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KWAZULU-NATAL

**INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI**

**THE INFLUENCE OF PERCEPTIONS OF LABOUR MARKET CONDITIONS
UPON INCREASED DEMAND FOR POSTGRADUATE STUDY**

by

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DECLARATION

I, Hlakaniphile Sinenhlahla Nene (215072466) declare that:

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Signed: _____

Date: _____/_____/_____

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my mom, Joyce Z. Nene

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First and foremost, I am grateful to the Almighty God for the strength, wisdom and good health that He has bestowed upon me throughout this research.

To my supervisor, Dr. Gerard Boyce; I would like to express my appreciation for your guidance, assistance and being patience with me throughout this study. I am fortunate enough to have had great supervisor who gave me the tools I needed to excel in my study. Thank you so much, words cannot explain how thankful I am.

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ABSTRACT

Globally, education systems have increasingly become human rights ‘sensitive’, as they cater for all learners and stakeholders involved in ensuring and maintain equality and fairness for all students and educators. Education remains an important part of the agenda for the government and has unequivocally been part of the international community’s agenda. While, many countries continue to democratise and embrace equality for all, education for all has become steadily democratised, and the more people are getting educated, the more the pressure the labour market exert in hiring the new graduates. While higher education enrolment rates increase, the youth unemployment rates in South Africa continues to increase. As of 2020, the graduate unemployment rates stand at 33.5% for those aged 15 to 24 years and 10.2% among those aged 25 to 34 years. Currently, only over 30% of the youth in South Africa have jobs and about half of them participate in the labour market. The aim of this study was to investigate the influence of perceptions on labour market conditions upon the demand for postgraduate enrolment. The quantitative data of this study was collected using the questionnaire research instrument among 190 final year undergraduate students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Westville Campus. The data was analyzed using IBM SPSS® Statistics, which is a statistical platform that allowed the researcher to perform descriptive statistics and regression analysis to understand the correlations and gaps with the dataset. Overall, the results revealed that there is no relationship between the perceptions of labour market conditions, specifically in terms of employment and earnings, and the postgraduate enrolment. This suggest that there are other driving forces that promote and inhibit students to pursue postgraduate studies or join the labour market after finishing an undergraduate study. This study calls for more future research to focus on the real-life experiences of students and high school learner to understand the social, cultural and economic factors that promote and inhibit students from joining the labour market rather than pursuing a postgraduate study after an undergraduate degree.

Keywords: unemployment, earnings, postgraduate enrolment, labour market, employment

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and Background

With the world continues to globalise and countries are becoming interdependent, there has been a recognition in ensuring that every individual has access to education. Globalisation has brought countries closer, allowing an internalisation of education which can be described as a process of integrating an international, intercultural, and global dimension into the goals, teaching, or learning, research and service functions of a university or higher education system (Knight, 2014). Education remains an important part of the agenda for the government and has unequivocally been part of the international community's agenda (Mhlongo, 2015). While, many countries continue to democratise and embrace equality for all, education for all has become steadily democratised. According to Bohler-Muller, Piennar, Davis and Gordon (2018), inclusive education has been driven by the values of democracy because it is aiming at achieving the rights for all, regardless of socio-economic background, cultural factors, and health and well-being.

Globally, education systems have increasingly become human rights 'sensitive', as it caters to all learners and stakeholders involved in ensuring and maintain equality and fairness. The Constitution of South Africa (1996: 12) ensures that every individual has access to education, and the education rights are contained in section 29 stating "everyone has the right to a basic education, including adult basic education; and to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible". This further implies South Africa's commitment to an education system that is inclusive and accessible to all individuals from various socio-economic backgrounds. Moreover, ensuring that all learners and students have an accessible equal and conducive platform, this would enable them to invest in their future and perform at their peak and to realise their potentials.

Education in South Africa and around the world has continuously recognised as a key instrument in the human capital development, as the more educated people are more likely to secure employment and jobs with good working conditions (Statistics South Africa, 2020). In the South African context, the education system consists of three components, namely: (1) general education and training, (2) further education and training, and (3) higher education and training. General Education and Training (GET) is grade R (0) up to grade nine (9), and encompasses the

compulsory age-years of the school. Under the South African School Act, no. 84 of 1996, schooling is mandatory from seven to fifteen years of age, and grade nine marks the end of the G phase, (Republic of South Africa 1996). After grade nine, students are allowed to choose to proceed to senior secondary education consisting of grade 10 to 12 for three years, or join a further education or enter the labour market.

The second phase, Further Education and Training (FET) operates from grade ten (10) to grade twelve (12), and includes additional academic education as well as advanced vocational training at technical colleges, private colleges and community college (Nuffic, 2015). Upon graduation, senior high school graduates and graduates of FET may choose to join the labour market or proceed to higher education institutions or universities. The third and last phase is the Higher Education and Training (HET), which encompasses of undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The undergraduate level is a requirement to be accepted for a postgraduate degree. At the undergraduate level, courses students may choose to do a higher certificate, a diploma, or a bachelor's degree, whereas at the postgraduate level; students proceed to do an honour's degree, a postgraduate diploma, a master's degree and/or a doctoral degree. (Nuffic, 2015). Additionally, the postgraduate level has a hierarchical order, which begins with an honours degree, then a master's degree and lastly; a doctoral degree (PhD), which tends to be highest academic level that can be achieved by students (Incikabi, Pektas, Ozgelen and Kurnaz, 2013).

When learners and students finish school or higher education and training, they are most likely to start looking for employment or start their own businesses. The legal age to be employed in South Africa is 15 years, and it is a criminal offence to hire or employ a child below this age (Department of Labour, 2018). In 2019, 40% of the working age in South Africans did not engage in any labour activity, and this means that these individuals were either studying, discouraged in looking for employment or were did not possess sufficient skills and experience to be hired for a job (Statistics South Africa, 2020). The remaining 60% were the labour market participants and delved between those who were working and those who were unemployed and actively pursuing jobs. In 2019, 29.1% of the labour market participants who were unemployed are young people. The Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) suggests that the official unemployment rate in the first quarter of 2020 increased by 1% point to (30,1%) compared to the fourth quarter of 2019 (Statistics South Africa, 2020). This unemployment rate has been persistently high over time with

the youth (aged 15–34 years) being the most affected by joblessness, as the young people accounted for 63,3% of the total number of unemployed persons and the unemployment rate within this group was 43,2% in the 1st quarter of 2020 (Statistics South Africa, 2020).

Graduates in the youth age group, the unemployment rate was 33,1% during the first quarter of 2020 compared to 24,6% in the fourth quarter of 2019 (Statistics South Africa, 2020). However, it was clear that the graduate unemployment rate was still lower than the rate among those with lower educational levels, and this emphasizes that education is still the key to these young people's prospects in the South African labour market. Even the 2019 QLFS findings showed that the unemployment rate was better with education level with 6.7 million unemployed, 56.1% had under-matric schooling, and were followed by those with matric at 34.1% in the third quarter of 2019 (Statistics South Africa, 2019). Moreover, just 2% of the unemployed were graduates, with 7.2% having a tertiary qualification as their highest level of education (Statistics South Africa, 2019). Further, this in some way highlights the importance of (higher) education in securing employment.

South Africa has experienced persistently growth in higher education enrolment rates. Undergraduate enrolment increased by 26% in 2017 compared to 2009. (Department Higher Education and Training, 2017). This growth has been supported by a push for higher education among policy makers in South Africa. Such as Chapter 9 of National Development Plan 2030. In addition, the South African government has played a pivotal role in providing financial assistance such as National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) and Funza Lushaka Bursary for students from impoverished economic backgrounds. NSFAS is intended for every qualifying undergraduate student whilst Funza Lushaka Bursary is intended for those who are pursuing a bachelor's degree in teaching only. Interestingly, growth is not only found in undergraduate enrolments. Notable, postgraduate enrolment has also seen an increase. Compared to 2009, in 2017, the number of postgraduates enrolled below the master's level increased by 36%, the master's degree increased by 35% and, finally, the doctorate doubled and increased by 114%, (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2017). There is no doubt that the number of postgraduates has increased, accompanied by an increase in demand for supervisors. (Singh, 2015). Noting that overall postgraduate enrolment is on the rise to ensure that these gains are sustained over time, understanding what has driven them is crucial

By the time a student completes an undergraduate degree, it is most likely that they have made a choice whether they ought to proceed to postgraduate studies or join labour market. The decision to pursue a postgraduate degree is not made immediately, it can be taken at many stages of life such as before the beginning of the undergraduate degree, during the undergraduate degree, at the end of the undergraduate degree or sometime later after the graduation (Jepsen and Neumann, 2008). No matter when a student wants to study at a postgraduate level, there will always be underlying factors that motivated them to further their studies. A great deal of research has centered on the following factors: family impact, keeping up with the age, gaining social status, escaping monotony of life, undergraduate experience, personal satisfaction, professional growth, academic progress, academic desire, peer impact, financial support, job experience, colleagues, career change, lecturers, community, (Incikabi et al. 2013; Aboobaker and Van Belle 2018).

While rising postgraduate enrolment rates may be attributable to a variety of factors, two are consistently ignored but yet are important. These two important economic factors that are often neglected are earnings and employment. The role played by the labour market information is often dismissed when considering underlying factors that influence one's decision to enrol in postgraduate studies. Additionally, the information on the labour market offers knowledge of what is happening on the labour market such as providing insights into who buys labour, what kind of labour is purchased and what kind of labour is available in terms of numbers, skills, and qualifications (Department for Education and Skills, 2007). This information changes with time and is influenced by different things, including technological change, globalization, demographics, government change, and education and training (Department for Education and Skills, 2004).

Education and training have become the driving forces in the labour market. South Africa's increase in education and training has brought shifts and significant changes in labour market opportunities systems. In line with this, recent statistics reveals that currently, the South African labour market is shifting to skilled workers from semi-skilled and low-skilled workers, and these are the ones that earn better wages compared to unskilled workers (Statistics South Africa 2010; Statistics South Africa, 2014; Department of Higher Education and Training 2019). Given the circumstances in the labour market and education, everyone tends to strive for better education. This transition has put those with advanced experience and skills in good position. For that reason,

students may decide to enroll in postgraduate education to improve their employment prospects and earnings.

In view of the fact that South African higher education policy clearly assumes an interpretation of the value of the higher education by human capital, (van der Merwe 2010). It is important to examine whether the changes in labour market conditions in South Africa and increasing enrolment in postgraduate education are affecting educational and employment decisions. Given that previous studies were based on general personal and social factors such as family's economic situations and peer pressure, which often motivate students to pursue postgraduate education. There is not much evidence to support the theory of human capital that individuals enter higher education primarily on the basis of future earnings and employment, as expected from them. (van der Merwe 2010). The purpose of this study is therefore to expand empirical work by considering the perceptions of labour market conditions on the demand for postgraduate education. The research focuses in particular on investigating the impact of perceptions of employment and expectations of earnings on postgraduate enrolment.

1.2 Problem statement

The South African government continues to stress the importance of higher education. Apart from driving the country's economic output, it has also been seen as a way of giving individuals access to labour market opportunities (Tomlinson, 2008). Consequently, South Africa has experienced steady growth in higher education, however; there is growth in both the official unemployment rate and the graduate unemployment rate (StatsSA, 2019). This suggest that the emphasis has been on the supply side and has focused on producing more graduates. Forgetting about demand side, which is creating more job opportunities as more people enhance their human capital and are ready to enter labour market. This has led to the development of a competitive labour market, as the shifts in the labour market conditions in South Africa has changed students' minds when it comes to taking decisions in terms of education.

Subsequently, the demand for postgraduate education in South Africa is increasing. Nonetheless, no work has been carried out to examine the effect of labour market changes on increased demand for postgraduate education. Instead, previous research has focused on factors that inspire and promote students to enrolling in postgraduate education. While a number of factors

have been studied affecting student enrolment, little attention has been paid to the relationship between postgraduate enrolment and economic factors such as employment and unemployment, and earnings. Moreover, while the economic factors might play a significant role in improving one's standard of living, little work has been carried out to understand the perceptions of labour market conditions on increased demand for postgraduate education. Hence, the purpose of the study is to investigate the influence of perceptions of labour market conditions upon increased demand for postgraduate education.

1.3 Rationale and significance of the study

This study investigates the influence of perceptions of labour market conditions upon increased demand for postgraduate education. Previous studies conducted have focused on some factors that motivate students to enrol in postgraduate studies, and these included implications on family, friends, lecturers, peer pressure and experiences during varsity (Incikabi et al., 2013). However, researchers have pointed out that none of the previous research have been conducted to understand the influence of perceptions of labour market conditions upon increased demand for postgraduate education. Therefore, the rationale behind conducting this study is to contribute to the limited literature about the influence of perceptions of labour market condition upon increased demand for postgraduate education. In addition, the significance of conducting this study is to contribute to the body of knowledge linking education and labour market, as there is a need to determine the effects of perceptions of labour market on student's decision to enrol in postgraduate education.

This research hopes that the findings will be able bridge the lack of sufficient information on the influence of perceptions of labour market on increased demand for postgraduate education. The findings of this study may be useful to the policy makers in various sectors of the government, especially in the education and labour departments. Moreover, in the educational sector, curriculum developers will be informed when developing curriculum for the students. Hence, the results from this study will be valuable to higher institutions to restructure or rather re-evaluate their teaching and learning approach, so they can meet the expectations of students. For that reason, the findings will likely influence further scholarly research by other researchers who may be interested in this field of knowledge and initiate appropriate mitigations.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

The aim of the study is to investigate the influence of perceptions of labour market conditions upon increased demand for postgraduate education.

This study has the following specific objectives:

- To investigate the influence of perceptions of unemployment upon postgraduate enrolment demand.
- To investigate the influence of perceptions of earnings expectations upon postgraduate enrolment demand.
- To explore the interrelations between the perceptions of unemployment and earnings influence upon postgraduate enrolment demand.

1.5 Research questions

In line with the specific objectives of this study, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

- What is the relationship between the perceptions of unemployment and postgraduate enrolment?
- What is the relationship between earnings expectations and postgraduate enrolment?
- What is the interrelation between the perceptions of unemployment and earnings expectations influence upon postgraduate enrolment demand?

1.6 Definition of terms

In an effort to help readers understand the content of this study and to prevent any misinterpretations, the researcher described and specified the following terms for a better understanding of this study.

1.6.1 Labour market

There is no commonly accepted definition for the concept 'labour market'. However, Serena (2016) noted that the use of the word 'market' does not mean that labour works as another commodity or service. The Economic Times (2019) offers the simplest description of the labour market, defining labour market as the place of interaction between employers and employees, and

employees are competing for the best jobs in this industry, while employers are competing to hire the best. In line with the definition provided by the Department of Education and Skills (2007) which claims that the labour market is a system that combines people's potential employers (the demand for labour) with people available for work (the availability of labour).

1.6.2 Unemployment

Generally, unemployment is what Byrne and Strobl (2004) defines as the situation in which the person without work is currently available for work and looking for work. Unemployment can be defined in various ways, as there is what is referred to strict and broad unemployment. Strict unemployment is known as an official definition, and includes only workers who are still actively seeking work, while the broad unemployment, also known as an expanded definition, and includes people who would like to work but are discouraged to even look for work as a result of rejection (Altman, 2003).

1.6.3 Employment

Employment to many people can mean a variety of things. In this context, employment is a partnership between two parties, typically on the basis of a contract for which work is compensated, where one party, which may be a company, is the employer for profit, a non-profit organization, a cooperative or another, and the other is the worker (Dakin and Armstrong, 1989).

1.6.4 Earnings

Earnings is used interchangeable with income, and it is known as money obtained in return for labour or services offered. For the purpose of the study, the earnings refer to the money an individual receives in compensation for his or her labour.

1.6.5 Postgraduate education

Postgraduate study refers to the range of courses available to students who have completed undergraduate studies (Nuffic, 2015).

1.7 Structure of dissertation

This research report consists of five chapters.

- Chapter 1 is the introduction and presents the subject of the study and provides an overview of the study's rationale.
- Chapter 2 is the literature review and introduces the reader to the subject-related research literature and selects the most important and applicable research related to topic rather than performing an exhaustive search. This chapter reviews literature conducted both locally and internationally.
- Chapter 3 is the methodology and explains the research methods and designs used to carry out the study and the actual procedures used to carry out this study.
- Chapter 4 is the interpretation and presentation of the results and present the findings from the data collected to make this study a reality.
- Chapter 5 is the discussion of results and conclusion, and discusses the findings presented in chapter four and analyse the research questions outlined in chapter one in relation to literature and theoretical framework. In addition, this chapter also provides a main conclusion and the recommendations based on the data analysis.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents literature conducted both locally and internationally, and the theoretical framework guiding this study. According to Fink (2014), literature review is meant to offer the readers how the research fits within bigger scope of study and also gives an indication of sources utilised in the process of investigating the subject matter. While, the theoretical framework gives an overview of which theory will be applied to the findings of the study. The literature review will be based on labour market variables, specifically earnings and unemployment (employment) in relation to post graduate education enrolment.

2.2 The relationship between education, employment and earnings

There is a growing discussion around education being the driver towards attaining employment in the future (Diebolt and El Murr, 2004; Branson, Leibbrandt and Zuze, 2009; Branson, Ardington, Lam and Leibbrandt, 2013). Education remains a significant influence of employment prospects, as noted that in order to have a profession one needs to acquire education (OECD, 2012). Education and employment have a vice-versa relationship, as education provides knowledge that prepares one for a working environment, and this knowledge allows one to perform well on the duties required by the occupation. In addition, employment grants an individual an experience that is more like education, which makes it possible to even get a higher position in the company. In addition, education and employment have a correlation, granting one the opportunity to learn and grow until their potential is reached.

As previously noted, education differs according to three levels; the GET, FET and HET. For the purpose of this research, the focus lies on the experiences of students in higher education and training, and this includes undergraduates (first to third level) and postgraduates (honours, masters and doctoral). Education continues to grant individuals that skills that are required in the labour market, as employers have certain requirements for the jobs they advertise and one of these requirements require a certain level of education for employment. In addition, when a job post is sent out, the job description determines whether one applies for the job or not, and when it is time for selection, employment recruiters usually look for candidates with required skills for the job.

