some transport (Shahiema, May 29, 2017).

Yes, it covered my transport fees for the year (Siphosihle, May 31, 2017).

Yes, it only covers my transport fees to college (Willene, May 29, 2017).

No, it does not cover all my transport (Nabeelah, August 24, 2017).

No, it does not cover all of my transport fees for the year (Zamumzi, June 1, 2017).

No, it only covers my travelling (Kyle, July 11, 2017).

No, it only covers half of my travelling (Wesley, March 30, 2017).

No, the stipend does not cover all of my travelling fees (Imraan, May 29, 2017).

No, only for travelling (Shepard, Interview, July 11, 2017).

Many students are dependent on the stipend to help them survive from day to day, and it is a struggle for those students who live far from the college to cover their expenses, while also

providing for themselves, as well as their unemployed immediate families.

Is Government is doing enough to alleviate FET graduate unemployment?

Yes	No
2	18

When participants were asked whether the South African government was doing enough to solve the graduate unemployment problem amongst FET students in particular, they gave the following responses:

Yes, we get bursaries to study (Nabeelah, Interview, August 24, 2017). Yes, students get bursaries (Kyle, July 11, 2017).

Yes, they give free bursaries and sometimes jobs too (Nozuko, August 22, 2017). Yes, we get bursaries (Shahiema, May 29, 2017).

No, there are too many youth unemployed and they turn to crime (Yolanda, May 29, 2017).

No, there are too many TVET College graduates unemployed working at places like Shoprite to earn a living (Imraan, May 29, 2017).

No, as there are too many people unemployed especially our youth and graduates (Zamumzi, June 1, 2017)

No, there are too many unemployed youth (Phakama, June 1, 2017).

No, there are too many unemployed graduates without work (Jade, July 11, 2017).

No, too many are unemployed (Willene, May 29, 2017).

No, they can do more to solve the unemployment problem amongst graduates and other youth (Siphosihle, , May 31, 2017).

No, we have too many unemployed TVET graduates (Leonette, August 16, 2017).

No, government can do much more to get unemployed people employable (Olwethu, August 24, 2017).

No, government is not doing enough for our graduate unemployment (Mandise, July 11, 2017).

No, too many graduates are unemployed for a few years (Shepard, July 11, 2017).

No, there too many unemployed youth in the country (Melissa, August 17, 2017).

No, I'm sure that I will also be an unemployed graduate soon (Sisanda, Interview, July 11, 2017).

No, not enough are being done to help graduates find jobs (Lee-Ann, August 17, 2017).

No, not enough is being done by government to help the unemployed (Zahraa, August 16, 2017).

Many households are living below the breadline and this makes it difficult for students to survive on the stipend as it often goes towards the cost of daily living to survive. Many female students often have children out of wedlock and this is an additional strain on the family income.

## **Summary, Findings and Recommendations**

This research paper is centred around the idea that education, Human Capital Theory, internships, and employability are all interlinked. One concept cannot be seen in isolation with regards to a country's economy and workforce. Providing a good quality and relevant educational basis is imperative to fulfilling the purposes of all of them. This is especially true when looking at TVET colleges – since they are tasked to provide qualified vocational graduates across the board for the economic growth of South Africa.

This study measured a sample group of 20 participants at a TVET college in the Western Cape, to determine the answer to the research question: How well does an internship prepare students for the workplace?

This question was broken down into two further questions: What are the successes and limitations of a college internship programme in preparing students for work? What are the skills needed to gain suitable employment?

### **19. Summary**

With the implementation of the NCV programme in 2007 it was anticipated that most of the unemployed youth would be absorbed into the TVET college system. Government implemented the SETAs to oversee the recruitment as well as the training of these youths, but unfortunately everything did not go as anticipated. Lack of clarity regarding the NCV qualifications framework as well as other logistical problems that needed urgent attention emerged and needed to be remedied as soon as possible. The working relationship between government industry and colleges was poor, and this further complicated things for colleges, who were not able to source internships for their first cohort of graduates.

