

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISPOSITIONAL EMPLOYABILITY AND  
CAREER SUCCESS OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT  
PRACTITIONERS**

by

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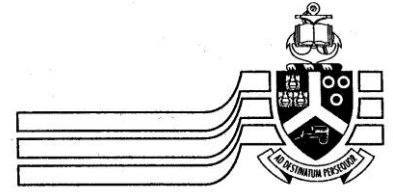
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## Abstract/Summary

Dispositional Employability and Career Success are constructs that when brought together leads to a multitude of questions regarding their meaning. This study attempted to determine whether there is a significant relationship between the two constructs of dispositional employability and career success. The study furthermore focused on expanding on the literature by elaborating on the sample group. This was done by determining whether or not there is a difference between the groups with regards to their Dispositional Employability and Career Success based on their individual characteristics.

A quantitative research approach was followed to obtain the research objectives of this study. The Dispositional Employability Measure and Career Success Orientation Measure were administered among a purposive convenience sample of HRM Practitioners in South Africa (N=155).

The results of the research showed that there is a significant relationship between Dispositional Employability and Career Success with a low effect. Furthermore significant differences exist between groups with regards to both Dispositional Employability on the ground of number of years in their current organisation and Career Success on level of education, age, race and job level.

The study thus contributes to the limited literature on both constructs. In addition, the results of the study make important theoretical, methodological and practical contributions. Recommendations for future research are made.

**Keywords:** *Dispositional Employability, Career Success, Career success measure, Dispositional measure of employability, relationships, Human Resources Management Practitioners.*

## Opsomming

Dispositionele indiensneembaarheid en Loobaansukses is konstruke wat as dit bymekaar gesit word kan lei tot menigte vra oor die betekenis daarvan. Hierdie studie het gepoog om te bepaal of daar 'n beduidende verband tussen die twee konstruke van Dispositionele indiensneembaarheid en Loobaansukses is. Die studie het verde gefokus op die uitbreiding van die literatuur met betrekking tot menslike hulpbronne werkers deur te fokus op 'n spesifieke groep in terme van die bogenoemde konstruke. Hierdie is gedoen deur te bepaal of daar 'n verskil is tussen die individue met betrekking tot hulle dispositionele-indiensneembaarheid en loopbaan sukses gebaseer op hulle individule kenmerke..

'n Kwantitatiewe navorsingsbenadering is gevolg om die doelwitte van hierdie studie te ondersoek. Die dispositionele Indiensneembaarheid en Loobaan sukses orientasie meetinstrumente was geadministreer op Menslike Hulbronne werkers in Suid Africa (N = 155) geadministreer.

Die resultate van die navorsing het getoon dat daar 'n beduidende verband tussen dispositionele indiensneembaarheid en loopbaan Sukses met' n lae effek is. Verder bestaan daar beduidende verskille tussen groepe met betrekking tot beide dispositionele Indiensneembaarheid op die grond van die aantal jare in hul huidige organisasie en loopbaan sukses op die vlak van opvoeding, ouderdom, ras en posvlak.

Die studie dra dus by tot die beperkte literatuur op beide konstruke. Daarbenewens het die resultate van die studie belangrike teoretiese, metodologiese en praktiese bydraes maak. Aanbevelings vir toekomstige navorsing word gemaak.

**Sleutlewoorde:** *Dispositionele Indiensneembaarheid, Loobaansukses, Dispositionele Indiensneembaarheid metingsinstrument , Loobaansukses oriëntasie meetings instrument, verhoudings, Menslike Hulbronbestuur praktisyne.*

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# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISPOSITIONAL EMPLOYABILITY AND CAREER SUCCESS OF HRM PRACTITIONERS

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This chapter forms the basis for the study on the relationship between Dispositional Employability and Career Success for Human Resources Management (HRM) Practitioners. This chapter outlines the introduction and background to this study in terms of an overview of the research, the problem statement and research objectives, the benefits and importance of the study as well as the assumptions made by the researcher regarding this study. Following first is the general introduction and overview of the research.

### 1.1 BACKGROUND

*The gem cannot be polished without friction, nor man perfected without trial.*

-Confucius-

The concept of Career Success can be found in the literature dated back as early as the 1970's. It has been studied and developed over the decades and still little consensus have been reached on the true meaning thereof. When the two constructs of career and success are brought together, the ambiguities that form the basis of the constructs reveal many entrancing questions (Gunz & Heslin, 2005). Recently the concept of employability has been incorporated in the literature of Career Success as a mediating factor to enhance the understanding of the concept of Career Success (De Vos, De Hauw, & Van der Heijden, 2011). Furthermore, individuals are the main focus and the differences that exist within and between them (dispositions) should also be acknowledged. The exploring and examining of a relationship between the two concepts of Dispositional Employability and Career Success might just lead to gaining better insight into both concepts.

Many studies have both the concepts Career Success and employability as key words (De Vos et al, 2011; Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004; Heslin, 2005a; Thijssen, Van der

Heijden, & Rocco, 2008), but no one study has taken the meaning of Career Success in its pure form and tried to find a relationship with regard to Dispositional Employability. Calls have been made in both disciplines to investigate both concepts more intense and in line with each other (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008). Thus finding a relationship between Dispositional Employability and Career Success could help organisations better understanding the need for investment in their employees to gain sustained competitive advantage, linking this study to Strategic Human Resources Management (Mello, 2006).

According to Fugate and Kinicki (2008), employability facilitates the identification and realisation of job and career opportunities. In that way employability is a disposition that captures individual qualities that foster adaptive behaviours and positive employment outcomes. The link between Dispositional Employability and Career Success needs to be examined to contribute to both streams of research. As both concepts incorporate different aspects of careers, there should be some form of a relationship which has not yet been discovered.

Previous research addressed several aspects of Career Success (Gunz & Heslin, 2005; Hay & Hodgkinson, 2006) and Dispositional Employability (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008), still only one article has attempted to find a link (De Vos, 2011). De Vos has made contributions that add real value to our current state of knowledge, but these need to be expanded to include various dispositions that individuals may have. Finding a relationship will lead to better understanding and greater insight into both concepts (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008; De Vos, 2011).