Therefore, it is visible that “education is becoming gradually significant to meet the demands of tomorrow’s jobs and is generally a good insurance against unemployment even in difficult economic times.” (OECD 2012: 1).

While education is necessary to secure formal employment, it is also crucial for better earnings. According to the World Bank (2018), education harvests solid economic benefits, as those with higher levels of education tend to earn higher earnings compared to ones with less education. There is an argument that the more an individual invests in education, the greater likelihood that he or she will retain higher earnings, and this varies with the type of careers undertaken (Walker and Zhu, 2003). The association between education and earnings is properly made in calculating the rate of return to investment in education (World bank, 2018). This issue of how higher education contributes to higher incomes has been posed and examined on a number of occasions. Nevertheless, the indicative results are that higher education typically offers higher income. For instance, a study carried out by Walker and Zhu (2003) indicates that there is a relationship between higher education and higher earnings.

2.3 Labour market

A number of students enrolling in postgraduate studies in South Africa is increasing gradually (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2017). Nonetheless, findings from StatsSA also show that graduate unemployment is also growing. Graduate unemployment refers to unemployment among people with an academic degree, and the findings from StatsSA shows a gradually increasing rate from 4.4% in 2011 (first quarter) to 7.9% in 2019 (first quarter) in a period of 6 years (StatsSA, 2019). According to StatsSA (2019), education is still the key to young people’s prospects improving in the South Africa labour market considering that graduate unemployment is still lower than the rate among those with other educational levels. Of 6 200 000 people who were unemployed in first quarter 2019, the majority were identified to be individuals with less than matric (55.9%), followed by those with matric (34.5%), and only 2.1% were graduates whilst 6.1% was for other tertiary qualifications (StatsSA, 2019).

Education level	Employees	Bottom 5%	Bottom 10%	Bottom 25%	Median	Top 25%	Top 10%	Top 5%
	Thousand	Rand						
All levels of education	11 058	570	845	1 500	2 800	6 500	12 000	17 000
No schooling	307	400	450	700	1 100	1 950	3 800	5 500
Less than primary completed	897	390	470	800	1 300	2 167	4 000	5 000
Primary completed	512	450	600	975	1 500	2 600	4 333	5 600
Secondary not completed	3 607	500	750	1 200	1 993	3 467	6 000	8 950
Secondary completed	3 455	900	1 200	2 000	3 500	7 000	11 000	15 000
Tertiary	2 134	1 500	2 500	5 500	10 000	15 000	23 333	33 000
Other	146	500	700	1 300	2 380	5 400	10 000	15 000

Table 1: Distribution of monthly earnings by level of education (Source: Statistics South Africa, 2010)

Table 1 represents monthly earnings of South Africans in 2010. The results suggest a positive relationship between education level and earnings. From the above figures, median monthly earning for those with no schooling was 84.62% of the median monthly earnings for those with less than primary completed. Median monthly earning of those with less than primary completed was 86.87% of those with primary completed. The median monthly earnings for those with secondary completed was 35% of the median monthly earnings for those with tertiary education. The distributions on Table 1 shows that students often realize that graduates are among the less unemployed by education level and that their earnings levels also increase with the level of education one accumulates and this may be one of reasons some undergraduate students pursue postgraduate studies.

2.4 Previous research

Previous research that has been conducted has focused on various factors such as family dynamics, peer pressure and socio-economic factors influencing students' decisions upon transition from high school to higher education, from undergraduate studies to postgraduate studies, and most of them looks at motivation for higher education in general rather than postgraduate education. These studies have been outlined in this chapter since they include earnings and employment as factors and variables that impact the decisions of high school graduates and an undergraduate student's conclusion concerning whether or not proceed to postgraduate education or look for employment with an undergraduate degree. The literature discussed in this paper focuses on previously research undertaken that includes earnings and employment as factors that influence students to further their education.

2.4.1 Perceptions of unemployment, earnings and enrolment

Against this backdrop of changing opportunity structures in the labour market, it is of importance to understand how significant are employment and earning considerations in the thoughts of a potential graduates when applying for postgraduate education. Lu, Mavondo and Qui (2014) identified two distinct research approaches, noting the (1) macro-environmental variables that influence students to take postgraduate studies, and (2) to identify reasons of choice at an individual level by examining the perceptions of students. Both macro-environmental variable and individual level studies were reviewed and are discussed below.

2.4.1.1 Individual level

Many studies were reviewed that focus on the influence of perceptions of unemployment and earnings expectations on individual level decision to enrol in higher education. These are separated into three levels, and were conducted amongst postgraduate students, undergraduate students, and high school students.

Mueller, Flickinger and Dorner (2015) conducted a study to explore determinants of students' intention to earn a PhD. The purpose of the study was to understand why students pursue doctoral degrees. The sample was master's students and doctoral students from a university in German. Questionnaires were administered among 229 students enrolled at a master's level and were conducted among students between ages of 20 years to 29 years. Interviews were conducted among 28 masters and 11 doctoral students. Of the 39 interviewees, 19 were males and 20 females and respondents for interviews were aged between 21 years to 34 years. Both questionnaires and interviews results revealed that master's students were neutral to getting higher earnings as a factor that influences them to take doctoral degrees. Similarly, with the findings by Teowkul, Seributra, Sangkaworn, Jivasantikarn, Denvilai, and Mujtaba (2009) who conducted a study in Thailand university amongst masters and doctoral students. Of 89 respondents, 76.4% were in a master's degree program and 23.6% were in doctoral programs. More than half of the respondents (58.4%) were between the ages of 21 to 30 years, 29.2% were between the ages of 31 to 40 years and 12.4% were above 41 years old (Teowkul et al., 2009: 38). Only 19.1% were unemployed in the study, and the results showed that motivations of continuing to pursue a postgraduate degree were not gender related. However, differences were found in level of education, as the intention for master's

students was to improve job prospects and getting higher earnings, while this was not the case for doctoral students.

Soroush, Arefi and Yamani (2015) approach was different from that of Mueller, Flickinger and Dorner (2015) and Teowkul et al. (2009). Soroush, Arefi and Yamani (2015) also sampled 161 masters and doctoral students at the Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, but this time with the aim of examining economic factors that affect the demand for higher education in undergraduates and postgraduate level. Unlike Mueller, Flickinger and Dorner (2015) and Teowkul et al. (2009) who focused on postgraduate level only, Soroush, Arefi and Yamani (2015) aimed to understand underlying economic factors promoting pursuing of education for undergraduates and postgraduate students. Of 161 respondents, 99 were females and 62 were males, and 49.7% aged between 23 to 25 years, 26.1% were aged between 25 to 27 years, 13% aged between 27 and 29 and 10.6% was aged over 29 years. In the undergraduate level and postgraduate level, getting a better job showed a positive relationship on motivations to pursue higher education. However, in terms of higher income in the undergraduate level, there was a strong positive relationship while postgraduate level showed moderate relationship on motivations to pursue higher education.

Liu and Morgan (2018) conducted a study among first year postgraduates in China to identify the factors influencing their decision to enrol in postgraduate studies. Data was collected using questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. 616 questionnaires were distributed, and only 381 respondents returned their completed questionnaires, making the response proportion 62%. Of 381 respondents who returned their application, 293 were females and 88 were males. Interviewees sample were selected according to gender and social class, with 11 respondents classifying as a middle class and 19 identifying as a working class. Quantitative findings revealed that the main reason for student to enrol in postgraduate studies was to “expand employment chances.” (Lui and Morgan, 2020:1). Similarly, qualitative findings revealed that participants were motivated by employment prospects and increased salary.

Uka (2012) conducted a study to provide a broader understanding of Albanian student’s intentions to pursue a master’s degree in education. Sample was master’s students enrolled in three public universities in different cities of Albania. 105 questionnaires were distributed, 82 gave consent resulting to 78.1% response rate. Of the 82 respondents who gave consent for the study to be conducted, 70 were females and 12 were males. Of 82 respondents, 62.2% aged between 20 to

25 years. Results showed career-oriented factors was the motivation driven by the desire to increase their earnings to improve their income rate and for financial stability. Results were in line with a study by Arar, Abramovitz, Bar-Yishay and Notzer (2017) who conducted a study to examine factors influencing student's choice of higher education and postgraduate studies and found that students had extrinsic motivations and intrinsic motivations. A need for financial advancement was among extrinsic motivations. Both Jewish and Israel Arab students in the study exhibited a strong relationship on earnings expectation and postgraduate enrolment (Arar et al., 2017). Another study by Arceno (2018) investigated the expectations and motivation of graduate students for pursuing higher education and found that salary expectation was the highest mentioned factor in extrinsic factors.

Aslan (2014) conducted a study to examine demand for postgraduate educational science programs of a developed and developing universities for the period of a year (2011 to 2012). Ankara university had 403 students while Gaziosmanpaşa had 132 students in this postgraduate program. 535 questionnaires were distributed, 222 gave consent resulting to 47% response rate. Of the 222 respondents, 121 were women and 101 were men, with 75.9% of women under the age of 30 years and 57.7% of men under the 30 years. All respondents were employed, and the findings shows that income expectations and better jobs motivated students to enroll in postgraduate education, and these were found higher amongst those students aged between the ages of 22 to 28 years. However, in a study conducted by Stoecker (1991) examining factors that influence the decision to return to graduate school for professional students, and the results showed that not being happy with the current income exerted a significant need to return to postgraduate education. Arar and Abramowitz (2017) also conducted research on motivation and choice of teachers to pursue their postgraduate studies in an ethnic minority college. The aim of the study was to examine factors that influenced teachers' decisions in continuing with their education. The sample was students studying in the Educational Management postgraduate program at a college, and 150 questionnaires were distributed, but only 84% gave consent for participation. Of 126 respondents who gave consent, 89.7% were females. Of the respondents, 50% aged between 31 to 40 years and the results showed that expectations of improved salary had a strong positive effect in enrolment to postgraduate education.

Knutsen (2011) conducted a study to examine factors that motivate students to pursue higher education. The sample for this study was U.S. workers who are generally at the age group of 18 to 24 years at the Robert Morris University. Of 200 respondents, 123 were females and 77 were males, and the results showed that to “increase my income” and to increase my job opportunities had a positive effect on student’s influence to pursue higher education. Similarly, Baliyan (2016) conducted a study to examine why students enrol in higher education in Botswana. The findings showed that employment prospects (graduate employment rate) were found to show positive effect on influencing students to enter for higher education. Another study conducted in Inner Mongolia and Dalian Nationalities Universities by Wen and Sha (2014) focused on undergraduate students’ views on motivations to pursue postgraduate studies. 76% of the respondents decided to take postgraduate studies while 24% decided not to take postgraduate studies. Of 76% respondents that decided to opt for postgraduate, 92% did so to pursue better jobs (Wen and Sha, 2014).

In contrast with the above studies by Knutsen (2011), Baliyan (2016) and Wen and Sha (2014), Lin’s (2011) study took a different turn from the rest, and conducted a study solely on women, with the aim to examine undergraduates’ women aspirations for pursuing masters and doctoral studies. The study consisted of 19 participants from one public and two private universities in Taiwan. Participants consist of only third years and fourth years, who were selected from the different fields, namely: humanities, management and engineering. Mixed approach was adopted as questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. The results revealed that employment prospects and earnings showed a strong positive effect for master’s enrolment but had a weaker effect for doctoral enrolment.

Gölpek and Çiftçioglu (2014) conducted a study with the aim of understanding the desire to receive higher education. Sample was grade twelve students registered at secondary education institutions in Gaziantep in 2012-2013 and students registered in different faculties of Hasan Kalyoncu University. 370 questionnaires were distributed, 351 gave consent for participation. 156 (85 females and 71 males) questionnaires were answered by grade 12 and 195 (105 males and 90 females) by university students. Of the 156 grade 12 students, 97.4% had it in their capacity to enrol in higher education. Of the 156 grade 12 respondents, 53.8% aged 18 years and of the 195 university respondents, 34.9% were aged 20 years. The findings showed that the experiences of

Grade 12 learners and university students were similar, as there is positive relationship in earning higher income and weak relationship in increasing chances of being employed. Consistent with a study by Saiti and Prokopiadou (2008) who examined factors influencing demand for higher education amongst Greece students, and found that of the 97.8% of respondents that had it in their capacity to enter higher education, 75% did so with an intention to escape unemployment and for career development and better jobs.

4.1.1.2 Macro level

To examine the influence of perceptions of labour market conditions, Albert (2000) conducted a study to investigate the influence of labour market in demand of higher education in Spain. The study canvassed young people aged between 18 to 24 years. Data was collected from second quarter Spanish Labour Force Survey between 1987 to 1998, and the results shows that “the labour market signals in Spain have an influence on the demand for higher education: as a signal of both the opportunity cost of finding a job if not going to university and the employment expectations for each relevant education level.” (Albert, 2000:147). Similarly, Cepar and Bojnec (2013) conducted a study to examine the perceptions of labour market conditions, and the study aimed at exploring determinants of relative participation in undergraduate higher education in Slovenia. The study also targeted students from the youth’s age group who were enrolled in undergraduate higher education in Slovenia between 1980 and 2006. Data was collected from Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia and Employment Service of Slovenia, and the results shows that most students are motivated by an expected higher earnings and labour market conditions.

Ahmed and McGillivray (2019) conducted a study among high school students and tertiary students, different from that of Albert (2000) and Cepar and Bojnec (2013) that focused solely on tertiary students. Ahmed and McGillivray (2019) conducted this study to examine wage expectations on higher education enrolment in Bangladesh. The objective was to determine whether the wage gap between secondary graduates and tertiary school graduate encourages enrolment in higher education. Data was collected from Bangladesh Labour Force Surveys and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics with the focus of 1999 to 2009 period, and the study showed that perceptions of earnings have positive effect upon graduate enrolment. In line with another study conducted in Spain, Clarke (2016) conducted a study among enrolled undergraduates and

postgraduates, as well as those who have completed their studies over the year 2000-2011. Data was collected from the Spanish National Institute of Statistics, World Bank, Spain's Ministry of Education and the Central Intelligence Agency World Fact book, and the results revealed that there is a positive correlation between perceptions of unemployment and enrollment level for both undergraduates and postgraduates.

Farajollahi, Shayestehfar, Saeidipour and Taleebi (2018) conducted a study using a different approach called a documentary-analytical method. The main objective of the study was to identify determinant economic factors in students' enrolment in open and distance universities. Sample size consisted of applicants of BA of the academic years 2001 to 2014 in all centres and branches of Payam-E-Noor University (PNU) in 31 provinces and about 500 centres. Data analysis were done using Ordinary Least Square, and few conclusions were drawn noting that the perceptions of earnings had an impact on the entry of students in Payam-E-Noor University. Contradicting some previous research with different results, Vieira and Vieira (2014) conducted a study to explain aggregate demand of higher education. The study investigated 36 years of applications to higher education in Portugal with an objective of identifying aggregate demand determinants between the period of 1977 to 2012. Data was collected from bank of Portugal, National Statistics Institute, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education's Statistical Office. The findings showed that perceptions of unemployment have a negative impact upon higher education enrolment.

Based on the reviewed studies, empirical evidence about perceptions of earnings and unemployment is found in developed countries (Albert, 2000; Saiti and Prokopiadou, 2008; Knutsen 2011; Cepar and Bojnec, 2013; Vieira and Isabel, 2014; Uka, 2012; Mueller, Flickinger and Dorner, 2015; Clarke, 2016) and developing countries (Teowkull et al., 2009; Lin, 2011; Aslan, 2014; Gölpek and Çiftçioglu, 2014; Wen and Sha, 2014; Soroush, Arefi and Yamani, 2015; Baliyan, 2016; Arar and Abramowitz, 2017; Arrar et al., 2017; Farajollahi et al., 2018; Arceno 2018; Ahmed and McGillivray, 2019; Liu and Morgan, 2020). Similar findings found in developed and developing nations show that perceptions of earnings and unemployment have negative and positive effect on higher education enrolment.

Moreover, it was noted that in Southern Africa context in a study conducted by Baliyan (2016) in Botswana, and the findings suggested that perceptions of graduate unemployment rate

have positive effect in higher education enrolment. Limited studies were conducted in South Africa, hence why there still a need for South Africa research. Also, most of the reviewed studies are post-hoc (Stoecker, 1991; Teowkull et al., 2009; Lin, 2011; Aslan, 2014; Arefi, and Yamani, 2015; Mueller, Flickinger and Doiner, 2015; Uka, 2012; Clarke, 2016; Arar et al., 2017; Arar and Abramowitz, 2017; Soroush, Arefi and Yamani, 2015; Liu and Morgan, 2020). Post-hoc studies have been criticised, respondents tend to provide answers they feel will sound right and appropriate to the researcher (Jepson and Neumann, 2017).

Other than the difference noted above, reviewed studies suggest that there is a significant difference in terms of observed characteristics such as the level of study, gender, age, and life experience. With regards to level of study, perceptions of unemployment and earnings among postgraduate students have a positive influence in opting for postgraduate education for postgraduate reviewed studies (Stoecker, 1991; Aslan, 2014; Uka, 2012; Arar et al., 2017; Arar and Abramowitz, 2017; Arceno, 2018; Liu and Morgan, 2020). In contrast to master's students, the students who are towards obtaining the highest qualification a student can get academically (doctoral) have no interest in employment nor earnings (Teowkull et al., 2009; Muller, Flickinger and Doiner, 2015; Soroush, Arefi and Yamana, 2015).

Similarly, perceptions of unemployment and earnings amongst undergraduate students have positive influence in opting for postgraduate education (Albert, 2000; Cepar and Bojnec, 2011; Knutsen, 2011; Wen and Sha, 2014; Baliyan, 2016,). However, in Lin's (2011) study, results are different from the above-mentioned studies, as they revealed that employment prospects and earnings have a strong positive effect for master's enrolment but have a weak effect for doctoral enrolment. This finding is similar to that study of Teowkull et al. (2009), Muller, Flickinger and Doiner (2015) and Soroush, Arefi and Yamana (2015). In addition, the difference is that Lin's (2011) study was conducted among undergraduates' students. With regards to high school (grade 12) students, similar results were found (Saiti and Prokopiadou, 2008; Ahmed and McGillivray 2019), and it was clear that the perceptions of unemployment and earnings have a positive effect for enrolment except for the study of Gölpek and Çiftçioglu (2014) and Vieira and Vieira (2014). The findings of these studies suggested that perceptions of unemployment have no influence in enrolment of higher education.