To underline the principles underpinning Human Capital Theory, the South African government follows a neoliberal pathway to secure educational funding from the World Bank and the OECD, which demand high returns on their investments in education in emerging countries, in the form of interest on loans. Nonetheless, these loans allow the South African government to offer a free bursary scheme to help students who struggle financially to acquire a tertiary education. In return, the government is, in theory, supposed to get their rate of return in the form of graduates who are qualified in the vocational fields, and as such the economy can prosper.

There have been changes in the vocational education sector. The old apprenticeship boards who had an excellent working relationship with industry were dissolved, and the apprenticeship system was replaced by an internship system. This was a mistake; there was no proper consultation done through the process, leaving many graduates in limbo, unable to find a suitable internship and thus unable to qualify in their respective trades. This resulted in many graduates being unemployable by industry.

Early research on HCT underlines that, based on the transferability of acquired skills, HCT academics distinguish between general investments in human capital and specific investments in human capital (Becker, 1964). This distinction is important, especially since it is employer-based training that comprises these investments, meaning that employers are concerned with reaping returns in the form of specific skills suited to their needs. However, in a competitive labour market, these firms will not invest in the general skills required of their employees, since they are unlikely to collect adequate returns on their investment. Consequently, the laying down of general employability skills is crucial for the tertiary education sector.

Due to the small sample of participants, it is difficult and nearly impossible to reach a definitive conclusion on the successes and failures of the internship programmes. The aim of the study was to investigate the internship programme at a TVET college in the Western Cape and how well students are prepared for the workplace.

Becker's (1993) work in relation to HCT and employability was used as the conceptual framework for this study. A deductive as well as qualitative and quantitative approach was applied to gather data, using nine questions from the survey questionnaire to determine a result. Within the context of the research issue, it's worth noting that in 2009 HESA published a study entitled "Graduate Attributes" (Griesel & Parker, 2009) which was developed after interviews with potential employees. According to the research, there were gaps between employees expectations and graduate student readiness, however, there was an indication that some tertiary

institutions are focused on producing graduates who are fully prepared for the workplace. This research also conceded that most graduates lack experience and the essential ‘soft skills’ required for the workplace – an assertion echoed in the results of this research paper.

Vocational training is deemed to not be sufficiently relevant to the requirements of industry as it is exacerbated. Employers in the past were prepared to have graduates who had modest skills and train them to perform their jobs whereas modern day employers seek graduates who not only have a qualification, but are more competent, high in talent and able to offer something unique and exceptional to the job (Weddle, 2010). This means that the development of soft skills should play an important role in the training of graduates. These include verbal and written communication skills, conflict management, teamwork, problem solving and time management skills, among others.

How effective is our education system in producing graduates who have the right mix of skills required for industry in our current context? According to Adcorp’s 2011 employment index, there were about 600 000 unemployed graduates in South Africa, mostly due to the irrelevance of their degrees in proportion to the demands in the local job market (Vorster, 2013).

It is clear something needs to be done to foster graduate employability as demanded in today’s knowledge economy. From the participants’ answers in this study, it is evident that the Life Orientation course contributes substantially to the acquirement of ‘soft skills’ needed in the workplace and should be further developed. Educators need to familiarise themselves with the Life Orientation course and teach these employability skills in an in-depth manner by applying different teaching methodologies in a situational environment. Specific generic skills that are more valuable in a particular study course over another, should be given different weights in accordance with industry demands.

## **20. Theoretical Insights**

The HCT framework used was moderately successful in understanding the principles behind government and industry investment in education, although more research should be done to determine to what extent HCT influences the TVET college curricula in particular, and how relevant the application of HCT is within the South African educational context. To an extent, the curricula have been influenced by HCT, since the South African education has been forced to adopt a neo-liberal education structure as advocated by the OECD, since it is the only way South Africa can obtain the finance required for



bursary schemes.

Currently, the Life Orientation curriculum at TVET colleges is designed specifically with the HCT in mind. Human Capital Theory has its focal point in individual resources, particularly in the contribution of an individual's investments in education, however it is clear that a new application of HCT is needed, in particular one more suited to the South African context, where the emphasis should not be a market-led approach to graduates, but one more centred on a social justice approach that nurtures long term sustainability and individual and community benefit (Tikly, 2013). Becker (1993) argues that HCT's return on investment should be broader than just market-led, but should manifest in higher wages, effective production and improved health. These investments produce real human capital, rather than purely the individual as a tool for financial capital.