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Most of the research conducted in the previous decades that relates to the topic of this research study looked at the two concepts namely, Career Success and Dispositional Employability, in isolation. An extensive search on Google Scholar and other academic databases such as EBSOCHost and SABINET showed that the proposed study was never done. This apparent gap in the literature reveals that these two concepts have not yet been compared to see if any relationships exist between these multi-dimensional constructs.

Furthermore, this study will attempt to use a context that has never been used before for the purposes of this research, namely HRM Practitioners in South Africa. Studies linking to career or employability theory usually looks at the employees in the organization over various fields but never the Human Resources Management Practitioner who is seen to have an understanding of these concepts. This context has the potential to shed some light on not only the two concepts of Dispositional Employability and Career Success but on the sample group as a whole.

The purpose of this quantitative study is thus to investigate whether there is a relationship between *Dispositional Employability* and Career Success of Human Resources Management Practitioners in South Africa. In addition this research will also attempt to determine whether a significant difference, with regards to Dispositional Employability and Career Success, exists between Human Resource Management Practitioners based on their demographic characteristics.

### **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study is guided by the following research questions, divided into a main question and sub questions. These questions are in line with the research objectives as discussed in the next section.

*Main research Question:*

- Does a significant relationship exist between Dispositional Employability and Career Success for Human Resource Practitioners in South Africa?

*Secondary research questions:*

- What is the Dispositional Employability of Human Resource Practitioners in South Africa?
- What is the Career Success orientation of Human Resource Practitioners in South Africa?
- Does there exist any significant differences between Human Resource Practitioners, with regards to Dispositional Employability, based on their demographic characteristics?

- Does there exist any significant differences between Human Resource Practitioners, with regards to Career Success, based on their demographic characteristics?

## 1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

From the research questions as stated above the following are the specific research objectives that will guide this study:

### *Main objective*

- To investigate whether a significant relationship exist between Dispositional Employability and Career Success for Human Resource Practitioners in South Africa.

### *Secondary objectives:*

- To determine the Dispositional Employability of Human Resource Practitioners in South Africa;
- To determine the Career Success orientation of Human Resource Practitioners in South Africa;
- To determine whether any significant differences exists between Human Resource Practitioners, with regards to Dispositional Employability, based on their demographic characteristics;
- To determine whether any significant differences exist between Human Resource Practitioners, with regards to Career Success, based on their demographic characteristics.

## 1.5 RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS

Flowing from the above research questions and objectives the following propositions and sub-propositions were developed and will guide the research process and interpretation.

### *Main Research Proposition:*

- P1: A significant positive relationship exists between Dispositional Employability and Career Success for Human Resources practitioners in South Africa.

This main proposition was set in a directive manner based on findings in the literature available on these topics. The literature is discussed in detail in Chapter 2 of this study.

### *Sub Propositions*

P1.1: No significant differences exist between Human Resources Practitioners, with regards to Dispositional Employability, based on their demographic characteristics.

P1.2: No significant differences exist between Human Resources Practitioners, with regards to Career Success, based on their demographic characteristics.

This sub proposition was set in a non- directive manner as there is a lack of evidence in the literature available on these topics to suggest that differences would exist. The literature is discussed in detail in Chapter 2 of this study.

The following section details the importance and benefits of the research study in terms of the contributions it makes to the literature and practice.

## **1.6 IMPORTANCE AND BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSED STUDY**

This study will contribute to the literature on both constructs in the following three ways: First, no known study has ever related *Dispositional Employability* and *Career Success*. As mentioned previously, most of the literature on this topic focused on either constructs in isolation and leading to a narrow view of both constructs. Second, this study will take on a dispositional approach to employability rather than the conventional employability route, which will lead to a new and fresh approach to both constructs. Third, this study will take place in a context that has not yet been explored by other researchers. Making use of Human Resource Management Practitioners in South African workplaces should lead to fresh and new ideas being brought to the forefront on both constructs and the sample group.



On the side of Dispositional Employability a call has been made by measurement developers Fugate and Kinicki (2008) that relationships should be examined between Dispositional Employability and career outcomes (e.g. Career Success) to further the understanding of the concept. On the side of Career Success, clarification is needed regarding the true meaning and underlining constructs of Career Success.

Academically this study contributes by filling a gap in the literature by building on studies that others have done that neglected to take one or the other construct into account (Fugate et al., 2004, Heslin, 2005; Thijssen et al., 2008) thus giving a more holistic perspective on the phenomenon's, while attempting to analyse these in a new context, such as South Africa. Relating these two constructs should enhance the current state of knowledge and contribute to the literature in a meaningful way, by building on the current theoretical basis and expanding upon it.

This research will also make an important methodological contribution towards exploring the psychometric properties of the Dispositional Employability Measure and Career Success Orientation Survey. This study is the first to use the measure of Dispositional Employability as developed by (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008) in South Africa and will thus make a contribution towards validating the measurement in the South African context. In addition, the Career Success Orientation Measure was developed by the researcher to measure the career success of individuals. This study will also provide insight as to whether this instrument can be utilised to measure the career success of HRM Practitioners.

From a practical perspective, the findings of this study should make a contribution to the field of Human Resource and Industrial Psychology by allowing practitioners in this field to identify and manage HRM Practitioners in line with their employability and Career Success. Furthermore in practice the findings of this study could enable practitioners to make informed decisions regarding talent management and strategic human resources. This will in turn lead to taking an investment perspective on human resources (Mello, 2006) that spirals up into the gaining of competitive advantages. This study will deliver a contribution, which is both academically and practically (although to a lesser degree) significant to the current body of knowledge.