Based on above, perhaps the difference between the doctoral and master's students' perceptions of unemployment and earnings can be explained by age and experience. "It has been widely believed that older people are wiser and skilled probably because of experience gathered over time, challenges that they have met and solutions that they managed to cobble to achieve. In group learning, we have people of different ages, young and old, who have totally different understanding and way of looking at issues." (Teowkull, 2009: 46). For instance, in the study by Teowkull (2009), only 19% of respondents were unemployed, and the rest were employed and were much older, with 36% of respondents having an experience of above 6 years, 15.7% had experience of 4 to 6 years. In addition, the level of experience explains they have seen, experienced and learnt a lot during their academic and professional years. Moreover, this was not the case for younger students, as they lacked experience as a result of their age, however; this group was still eager for more earnings and securing employment. For example, Uka (2015) and Aslan (2014) found employment prospects to have strong influence amongst people aged between 20 to 28 compared to aged 29 and above. For Grade 12 students, it was clearly evident that they were still not clear if they want to proceed with education or look for employment.

In terms of gender differences, Uka (2012), Stoecker (1991), Knutsen (2011), Teowkull et al. (2009) found no significance between males and females' perceptions of unemployment and earnings. Both males and females expressed their intention to improve their income rate for financial stability, and to increase chances for securing better jobs by pursuing higher education. In contrast, Liu and Morgan (2020) found specific gender differences for motivation to pursue higher education, as females were more concerned about their earnings and employment opportunities to make them independent. This is in line with Lin's (2011) study which focused solely on women's motivations to pursue graduate education. It has been clear that women have suffered deep-rooted gender values, in patriarchal societies women are rendered lower position than men, having to stay at home take care of children and the house while men work has resulted in women not being independent financially (Rispel and Popay, 2009). For that reason, education has allowed women to live more confidence lives.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

This study makes use of the Human Capital Theory (HCT), which suggests that human capital means that productive wealth is embodied in labour, skills, and knowledge (OECD, 2001). According to Tan (2014), the HCT assumes that individuals seek different opportunities to maximise their own economic interests. Additionally, it has been postulated that individuals are likely to invest in education and training with hopes of getting better opportunities and higher wage pay in the future (Tan, 2014). In simple terms, the HCT sees education and training as an escape to better opportunities. The HCT will be overlooked within field the of education. Throughout the world, the theory has bent to influence education systems. In line with this Gillies (2015: 1) who asserted that; “In recent times, human capital theory has become one of the most powerful underpinnings of education policy discourse worldwide.” In this sense, the influence of the theory is significant within education systems nationally. Consequently, in the South African context, education programmes are stimulated by the HCT to human progress and development. For this study, education is promoted as an “investment which yields returns in due course to the individual in terms of pay and to the state in terms of employment and economic growth.” (Gillies, 2015: 1). In this regard, investment in the education of individuals is regarded as the solution to all the structural problems of the economy and the labour market (Sibiya and Nyembezi, 2018).

2.5.1 The origins of the theory

According to Goldin (2016:1), human capital refers to the “stock of habits, knowledge, social and personality attributes (including creativity) embodied in the ability to perform labour so as to produce economic value.” Human capital remains to have a long but discontinuous history in understanding education and employment (Tan, 2014). However, the original notion of the human capital can be traced back to Adam Smith in the 18th century, where the term in the book was defined as an inquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth nations (Goldin 2016). Smith (1976) proposed that refining human capital through training and education leads to gains for companies, and this automatically adds to the communal wealth of society. The modern theory was then popularised by Gary Becker, Jacob Mincer and Theodore Schultz (Sibiya and Nyembezi, 2018). Schultz invented the term in the 1960s during his address in the American Economic Association. This theorist suggested that better job opportunities and economic growth

will result from education, and therefore, people should invest in education to improve their standard of living.

Another important theorist that contributed to development of human capital theory was Daniel Bell. In 1973, Bell coined the term “post-industrial”, which recognised that there is shift in the economy, as the economy could no longer depend on heavy industry (Adams, 2016). Bell “identified that the work of the future would require more highly educated workforce.” (Adams, 2016: 2:02). In addition, Bell posited that everything inside a worker’s head can be classified as human capital, an individual’ intelligence, experience which is incorporated by work habits, training received, social and personal attributes, energy level, trustworthiness, judgement, and creativity all contributed to the ability to perform labour (Adams, 2016). Bell also believed that “all these resources are the total capacity of the people that represent a form of wealth which can be redirected to accomplish the goals of the nation or state or portion therefore of.” (Adams, 2016: 2:29).

There are two core elements in human capital theory. The first element theorises that income distribution or wage differentials can be generally associated with the level of education. In earliest years of the human capital theory, research was undertaken to explore how earnings can be connected to education (Gillies, 2015). The research aimed at comparing earnings of high school graduates as opposed to that of tertiary graduates. After observing that tertiary graduates earned more than high school graduates, Schultz (1960 as cited in Gillies, 2015: 2) contended that perhaps the “costs of a tertiary education could be viewed as an investment, embodied education becoming human capital, which offered later returns in form of relatively higher wages.” The findings then indicated that investing in education has financial return for the time and resources utilised during the period, which may be referred to dividends in the form of higher education earnings, and this has resulted to education being viewed as investment instead of consumption.

The second element relates to the findings of the first elements views education as important means to enhance quality workforce. It looks at the difference in income distribution and acknowledges that it is not a coincidence that tertiary graduates earn higher compensation as opposed to high school graduates. In addition, tertiary graduates earn more as a result of their quality of work they produce. This element does not only acknowledge education in relation to earnings but also notes that education has power to contribute to the economic growth of the

country. In this regard, purifying human capital through education is therefore taken as a crucial way in which economies could grow.

The human capital theory rests on the assumption that education is highly instrumental and necessary to improve the productive capacity of a population. In short, the underlying assumption in the human capital theory is that an individual has to unleash his/her human capital (knowledge and skills) through education and training. Increase in individual's productivity in the workplace often relies on their knowledge and skills. Moreover, this increased productivity brings a higher salary to the individual since the wage of a person, in the ideal labour market, is determined by the person's productivity. Therefore, there is a need to invest in education in exchange for better wages. "In light of this set of assumptions, the logic of HCT becomes clear that education and training increase human capital, and this leads to a higher productivity rate, which in turn brings a higher wage for the individual. Based on this train of reasoning, it can be claimed that education and earnings are positively correlated and thus education/training should be promoted." (Tan, 2014: 413).

As this theory takes returns in terms of pay, employment and economic growths as produced by investing in education, building human capital is an investment decision whereby people give up some proportion on income during the period of education and training in return for increased earnings (Blundell, Dearden, Meghan and Siyoni, 1999). If an individual decides to build human capital, during this process, the individual incur costs such as tuition fees, textbooks, boarding and travel expenses which are considered as direct costs, while indirect costs are considered as the income and work experience forgone in the process of acquiring human capital (Gamede, 2017).

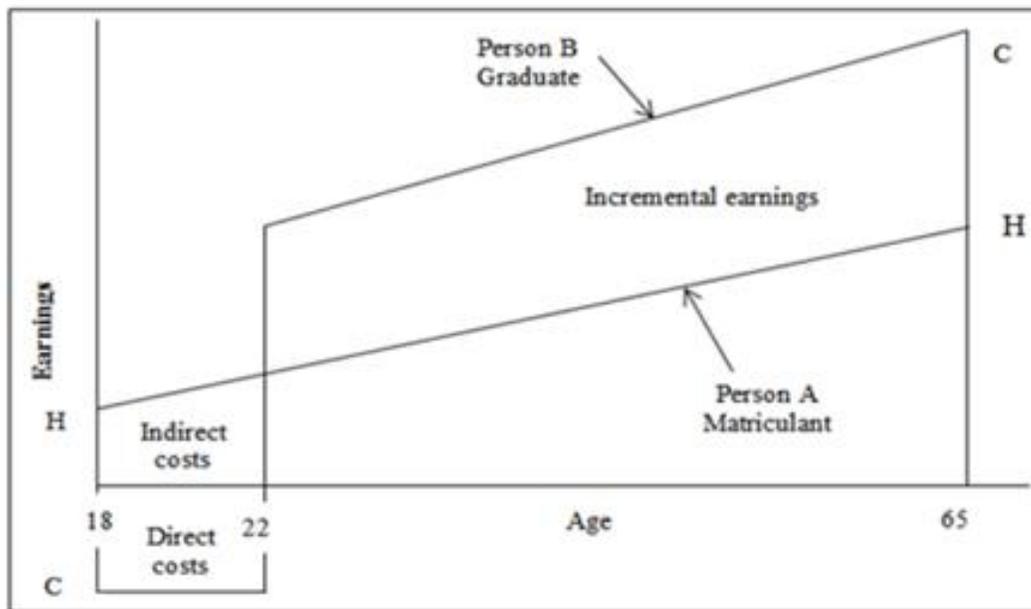


Figure 1: Comparisons of earnings (Source: Gamede, 2017)

Figure 1 presents the comparisons of earnings as outlined by Gamede (2017); it can be seen that higher earnings are associated with higher level of education. A matriculant is most likely to range in line HH earnings, whilst a graduate will range in CC. Therefore, graduates are likely get higher compensation as a result of investing some years in higher education and training and their human capital. Basically, the above diagram explains the epitome of this theory, which is that “investment is made in human resources in order to enhance productivity and earnings.” (Gamede, 2017: 31).

2.6 Summary

This chapter has reviewed literature conducted both locally and internationally, and introduced the theoretical framework guiding this research. The literature review helped the researcher understanding how knowledge has evolved within the field, highlighting what has already been done, what is generally accepted, what is emerging, and what is the currently being reviewed in market labour: earnings and employment and postgraduate education. This chapter has identified, evaluated and synthesised the relevant literature review within market labour conditions and enrolment to postgraduate education. The presented studies in this literature review were conducted using two approaches: self-reported (micro level) and non-self-reported (macro level). Hence, this study chose a self-reported approach because the focus is on how factors affecting at

individual level interact with perceptions of individuals to translate to demand for postgraduate study. It will be more focused on people's preferences and choices to determine the relation between perceptions of unemployment, earnings expectation, and graduate education. More importantly, this study aims to void the gap in the literature, since there are very few studies that focus solely on perceptions of unemployment and earnings, and with the available ones conducted at macro level. As a result, the next chapter will outline the methodology to understand how data was collected to make this study a reality.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The research methodology describes the methods utilised in identifying, selecting, processing, and analysing data on a research topic. According to Wiersman and Jurs (2009), a research methodology is the development of a plan for conducting research, the third step after identifying a research problem and outlining the literature review. This chapter explains how the study was conducted and is divided into four sections, where the first section gives an overview of study location. The second section explores the research methodology adopted for this study, which is a quantitative method. The third section outlines the data collection and data generation process, and the researcher explains all the research techniques adopted for this study. The final section focuses on validity and reliability of data, data analysis, ethical considerations, and the limitations of the study. These four sections have allowed the researcher to answer the research questions elaborated on the first chapter of this dissertation.

3.2 Location of the study

Located in east of South Africa, KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) has the second largest population with the population of approximately 11,5 million people as recorded in 2020 mid-year population estimates (StatsSA, 2020). This study was conducted in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, which recorded the second highest proportion (39.1%) of young people aged 15 to 24 years not in employment, education or training in the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) for 2020 (StatsSA, 2020). In addition, in terms of official unemployment rates, KZN has a proportion of 26.9% and 43% for the expanded unemployment rates. Compared to other eight provinces in South Africa, the KZN province had the third lowest official unemployment rate and the sixth highest expanded unemployment rate. For that reason, the study was collected at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), located in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. This public university is amongst the top five prestigious universities in South Africa, and comprises of five campuses. However, for the conditions of this study, only one campus was selected and is situated in Westville in Durban. The Westville Campus is located about eight kilometers from the CBD of Durban and Pinetown. This campus comprises of four colleges out of five at UKZN, namely:

College of Agriculture, Engineering and Science, College of Health Sciences and College of Law and Management Studies.

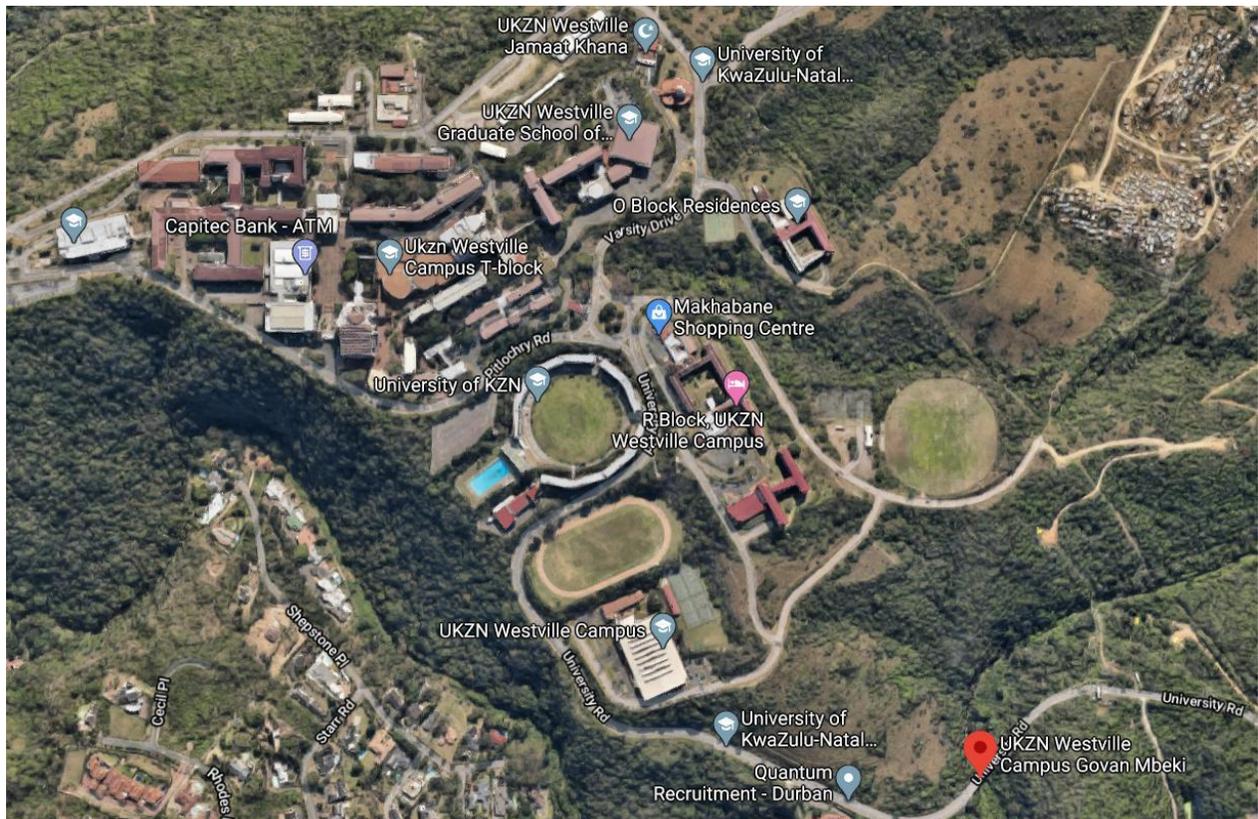


Figure 2: Map of Westville Campus

3.3 Research design

The research design refers to the overall strategy that the researcher chooses to incorporate the various components of the study in a coherent and logical manner. While ensuring that the research question is tackled effectively, choosing an appropriate research design for data collection, calculation and evaluation is of importance (De Vaus, 2001). This study adopted a quantitative research methodology because the approaches offered by the quantitative research methodology accentuate quantitative analysis, objective analysis, analytical analysis of data obtained by questionnaires, surveys, and polls or by using computational techniques to manipulate pre-existing statistical data (Kabir, 2016). A quantitative research method focuses on gathering and

generalising statistical information through groups of individuals or describing a phenomenon. In a post-positivism paradigm, the quantitative research methodology was framed because it maintains the only way to establish truth and objective reality through a scientific method.

This study was designed to investigate the influence of perceptions of labour market conditions upon increased demand for postgraduate education. Hence, making the research design a descriptive and correlational in its nature is a good choice for this study. The questionnaire research methodology chosen for this study helped in identifying behaviours and describing behaviours of the participants, and making the study descriptive. The three objectives of the study were: (1) to investigate the influence of perception of employment upon postgraduate enrolment; to (2) investigate the influence of perception of earnings expectations upon postgraduate enrolment and (3) to investigate the interrelations between the influence of perception of employment and earnings upon postgraduate enrolment. These three objectives would allow to predict the relationship between perceptions of employment, perceptions of earnings and the intention to enrol a postgraduate study. Further, these objectives make the study as correlational (relational) as the relationship between dependent variable (the intention to enrol at postgraduate level) and independent variable (the factors influencing students) has been determined.

Descriptive and correlational studies observe variables in their natural surroundings and do not include interventions performed by researchers (Simon and Goes, 2011). Price (2001) argued that any researcher who adopts a descriptive model seeks to produce systematic, subjective, descriptive and detailed results. This enables the researcher to collect data directly from the participants in their natural environment in order to examine their perceptions, views and comments on the subject. Baliyan (2016: 88) posited that “the descriptive investigations are particularly valuable when something is first researched.” Hence, it helps in identifying and describing variables. However, as this study went beyond identifying and describing variables to examine comparisons and relationships among variables, consequently a correlational design was adopted. Simon and Goes (2011) asserted that a correlation study aims to determine the relationship between variables and, if there is a relationship, determining a regression formula that could be used to make predictions. By essence, descriptive investigations present facts and correlations that are aligned with the evidence to establish the relationships. For that reason, this

study examined whether a set of variables (perceptions of employment and earnings expectations) could predict the intention of students to enrol at a postgraduate level.