This research focussed on internships specifically, since they provide the bridge between the classroom and the workplace, being work-based educational experiences that relate to learning directly to specific jobs or professions (Merritt, 2008). American technical colleges focus their curriculum around internships to ensure graduates' experience of the learning process is more realistic.

Internships have been defined as “work-based educational experiences that relate to specific jobs, positions, occupations and professions. They are career- orientated curricular endeavours of practical applications” (Littke, 2004, p.1), which amount to “real work integrated into everyday world of school” (Littke, 2004, p. 124) Furthermore, “internships may develop partnerships between schools and corporations-companies, businesses and industries,

... create positive attitudes from business communities and get businesses involved in student education” (Merritt, 2008, p.4) and have “a sound educational and philosophical basis” (Merritt, 2008, p.3)

In this research study, the theory learned at college is mostly not aligned to the internship itself. This is why some participants claimed that they did not learn anything and could not apply their theory during their internships. This echoes the HESA report indicating the disparities between the expectations of employers and the readiness of graduates (Griesel & Parker, 2009).

Not enough exposure to practical applications and workplace learning means that, on top of lacking certain generic skills, many graduates fell short of possessing and applying the soft skills that make them employable.

With the pragmatic NCV programmes roll-out, government was expecting high returns (in terms of pass rates) due to the amount of money invested in FET Colleges, as well as in the students, in the form of bursaries. And yet this does not seem to take into account the principle of



employability in today's context. Several participants indicated that the NCV programmes did not really prepare them well for the workplace. Their most prominent concerns included the fact that they lacked the skills required and needed much more time in the workplace or practically applying what they had learned, although in some aspects, the NCV programmes has had a marginal amount of success in preparing students for the workplace. The NCV programmes should be reviewed in its entirety and must include a solid work readiness component relevant to their internships, to increase graduate employability.

Also, in relation to employability, respondents indicated that they had not been adequately exposed to the priority skills required by industry. This indicates the curriculum is outdated and does not reflect the immediate needs of industries across the board. The graduates' responses in the survey questionnaire highlighted that the NCV graduates were not well-prepared for the workplace environment and found it difficult to cope with the workload. This may be due to poorly qualified lecturers in various specializations areas, and a flawed and inadequate curriculum, which was poorly planned and quality assured.

The evidence gathered in this research suggests that 12 participants out of 20 agreed that the NCV has not prepared them holistically for the workplace and referred to a lack of practical training as a major stumbling block. Evidence reveals that the majority of participants were lacking 'soft skills' such as communication skills, critical thinking and problem-solving skills that are core to employability. Interestingly, one participant said that it was 1 000 times more difficult in the workplace than at college (in terms of putting theory into practice). This could be due to the fact that role-play or workplace simulation of topics did not take place. This would have familiarised students with real day-to-day issues of the workplace, and how to develop and apply skills such as conflict management and teamwork as well as critical thinking and problem solving.

## **21. Findings**

Due to the small size of the sample I cannot get to a conclusive finding on internships and work readiness. Given the data of the different graphs we can see that a lot of work needs to be done with regards to soft skills and hard skills so that TVET colleges and industry are on the same page.

The work readiness programme in particular is inadequate and needs a relook in line with industry's needs.

Colleges lack a learning theory model similar to the United States, whose technical community college graduates performed much better than their South African counterparts in TVET colleges.

Generic skills should have priority, but the lack of certain employable soft skills such as communication skills, teamwork, problem-solving and critical thinking stood out as the main cause behind students lacking employability. Participants also agreed that they need these skills. Besides internships, there is no work readiness programmes incorporated into NCV courses; the need to consult industry is a must, to facilitate curriculum development and ascertain the needs of industries.

To my knowledge as a TVET educator there is not enough practical exposure. European TVET students spend 70% of the semester in a workplace applying all the theory on the job.

The abolishment of the old apprenticeship boards that were an integral part of workplace learning were a major loss to the vocational training sector.

The theoretical side and practical side of NCV programmes appear mismatched as participants said they didn't apply any theory they learned in class to the workplace.