## 1.7 ASSUMPTIONS

According to Leedy and Omrod (2010, p. 5), assumptions are “self-evident truths, the *sine quo non* of research”. They further state that the assumptions made by a research must be valid or it will render the research conducted meaningless. The main reason for identifying and including assumptions are that the researcher is trying not to leave anything to chance and prevent misunderstanding. The proposed study will thus incorporate the following assumptions:

- The research conducted is limited to the confines of the underlying theoretical conditions. The theories used were developed in the disciplines of human behaviour and should thus be applicable to all individuals.
- In essence it is assumed that all people in the target population have some degree of Dispositional Employability as well as Career Success.
- In terms of the research paradigm it is assumed that only one true reality exists which is identifiable and measurable.
- Quantitative research is assumed to be an appropriate means to explore and identify this relationship.
- It is assumed that participants will be willing to provide data due to the voluntary nature of the study.
- The population is literate, has conceptual and working understanding of English and will be able to complete the questionnaire. Furthermore it is assumed that all participants are computer literate.
- It is assumed that participants will provide correct and truthful answers to the questions asked in the survey due to the acknowledgement of confidentiality.
- The proposed sample chosen from the population will represent the population and generalisations could then be made.
- Making use of established surveys of which the reliability and validity was tested incorporates the assumptions that the measurements used as data collection tools are both valid and reliable.

The assumptions as stated above will guide the research. Following in the final section of this chapter, a list of definitions and abbreviations that will be used in this study, is provided.

## 1.8 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

There is a need to define the most central and core components and terms in order for the reader to fully understand the contents used in this study. These terms are listed in alphabetical order below.

**Career:** For the purpose of this study this term will be defined as an account of the actions and progresses taken by individuals throughout their lifetime related to specifically their occupations.

**Career Success:** For the purpose of this study Career Success is defined as: “real or objective and perceived or subjective achievements in individuals’ work lives” (Bozionelos, 2004b, p. 25).

**Dispositions:** Is defined as the inherent individual differences within and between individuals.

**Employability:** Is defined by Fugate et al (2004, p. 15) as “a psycho-social construct that embodies individual characteristics that foster adaptive cognition, behaviour, and affect, and enhance the individual-work interface.”

**Dispositional Employability:** Is seen and hence defined as “a constellation of individual differences that predispose employees to be (pro) actively adapted to their work and career environments” (Fugate, cited in Fugate & Kinicki, 2008, p. 504).

**Human Resource Management Practitioners:** This term refers to and includes any person employed in a South African workplace who works with the Human Resources, Human Capital or Personnel services in that applicable organisation.

Furthermore listed in Table 1-1 are the abbreviations and their meanings that will be used consistently in this document.

**Table 1-1: Abbreviations to be used in this study**

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
KSAOs	Knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics
DE	Dispositional Employability
DME	Dispositional Measure Employability
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
CS	Career Success
CSOM	Career Success Orientation Survey
HRM	Human Resource Management

Following in conclusion to this chapter is the outline of the entire document that will briefly be given to acquaint the reader with what to expect from the Chapters to follow.

## **1.9 CHAPTER OUTLINE OF THE STUDY**

The chapter outline highlighting the overview of this research is as follows:

### *Chapter 1: Introduction and Background*

This Chapter outlines the introduction and background, the rationale for the research linking to the problem statement, the research objectives, the implications and benefits of the research as well as the applicable delimitations and assumptions made with regards to the study. The Chapter ends off with the defining of key terms to be used in this study as well as the applicable abbreviations. The aspects discussed in Chapter 1 forms the basis for this research report.

### *Chapter 2: Literature Review*

The literature review chapter will attempt to identify and synthesise the main body of knowledge currently available relating to DE and CS. The literature review is structured according to three main sections of literature: 1) Discussion on Employability, 2) Discussion on CS and 3) Discussion on the link between the two aforementioned

concepts. The last section looks at a proposed model in summary of how the concepts are most likely to relate to one another as these forms the basis for the study at hand.

### *Chapter 3: Research Design*

The research design as related to this study is unpacked in Chapter 3 in terms of the research paradigm, as well as the strategy of enquiry to be used and the overall research design. Furthermore in this Chapter the applicable population, sampling method, sample size and data collection approach, methods and instruments are discussed and outlined. The actual analysis procedure is also discussed in terms of data storing and preparation, analysis techniques and specific tests to be used. The research design chapter continues with a discussion on the possible bias and errors that can be present as well as reliability and validity of the entire study and the research ethics that need to be taken into consideration. Finally three propositions are set that will be statistically tested to establish the objectives of the study.

### *Chapter 4: Results*

In this chapter the results obtained from the statistical analysis run on the data of the current study is presented in three specific phases namely, 1) Sample demographics, 2) Empirical analysis of the Measuring instruments used, and 3) Testing of Propositions. This chapter is only for the presentation of the results and does not include interpretation of the results.

### *Chapter 5: Analysis and Interpretation*

The analysis and interpretation of the results obtained and presented in the previous chapter is given in chapter 5. The structure of the chapter is laid out as: firstly a discussion on the instruments used in the study followed by the actual interpretations of the results with regards to the research objectives and applicable propositions that accompany these.

### *Chapter 6: Conclusions, Limitations and Recommendations*

In the final chapter of the study, everything is pulled together to present the conclusions drawn from the study as well as the applicable value add, limitations and recommendations of the study.

## 1.10 CONCLUSION

The journey that needs to be taken with regards to finding a relationship between DE and CS is justified and presented in this chapter. This chapter formed the basis for the rest of the study in terms of setting the scene for what is still to come. Following next, a review on the most prominent literature relating to the study as discussed.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Employability and CS as concepts in isolation have received much attention in workplace studies. These concepts relate to the management of Human Resources in an organisation as it has important implications for individual behaviour and work outcomes. These concepts of DE and CS form the basis for this study and hence an overview and understanding of these concepts and their underlining dimensions are integral.

The following literature review will attempt to identify and synthesise the main body of knowledge currently available relating to DE and CS. This literature review will serve as the backdrop against which the results obtained in this study will be analysed and interpreted. The literature review is structured according to three main sections of literature: 1) Discussion on Employability, 2) Discussion on CS, 3) Discussion on the link between the two aforementioned concepts. The last section looks at a proposed model in summary of how the concepts are most likely to relate to one another as these forms the basis for the study at hand.