3.4 Data collection and sampling

3.4.1 Sample

Unless if it is a census, for surveys and questionnaires; it is unlikely that the investigator can collect data from all people in a study context to address the research issues, hence; why a sample is needed to make a study a reality (Taherdoost, 2016). A sample is the sub-population or the smaller number that is used to draw conclusions on the population as a whole (Mugenda and Mugenda 1999). For this study, the target sample was recruited from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Westville Campus and included only undergraduate final year students. The sample was inclusive of every undergraduate final year student, regardless of their gender, age, race or province. However, in terms of age, the participant had to be over the age of 18 years to abide by the rules and regulation from ethics. A rationale behind choosing to focus on undergraduate final years was that these students were towards the end of their undergraduate academic journey and, in this period, they are likely to think more about their future prospects. As a result, exploring their perceptions on enrolling for a postgraduate education or looking for employment during this stage of their journey provided a good insight.

The sample size consisted of 200 participants. This sample size was arrived at given the relatively few (four) variables, viz., age, gender, population group and province, that were controlled for, the exploratory nature of the study and time and cost constraints. Established rules of thumb regarding sample sizes for logistic regression were also employed when deciding upon a sample size. Another reason for aiming to recruit a sample of 200 participants was that it would enable stratification of the sample so that each subgroup of the population would be presented by at least 20 to 50 respondents. However, after realising that 10 respondents were not from South Africa, the researcher decided to exclude them from the study because their perceptions of labour market might differ from those of South Africans. This resulted to 190 participants.

3.4.2 Sampling technique

There are two main types of sampling techniques employed by researchers when conducting research, and includes a probability and non-probability sampling techniques. In the probability sampling, each participant has equal chances of being selected while the chances of being selected are unknown for a non-probability sampling (Taherdoost, 2016). There are various types of probability sampling technique, namely: simple random sampling, stratified sampling, cluster sampling and systematic sampling, while the non-probability sampling has convenience sampling, quota sampling, purposive sampling, and snowball sampling. Probability sampling is mostly associated with quantitative research while non-probability sampling is associated with qualitative research (Taherdoost, 2016).

This study was carried using a non-probability sampling technique called convenience sampling. Non-probability sampling is a sampling method that does not measure the chances of any participant chosen for a sample, while convenient sampling as the name proposes, it involves collecting a sample from a convenient place for you, which could be your local school, church, or mall (Denscombe 2003). Convenience sampling is sometimes called grab sampling, accidental sampling or opportunity sampling. The rationale for using convenience sampling is that the study was conducted at a university setting, and the criteria for the sample was not specified to certain students, except that it was any undergraduate final year student one came across on campus.

3.4.3 Research instrument technique

Following the establishment of sampling methods (sample size and technique), the next step is to collect data (Taherdoost, 2016). Kabir (2016: 202) defined data collection as “the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes.” Further, the objective of data collection is to capture the quality of the evidence that is then translated into rich data analysis to provide a convincing and credible answer to the research questions raised on the first chapter (Kabir, 2016). In addition, there are many methods of collecting data, and they all depend on the research's intent and objectives. For this study, data was collected using a questionnaire research instrument (See Annexure 4).

The researcher personally administered the questionnaires to the respondents, and it took less than 6 minutes to complete the questionnaire. A questionnaire is a research tool consisting of a number of questions and other prompts to collect information from respondents. Questionnaires includes questions formulated on the basis of the research questions presented in the study, the literature review and the theoretical positioning (Denscombe, 2003). In addition, this research instrument is often used with checklists and scales of scores. The checklist is a list of the attitudes; attributes or other things the investigator is searching for. Moreover, questionnaires help simplify and quantify behaviours and attitudes of individuals (Denscombe, 2003). One of the advantages of a questionnaire is that it consists of large amounts of data, which is often obtained in a short period time and in a fairly cost-effective manner from a large number of people (Kabir, 2016). The rationale for using questionnaire is that it allows the questions to be set in a way that examines the connection between perceptions of unemployment, earnings expectations and postgraduate enrolment.

3.5 Ethical consideration

Studies involving human subjects require awareness of legitimate, professional and ethical standards (Graziano and Raulin, 1993). Correspondingly, Schumacher and Mcmillan (2006) noted that researchers should be aware of ethical responsibilities and legal constraints that accompany the collection and reporting of information in order to protect the rights and well-being of research participants. Ethical standards require people who choose to engage in research to have fundamental rights to personal privacy and to psychological and physical harm protection. In addition, it is required that appropriate information should be given to human subjects of a research to help them decide on their participation for research. A variety of ethical considerations that researchers need to tackle in conducting research have been identified (Gay, Mills and Airasian, 2006).

Ethics in research is involved to protect the dignity of participants and the dissemination of information for a research study. An application was submitted to the university affiliated ethics committee based in Westville Campus at the Research Office. All supporting documents such as the informed consent, proposal form and the questionnaire guide were submitted together with ethical clearance application form. After the application was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics (HSSREC), ethical clearance was granted on 30 October 2019 with

a protocol reference number HSSREC/00000454/2019. The ethics approval receipt was presented to participants, together with informed consent and the gatekeepers letter granted by the Office of the Registrar at UKZN. Each of supporting documents were explained during the day when data was collected and was explained in-depth for the respond to understand certain conditions they are abided by in consenting to participate in the study. All participants in this study were above the age of 18 years, and no consent or permission was required from the legal guardians or caregivers of the participants. The researcher was coherent in clarifying that all the information to be provided by the participants will be kept confidential and that the study was voluntary. Below is the process of how ethics approval and gatekeeper's letters were granted.

3.5.1 Permission for study

Prior to conducting this study, the researcher wrote a letter to the registrar of University of KwaZulu-Natal seeking the permission to conduct a research study at Westville Campus (see Annexure 1). As McMillan and Schumacher (1997) stated that for the research to be carried out in an institution, a school system approval should be obtained from the institution. After approval from the registrar of University of KwaZulu-Natal, the researcher submitted an ethics application (see Annexure 2) to the HSSREC at UKZN, and approval was granted in a month.

3.5.2 Informed Consent

Informed consent means that every person who has any kind of research procedure should give their consent to the procedure (Roy, Black and McPeck, 1991). Having management approval is the first step, but reaching out to people who will be asked to complete questionnaires is necessary (Bell, 1999). Therefore, despite that the registrar gave permission to conduct research at the university's premises, reaching and recruiting respondents and obtaining their consent was essential. Hence, a clear and informative informed consent was designed and administered to respondents during data collection to assure them that the information collected would be kept confidential (see Annexure 3). Informed consent was aimed at clarifying and describing many things and questions that students might have before their willingness to participate in the study. The consent form offered details of the researcher (name, school, cell phone number and email),

title of the study, study nature, sample size, location of the study, population of the study, time expected to be spent to respond to the questionnaire, risks and benefits involved.

As part of the research protocol, participants must be shielded from harm in research and the rights of the participants to privacy should be guaranteed (McMillan and Schumacher, 1997). Anonymity and confidentiality have therefore been discussed in more detail.

3.5.2.1 Anonymity and Confidentiality.

Anonymity and confidentiality are ethical standards intended to protect human privacy as data is collected, processed and published, (Coffelt 2017). These two concepts are used closely but are distinct. Anonymity refers to the collection of data without obtaining any personally identifiable information. Confidentiality, on the other hand, refers to the separation or modification of any personal information supplied by participants from the data, (Coffelt 2017). To ensure participants were shielded from harm in research and the rights of the participants to privacy was guaranteed, measures to protect the rights to privacy were put in place during and after the study as participants were kept anonymous. In terms of ensuring anonymity, participants were not asked to disclose sensitive information that could be used to trace them such as their names, identity or student numbers. In other words, personally identifying data was not collected. Correspondingly, to ensure confidentiality, information provided by respondents was pass coded to ensure anonymity and treated purely as academic and confidential for the wellbeing of the respondents. This was done to ensure that the disclosed information is protected and that their privacy is respected in general.

3.6 Validity and reliability of data collection instrument

Measurement error is unavoidable and can never be removed completely, but there are ways to reduce those errors and discrepancies (Baliyan, 2016). It is of vital importance for a researcher to try to minimise any possible measurement errors that can arise in the process of analysing data. Hence, adequate steps to reduce measurement errors should be taken by resolving validity and accuracy problems. Further, the reliability and validity of the data for this study are outlined below.

3.6.1 Validity

Validity is the accuracy and meaning of the inferences based on the results of the research (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). For quantitative research, the validity of the research tool is the extent to which such a tool can measure what it should measure (Thatcher, 2010). Validity therefore refers to the degree to which the findings are derived from data analysis to represent the variables being studied. There are four types of validity, namely: face validity, criterion related validity, content validity and construct validity. The research approached and instruments used in this research have been validated in terms of content validity. Hence, the validity of the content measures the extent to which the items in question reflect the particular areas covered, and in other words, tries to understand if whether the questionnaire appeal well to participants. Mohajan (2017: 5) noted that “there is no statistical test to determine whether a measure adequately covers a content area, content validity usually depends on the judgment of experts in the field.” Therefore, for this study, content validity was conducted by panel of professionals, including the researcher, school’s reviewers and the supervisor of this study, and their comments were incorporated and consolidated to improve the final version of this study’s questionnaire.

3.6.2 Reliability

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), reliability is the ability of a study tool to reliably assess value of characteristics over time. For quantitative research, reliability relates to stability, consistency and repeatability of the tests such as the outcome of a study is often assumed to be accurate because of previous studies and similar findings in different contexts (Mohajan, 2017). Similarly, Kirk, Miller and Miller (1986) argued that to be reliable, an instrument must be able to repeat a measurement, stabilise the measurement over time and provide similar measurements over a given period of time. Therefore, reliability is therefore the degree to which a research instrument, after repeated tests, produces consistent results or data. Although, it is very difficult to create, design and use a research method that is perfectly reliable, but a researcher should make every effort to ensure that the tool is reliable (Baliyan, 2016).

A pilot test was used in this study to measure reliability before going in-field. Hassan, Schattner, and Mazza (2006) defined a pilot study as a “small study to test research protocols, data collection instruments, sample recruitment strategies, and other research techniques in preparation

for a larger study.” Pilot test was used to measure reliability of the questionnaire. Pilot group consisted of three (3) participants, and these participants were chosen as they possessed similar characteristics of the participants to be recruited for the final study. The pilot testing was not performed on the same group of students participating in study as it would cause pre-test error in the study and introduce bias to the findings as the students were already exposed to the instrument before the study was conducted (Baliyan, 2016). After piloting those three participants, they did not experience any difficulties, except for question 14 and 15, and the researcher discovered that they did not understand what was required of them. Consequently, the following amendments were made to those questions:

Question 14:

From: I am now going to give you information about series of number of years invested in education and associated earnings. Which of the combinations will be preferable to you?

Years of investment in education	Monthly Earnings
3	R 7000
4	R 10 000
5	R 15 000
6	R 18 000
7	R 20 000

To: The information presented below are stylised not actual:

The table below represents the number of years invested in education and associated earnings:

Which of these combinations will be preferable to you?

Years of investment in education	Monthly Earnings
---	-------------------------

3	R 7000
4	R 10 000
5	R 15 000
6	R 18 000
7	R 20 000

Question 15:

From: Would you consider taking a job that offers?

Per month	Yes	No
R 2 500		
R 5 000		
R 8 000		
R 13 000		
R 16 000		

To: Below is a series of earnings in the labour market, would you consider taking a job that offers?

Per month	Yes	No
R 2 500		
R 5 000		
R 8 000		
R 13 000		
R 16 000		

3.7 Data management and analysis

Data management and analysis follows after a research problem statement has been articulated by the researcher, the research hypothesis being identified, data collection arrangements being made

and data being collected. Kothari (2004: 122) noted that data management and analysis is “essential for a scientific study and for ensuring that we have all relevant data for making contemplated comparisons and analysis.” Appropriate data management and control is therefore vital to the success and reproducibility of a statistical analysis. Data management involves the classification, coding, editing and tabulation of the data collected in order to be able to be analysed, while the analysis relates to the measurement of certain variables along with the quest of variations of relationships that occur within the dataset (Kothari, 2004).

The collected data was managed and analysed using the Social Sciences Statistical System (SPSS). SPSS is a data editing and analysis software for all kinds of quantitative data. This software is able to open all file formats widely used for structured data such as spreadsheets from Microsoft Excel, OpenOffice, plain text files and Statistical Analysis System (SAS). The SPSS software helps the investigator to identify and categorise data in order to uncover trends and draw conclusions from that dataset (Leedy, 1993). For that reason, descriptive statistics were used to answer research questions:

Q1: What is the relationship between perceptions of unemployment and postgraduate enrolment?

Null hypothesis one: There is no relationship between perceptions of unemployment and postgraduate enrolment.

Q2: What is the relationship between earnings expectation and postgraduate enrolment?

Null hypothesis two: There is no relationship between earnings expectation and postgraduate enrolment.

Q3: What is the interrelation between the perceptions of unemployment and earnings expectation influence upon postgraduate enrolment demand?

Null hypothesis three: There is no interrelation between perceptions of unemployment and earnings expectation influence upon postgraduate enrolment demand.

3.8 Limitations of the study

The limitations of the study are those design or methodology characteristics that have affected or influenced your research findings ' interpretation (Price and Murnan, 2004). All research studies have drawbacks, probably related to the complexity of monitoring variables in the research design or related to the limited data types that can be obtained due to ethics (Baliyan, 2016). This study also has some limitations, after approval was received on the 30th of October 2019. This was during the exam period at University of KwaZulu-Natal, and it was difficult to recruit participants during this time, as students were either busy with their exams. However, the researcher had to go out actively looking for students everywhere around the campus, including lans and labs. Further, it was not easy to collect data during this time because students were scarce around campus as compared to normal basis pre-exam time. The researcher is registered at Howard College (which is one of the campuses at UKZN), and was not familiar with the Westville Campus. Hence, in terms of recruiting participants, it was difficult to figure out some of the chilling hotspots of students.

Moreover, this study and its results were limited to one campus at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. There are five campuses in the university. This means that the four other UKZN campuses and other universities were not considered. While it may be easy to rely on the representativeness of the sample to generalize study results to all university students, it may not be appropriate to do so. In addition, the study was carried out using quantitative research while a convenient sampling technique for qualitative research was utilised in the technique. Convenience sampling has its shortcomings including the one mentioned above about generalisation of findings. Finally, this study was self-reported and therefore it is possible that participants were not truthful and also misunderstood certain questions.

3.9 Summary

This chapter discussed all the adopted methodological procedures that are significant for this study. The researcher elaborated on each type of method and technique that was followed to make this study a reality. The quantitative research methodology was implemented by the post-positivism paradigm to allow the researcher to understand the perceptions of students in labour market choices and a choice to pursue a postgraduate degree. This study draws on the questionnaire administered

among 200 third year undergraduate students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, however only 190 questionnaires were approved after the data quality and control procedure. These participants were recruited using convenience sampling because they were recruited on availability. Every participant who participated had to be sure about the terms and conditions of this study as they formally read and signed the consent form compiled by the researcher. In addition, this study was ethically approved by the HSSREC and the office of the Registrar at UKZN. As a result, the next chapter is the data analysis of this study, and data is analysed using SPSS and utilises some descriptive statistics to analyse the quantitative data that was collected.

CHAPTER 4: INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This study aimed at investigating the influence of perceptions of labour market conditions upon increased demand for postgraduate education. The analysis of data and presentation of the results is outlined in this chapter. Firstly, this chapter presents the questionnaire results as they are, from demographic data to the attitudes about postgraduate enrolment. This is followed by the presentation of results in relation to research questions outlined in chapter one. The aim of this chapter is therefore to achieve the objectives of the study by answering the following three research questions of the study:

- What is the relationship between perceptions of unemployment and postgraduate enrolment?
- What is the relationship between earnings expectation and postgraduate enrolment?
- What is the interrelation between the perceptions of unemployment and earnings expectation influence upon postgraduate enrolment demand?

The study was conducted among final year undergraduate students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Westville Campus. Final year undergraduate students were used to share their perceptions of labour market and postgraduate enrolment. A total of 190 students were conveniently sampled. Data from questionnaires was coded and analysed into quantitative summary reports using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Further, data analysis involved binary regression and descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages, and in the form of cross-tabulations (crosstabs).

4.2 Demographic profile of respondents

Before presenting the analysis of the findings, it is important to analyse the respondents and their profiles.

4.2.1 Age of the respondents

Respondents for these students included students between the ages of 19 to 31 years. The education system of South Africa requires learners to at least complete Grade 12 at the age of 18 years, and thereafter enrol in a higher education institution, where the undergraduate degree often takes 3 or 4 years. Hence, the age was categorised according to ideal age for undergraduate and postgraduate enrolment. As a result, those aged 19 to 22 years were categorised as age appropriate to be undergraduate final years and those aged 23 to 31 years not appropriate. Of 190 respondents, 57.9% aged between 19 and 22, 42.1% aged between 23 and 31 years (see Table 6). Overall, the study managed to include respondents that were of different ages, and since respondents are at different stages of their lives, this might have had an impact on their thinking capacity.

Age (years)	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	29	31	Total
Frequency	1	32	42	35	31	20	14	7	6	1	1	190
%	0.5	16.8	22.1	18.4	16.3	10.5	7.4	3.7	3.2	0.5	0.5	100

Table 2: Age of respondents

4.2.2 Gender distribution

Respondents were asked their sex. Of 190 respondents, 53.7% were males and 46.3% were females (see Figure 2). The figure shows that there is not really much difference between males and females, and all genders were accommodated and recruited for this study. While most of the responses for the research questions relied on opinions and perceptions, the gender distribution is expected to accommodate the perceptions and opinions of either gender.