Colleges are not equipped to do the hands-on, practical training required, due to lack of finances and infrastructure.

Stipends are not enough for many of the students, whose parents are unemployed. Most of the time these students use the stipend to put food on the table and subsequently drop out of college since they do not have enough money left to pay for transport.

## **22. Recommendations**

Due to the small sample it is difficult to make recommendations as it does not represent the majority of the student population. More and in-depth research should be done with a fifty percent student population in order to be able to make effective recommendations. Drawing from the research findings, observations and investigations of this research study, the following recommendations emerge:

TVET colleges in South Africa need urgent attention. The academic sphere of the NCV programmes needs to be reconsidered, and sufficient financial backing made available to improve infrastructure and facilities so that NCV programmes can function according to their stated purpose, and students perform to the best of their ability in an environment conducive to

practical learning.

The Department of Higher Education should consider implementing a bridging course of one academic year for those entering the NCV programme with Grade 9 who are 15 years old. This should facilitate the transition from high school to college, teaching general skills such as positive living, negotiating the world of work, and life skills such as etiquette and manners, ethics, good behaviour, and attitudinal qualities – such as willingness to do the work – as well as civil responsibility and writing skills.

All employability options should be investigated for students in line with what industries require. This should be done through collaboration between TVET colleges, industries and the government.

To date the curriculum does not include drawing up of portfolios by students to present to prospective employers when applying for employment. This needs to be amended so that they are able to produce industry-relevant portfolios.

Soft skills and attributes such as reliability, honesty, trust and initiative need to be nurtured to allow students to draw up accurate CVs and personal portfolios, and writing skills developed, in applying for jobs.

A tripartite alliance (government, TVET Colleges and industry) should put a task team together, who will investigate and gather information regarding required skills on a two-yearly basis, as industry develops and new required ‘soft skills’ emerge.

It should resemble a Learning Theory Model that promotes ‘soft skills’ from across the board for different industries. Local and national companies should give input as to what hard and soft skills are required from industries across the board with different weightings depending on the type of industry. On-going tracking of graduates in employment as well as out of employment is important to gauge the effectiveness of this Learning Theory Model intervention.

Skills that are more valuable in a particular study course over another should be given different

weights in accordance with industry demands. In hospitality, for example, sub-sections like reception, catering, as well as hotel management emphasis should be given to industry terminology, as well as Business English and Business Afrikaans.

The Apprenticeship Boards of the late 1990s to 2000 should be reintroduced and be intimately connected with industry as per pre-1994. This will ensure that interns and colleges are in touch with the latest technological innovations of industry and colleges in turn can prepare students well for the workplace.

Colleges need structured, targeted work preparedness practical requirements that candidates complete prior to graduation or job placement.

The National Skills Development Sector should be overhauled to accommodate all NCV students in internships and in apprenticeships as well as those not in employment with certain expected criteria to be absorbed into training.

Government should gazette in law that all companies, big or small should be compelled to be part of a national graduate employment initiative using the SETAs to the maximum. Funding should be made available to assist and incentivise all companies in the training of graduates and the up skilling of the current workforce. It should be strictly regulated to avoid fraud.

It is critical for interventions to succeed to build industry confidence in TVET colleges. A collaborative approach would work best here, and a public-private partnership could be successful.

As for international models, the DHET should incorporate a combination of the British system, together with the American community college system, to secure a more structured system for TVET colleges that will lend them more credibility. In terms of internships, the DHET should adopt and apply the American system of internships in consultation with industries across the board to prepare formal learning as well as practical application of this theory in the workplace. Community colleges, especially in rural areas, would benefit from this, as would technical schools.

In addition to looking at European and US models, South African TVET colleges should turn to countries such as Ghana and Singapore, who have also had a colonial history that exacerbated problems in their educational systems and has caused public misconceptions of education in relation to employability. Like in Singapore (Law, 2010) and Ghana (Akyeampong, 2010), South African students and parents, as well as communities, see vocational subjects as inferior to academic subjects in terms of securing gainful employment. Students see TVET colleges as their last hope when they are not accepted at universities. But this is countered by the fact that South Africa has recently resorted to importing the required qualified artisans from the Far East. South Africa should employ part of Ghana and part of Singapore's TVET initiatives and formulate their own TVET initiatives that will suit the South African TVET system.