Each section of the review as identified above is structured in a logical manner that allows for good deductive reasoning. The first part of the review, which is employability, looks at the idea of employability and how it will be conceptualized in this study and then flows over into the actual definition of employability. Two models with regards to employability are then briefly considered. The section ends of with the new perspective on employability, DE which is the concept that will be used and measured in this study. The second set of sections starts by basing CS firmly in career theory after which the concept of CS is discussed and defined. The scope of CS is then discussed. The CS sections ends of with a discussion on CS orientation which is the central idea and the concept used in this study for the development of the measuring instrument. The third section in the review looks at other studies that have been done with regards to employability and CS and synthesizes the learning's from these studies. The final section of the review briefly recaps on the literature review and brings it together in a proposed link model which the researcher will use to analyse and interpret the findings of the study at hand.

## **2.2 SECTION 1: EMPLOYABILITY**

In today's global business environment and within the dynamic labour market it is of the utmost importance that people become fluid and multifaceted. No longer can people be expected to be given a job. They have to work for it and be willing to make themselves marketable. According to Fugate et al (2004, p.15), "a person's ability and willingness to adapt is essential to CS", thus making the concept of employability very relevant in HRM today. The responsibility has shifted to employees and individuals to get the knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics (KSAOs) needed and wanted by potential employers (Fugate et al, 2004).

### **2.2.1 The Idea of Employability**

Employability has been recorded in the literature since the early days of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to Berntson (2008) the concept of employability has taken on many forms and a variety of levels of focus during the past decade. In his study on employability he distinguishes between three distinct eras of thinking on employability. The first era focuses on a straight forward view of employability as employability was considered "dichotomic". In this view individuals could be classified as either unemployable or employable based on basic characteristics such as being the right age or sufficiently healthy (Gazier, 2001 in Berntson, 2008). The second era is characterised more broadly and divers and included the concept of employability more in policy linking to fit in the labour market. The third era, the one we currently operate in, sees employability as having expanded to include the entire labour market focusing on capacities, skills and abilities of the individual (Berntson, 2008).

This movement from a very static view of employability to a more interactive view can be interpreted as a movement to get individuals in the labour market more focused on reaching not only full employment but also enhancing their working life's by focusing on their careers and becoming more successful in this.



Leading away from where the concept of employability comes from it becomes important to define the concept not only in its meaning according to the literature but also how it is used and defined specifically for this study.

## 2.2.2 Defining the concept of Employability

Many authors attempted to define what employability is. Mostly they tend to try and incorporate the dimensions of employability into the definition. Following in Table 2-1 are some of the more profound definitions of employability found in the literature.

**Table 2-1: Definitions for Employability**

Source	Definition
Hillage & Pollard (1998) in Pool & Sewell (2007, p.278)	Employability is “about being capable of getting and keep fulfilling work. More comprehensively employability is the capability to move self-sufficiently within the labour market to realise potential through sustainable employment.”
Pool & Sewell (2007, p.279)	Employability is “having a set of skills, knowledge, understanding and personal attributes that make a person more likely to choose and secure occupations in which they can be satisfied and successful.”
Fugate et al (2004, p.15)	Employability is “a psycho-social construct that embodies individual characteristics that foster adaptive cognition, behaviour, and affect, and enhance the individual-work interface.”
Thijssen et al (2008, p167)	Employability is, at its most basic, “The possibility to survive in the internal or external labour market.”
Fugate (2004) in De Vos (2010, p.6)	Employability is “a form of work-specific active adaptability that enables workers to identify and realise their career opportunities.”
Guo et al (2009, p.1)	Employability is “the individual possesses the ability of gaining employment opportunities, maintaining and transforming working positions, and even the workplace.”

As can be seen by the definitions above employability could be viewed from different perspectives and accommodates many aspects. Main trends from the definitions above are on how employability should be viewed comes to light and will be briefly discussed in the following section.

### **2.2.2.1 *Individual versus collective***

Firstly the notion of individual versus collective comes to the fore. Most definitions see employability from an individual perspective (Pool & Sewell, 2007; Fugate et al, 2004; Guo et al, 2009) stating that employability is the prime responsibility of the individual to develop. Other researchers state the link to the macro environment (Hillage, 1998; Thijssen et al, 2008) where the ownership of employability creation lies with the organization or labour policy creators to foster (Bernston, 2008).

### **2.2.2.2 *Unemployed versus employed***

The second main theme from the definitions in Table 2-1 which is also noted by Bernston (2008) is that of employability being a factor in unemployed versus employed scenarios. This in essence refers to when employability is most applicable. According to Bernston (2008) employability is exemplified in all stages of an individual's employment life cycle, from the ability to gain initial employment, the maintenance of employment and lastly obtaining new employment. This view is supported by (Hogan, 2011).

### **2.2.2.3 *Actual versus perceived***

The third and final consideration to be given with regards to the definitions supplied is that of actual versus perceived employability. According to Bernston (2008) employability, as with CS, can be viewed subjectively or objectively. He refers to objective or actual employability, such as qualifications and work experience, as the absolute level of employability. Persons with this type of employability typically get work more easily. The subjective view of employability is where the individual perceives themselves as being employable and hence believe their chance of getting employment is good (Bernston, 2008).

### **2.2.2.4 *Conceptualisation of Employability in the current study***

The definition to be adopted and followed in this research paper is that of Fugate et al (2004, p.15) as: "a psycho-social construct that embodies individual characteristics that

foster adaptive cognition, behaviour, and affect, and enhance the individual-work interface.” This definition is further enriched by that of Fugate et al (2004) cited by De Vos (2011, p. 439) where employability is “a form of work-specific active adaptability that enables workers to identify and realise their career opportunities.”

Looking at the trends identified from the definitions in conjunction with the suggestions made by Bernston (2008), this definition emphasises that the study is done under the assumptions that employability is individual rather than on a macro level. That it focuses on the employed rather than unemployed and lastly that the focus is more strongly on perceived employability than that of objective or actual employability.