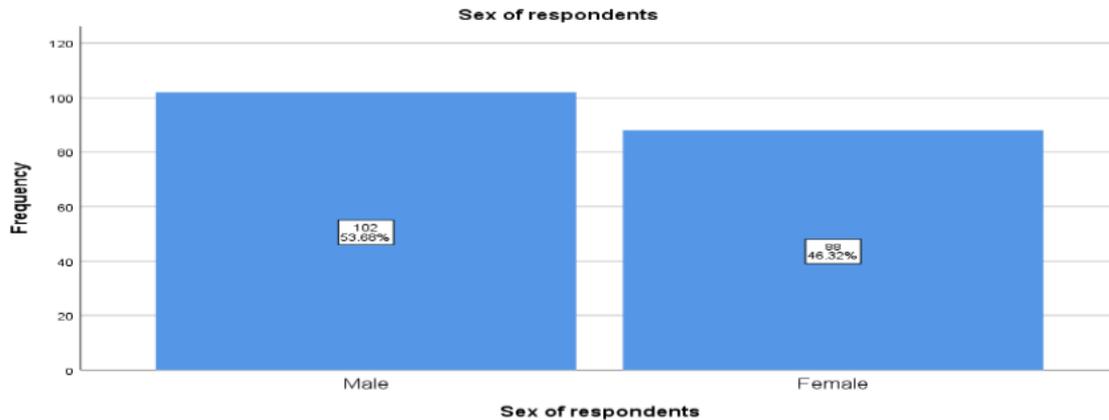


Figure 3: Sex of respondents

4.2.3 Population group

Respondents were asked about the population group they fall under. Of 190 respondents, 78.4% of the respondents identify as Africans, and were followed by Indians/ Asians (14.7%), Coloureds (4.7%) and Whites (2.1%) (see Table 7). It was clear that the study had a majority of the African students, and this may be supported by the fact that UKZN is an institution based in KZN, where the African population are dominating in the province. The population group imbalances are not likely to affect the study as the nature of the research and questions asked were not based on sensitivity of the population. However, given that most of the responses in the research questions relied on opinions and perceptions, the population distribution is expected to accommodate the perceptions and opinions of any population group.

Population group	African	Indian/Asian	Coloured	White	Total
Frequency	149	28	9	4	190
%	78.4	14.7	4.7	2.1	100

Table 3: Population group distribution of respondents

4.2.4 Province

Respondents were asked about the provinces where their homes are situated. From the responses, the majority were from KwaZulu-Natal with a proportion of 70%, and were followed by Eastern

Cape (14.7%) and Gauteng (4.7%). Less than 1% of respondents were from Limpopo and North West, respectively with 0.5% (see Table 8). The study conducted in KwaZulu-Natal Province, and it is not surprising that the proportion of students from KwaZulu-Natal was highest compared to other provinces. For that reason, 70% of respondents are from KZN, whilst 30% are non-KZN. The province imbalance is not likely to affect the study as the nature of the research and questions asked were not province sensitive. However, given that most of the responses in the research questions relied on opinions and perceptions, the province distribution is expected to accommodate the perceptions and opinions of either province group.

Province	KZN	EC	GP	FS	WC	NC	MP	LP	NW	Total
Frequency	133	28	9	8	4	3	3	1	1	190
%	70	14.7	4.7	4.2	2.1	1.6	1.6	0.5	0.5	100

Table 4: Province distribution of respondents

4.3 Perceptions of postgraduate education

In order to identify the number of respondents interested in enrolling for postgraduate study in academic year 2020, the following questions to understand perceptions were asked:

4.3.1 Considered applying for PG in 2020

Respondents were asked if whether they had considered applying for a postgraduate (PG) study in 2020. From the responses, 76.3% of students have considered applying while 23.7% have not considered applying for PG study (see Table 9). These findings suggest that a majority of respondents have a strong interest for postgraduate studies.

Considered applying for PG study in 2020	Yes	No	Total
Frequencies	145	45	190
%	76.3	23.7	100

Table 5: Considered applying for 2020

The proportion that considered applying (76.3%) for a PG study were then asked to rate on a scale of 10, how they have thought about applying a postgraduate study in 2020. Of these respondents, 6 respondents rated less than 5, whilst 139 respondents rated more than 5. In addition, 4.1% of respondents have less thought about a PG study, whilst 95.9% of respondents have thought deeply about it (see Table 10). This emphasizes that a majority of respondents have given some deep thoughts to the idea of applying for a PG study in the 2020 enrolment.

Scale	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Frequency	0	1	1	4	23	9	24	32	15	36	145
%	0	1	1	2.8	15.9	6.2	16.6	22.1	10.3	24.8	100

Table 6: Thought about applying for PG 2020

4.3.2 Applied for PG 2020

The sub-sample that has considered applying (145 respondents) for PG study in 2020 were then asked if they have applied or not for PG 2020 enrolment. From the responses, 71% of the respondents have actually applied, and 29% have not applied (see Table 11). In other words, out of 145 respondents, 103 respondents did not just end by thoughts of considering a PG study, but have actually transformed their thought about considering about applying for PG 2020 enrolment into action. Findings suggest that it was more than just a thought for 103 respondents.

Have you applied for PG study in 2020	Frequency	Percent
Yes	103	71.03
No	42	28.97
Total	145	100

Table 7: Applied for PG study in 2020

For the sub-sample that has considered applying for PG 2020 enrolment and actually went on to make applications (71%), these respondents were asked how many applications they had already

made. From the responses, 34% reported that they made two applications, while 33% made one application and the remaining respondents reported to have made more than two applications (33%) (see Table 12). This suggests that only 33% of respondents have a clear mind-set on what they want to pursue for a PG study, 67% of have no linear mind-set for putting more than one application. In addition, these students have a vast of options and there is a possibility that they made applications to different disciplines or different universities. For that reason, this suggest that some students do a postgraduate study for a sake of doing it, not because they want to increase their chances of employed on the basis of the educational experiences.

Number of applications	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Frequency	34	35	14	12	2	3	2	1	103
%	33.01	33.98	13.59	11.65	1.94	2.91	1.94	0.97	100

Table 8: Number of applications made

4.4 Perceptions of unemployment

4.4.1 Graduate unemployment as a problem

Respondents were asked about whether they thought graduate unemployment was a problem in South Africa, and 97.9% of respondents thought this was a problem. However, only 3 respondents did not think so and 1 respondent was not certain (don't know). This suggested that almost all the respondents from the study perceived graduate unemployment as a problem in South Africa.

Graduate unemployment as problem in South Africa	Frequency	%
Yes	186	97.89
No	3	1.58
Don't Know	1	0.53
Total	190	100

Table 9: Graduate unemployment

4.4.2 How anxious are final year undergraduate students about unemployment

From the group that perceived graduate unemployment to be a problem in SA (97.9%), respondents were asked how anxious they were about unemployment in general in South Africa on a scale of 1 to 10. The results showed that 34.9% of the respondents rated 10, followed by 19.9% that rated 7 and 15.6% that rated 8. Seemingly, 11 respondents (5.9%) rated less than 4 and emphasized less anxiousness about unemployment while 175 respondents (94.1%) rated more than 5 and emphasized being very anxious about unemployment.

Scale	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Frequency	5	3	3	10	12	37	29	22	65	186
%	2.7	1.6	1.6	5.4	6.5	19.9	15.6	11.8	34.9	100

Table 10: Level of anxiousness among respondents

4.4.3 Graduate unemployment estimation

All respondents were asked how they would estimate graduate unemployment rate in South Africa in percentages. From the responses, each respondent had mentioned his/her percent estimation, however the lowest reported percentage was 2% and the highest reported percentage was 95%. The most occurring was 60%, and on the average, the mean percentage that was reported is 45.4%. In addition, respondents perceived graduate unemployment to be much higher than it is in the official estimates provided by statistics organisations in South Africa. The second quarter of the QLFS 2019, graduate unemployment was estimated to be 7.9% (StatsSA, 2019), but the average mean percentage was 45.4% which is at least five times larger than what graduate unemployment is. Also, the graph below (Figure 3) shows that only 4 respondents out of 190 estimated less than the actual percentage, whilst most respondents reported percentages that are actual far greater than the actual percentage. In the eyes of these respondents, graduate unemployment was considered to very high.

Graduate Rate

N	Valid	190
	Missing	0

Mean	45.44
Median	50.00
Mode	60
Range	93
Minimum	2
Maximum	95
Sum	8634

Table 11: Estimation of graduate unemployment by students

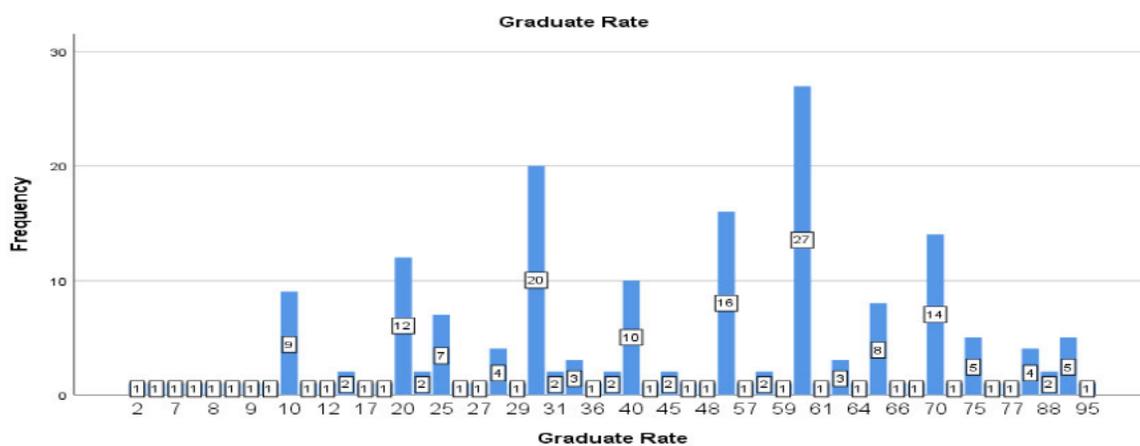


Figure 4: Graduate estimation percentages

4.4.4 Changes

The study also asked if whether respondents had any changes in anxiousness and percentage estimate of graduate unemployment after knowing the actual percentage of graduate unemployment. From the responses, 51% of respondents felt less anxious, but 49% reported that they still felt the same. The table below (Figure 4) shows that almost half of the respondents are not changing their views, even after telling them the actual percentage of graduate unemployment was 7.9% in South Africa. In addition, it was clear that these respondents were fixated to their ideas, as they still believe graduate unemployment has to higher than what was estimated by StatsSA. Therefore, these individuals refused to change their views of graduate unemployment and their anxiousness because in their eyes, graduate unemployment remains high. As a result, the information provided does not mediate their actions/views.

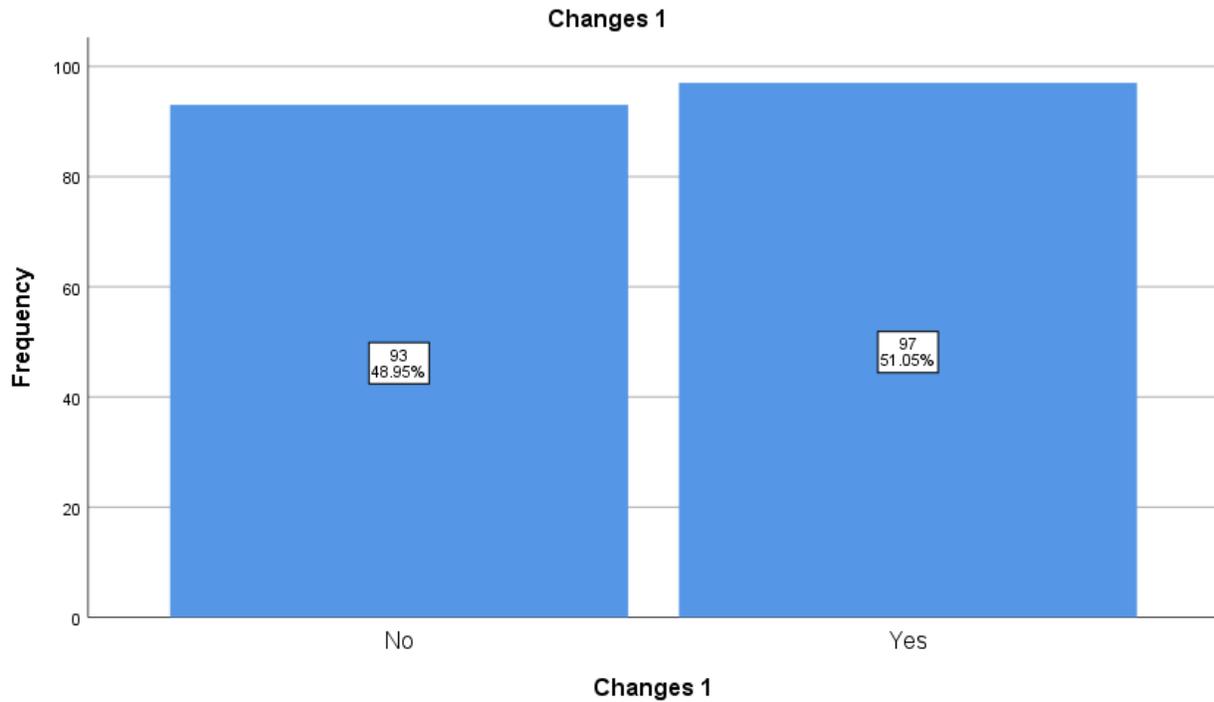


Figure 5: Changes resulting from graduate percent

4.5. Earnings expectation

4.5.1 Years of investment in education and monthly earnings

A figure with years of investment in education and monthly earnings was presented. The results showed were presented according to monthly earnings that would choose with their highest education level. A majority of respondents believed that with 7 years' investment in education, a graduate should only access anything equal to R20 000 or above. This was followed by those who believed that with 4 years in higher education, a graduate should earn at least R10 000. The figure below also shows that respondents have a preference to stay at school, as they are not prepared to go look out for jobs immediately after completing an undergraduate degree which takes 3 or 4 years. In addition, respondents were willing to invest more years in education in order to get a higher income, and over half respondents have preference to pursue additional years in education to make this a reality. Interestingly, the Indeed website showed that the average salary for a new graduate is R6 778 per month in South Africa (Indeed, 2019), yet respondents are not prepared to work to get a monthly income of R7 000 after completing a degree. In addition, the respondents

of this study are final year undergraduate students and they will soon be faced with such decisions in terms of education and income.

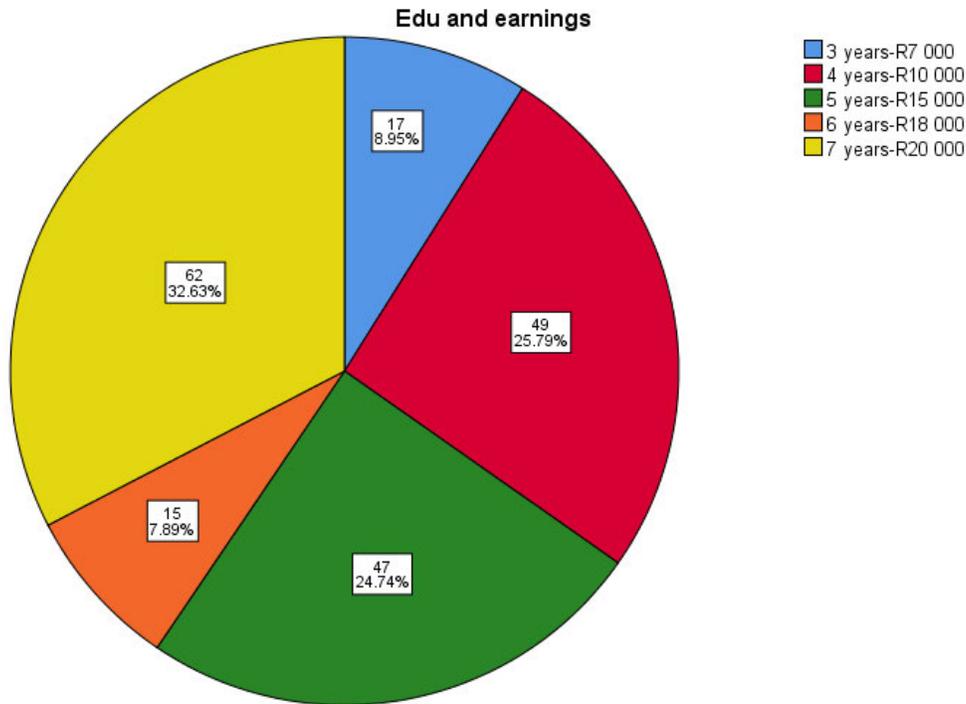


Figure 6: Years of studying and earnings

4.5.2. Job offer and earnings

Different earnings in labour market are presented in this section. The respondents were asked which of the earnings on Figure 6 they would go for after graduation. From the responses, with equal proportions of 23.7% chose the minimum amount of R8 000 and R16 000, while 22.1% chose a minimum amount of R 13 000, 19% chose a minimum amount of R5 000 and 5.79% preferred a minimum amount of either R2 500 or just nothing. Over half of the respondents (67.5) are not prepared to take anything less than R8 000, and this is interesting because a new graduate entry level salary is R6 778 (Indeed, 2019). These findings emphasize that a soon to be graduates would prefer higher earnings, as they are not willing to settle for anything less than R8 000 because only 47 respondents are sitting at R5000 as their minimum amount to accept a job offer. It was clear that the respondents gave high reservation wages, and therefore; for companies to hire graduates they would need to be prepared to offer higher wages for these graduates.