The government, in conjunction with TVET colleges, should appoint a task team to determine all registered student's home situations especially their immediate families' employment status and then for a period of six months adapt the stipend in relation to the increased travelling cost for the year.

### **23. Conclusion**

Life Orientation should be a critical component of any TVET course, and it should be aligned with the required skills of industries, especially the soft skills of the new knowledge economy. Life Orientation should be presented by suitably qualified and trained lecturers, who are able to timeously respond to course relevant needs of the college students, as well as to students' practical scenario needs.

Employability of graduates should be the foundation of every TVET college in the country. The challenge regarding employability and work readiness is extensive, but achievable if the right balance is found. Drastically improved NCV programmes, coupled with internships that adequately prepare graduates and involving all role players in meeting the needs of industries.

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## 25. Appendixes

### 25.1 Appendix A: Questionnaire

2016 NC(V) Graduate Students' Questionnaire

Please complete the following questionnaire, ticking the appropriate option where applicable and giving additional details where relevant in the space provided.

Personal Details

First name:

—

Surname: \_

Gender:

Age:

Marital status: Single / Married / Divorce:

Qualifications:

Highest grade passed at school: Highest

professional

qualifications prior to attending NCV:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other skills and qualifications:

Prior Work Experience

Do you have any previous work experience prior to registering at the college? Yes \_ No

If yes, give details.



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Study at FET College

Why did you decide to study at an FET College?

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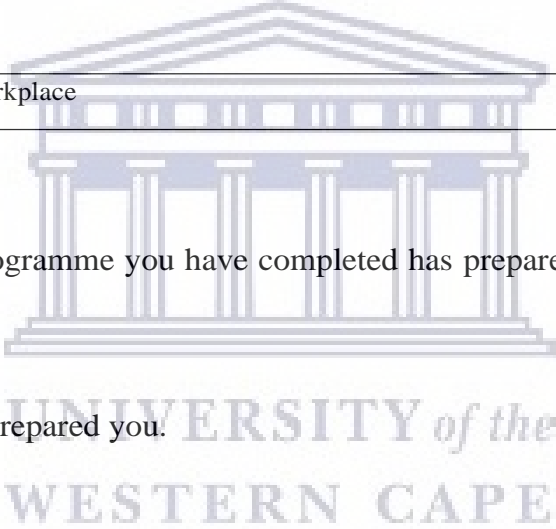
Which NCV programme have you completed? \_

Preparation for the Workplace

Do you think the NCV programme you have completed has prepared you well enough to enter the workplace?

Yes      No

If yes, explain how it has prepared you.



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If no, explain why not.

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Have you received any 'soft skills' training at college to prepare you for work?

Yes

No

If yes, give details:

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Have you received or been offered any other form of workplace training, such as an internship or job shadowing at college?

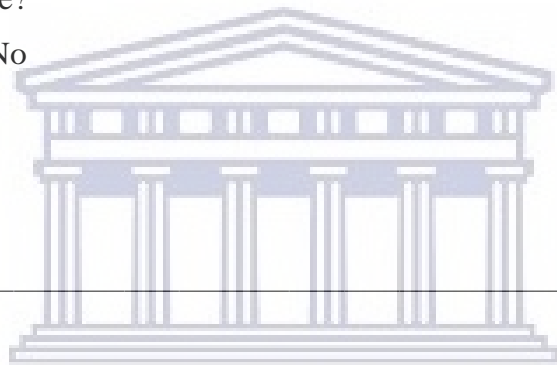
Yes

No

If yes, give details:

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How do you rate your overall skills in terms of your readiness to enter the workplace?

Poor                                      Average    \_    Good                      Excellent

Type of Work
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What kind of employment did you look for on graduating?