### **2.2.3 Models of employability**

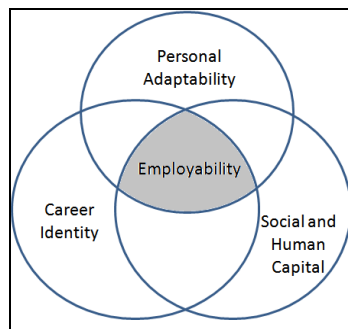
With the considerations and trend in the definitions of employability in mind looking at more specific models of employability is needed to contextualise employability in terms of the current study.

Two models on employability, the psycho-socio construct model and the employability link model, will be briefly discussed and evaluated to gain a greater insight into the concept. The main underlining dimensions are discussed with regard to their applicability to the current study.

#### **2.2.3.1 *Employability as a psycho-social construct***

The view of employability as a psycho-social construct, postulated by Fugate et al (2004), views employability as the multitude of person-centred constructs that combine and integrate to assist workers in adapting successfully to work-related changes. This links to the view taken on employability as being on an individual level, where people are already employed and how they perceive, rather than their actual employability. The constructs that underline employability for these researchers are shown in Figure 2-1 below.

**Figure 2-1:Heuristic model of employability**



Source: Fugate et al (2004, p.19)

The developers of this model classify employability as being underlined by three distinct dimensions that eventually overlap to create perceived employability. These dimensions are:

- **Career Identity:** Provides some form of career compass for the individual employee, offering them a motivational component to employability (Fugate et al, 2004). This dimension provides the representation of “who I am” or “who I want to be” at work. This includes, according to Fugate et al (2004), goals, hopes, personality traits and career aspirations amongst others. This dimension is longitudinal in nature as it focuses not only on the future but the past and the present. This does not mean that career identity is the sum of work experiences but rather the integration of these experiences into meaningful structures that are individualized rather than institutionalized (Fugate et al, 2004).
- **Personal Adaptability:** The ability to adapt to changing environments and needs in the labour market makes individuals appear more attractive to prospective employers. It must however be noted that this adaptability is an individual trait that is internally generated but externally focused (Fugate et al, 2004). This adaptability is fostered by means of individual dispositions, KSAOs and behaviours that are demanded by the specific situation.
- **Social and human capital:** The ability to identify and capitalise on opportunities presented in the labour market is influenced by social and human capital. Human capital refers to KSAOs and other experiences gained throughout the work life time, while social capital refers to the ability to utilise social connections to ensure marketability in terms of one’s career (Fugate et al, 2004). These forms of capital

ensures that a person can enhance their perceived employability by either tapping into their social networks to help in their quest across the employment life cycle or working on their individual KSAOs and dispositions to enhance their “attractiveness” to potential employers.

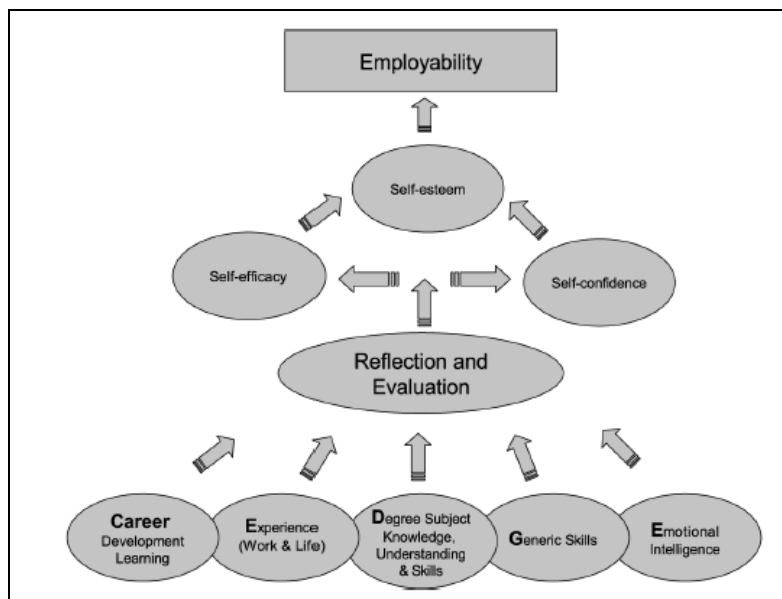
The developers of this model is of the opinion that employability helps facilitate the realisation of career opportunities and that the dimensions as listed above enable an individual to enhance their employability and thus their chances of CS. This model brings to mind many of the concepts found in the review on CS to follow, specifically as it shows the perceived or subjective side of employability which links to the subjective notion of CS. This model can thus be seen as a good indicator of employability and that it should indeed have a relationship with the perceptions on CS as postulated by the proposed research.

### **2.2.3.2 *The key to employability model***

The developers of the key to employability model had a very clear and concise goal in mind when developing this model, namely: simplicity. Pool and Sewell (2007) developed this model with graduate training in mind linking to the fields of HRM. The key to employability model is shown in Figure 2-2 below and encompasses the researcher’s ideas of the main and essential components of employability. According to Pool and Sewell (2007), six components make up employability. These are depicted in Figure 2-2 below and will be discussed next.

The first component of degree and subject knowledge and understanding is central to the model as education remains the enhancer of career opportunities, thus this component deals solely with formal education and training. The second component labelled as generic skills refers to the core or key skills that organisations need. The list of these generic skills is very exhaustive but in essence refers to soft skills such as time-management, innovation and so forth. The third component of the model is emotional intelligence, which falls under a personal disposition in terms of how you understand, perceive and deal with both your own feelings and those of others. According to the researchers this skill is becoming more critical in work environment of today (Pool & Sewell, 2007).

**Figure 2-2: The key to employability Model**



Source: Pool & Sewell (2007, p.280)

The fourth component deals with career development learning where the researchers argue that career management activities should be included in all training programs for undergraduates to ensure them better employability (Pool & Sewell, 2007). The fifth component is that of work and life experience, which almost a prerequisite for most job applicants is today. The final component involves the reflection and evaluation on learning and the career journey. The researchers state that this is necessary as it is the only way in which employees can grow and enhance their employability. Incorporated into this evaluation and reflection are the “three closely-linked S’s”, self-confidence, self-esteem and self-efficiency. These provide the critical link between the aforementioned five components and employability.