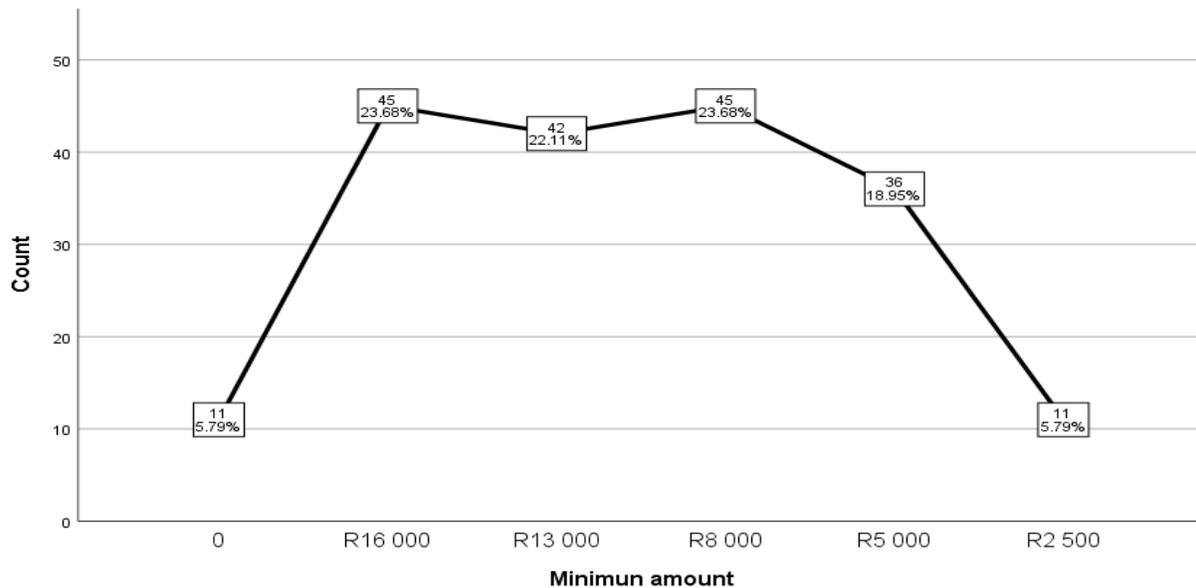


Figure 7: Job offer and earnings

4.5.3 Changes

Respondents were asked whether knowing graduate entry-level salary has any changes to the answer provided in terms of the number of years invested in education and job offer and earnings. From the responses, 72,1% answered No and 27.9% answered Yes. The findings show that despite the fact that respondents knew about the graduate entry-level salary of R6 778, they expressed a sense of non-preparedness to settle for an income less than R8 000. In addition, they have a preference to study further in order to get higher earnings, even if they do not study further but they know what they will settle for as graduates. It is clear that these findings suggest that graduates are not prepared to compromise when it comes to earnings.

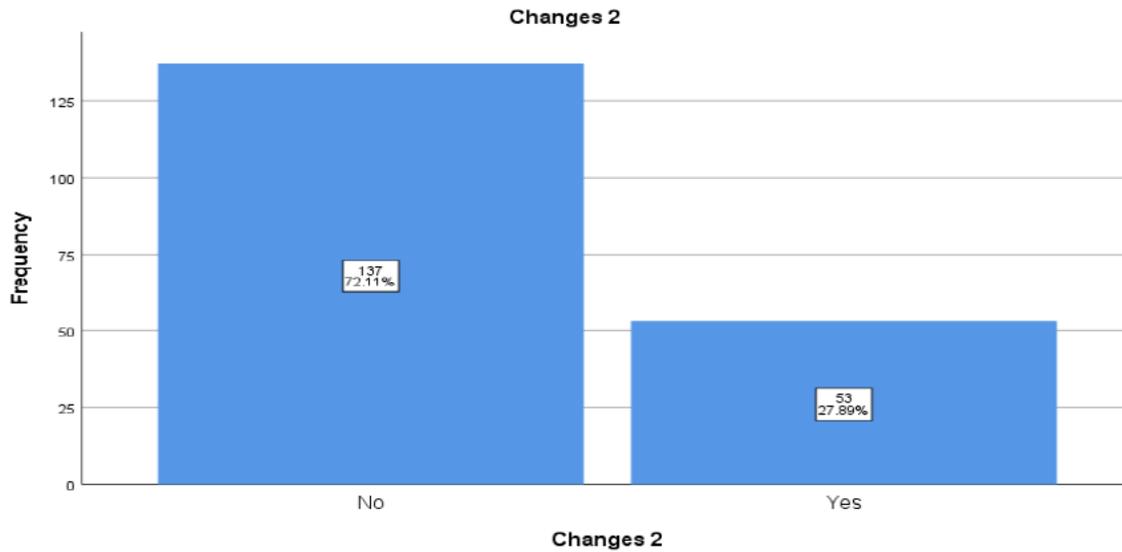


Figure 8: Changes resulting from entry salary

4.6. Attitudes to postgraduate studies

4.6.1 Employment

One of the questions in the questionnaire asked if respondents agree or disagree with the statement: “taking postgraduate studies will increase my chances of getting a job.” The results showed that the majority of respondents agreed (63%) with statement, whereas 11.6% did not agree. Those who neither agree nor disagree constituted a proportion of 22.1%. It was clear that a majority of final year undergraduate students agree that pursuing a postgraduate study increases one’s chances of getting a job.

Pursuing a PG study increases one’s changes of getting a job	Frequency	%
Agree	121	63.7
Neither agree nor disagree	42	22.1
Disagree	22	11.6
Don't Know	5	2.6
Total	190	100.0

Table 12: Attitudes of employment and postgraduate enrolment

4.6.2 Earnings

The study also explored if respondents would agree or disagree with the statement: “taking postgraduate studies will increase my earnings.” The results showed that 73.2% of respondents agreed with the statement, while 13.2% neither agreed nor disagreed and 10.5% disagreed. 3.2% of respondents were unsure if continuing with a PG study would increase their earnings in the future employments. It was clear that a majority of respondents agreed that pursuing postgraduate studies increase earnings.

Pursuing a PG study increases one’s changes of getting higher earnings	Frequency	%
Agree	139	73.2
Neither agree nor disagree	25	13.2
Disagree	20	10.5
Don't Know	6	3.2
Total	190	100.0

Table 13: Attitudes of earnings and postgraduate enrolment

4.6.3 Bachelor’s degree

The study also explored if respondents would agree or disagree with the statement: “a bachelor’s degree no longer matters when it comes to securing a job.” The results showed that 39.5% of respondents agreed with this statement, and this was followed by those who disagreed (34.7%). Respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed constituted a proportion of 21.1%, while 4.7% were unsure of the statement. It was clear that there is slight gap between those who agree and those who disagree. However, the findings suggested that although a majority of respondents agreed to the idea of bachelor degree not being sufficient when it comes to securing a job, while some respondents; also, with a slightly higher proportion disagreed with the statement.

A bachelor's degree no longer matters when it comes to securing a job	Frequency	%
Agree	75	39.5
Neither agree nor disagree	40	21.1
Disagree	66	34.7
Don't Know	9	4.7
Total	190	100.0

Table 14: Attitudes about bachelor degree

Drawing from the overall analysis, respondents' mind-set long shifted from their undergraduate studies, as they believed that the undergraduate degree is no longer considered sufficient to secure a job as opposed to attaining a postgraduate degree. It was clear that respondents had a strong preference for a postgraduate degree, and this was seen from their level of anxiety for unemployment as shown in Table 19. Respondents also noted a preference to invest more years in education in return for a higher salary. Lastly, respondents also possessed a positive attitude towards postgraduate education.

4.7 Demographics by outcomes

This section covers a cross-tabulation of certain variables in understanding the relationship of how the findings of this study are distributed in terms of demographics.

4.7.1 Considerations for a postgraduate study

This was drawn from all (n=190) respondents who participated in this study:

Have you considered applying? (n=190)							
Demographics		No	Yes	Total	Pearson chi-square	Df	Sig.
Age	19-22	14.5%	85.5%	100%	12.071	1	.001

		(16)	(94)	(110)			
	23-31	36.3%	63.7%	100%			
		(29)	(51)	(80)			
Gender	Male	24.5%	75.5%	100%	.083	1	.773
		(25)	(77)	(102)			
	Female	22.7%	77.3%	100%			
		(20)	(68)	(88)			
Population group	African	18.8%	81.2%	100%	9.143	1	.002
		(28)	(121)	(149)			
	Other	41.5%	58.5%	100%			
		(17)	(24)	(41)			
Province	KZN	24.1%	75.9%	100%	.035	1	.852
		(32)	(101)	(133)			
	Non-KZN	22.8%	77.2%	100%			
		(13)	(44)	(57)			

Table 15: Demographics by have you considered applying

From Table 19, the Pearson chi-square is 12.071, with 1 degree of freedom. P-value associated with the chi-square (0.001) is lower than significant level (0.05), and this means that there is statistical significance of 5% between age and the considering applying for PG in the 2020 enrolment variables. Findings also show that considering applying for a PG for 2020 for the age group of 19 to 22 years and the group aged between 23 to 31 years significantly differ. Those aged 19 to 22 years have considered applying more than those aged 23-31. Further, perhaps the reason behind this difference is that those aged 19 to 22 years felt that they are still young and have all the time they need in the world to make decisions that will have an impact on their future. While

the other age group (23 to 31 years) felt that the time was against them, hence; the reason why they would not consider staying in the university after an undergraduate degree.

Pearson chi-square was 0.083 with 1 degree of freedom. P-value associated with chi-square (0.773) is greater than the significant level 0.05, and this means that there is no statistical significance between gender and considering applying for PG in the 2020 enrolment at 5% level of significance. It was clear that the findings show that considering applying for PG 2020 enrolment for women and men significantly do not differ. Both gender categories are considered equally to apply for PG 2020 enrolment, and this means that both men and women have equal interest for PG 2020 enrolment.

Pearson chi-square is 9.143 with 1 degree of freedom. P-value associated with chi-square (0.002) is lower than significant level of 0.05, and this means that there is a statistical significance between population group and considering applying for PG in the 2020 enrolment at 5% level of significance. The finding shows that considering applying for PG in the 2020 enrolment for Africans and other population groups significantly differ, however, the African population group has considered applying the most than other population groups. In addition, the reason behind this difference is resilience for the African population group because education is a new thing for them, and completing grade 12 is taken as a big thing post-apartheid, while completing an undergraduate degree is even more a big thing. Hence, the more the society applauds you the more one feels greater and there more one feels greater about his/her accomplishments which improves their interest in accomplishing more.

Pearson chi-square is 0.035 with 1 degree of freedom. P-value associated with chi-square (0.852) is greater than significant level of 0.05, and this means that there is no statistical significance between province and considered applying for PG in the 2020 enrolment at 5% level of significance. This shows that considering applying for PG in the 2020 enrolment for KZN and other provinces significantly do not differ, as KZN and other provinces have the same considerations about applying for a PG study. All provinces in SA have same interest for postgraduate enrolment, and perhaps the reason behind this is the fact that more people in South Africa are considering accomplishing an education certificate or achievement.

4.7.2 Applied for a postgraduate study?

This was drawn from the respondents that have considered applying (145):

Have you applied? (n=145)							
Demographics		No	Yes	Total	Pearson chi-square	Df	Sig.
Age	19-22	23.4% (22)	76.6% (72)	100% (94)	4.017	1	.045
	23-31	39.2% (20)	60.8% (31)	100% (51)			
Gender	Male	32.5% (25)	67.5% (52)	100% (77)	.979	1	.323
	Female	25.0% (17)	75.0% (51)	100% (68)			
Population group	African	24.0% (29)	76.0% (92)	100% (121)	8.877	1	.003
	Other	54.2% (13)	45.8% (11)	100% (24)			
Province	KZN	25.7% (26)	74.3% (75)	100% (101)	1.680	1	.195
	Other provinces	36.4% (16)	63.6% (28)	100% (44)			

Table 16: Demographics by have you applied

Pearson chi-square was 4.017 with 1 degree of freedom. P-value associated with chi-square (0.045) is lower than significant level (0.05), and this means that there is a statistical significance between age and applying for postgraduate in the 2020 enrolment at 5% level of significance. Findings shows that applying for postgraduate in the 2020 enrolment for the group aged 19 to 22 years and the group aged 23 to 31 years significantly differ. The group aged 19 to 22 years have applied the most as opposed to the group aged 23 to 31 years, and this shows that the group aged 19 to 22 years have a strong interest for a postgraduate study, as they did not just end on the thought of considering to apply, but actually went on and made applications. In addition, this group could have been persuaded by the same reasons that they have all the time on their side while the group aged 23 to 31 years may feel the time is against them. Hence, pursuing a postgraduate study is the last thing in their mind because they might be pressured to look after their families.

Pearson chi-square was 0.979 with 1 degree of freedom. P-value associated with chi-square (0.323) is greater than significant level (0.05), and this means that there is no statistical significance between gender and applying for PG in the 2020 enrolment at 5% level of significance. This shows that applying for PG in the 2020 enrolment for women and men significantly do not differ. Equal number of men and women have applied, and the idea of one gender applying more than the other another is disregarded in these results because both males and females have the same interest for postgraduate enrolment as they considered applying for it equally as well. These results might give wrong impression about what exactly is happening in the selection process if both genders apply for PG because this is not the case in the seminar rooms around the universities. However, this could also be the fact that other gender qualifies more than the other because applying does not always guarantee a successful application.

Pearson chi-square was 8.877 with 1 degree of freedom. P-value associated with chi-square (0.003) is lower than significant level (0.05), and this means that there is a statistical significance between the population and applying for PG in the 2020 enrolment at 5% level of significance. The finding shows that applying for PG in the 2020 enrolment for Africans and other population groups significantly differ. The African population group has applied the most compared to the other population groups, and this shows that the African population group did considered applying but went on to make applications while for the other population group the case was not the same, as they did consider applying but they did not apply. One of the reasons behind this difference is

that other population group do not find anything amusing about a postgraduate degree because they do not see any benefits that could be brought by it.

Pearson chi-square was 1.680 with 1 degree of freedom. P-value associated with chi-square (0.195) is greater than significant level (0.05), and this means that there is no statistical significance between province and applying for PG in the 2020 enrolment at 5% level of significance. This finding shows that applying for PG in the 2020 enrolment for KZN and other provinces significantly do not differ. It was clear that all provinces showed same energy for considering and same energy when it comes to applying, and this shows that all provinces have a strong interest for PG in the 2020 enrolment.

4.8 Analysis of research questions

As outlined in Chapter 1, the study aimed to answer the following three research questions:

- What is the relationship between perceptions of unemployment and postgraduate enrolment?
- What is the relationship between earnings expectation and postgraduate enrolment?
- What is the interrelation between the perceptions of unemployment and earnings influence upon postgraduate enrolment demand?

To answer these research questions, the following represents the questionnaire questions that were asked to understand the perceptions and attitudes of students in terms of postgraduate enrolment and employment.

4.8.1 Perceptions of unemployment and postgraduate enrolment

To investigate the relationship between the perceptions of unemployment and postgraduate enrolment, crosstabs were performed for perceptions of unemployment presented in 4.4 and two outcomes from the questions on have you considered applying and have you applied.

The first question (whether graduate unemployment is a problem or not) was excluded from crosstabs, as it was shown previously that out of 190 respondents, 186 perceived graduate unemployment as a problem, 1 respondent was unsure (do not know), while 3 respondents did not

perceive graduate unemployment as a problem. Therefore, performing crosstabs could not work as some categories had insufficient numbers. As a result, the three questions are presented below:

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED APPLYING?							
Perceptions of unemployment		No.	Mean	Std. deviation	T-test	Df	Sig.
1. Anxious about unemployment in general	No	43	7.49	2.324	-1.983	184	.049
	Yes	143	8.18	1.909			
TOTAL		186	8.02	2.027			
2. Graduate unemployment estimation	No	45	40.63	21.395	-1.638	188	.103
	Yes	145	46.94	22.902			
TOTAL		190	45.44	22.659			
Perceptions of unemployment		No	Yes	Total	Pearson chi-square	Df	Sig.
3. Changes resulting from actual graduate unemployment percent	No	23.7% (22)	76.3% (71)	100% (93)	.000	1	.993
	Yes	23.7% (23)	76.3% (74)	100% (97)			

Table 17: Perceptions of unemployment questions by have you considered applying

From the group that considers graduate unemployment a problem, the T-test was -1.983 with a 184 degree of freedom. The p-value associated with the t-test is 0.049 while the significant level is 0.05. As p-value is equal to significant level, this means there is no statistical significance between two groups because the average anxious for unemployment in general for the group that

has considered applying and the one that has not applied significantly do not differ. There are 95% chances that these two variables are not significantly different. In addition, the group that has considered applying and the group that has not considered applying have the same level of anxiousness about unemployment and the reason behind this might be the fact that a very high proportion in South Africa is unemployed.

From all respondents, the T-test is -1.638 with 188 degrees of freedom. The p-value associated with t-test is 0.103 while the significant level is 0.05. As the p-value is greater than the significant level, this means there is no statistical significance between the two groups; average graduate rate for the group that has considered applying and the one that has not considered applying significantly do not differ. There are 95% chances for the group that has considered applying and the group that has not considered applying, as both groups believe that graduate unemployment is high. Considering, the socio-economic problems faced by South Africa, graduate unemployment remains a topic of concern because there is a number of graduates that are currently unemployed.

From all respondents, the Pearson chi-square is 0.000 with 1 degree of freedom. The p-value (0.993) associated with the chi-square is greater than the significant level of 0.05, and this means that there is no statistical significance between considering applying for a postgraduate study in the 2020 enrolment and changes that result from information provided at 5% level of significance. This shows that considering applying for PG in the 2020 enrolment for the group that changes and the group that does not change significantly do not differ. In addition, the consideration about applying is the same for both group despite the information shared, and this shows that the information shared did not change anything in their eyes because graduate unemployment remains high to the respondents.

From respondents that have considered applying:

HAVE YOU APPLIED?

Perceptions of unemployment		No.	Mean	Std. deviation	T-test	Df	Sig.
1. Anxious about unemployment in general	No	42	7.88	2.074	-1.218	141	.225
	Yes	101	8.31	1.832			
TOTAL		143	8.18	1.909			
2. Graduate unemployment estimation	No	42	43.70	22.721	-1.088	143	.279
	Yes	103	48.26	22.954			
TOTAL		145	46.94	22.902			
Perceptions of unemployment		No	Yes	Total	Person chi-square	Df	Sig.
3. Changes resulting from actual graduate unemployment percent	No	19.7% (14)	80.3% (57)	100% (71)	5.782	1	.016
	Yes	37.8% (28)	62.2% (46)	100% (74)			

Table 18: Perceptions of unemployment questions by have you applied

From the group that consider graduate unemployment a problem and considered applying, the T-test is -1.218 with 141 degrees of freedom. The p-value associated with t-test is 0.225, while the significant level is 0.05. As the p-value is greater than the 5% significant level, this means that there is no statistical significance between the two groups, the average anxiousness for unemployment in general for applied group and the group that has not applied significantly do not differ. There are 95% chances that these variables are not significantly different, as the anxiousness level is the same for the group that has applied and the group that has not applied. In addition, the

group that has not applied might have not applied for some personal reasons, but in general; they are anxious about unemployment. The group that has applied for a PG study, might have applied because they feel they can afford the tuition fees or the time to further their studies.