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9. How will you seek employment? (Tick all the methods you will use)

\* Word of mouth \_                      Social media

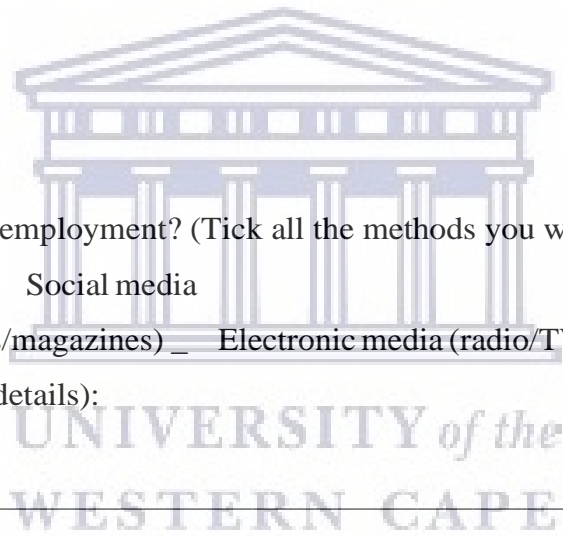
Printed media (newspapers/magazines) \_    Electronic media (radio/TV)

Online \_              Other (give details):

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Life Orientation High school/College Level

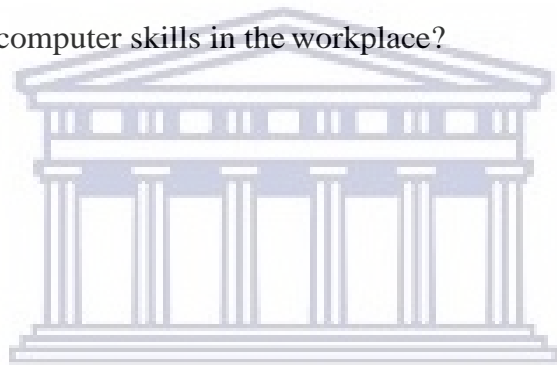
Do you think that the Life Orientation program has prepared you well for the workplace?

Excellent

Very good Not so good

Very dissatisfied Optional Comments

How would you rate your computer skills in the workplace?



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Excellent  
Very good  
Average  
Very Dissatisfied

Rate your time management skills in the workplace. Excellent  
Very Good Average  
Very dissatisfied

Did you employ any of the skills you learnt in the Life Orientation program in the workplace?

If yes, what was it? No Optional Comments

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How good was your participation in the workplace? Excellent  
Very good Average Dissatisfied

Were you included in the company's social development program? If yes, what was the program all about?

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If no, why not?

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Optional Comments

What other ‘soft skills’ were you missing while being an intern that you haven’t learnt at college? Maximum 2 skills.

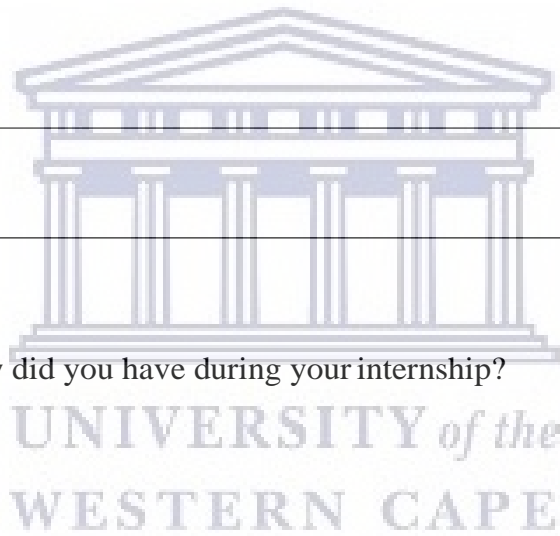
Optional comments

What type of job interview did you have during your internship?

Skype

Personal face interview

Telephone interview



What are the “skills” that you can bring to the workplace? Maximum 3 skills

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What type of internship did you participate in? Paid  
Unpaid Others



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Where was your internship situated? Campus  
Off campus Outside campus Outside province  
Other (please specify)

Where did you intern/ Work Base experience take place? Park Inn Hotel  
Cape Grace Hotel One and Only Hotel  
St. James Retirement Hotel Double Tree by Hilton City of Cape Town Premier's Office  
Netcare Hospitals Barlow World Group False Bay College South African Navy  
Any other place not mentioned above:



Where did you look for and find your internship/work-based placement? Student internship  
counsellor  
Company website Newspapers Family and friends Interment  
Career website

On average how many hours per week did you work?