The value of this model lies most certainly in its simplicity of describing the multi-dimensional construct of employability. It also incorporates disposition of individuals and helps one realise that employability in itself might as well be disposition.

#### **2.2.4 New perspectives on Employability: Dispositional Employability (DE)**

Following from the discussion on the two models above one can now start to see the entrancing interrelations of dispositions into the concept of employability. Only recently

have the dispositions or rather the individual differences that consist within and between individuals entered the domain of employability. Dispositions have been included in the discussions on employability in the third era where employability is seen more as interactive (Berntson, 2008). Dispositions include, but are not limited, to neuroticism, locus of control, self-esteem and self-efficacy. Perceived employability of individual's links closely to the appraisal of situations, thus how individuals observe their potential to shape and influence their current situation, is of substance when determining their review of the situation (Berntson, 2008).

Employability has frequently in the literature been equated with dispositions such as self-efficacy and self-evaluation (Berntson, 2008), with many researchers saying that it could possibly be one and the same thing. This triggers the belief that a dispositional approach to employability as postulated by Fugate and Kinicki (2008) should be viable and lead to great insights into the concept of employability.

Fugate and Kinicki (2008) are the developers of an instrument that measures a dispositional approach to employability. Fugate (2006) as cited in Fugate and Kinicki (2008, p.504) defines DE as:

*“a constellation of individual differences that predispose employees to be (pro)actively adapt to their work and career environments. Employability facilitates the identification and realisation of job and career opportunities both within and between organisations. Conceived this way, employability is a disposition that captures individual characteristics that foster adaptive behaviours and positive employment outcomes.”*

As noted earlier in the review employability is defined for the purposes of this study as: “a psycho-social construct that embodies individual characteristics that foster adaptive cognition, behaviour, and affect, and enhance the individual-work interface.” (Fugate et al 2004, p.15). Employability is seen as a psycho-social construct as it encompasses individual differences and characteristics that overcome the environment-individual gap (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008). From this view employability extends to represent a higher-order trait that helps along proactive adaptability by means of KSAOs. Adaptability is core to

most employability theories and in essence adaptability is a disposition an individual possesses. According to Fugate and Kinicki (2008), employable individuals do not merely react and engage in the opportunities in their career and work life, but they proactively create or enhance the opportunities.

DE is conceptualised according to the instrument developers Fugate and Kinicki (2008, p.506) as a “latent multi-dimensional construct” meaning that there is a higher order scheme underlining its dimensions. The dimensions they include are shown in Table 2-2 as described by Fugate and Kinicki (2008):

**Table 2-2: Dimensions of Dispositional Employability**

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Description</b>
Openness to Change at work	Enhances personal adaptability and flexibility. Individuals with this trait are likely to perceive change as a challenge and not a threat.
Work and Career Resilience	This trait encompasses positive self-evaluations and the ability to attribute successes to personal ability and effort. Views career changes as opportunities for learning and the pursuit of new goals
Work and Career Productivity	This trait allows a person to actively seek information and create opportunities for success.
Career Motivation	This builds on the concepts of learning and goal orientation. It links to persistence in doing and a willingness to meet situational demands.
Work Identity	Entails the definition of oneself in the career context. Influences personal goals and aspirations. Helps individuals compensate by replacing institutionalised career structures with individualised psychological structures.
Optimism/Other dimensions	Proactive personality, Personal initiative and proactive behaviours.

The main idea underlining DE is that of adaptability, which is becoming increasingly more important in today’s dynamic labour market and work conditions. According to this model any individual dispositions or characteristics that predispose people to proactively adapt will be beneficial to them and increase their perceived and possibly their actual employability.

## **2.3 SECTION 2: CAREER SUCCESS (CS)**

The term CS has been researched in the literature since the 1950’s, but a more in depth study thereof only occurred in the late 1980’s (Gardiner, 2006). Over the decades the



concept of CS has spanned many disciplines (Gardiner, 2006) from education and training to the management sciences. The term CS has been referred to in various different ways across this time span. The search for the meaning of the concept of CS yields thousands of articles attempting to answer questions such as: “When is my career successful?”; “How is success in careers measured?”; “Is success the same for all people?” and “What is CS?”. The answers to these questions differ for all people and only little consensus has been reached in the literature on what the concept essentially means.

CS has implications and is of importance to both the organisation and the individual (Pachulics, Schmitt, & Kuljanin, 2008). In the view of the organisation the organisational success should to some extent overlap with that of the individual employee, as the old saying goes that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. An individual spends three quarters of their lifetime in the workplace and hence making a success of it seems essential to personal development as well as finding meaning.

### **2.3.1 Career Success is grounded in career theory**

When attempting to find the true meaning of CS, it is first necessary to define what a career is. CS is dependant on having a career as CS is essentially an outcome of an individual’s career. The main idea behind what a career is takes into account the actions and progresses taken by individuals throughout their lifetime related to specifically their occupations. It includes jobs and titles held as well as the accomplishments of the individual over that time. A career can thus shortly be defined as the unfolding progression of a person’s work experiences over a life time (Arthur, Khapova, & Wilderom, 2005). It is important to note the role that time plays in this definition, showing that it is not a static view of work arrangements but rather a continues process that evolves and is dependant on certain outcomes along the journey.

The concept of a career furthermore incorporates a duality or “two-sidedness” (Goffman, 1961 in Arthur et al. 2005, p.179) which consists of an objective and subjective view of a career. The foremost referring to the material outcomes or widely observable positions and status of a career and the latter referring to individual’s perceptions and sense of what a career is or is becoming (Arthur et al, 2005). This duality does not suggest that careers

should be viewed as either subjective or objective but rather that there is interdependence between these two sides that occur over time. A career is in essence a process that has to be followed. A process has a starting point, with activities which are impacted by specific inputs, and the process results in specific outcomes. The positive outcome of a career is usually referred to as CS. For the purpose of this study the main focus are on these outcomes which is referred to CS which is rooted in career theory.