From respondents that have considered applying, the T-test is -1.088 with 143 degrees of freedom. P-value associated with t-test is 0.279 while significant level is 0.05. As p-value is greater than 5% significant level, this means there is no statistical significance between the two variables, the average graduate rate for the group that has applied and the group that has not applied significantly do not differ. There are 95% chances that they are not significantly different because graduate unemployment rate is high for the group that has applied and the group that has not applied. This is consistent with the experiences of South Africa in terms of graduate unemployment whereby graduates are seen serving as petrol attendants and street vendors, and there are cases whereby graduates are unemployed at all and a very few graduates are employed within their field of study.

From respondents that have considered applying, the Pearson chi-square was 5.782 with 1 degree of freedom. The p-value associated with the chi-square of 0.016 is lower than significant level of 0.05, and this means that there is a statistical significance between applying for postgraduate in the 2020 enrolment and changes that result from information provided at the 5% level of significance. The group that applied is not changing their views despite the information provided, whereas the ones that have not applied are changing theirs. In addition, despite the information provided the group that applied, these respondents still believe that graduate unemployment is even higher and they are anxious about not being employed in a near future.

None of the perceptions of unemployment are significant to the presented outcomes; have you considered applying and have you applied. These findings suggest no relationship between the perceptions of unemployment and postgraduate enrolment because almost all the respondents consider graduate unemployment as a problem, they have too much anxiety about unemployment in general and their estimation of graduate unemployment tends to be much higher than estimations provided by Statistics South Africa. However, to conclude; the following findings from the binary regression process were performed:

Equation 1: This equation is based on all respondents and if they have ever considered graduate unemployment to be a problem (186 respondents). Noting that almost all (186 out of 190) respondents perceived graduate unemployment to be a problem, and from the group that perceived graduate unemployment to be a problem, only 11 respondents rated less than 5 in terms of the anxious level, while the other 175 respondents rated 5 or more and this means that they are very anxious about unemployment in general. For this reason, anxious variable does not provide any new information, therefore it was excluded from the following equation.

Model Summary			
Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	185.707 ^a	.080	.120
a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 5 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.			

Table 19: Model summary of equation 1

Variables in the Equation							
		B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1 ^a	Age	-.165	.087	3.574	1	.059	.848
	Gender	.013	.369	.001	1	.971	1.013
	Population Group	-.455	.157	8.387	1	.004	.634
	Province	-.082	.083	.970	1	.325	.921
	Graduate rate	.111	.082	1.830	1	.176	1.118
	Changes 1	.264	.369	.511	1	.475	1.302
	Constant	4.815	2.099	5.263	1	.022	123.347
	a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Age, Gender, Population Group, Province, Graduate rate, Changes 1.						

Table 20: Equation 1 results

Regression coefficient for age is -165 with a p-value of 0.059. This coefficient is negative based on the coding system because there is 0 for those aged 19 to 22 years and 1 for those aged 23 to

31 years. Hence, this coefficient being negative is indicative that those aged 19 to 22 years were demonstrating a greater likelihood of expressing an intention to consider applying than those aged 23 to 31 years and this difference was statistically significant at the 10% level of significance. The odds ratio (.848) is less than 1, implying a negative relationship. This means that those aged 23 to 31 would correspond with lower odds of considering applying than those aged 19 to 22.

Regression coefficient for gender is 0.013 with a p-value of 0.971. This coefficient is positive and is not statistically significant based on coding system because there is 0 for males and 1 for females. This is indicative that both males and females were demonstrating a greater likelihood of expressing an intention to consider applying and this is not statistically significant.

Regression coefficient for population group is -0.455 with a p-value of 0.004. This coefficient is negative based on coding system because there is 0 for Africans and 1 for other population groups. Hence, this coefficient being negative is indicative that Africans were demonstrating a greater likelihood of expressing an intention to consider applying than non-Africans, and that difference was statistically significant at the 10% level of significance. The odds ratio (.634) is less than 1, implying a negative relationship. This means that students from other population groups have lower odds of considering applying than African students.

Regression coefficient for province is -0.082 with a p-value of 0.325. This coefficient is negative based on coding system because there 0 for KZN and 1 for other provinces. Hence, this coefficient being negative is indicative that the KZN Province was demonstrating a greater likelihood of expressing an intention to consider applying compared to other provinces, and the difference was not statistically significant.

Regression coefficient for graduate rate is 0.111 with a p-value of 0.176. The positive coefficient and it being not statistically significant indicates that people who were very anxious tended to be more likely to express an intention to apply. Similarly, for those who had lower level of anxious tended to be more likely to express an intention to consider applying.

Regression coefficient for changes is 0.264 with a p-value of 0.475. This is a positive coefficient and is not statistically significant, and it indicates that both the group that was changing

and not changing due to the information provided about graduate unemployment estimation tended to be more likely to express an intention to consider applying.

When significant variables are removed from the equation such as age, there are no changes experienced in terms of the regression coefficients, meaning the information provided by age is different and is not independent on anything. However, when population group is removed, graduate unemployment rate changes to being statistically significant (0.070), meaning the information contained by the population group dull graduate changes. In addition, when population group is removed from the equation, Cox & Snell R Square drops instantly to 0.038, and this suggests that population group affect this equation much stronger, and followed by age (0.062), while sex (0.080), provinces (0.075), graduate unemployment rate (0.070) and changes (0.077) do not have much of an effect to the equation.

Equation 2: This equation is based on those who have considered applying and consider graduate unemployment to be a problem (n=143).

Model Summary			
Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	153.433 ^a	.129	.183
a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 4 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.			

Table 21: Model summary of equation 2

Variables in the Equation									
		B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for Exp(B)	
								Lower	Upper
Step 1 ^a	Age	-.161	.096	2.848	1	.091	.851	.706	1.026
	Gender	.326	.409	.637	1	.425	1.386	.622	3.089
	Population Group	-.619	.195	10.042	1	.002	.539	.367	.790
	Province	-.103	.090	1.305	1	.253	.903	.757	1.076

Graduate rate	.039	.095	.171	1	.679	1.040	.863	1.254
Changes 1	-.774	.414	3.497	1	.061	.461	.205	1.038
Constant	5.081	2.377	4.568	1	.033	160.909		
a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Age, Gender, Population Group, Province, Graduate rate, Changes 1.								

Table 22: Equation 2 results

Regression coefficient for age is -0.161 with a p-value of 0.091. This coefficient is negative based on coding system and there is 0 for those aged 19 to 22 years and 1 for aged 23 to 31 years. Hence, this coefficient being negative is indicative that those aged 19 to 22 years were demonstrating a greater likelihood of expressing an intention to apply than those aged 23 to 31 years and that difference was statistically significant.

Regression coefficient for sex is 0.326 with a p-value of 0.425. This coefficient is positive and is not statistically significant based on coding system because there is 0 for males and 1 for females. This is indicative that both males and females were demonstrating a greater likelihood of expressing an intention to apply and this is not statistically significant.

Regression coefficient for population group is -0.619 with a p-value of 0.002. This coefficient is negative based on the coding system because there is 0 for Africans and 1 for the other population groups. This coefficient being negative is indicative that Africans were demonstrating a greater likelihood of expressing an intention to apply than the other population group, and that difference was statistically significant at the 10% level of significance. The odd ratio (.539) is less than 1, implying a negative relationship. This means that other population group would correspond with lower odds of considering applying that African population.

Regression coefficient for province is -0.103 with a p-value of 0.253. This coefficient is negative based on coding system because there is 0 for the KZN Province and 1 for the other provinces. Hence, this coefficient being negative is indicating that the KZN Province is demonstrating a greater likelihood of expressing an intention to apply than other provinces and

this difference was not statistically significant. Since the P-value (.253) is above 0.05, this is a non-statistically significant relationship.

Originally, the regression coefficient for graduate unemployment rate is 0.039 with a p-value of 0.679. This represents a positive coefficient and it is not statistically significant, and this is indicating that people who were very anxious tended to be more likely to express an intention to apply for a PG study. Similarly, those who had lower level of anxious tended to be more likely to express an intention to apply. Since the P-value (.679) is above 0.05, this relationship is not statistically significant.

Regression coefficient for changes is -0.774 with a p-value of 0.061. This coefficient is negative based on coding system because there is 0 for No and 1 for Yes. Hence, this coefficient being negative is indicating that the group that fall under “No” was demonstrating a greater likelihood of intention to apply for a PG study than the group that responded “Yes” and this difference was statistically significant. Since the P-value (.061) is above 0.05, this relationship is statistically significant at the 10% level. The odds ratio (.461) is less than 1, implying a negative relationship. This means that the group that had changes would correspond with lower odds of applying than the one that did not have changes.

When some variables are removed from the equation including significant variables, certain changes were noted. When age is removed, nothing changes, and when population group is removed, age changes to being not statically significant (0.174) and lastly; when province is removed, age changes to being not statistically significant (0.110). This implies that the information contained by the population group and province mediated the age variable. In addition, when the population group is removed from the equation, Cox & Snell R Square drops instantly to 0.062, and this suggests that population group affect this equation much stronger and this was followed by the changes variable (0.107) and age (0.111), while gender (0.125), provinces (0.121) and graduate unemployment rate (0.128) do not have much of an effect to the equation.

These two equations provide the same information, and the findings suggest that there is no relationship between the perceptions of labour market and postgraduate enrolment, but rather the information provided about the actual graduate unemployment rate mediate the changes from

the group that has previously considered applying to not continue applying. In addition, the differences are found in age and population group variables for both that have considered applying and those have actually applied.

4.8.2 Perceptions of earnings expectation and postgraduate enrolment

To investigate the perceptions of earnings and postgraduate enrolment, crosstabs were performed for perceptions of earnings presented in 4.5 by two outcomes presented in 4.3 (have you considered applying and have you applied).

4.8.2.1 Years of investment in education and expected monthly earnings

In terms of the years of investment in education and monthly earnings, the R18 000 category was removed from the analysis due to having a proportion less than 5, resulting to 175 respondents in total.

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED APPLYING? (n=175)								
	3years- R7000	4years- R10 000	5years- R15 000	7years- R20 000	Total	Pearson chi- square	Df	Sig.
No	12.5% (5)	25.0% (10)	20.0% (8)	42.5% (17)	100% (40)	2.221	3	.528
Yes	8.9% (12)	28.9% (39)	28.9% (39)	33.3% (45)	100% (135)			
HAVE YOU APPLIED? (n=135)								
	3years- R7000	4years- R10 000	5years- R15 000	7years- R20 000	Total	Pearson chi- square	Df	Sig.
No	12.5%	30.0%	25.0%	32.5%	100%	1.168	3	.761

	(5)	(12)	(10)	(13)	(40)			
Yes	7.4%	28.4%	30.5%	33.7%	100%			
	(7)	(27)	(29)	(32)	(95)			

Table 23: Years of investing in education and monthly earnings by have you considered applying and applied

From all respondents, excluding the 6years-R18 000 category, the Pearson chi-square is 2.221 with 3 degrees of freedom. The p-value (0.528) associated with the chi-square is greater than the 5% significant level, and this means there is no statistical significance between considering applying for postgraduate in the 2020 enrolment and choosing between stylised years of studying and monthly earnings at 5% level of significance. Findings also show no differences between the group that considered applying for a PG study and the one that has not considered applying for postgraduate in the 2020 enrolment. In addition, both groups choose 7 years of study, and this mean that they all have preference of a higher salary. It was clear that this group of final year undergraduate students have a preference of staying in university and pursue postgraduate in order to retain higher earnings instead of taking what is offered by the labour market based on their undergraduate degree.

From the respondents that have considered applying, excluding the 6years- R18 000 category, the Pearson chi-square is 1.168 with 3 degrees of freedom. The P-value (0.761) is greater than the significant level (0.05), and this means that there is no statistical significance between applying for postgraduate in the 2020 enrolment and choosing stylised years of studying and monthly earnings at 5% level of significance. The findings also show that the group that has applied had the same preference as the group that has not, and they all prefer 7 years which indicates a higher salary expectation.

4.8.2.2 Job offer and minimum salary:

Due to having categories with proportions less than 5, the R2 500 category was combined with the R5 000 category and those who did not choose anything were removed, and this resulted to 179 respondents in total.

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED APPLYING? (n=179)								
	R16 000	R13 000	R8 000	R5 000	Total	Pearson chi-square	Df	Sig.
No	31.0%	26.2%	11.9%	31.0%	100%	5.196	3	.158
	(13)	(11)	(5)	(13)	(42)			
Yes	23.4%	22.6%	29.2%	24.8%	100%			
	(32)	(31)	(40)	(34)	(137)			
HAVE YOU APPLIED? (n=137)								
	R16 000	R13 000	R8 000	R5 000	Total	Pearson chi-square	Df	Sig.
No	21.1%	28.9%	26.3%	23.7%	100%	1.224	3	.747
	(8)	(11)	(10)	(9)	(38)			
Yes	24.4%	20.2%	30.3%	25.3%	100%			
	(24)	(20)	(30)	(25)	(99)			

Table 24: Job offer and minimum salary by have you considered and applied

From all respondents, the Pearson chi-square is 5.196 with 3 degrees of freedom. The p-value of 0.158 associated with the chi-square is greater than the significant level (0.05), and this means that there is no statistical significance between considering applying for postgraduate in the 2020 enrolment and choosing a minimum salary at 5% level of significance. The findings suggested that the group that has not considered applying has the same preference as the one that has considered applying.

From the respondents that have considered applying, the Pearson chi-square is 1.224 with 3 degrees of freedom. The p-value of 0.747 associated with the chi-square is greater than the significant level (0.05), and this means there is no statistical significance between considering applying for postgraduate in 2020 enrolment and choosing a minimum salary at 5% level of significance. The findings suggest that the group that has not applied has the same preference as the one that has applied.

4.2.2.3 Changes resulting from providing entry level salary

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED APPLYING? (n=190)						
	No	Yes	Total	Pearson chi-square	Df	Sig.
No	73.3% (33)	26.7% (12)	100% (45)	.044	1	.833
Yes	71.1% (104)	28.3% (41)	100% (145)			
HAVE YOU APPLIED? (n=145)						
	No	Yes	Total	Pearson chi-square	Df	Sig.
No	66.7% (28)	33.3% (14)	100% (42)	.746	1	.388
Yes	73.8% (76)	26.2% (27)	100% (103)			

Table 25: Changes resulting from providing graduate entry salary

From all respondents, the Pearson chi-square is 0.044 with 1 degree of freedom. The p-value (0.833) associated with the chi-square is greater than significant level (0.05), and this means that there is no statistical significance between considering applying for postgraduate in the 2020 enrolment and changes that result from information provided at 5% level of significance. Findings suggest that both groups (considered and not considered) are resilient about their reservation wage and they are not changing their preference, despite knowing the entry level salary by Indeed (2019). In addition, those who considered are not willing to join the labour market immediately after completing their undergraduate studies, but they willing to forgo extra years for better salaries. However, the group that did not consider even if they join labour market, the respondents are not willing to change their reservation wage.

From the respondents that have considered applying, the Pearson chi-square is 0.746 with 1 degrees of freedom. The p-value associated with chi-square (0.388) is greater than the significant level (0.05), and this means that there is no statistical significance between applying for postgraduate in the 2020 enrolment and changes that result from information provided at 5% level of significant. These findings suggest that the group that has applied have the same preference with the ones that have not applied. The applied group chose to not join the labour market now and forgo extra years in order to retain higher earnings, while the group that did not apply chose to join the labour market, but they are not willing to accept the lower reservation wages. In addition, this simply means that despite the information provided by these two groups, it was clear that they not willing to change their reservation wage.

None of the perceptions of earnings are significant to the presented outcome; have you considered applying and have you applied. These findings suggest that there is no relationship between the perceptions of earnings and postgraduate enrolment, as almost all respondents opted for higher earnings regardless of whether they have considered applying, applied or not and the information provided about the new graduate entry salary did not do any justice in terms of students deciding to continue with their studies or not.

4.8.3 The interrelation between the perceptions of unemployment and earnings expectation influence upon postgraduate enrolment demand

The aim of this section is to understand if whether there is an interrelation between the perceptions of unemployment and earnings influence upon postgraduate enrolment. From the crosstabs performed between the perceptions of unemployment and two outcomes namely; have you considered applying and have you applied, none of the perceptions of unemployment was found statistically significant. Similarly, with the results for the perceptions of earnings and postgraduate enrolment, it was clear that was no statistical significance. Clearly if no statistically significant was found between the two crosstabs of the abovementioned variables, and this automatically suggest that there is no interrelation between the perceptions of unemployment and earnings influence upon increased demand for postgraduate enrolment.

4.9 Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to present results, and more specifically answer the research questions that guided the study. It was clear that the research questions were answered using the commands for descriptive statistics and binary regression run from SPSS. The descriptive statistics were performed to understand the perceptions of respondents when it comes to pursuing a postgraduate study or joining a labour market, and this allowed to determine if the extracted factors were statistically significant or not to understand and establish if there was any relationship. The binary regression was performed to determine the extent to which the perceptions of employment factors influence the student's intention to enrol for a postgraduate study in 2020.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The statistical analysis and the findings were presented in the previous chapter. As noted, the aim of this study to investigate the influence of perceptions on labour market conditions upon increased demand for postgraduate education. The purpose of this chapter is to reflect on the objectives that guided the study, and evaluate if whether the research questions of this study were answered. For that reason, this chapter will discuss the findings of this study and link these with the previous literature review. This chapter is divided into different segments and consists of a summary of the results, linking the findings of this study to the previous literature and the theoretical framework, report the implications of the findings, provide limitations and the recommendations and then conclude the whole study.