(a) 20 - 45

(b) Shifts (60 hours) Optional comments

Rate your internship/ work-base experience on the level of responsibility given to you. Very satisfied

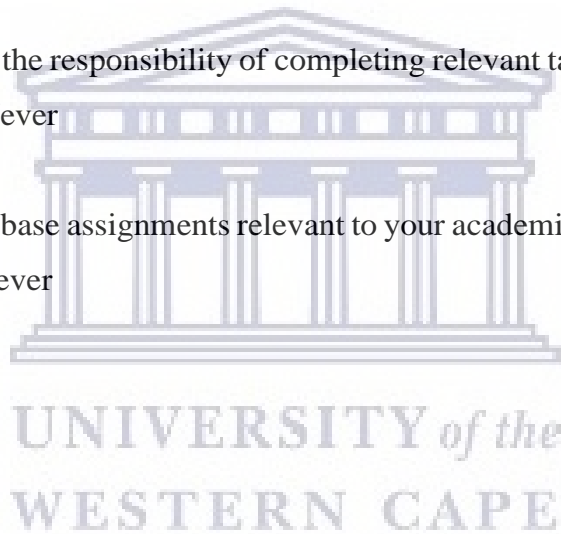
Moderately satisfied Satisfied/neutral Very dissatisfied Option Comments

How often were you given the responsibility of completing relevant tasks? Always

Often Sometimes Rarely Never

Was your internship/work-base assignments relevant to your academic subjects? Always

Often sometimes Rarely Never



Were supervision and guidance given to you in the workplace? Very satisfied  
Moderately satisfied Satisfied/Neutral Very dissatisfied Optional Comments

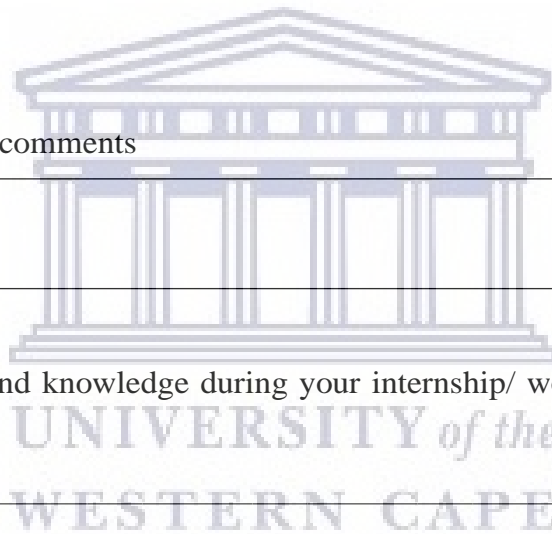
To what extent have you applied your theoretical knowledge of your field in the workplace?

Very satisfied

Moderately satisfied

Satisfied/Neutral

Very dissatisfied Optional comments



Did you gain new skills and knowledge during your internship/ work-base experience? If yes, explain what it was:

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If no, explain:

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Was there a “skill” you wished you had during your internship/work-based experience? If so what was it?

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How would you rate your overall internship/work-based experience?

Very satisfied

Moderately satisfied

Satisfied/neutral

Very dissatisfied Optional comments

Which of the following did you like the most about your internship/ work-based experience?

Good pay

Professional work environment Opportunity for gaining knowledge Opportunity for development of skills Opportunity to create contacts

Part of a team experience Flexible schedule

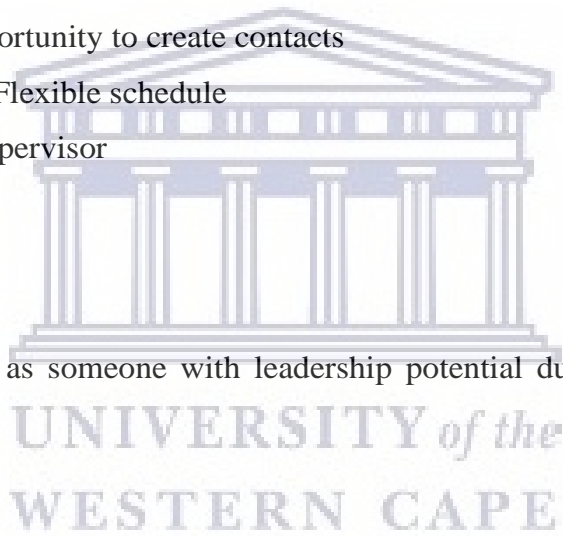
Good co-workers Good supervisor

Different responsibilities

Were you ever identified as someone with leadership potential during your internship/work-based experience?