### 2.3.2 Defining the concept of Career Success

The definitions of CS incorporate many different aspects and show many views on CS as postulated by researchers over time. Table 2-3 gives a summary of the most prominent definitions of CS.

**Table 2-3: Definitions of Career Success**

Source	Definition
Khapova, Arthur, and Wilderom, (2007, p.179)	CS is “the accomplishment of desirable work-related outcomes at any point in a person’s work experiences over time”.
Bozionelos (2004b, p.25)	CS is the “real or objective and perceived or subjective achievements in individuals’ work lives”.
Judge and Kammeyer-Mueller (2007, p.60)	CS is “the real or perceived achievements individuals have accumulated as a result of their work experiences”.
Seibert and Kraimer (2001, p.2)	Define CS in terms of “the positive psychological and work-related outcomes accumulated as a result of one’s work experiences”.
Guo, Niu, and Yang (2009, p.1)	CS is “the accumulated positive working and psychological outcomes resulting from one’s work experience”.

From the definitions above clear concepts that make up the construct CS comes to light. The first is the continuous referral to the positive side in that CS is a positive outcome of one’s career path and in essence an accomplishment which is desirable to achieve (Athur et al, 2005). The second most prominent reference made in these definitions refers to work life and confirms the notion that CS is rooted in career theory and the organizational context as a whole. The last component speaks to the duality of CS in that it can be perceived as objective or subjective successes. These aspects will be discussed in more detail in the next section to form the basis for understanding and interpretation of the results of this current study.

The common themes that arise from the definitions provided include: accomplishment, objective versus subjective, work experience and positive. These ideas form the basis for the definition that will be used for the purpose of this study. Following Bozionelos (2004b, p.25) CS will be defined in this study as, “real or objective and perceived or subjective achievements in individuals’ work lives”.

In the following section the scope of career success will be discussed in terms of model on career success postulated by Judge, Cabel, Boudreau and Bretz (1995).

### **2.3.3 The scope of Career Success**

CS is an outcome of the career path of individuals. To ascertain what CS means, the focus should be dual: 1) on the outcomes perceived in a career together with 2) the predictors of CS. In these sections the main ideas that make up CS in the literature is discussed.

#### **2.3.3.1 *Duality of Career Success***

The first and most prominent impression from the literature on CS is that there are two sides from which CS can be viewed (Arthur et al, 2005; Bozionelos, 2004b; Hay & Hodgkinson, 2006; Heslin, 2005a; Seibert and Kraimer, 2001). CS is generally viewed by most researchers as being either subjective or objective.

The objective side of an individual’s CS relates to the external view of a person’s CS that delineates more or less material indicators of the individual’s career situation and outcomes (Arthur et al, 2005). This aspect of CS is measured by tangible deliverables such as salary and the number of promotions received over individual career paths (Heslin, 2005a; Arthur et al, 2005). This aspect of CS is seen as measurable and verifiable (Dries, Perermans, & Carlier, 2008).

The second view that is taken on CS is the subjective view where CS can be seen as the individual and internal appreciation and assessment of a career in terms of dimensions

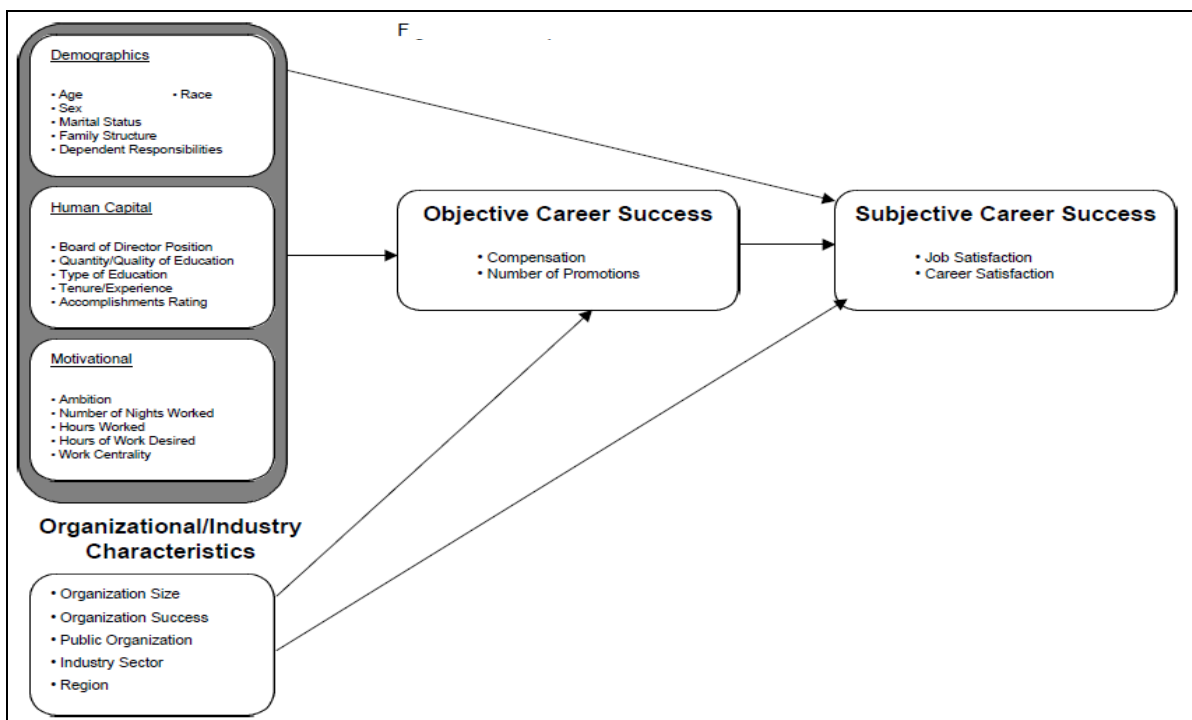
and criteria that is important to the individual (Arthur et al, 2005). This is typically measured by an individual's perceived and actual satisfaction with their job (Heslin, 2005a; Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2007). This view suggests that CS is an internalized perception by individuals regarding their careers and their own interpretation of what success means to them.