5.2 Summary of findings

A sample size of 200 final year undergraduate students completed the questionnaires, however; only 190 respondents qualified for the study. The excluded 10 respondents were not from South Africans and were excluded because their experiences and perceptions might be different to those of South Africa final year students. The sample size of this study almost had a balanced gender distribution, as there were 46.3% females and 53.7% males. The study comprised of final year undergraduate students between the ages of 19 to 31 years, the group that aged 19 to 22 years (57.9%) was identified appropriate age for final year undergraduate students in South African universities. It was also clear that the study was dominated by the African population (78.4%) and it was not surprising for such a higher proportion because the university is situated in the KwaZulu-Natal Province.

After performing some statistical analysis to explore the intentions of final year undergraduate students about postgraduate enrolment, four questions were asked and the results revealed that 76.3% of respondents have considered applying for a PG study in 2020. It was also clear that from the group that has considered applying, 95.9% of respondents had thought about this deeply and 71% of them has actually applied, and from the group that applied 67% actually made two or more applications. Further, the findings also revealed that women and men, and all

provinces have the same preference for a postgraduate enrolment. The group aged between 19 to 22 years was more likely to opt for postgraduate studies than the group aged between 23 to 31 years, and it was noted that Africans were more likely to opt for postgraduate studies than other population groups.

It can be noted that the research questions of this study were answered. The first question investigated the relationship between the perceptions of unemployment and postgraduate enrolment, and participants were given four questions to answer in order to understand their perceptions of unemployment. 97.9% of respondents perceived graduate unemployment to be a social problem, and from the group that perceived graduate unemployment to be a problem, 94% of respondents rated 5 or more out of 10 and the most popular group that rated 10 out of 10 had a proportion of 34.9% for their anxious level. 45.4% was the average mean for the estimation of graduate unemployment rate, with 2% minimum and 95% maximum, and only 51.1% of respondents changed after receiving the correct information estimated by the Quarterly Labour Force Survey conducted by StatsSA. The researcher also conducted crosstabs between the questions listed under perceptions of unemployment and there were two outcomes namely; have you considered applying and have you applied, separately. Due to insufficient numbers, crosstabs were not conducted for the first question. However, for the rest of the questions, no statistical significance was found.

The second question investigated the relationship between the preference of earnings and postgraduate enrolment. This question provided the respondents with three questions to respond to in order to understand their preference of earnings. It was clear that the most recurring response was a preference of 7 years-R20 000 for the first question, and only 24.7% of respondents had preference of a minimum salary of R5 000 from the second question. 72.1% of respondents did not change their preference even after being provided the information from Indeed (2019) about new graduate entry level salary. The students felt like they deserved more than the R6 778 provided by the Indeed website. Crosstabs were also conducted between the questions listed under perceptions of earnings and two outcomes namely; have you considered applying and have you applied, and it turned out that none of these questions were statistically significant.

5.3 Relating the main findings to the literature and theoretical framework

5.3.1 Level of study

This study was conducted amongst final year undergraduate students at UKZN, and the results revealed that the relationship between perceptions of labour market conditions and particularly unemployment and earnings and postgraduate enrolment is not statistically significant. It appeared that these results were not in line with existing literature, as the previous studies noted that the final year undergraduate student's intention to enrol in postgraduate education has to do with obtaining employment and increased income (Wen and Sha, 2014; Lin, 2011). Moreover, the previous literature also noted that those about to graduate in high schools, the undergraduate students and master's students are often motivated by employment and earnings (Albert, 2000; Baliyan, 2016; Knutsen, 2001). However, this was not in line with the current study because the findings suggest supported the findings that are asking about the intention to enrol for PhD and whose interests is not on employment nor earnings (Arefi and Yamana, 2015; Mueller, Flickinger and Dorner, 2015; Teowkull et al., 2009). It can be concluded that the final year undergraduate students are critical thinkers and very curious about their next steps in life, and it was clear that they are motivated by other factors to pursuing for a postgraduate education other than the implications on labour market conditions.

5.3.2 Age

Previous studies have overlooked the labour market conditions, together with age and experience dynamics. The current study looked at the labour market conditions in relation to postgraduate enrolment in terms of the age of the respondents. This study comprised of students between the ages of 19 to 31 years. As per the South African education system, students are expected to complete grade 12 at 18 years and then decide whether to enter the labour market or pursue a higher education qualification. Hence, the age categories of this study were according to the ideal age for undergraduate and postgraduate enrolment. As a result, those students aged 19 to 22 years were categorised as age appropriate to be undergraduate final year students and those aged 23 to 31 years were classified not appropriate. From the findings, the group aged 19 to 22 years demonstrated a greater likelihood of expressing an intention to consider applying than those aged 23 to 31 years and this difference was statistically significant.

It also appeared that the findings of this study were in line with the existing literature, Teowkul et al. (2009) found age difference to be a contributing factor towards decision making, and younger people were likely to study with the intention to secure employment and higher earnings, as opposed to older people. Similarly, this study found younger people to be likely to apply for a postgraduate study than older people. Teowkul et al. (2009: 46) argued that the reason behind this difference was that “older people are wiser and skilled probably because of experience gathered over time, challenges that they have met and solutions that they managed to cobble to achieve. In group learning, we have people of different ages, young and old, who have totally different understanding and way of looking at issues.” In line with this study, young people were more likely to apply for postgraduate studies than older people, as they have no much experience in the outer world, and they are moving from one phase to another in terms of education unlike older people because they have responsibilities.

5.3.3 Gender

Previous studies have overlooked the labour market conditions and gender dynamics, while this study looked at labour market conditions in relation to postgraduate enrolment control for gender. It appeared that the findings of this study were in line with the existing literature on labour market conditions in relation to postgraduate enrolment control for gender. In addition, this study found no gender differences on perceptions of labour market conditions and postgraduate enrolment. Hence, when freezing gender, no differences were found on the perceptions of labour market conditions and postgraduate enrolment. Similarly, the previous studies found no differences between gender dynamics and labour market conditions (Knutsen, 2011; Stoecker, 1991; Teowkull et al., 2009; Uka, 2012). While the relationship found between the labour market conditions and postgraduate enrolment differs, previous found a relationship amongst the two variables and this study did not find any relationship. Hence, both males and females expressed an intention to enrol in postgraduate enrolment, but this had no effect on labour market conditions.

This study was framed within human capital theory, which suggests that students invest in education to obtain more earnings and/ to secure employment (Blundell et al., 1999). It has appeared that the findings from this study are not in line with the theoretical framework. The results indicated that students are not drawn only by earnings and employment to pursue postgraduate

studies, but are also drawn by social status. In this stance, the framework can be considered an unreliable tool in understanding the perceptions of labour market conditions upon increased demand for postgraduate study (Tomlinson, 2008). In addition, the findings also imply that students have stronger interests for postgraduate studies, however; their concerns about employment and earnings had nothing to do with a PG study. This is in line with the findings by results by Tomlinson (2008) who found that students understand that labour market outcomes are more complex than simply possessing extra credentials. This evidence clearly shows that there is another driving factor for students to enrol for a postgraduate study and this calls for further research. This brings one of the shortcomings of the theory into attention because it does not take into consideration other factors which can motivates students to invest in education, and these include career development, job satisfaction, pressure, enjoyment and status (Gillie, 2015). Moreover, this shows that some students might be motivated by other socio-economic factors to invest in education and these are not taken into consideration by the human capital theory.

5.4 Limitations of the study

The main limitations of the study are as follows:

- ❖ The first limitation of this study is the relatively small sample size. This limits the power of the study and thus that can be attached to the interpretation of the results. If the sample size is small, the power of the study is low and high margin error, which makes the study meaningless.
- ❖ The second limitation is the use of convenience sampling. One of the shortcomings of convenience sampling is the inability to generalize survey results to the entire population, due to potential bias in sampling techniques and insufficient representation of subgroups in the sample relative to the population on interest.
- ❖ The third limitation is that the questionnaires were self-reported. A number of disadvantages are associated with self-reported data. For example, the ability to provide false answers, the tendency to respond in a certain way, despite the question, and finally to respond in a socially acceptable manner.
- ❖ Limitations related to the cross-sectional nature of the data. For example, one of the outcomes of the study was “Have you applied?” Since, data was collected at the end of October, while late applications for postgraduate enrolment re-opens at the beginning of the year, and this outcome can somehow provide incorrect (incomplete) information.

5.5 Recommendations and future research implications

South Africa has recently experienced persistent and remarkable growth on the admission rate in higher education institutions. Ensuring that these gains are sustained over time, it would be great to further understand what has driven the increased rates in higher education institutions. Since many students do not have good career planning, the government and other economic initiatives should consider conducting workshops on career planning to allow students to make better future prospects. In addition, the government should consider expanding financial assistance at postgraduate level as more students are interested in postgraduate study. Further, government needs to investigate why more women than men are accepted and admitted for a postgraduate study.

More qualitative studies would be valuable in future academic research to allow participants to share their perceptions and attitudes based on their real-life experiences. Further future research should investigate the experiences of two countries or two areas to understand if there are correlations or gaps between two regions being studied in one research. Research in high schools should be conducted to understand the future prospect of high school learners to explore if whether they are familiar with postgraduate studies, or if this is something they get to know about when they arrive in higher education institutions. More factors should be explored to investigate if whether there are any underlying socio-cultural factors promoting or inhibiting students to pursue postgraduate studies. Future research should investigate students from different fields/faculty, perhaps a student from College of Law and Management Studies may not think alike as the student from College of Agriculture, Engineering and Science or any other college.

5.6 Conclusion of the study

This final chapter of this dissertation offered a summary of the entire study, drew some conclusions based on the research findings, produced some useful policy recommendations and suggested directions for future research. This study was conducted with an intention to investigate whether perceptions of labour market conditions have an impact on postgraduate enrolment amongst final year undergraduate students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Westville Campus. The study used a quantitative research methodology to collect data on the perceptions of labour market and postgraduate enrolment among 190 final year undergraduate

students between the ages of 19 to 31 years. These respondents were recruited using convenient sampling and a questionnaire was consolidated and distributed to final year undergraduate students.

The descriptive statistics and binary regression were used to answer the research questions of the study, and the main findings suggest no link between the perceptions of the labour market, particularly unemployment and earnings, and postgraduate enrolment. Other findings revealed that there is no relationship between the perceptions of unemployment (graduate unemployment, anxious about unemployment, graduate job estimation rate) and postgraduate enrolment. In addition, other findings revealed that there is no relationship between the earnings expectation (number of years invested in education and monthly earnings, and job offer and minimum salary) and postgraduate enrolment. The third research question's findings revealed that there is no interrelation between perceptions of unemployment, earnings preference and postgraduate enrolment. It was clear that providing information can actually decrease the application for postgraduate enrolment, hence, providing information about the actual graduate unemployment percent did mediate the respondents who have previously considered applying to not continue with application.

The study also revealed that students do not have career planning, as 70% of respondents made two or more applications and this suggests that students are not clear about their future prospects. There was no difference in gender when it comes to the intention to enrol for a postgraduate study in the 2020 enrolment. The results also revealed that providing information on the actual graduate unemployment rate and the entry level graduate salary allows undergraduate students to have better planning when it comes to joining the labour market or continue to pursue a postgraduate study. Students continue to have higher preference of earnings and they are not willing to compromise their highest education level with lower wages. when it comes to them. It was also clear that young people are more interested in postgraduate studies as compared to the older students that participated in the study. Overall, it was also clear that some of the literature review presented in Chapter two were consistent with some of the findings of the study, while some previous literature was not consistent with other findings of this study.

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LIST OF ANNEXURES

1. Gatekeepers Letters



29 August 2019

Ms Hlakaniphile Sinenhlanhla Nene (SN 215072466)
School of Built Environment and Development Studies
College of Humanities
Howard College Campus
UKZN
Email: 215072466@stu.ukzn.ac.za Hlakaar96@gmail.com Boyce@ukzn.ac.za

Dear Ms Nene

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Gatekeeper's permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), provided Ethical clearance has been obtained. We note the title of your research project is:

"Investigate the influence of perceptions of labor market conditions upon increased demand for postgraduate education."

It is noted that you will be constituting your sample by handing out questionnaires to final year undergraduate students on the Westville campus.

Please ensure that the following appears on your notice/questionnaire:

- Ethical clearance number;
- Research title and details of the research, the researcher and the supervisor;
- Consent form is attached to the notice/questionnaire and to be signed by user before he/she fills in questionnaire;
- gatekeepers approval by the Registrar.

You are not authorized to contact staff and students using 'Microsoft Outlook' address book. Identity numbers and email addresses of individuals are not a matter of public record and are protected according to Section 14 of the South African Constitution, as well as the Protection of Public Information Act. For the release of such information over to yourself for research purposes, the University of KwaZulu-Natal will need express consent from the relevant data subjects. Data collected must be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity.

Yours sincerely


**DR KE CLELAND
REGISTRAR (ACTING)**

Office of the Registrar
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, South Africa
Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 8005/2206 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 7824/2204 Email: registrar@ukzn.ac.za
Website: www.ukzn.ac.za

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2. Approval from HSSREC Ethics



30 October 2019

Miss Hlakaniphile Sinenhlanhla Nene (215072466)
School of Built Environment & Development Studies
Howard College Campus

Dear Miss Nene,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00000454/2019

Project title: The influence of perceptions of labour market conditions upon increased demand for postgraduate education

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 05 September 2019 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid for one year from 30 October 2019.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

Yours sincerely,


Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)

/ms

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)
UKZN Research Ethics Office Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/>

Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

3. Informed Consent

UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH

ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL

For research with human participants

INFORMED CONSENT RESOURCE TEMPLATE

Note to researchers: Notwithstanding the need for scientific and legal accuracy, every effort should be made to produce a consent document that is as linguistically clear and simple as possible, without omitting important details as outlined below. Certified translated versions will be required once the original version is approved.

There are specific circumstances where witnessed verbal consent might be acceptable, and circumstances where individual informed consent may be waived by HSSREC.

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date

Greetings

My name is Nene Sinenhlahla H. from School of Built Environment and Development Studies, 0810525689, hlakaar96@gmail.com

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research related to relationship between labour market conditions and demand for postgraduate studies. The aim and purpose of this research is to investigate the effect of labor market conditions upon increased demand for postgraduate studies. The study is expected to enroll 200 participants, which consist of final year undergraduate students. All participants will comprise of UKZN Westville Campus

students. It will involve the following procedures: The collection of data related to labour market variables particularly, earnings and unemployment and if they influence students to enroll on postgraduate studies, this data will be collected and analyzed to contribute to the overall understanding of whether labour market conditions contribute to increased demand for postgraduate education. The duration of your participation if you choose to enroll and remain in the study is expected to be not more than 10 minutes. The study is funded by the researcher.

The study may involve the following risks and/or discomforts: psychological risks such as emotional trauma and distress. The study might provide the following benefits to participants: give them information about labour market conditions and allow them to review their decisions or rather make informed decisions. The findings can also be of assistance to labour market policy makers and government. In the case of emotional trauma/distress, please seek help at the Student Support Services. Contact details:

031 260 2668

Moodleyv28@ukzn.ac.za

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number 00000454).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at 0810525689, hlakaar96@gmail.com or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS

ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001 Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Participation in this research is voluntary and the participants may withdraw participation at any point. In the event of refusal/withdrawal of participation you will not incur any penalty.

Steps will be taken to protect confidentiality of your personal information. Your name and student number will not be required. The details you have provided will be pass coded to ensure anonymity

CONSENT

I have been informed about the study entitled “the influence of perceptions of labour market conditions upon increased demand for postgraduate education.” by Nene H.S.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time.

I have been informed about any available medical treatment if injury occurs to me as a result of study-related procedures.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study, I understand that I may contact the researcher at 0810525689, hlakaar96@gmail.com.

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

**HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS
ADMINISTRATION**

Research Office, Westville Campus Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001 Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Signature of Participant

Date

4. Study's questionnaire

FORM NO: 1

POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION QUESTIONNAIRE

The influence of perceptions of labour market conditions upon increased demand for postgraduate education

Please note that participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw participation at any point

Please indicate with an 'X' your responses to the questions in the spaces provided

PART I: Socio-demographic information

1. What is your age?

2. What is your sex?

Male: _____ Female: _____

3. What is your population group?

African: _____ White: _____ Coloured: _____

Indian/Asian: _____ Other: _____

4. Are you a South African citizen? Yes: _____ No: _____

5. If your answer was YES above, which province in South Africa are you from?

KwaZulu-Natal: _____ Limpopo: _____ Gauteng: _____ North
West: _____

Eastern Cape: _____ Mpumalanga: _____ Western Cape: _____ Free
State: _____

Northern Cape: _____

6. Have you considered applying for postgraduate studies next year?

Yes: _____ No: _____

7. How deeply have you thought about it?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1
										0

8. Have you applied for post graduate study?

Yes: _____ No: _____

9. If you have applied, how many applications have you already made? _____

PART II: Employment

10. Do you think graduate unemployment is a problem in South Africa?

Yes: _____ No: _____ Don't know: _____

11. How anxious are you about unemployment in general in South Africa?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1
										0

12. What is your estimate of graduate unemployment in SA, in percentage?

13. According to StatsSA graduate unemployment is 7.9% as of 2019. Does this information change the answer you gave in question 10 and 11 in any way?

Yes: _____ No: _____

PART III: Earnings

The information presented below is stylised not actual:

14. The table below represents number of years invested in higher education and associated earnings: which of these combinations, will be preferable to you?

Years of investment in education	Monthly Earnings
3	R 7000
4	R 10 000
5	R 15 000
6	R 18 000
7	R 20 000

15. Below is a series of earnings in the labour market, would you consider taking a job that offers?

Per month	Yes	No
R 2 500		
R 5 000		
R 8 000		
R 13 000		
R 16 000		

16. According to Indeed, the average salary for a New Graduate is R 6 778 per month in South Africa. Does this information change the answers you gave in question 14 and 15 in any way?

Yes: _____ No: _____

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
1. Taking postgraduate studies will increase my chances of getting a job.						
2. Taking postgraduate studies will increase my earnings.						
3. A Bachelor's degree no longer matters when it comes to securing a job.						