Yes in what capacity \_No

Optional comments



Are you currently gainfully employed within your field of specialisation? Choose one of the following:

Full time permanent

Contractual

Part time

If not explain

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Government Intervention

Do you think government is doing enough to alleviate FET graduate unemployment in South Africa?

Yes No

Optional comments

Does the stipend you received cover all expenses including travelling for the whole year?

Yes No

Optional response



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During your registration, were you provided with any career guidance counselling regarding your choice of studies?

Yes No

Optional response

How does employer(s) view your FET NCV qualifications? Positive

Negative

Optional comments

How would you evaluate your overall internship experience in the workplace? Very satisfied

Moderately satisfied Satisfied/neutral Very dissatisfied

Optional comments

Thank you for your participation...!

## 25.2 Appendix B: Permission Letter

10 March 2017 Dear Sir/Madam,

Request for permission to interview students

My name is Antonio John Alistair Mitcham. I am currently enrolled in the online Masters programme in Adult Learning and Global Change which is offered in collaboration with the University of the Western Cape, South Africa; Linkoping University in Sweden; the University of British Columbia in Canada and Monash University in Australia.

My research study is entitled The NCVprogramme, internship and employability The case of a TVET College in the Western Cape

The study investigates how a college internship programme is preparing students for the work place. I would like to select 30 NCVstudents (15 males and 15 females) for my research. I am requesting your permission to include 30 of your students as participants in my study.

If you provide your consent, I would like to approach participants to complete a survey questionnaire. The survey questionnaire should take between 30 and 60 minutes to complete online. All information will remain confidential and anonymous.

All participants will be given a letter with information about the study. Included is a copy of the information letter for your perusal. Consent forms will be sent to all participants.

I will conduct my research in accordance with the ethical and professional guidelines as specified by the University of the Western Cape.

I would be happy to answer any questions or concerns that you might have. I can be contacted on my email address: antoniomitcham@gmail.com or on my mobile +27789588668 when I'm in Cape Town or on +966 593463204 when I'm in Saudi Arabia, which is much of the year.

If you provide your consent, I would like to request a signed letter of permission acknowledging your consent and permission for my research.

Research Title: The NCVprogramme, internships and employability. The case of a TVET College in the Western Cape.

Researcher: Antonio John Alistair Mitcham University of the Western Cape

Email Address: antoniomitcham@gmail.com Contact Number: +27789588668



### 25.3 Appendix C: Information Sheet

Dear participant

Re: Information regarding participation in research study.

My name is Antonio John Alistair Mitcham. I am currently a registered student in the online Masters Programme in Adult Learning and Global Change (ALGC). The University of the Western Cape requires me to conduct a research study. I am writing to invite you to participate in my research study. Details are provided below.

The purpose of the study: The purpose of this study is to investigate/ research the NCV programme, internships and employability. I hope that the findings of this study will inform policymakers and stakeholders in order to improve NCV internships.

Your participation: You are requested to complete the survey questionnaire. It must be stressed that your participation is entirely voluntary. The questionnaire will take approximately 30-60 minutes to complete. In the event that you decide to withdraw any information you have provided will be destroyed.

Confidentiality: Your name and identifying information and the completed questionnaire will be kept confidential. All data will be stored in a secure location for 5 years after which it will be destroyed.

Research Title: The NCV programme, internships and employability: The case of a TVET College in the Western Cape.

Researcher: Antonio John Alistair Mitcham University of the Western Cape

Email Address: antoniomitcham@gmail.com Contact Number: +27789588668

## 25.4 Appendix D: Consent Form

Dear participant

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this research study.

Statement of Consent: I have read the information letter. The researcher provided me with a copy. I freely consent to participate. I agree to complete the questionnaire. I am fully aware of the fact that I can discontinue my participation in the study at any time.

Signed.....

Date.....

Place.....