It is important to note and understand with regards to CS is that although this dual view is made up of two separate conceptualizations it has to be seen as individual sides of CS which are interdependent. When looking at CS one should view both these sides (subjective and objective) as essentially signifying CS (Arthur et al, 2005). The second observation that it is very prominent in the literature on CS is that success should be seen as an outcome, hence there has to be some form of predictor that will lead to CS (Judge et al, 1995). The conceptual model of CS as postulated by Judge et al (1995) will be discussed next as it incorporates the dimensions that lead to CS.

### 2.3.3.2 A Conceptual Model of Career Success

A conceptual model of CS as postulated by Judge et al (1995) is shown.

**Figure 2-3: Conceptual model of Career Success**



Source: Judge et al. (1995, p.488)

This model suggests that CS be it objective or subjective can be predicted or determined by three specific dimensions as well as taking into consideration organizational, industry and individual characteristics.

Looking at the first dimension referred to by the researchers as demographics, this links to the actual demographic characteristics of a person, such as age and gender which can influence both their objective and subjective CS (Ballout, 2007). According to Judge et al (1995) several studies have found that demographic variables have a tendency to explain more variation in CS than any other set of influences. Studies have been done with regards to the difference between CS for people with differing demographics such as male and female. For example, the notion of the glass ceiling identified in other Human Resource literature can have an impact on CS both in the objective and subjective form as it can impede on the perceptions certain gender groups have with regards to what they can and can't obtain in their career.

The second dimension of the model speaks to what is known as human capital. Human capital variables refer specifically to those acquired and inherent characteristics of individuals such as cumulative educational, personal and professional experiences that have the potential to enhance an individual's value to a prospective or current employer (Judge et al, 1995). Ballout (2007) explains that human capital variables can have a significant impact on CS, especially objective CS, as it can explain a large portion of the variation in salary. In terms of subjective CS Ballout (2007) found that as careers become more uncertain, as in the South African labour market shown by the high unemployed statistics (StatsSA, 2010), human capital attributes such as personal characteristics become more critical. Human Capital Theory, according to the developers of this model Judge et al (1995), says that labour markets or then organisations tend to reward investments that people make in themselves, letting one to believe that the motivational dimension of this model will be seen as integral.

The third dimension refers to motivation. In terms of CS this relates to the individuals own willingness to enhance their CS by engaging in activities that motivate them to accomplish more which, as shown earlier, is a critical theme emerging form the definition to CS. According to Judge et al (1995) if an individual sees their work as central to their lives and

if the degree of importance is of such a nature that it positively influences a person's job experience, they will make more of an investment in their work lives and eventually their careers. In essence the reason for inclusion of this dimension into the model shown above is that it is expected that the greater the desire to advance, the greater the expected success (Judge et al, 1995)

The last inclusion in this model on CS is the organisational, industry and individual characteristics that contextualize CS, be it objective or subjective. Dries et al (2008) suggests that CS must be constructed in a context that gives body to the meaning of CS. As stated earlier most definitions talk about CS as linking to the work-place and accomplishment within the work context. Dries et al (2008) states that the condition of the meaning of CS is a historical and cultural specific process meaning that the perception will adapt according to the situation. Furthermore specifically to this model the demographics of the organisation and the industry will determine an individual's CS as it is embedded in the workplace and what happens there. Judge et al (1995) postulates that characteristics of the organisation such as organisation size and success can and will influence the perceptions individuals have with regards to their CS as it directly impacts on both the objective and subjective sides of CS.

### **2.3.3.3 A second view on the predictors of Career Success**

Supporting this view, another view on the predictors of CS is postulated by NG, Eby, Sorensen and Feldman (2005). They reviewed and compared the predictors of subjective and objective CS.

These researchers utilised prominent theoretical perspectives namely: Contest-mobility (one can only get ahead on the basis of individual contributions, skills and abilities) and sponsored-mobility (established élites in an organisation, sponsor activities to help identify individuals win the competition for success) to view the predictors of CS. In their perception the main predictors of CS are human capital, organisational sponsorship, socio-demographic status and stable individual differences, which link closely to those dimensions of Judge et al (2004) described as demographics, human capital and motivational. These predictors will lead to eventual CS, be it objective or subjective.

In conclusion according to Dries et al (2008) career scholars today are becoming more acutely aware that CS is a social construction rather than an objective reality, a dynamic concept rather than a static truth and that it is evolving with the historical and cultural context that surrounds it.

#### **2.3.4 Career Success Orientation**

The nature of the study at hand leads us to go beyond the mere measuring of actual CS and move onto an even more subjective view: the meanings participants attach to CS. CS (as with employability which will be discussed later in this chapter) can be seen as actual and or perceived by the individuals. This study focuses on the orientations that participants have toward CS, and thus it is necessary to investigate the link between CS discussed thus far in relation to CS orientation that will be discussed in more detail below. The question to ask is whether it is safe to assume that the ideas and determinants of CS apply to HRM Practitioners in South Africa.

Kim (2005) in her study on CS orientations identified the many names and labels applied and attributed to CS over the decades and consolidated the different interpretations from the literature. Kim (2005) argues that there are five types of orientations toward careers that are common to the most widely used labels and interpretations of CS. Table 2-4 shows a comparison between the main theories applicable to career orientation and by extension CS.

Table 2-4 shows that although many researchers have had different terms and ideas on the meaning of CS and career orientation in essence the core ideas are similar. According to Kim (2005), CS orientation is likely to influence individual's occupational decisions and eventually their perceptions on CS.

**Table 2-4: Comparison of Theories on Career Orientation**

Type	Description of common characteristic	Schein's (1978) career anchor	Delong's (1982) career orientations	Driver's (1980) career concept	Derr's (1986) CS orientation	Barach's (2004) measures of CS
Type 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advancing up the organisational hierarchy</li> <li>- Increased responsibility, authority</li> <li>- High status, prestige, income</li> </ul>	General Management competencies	Managerial competency / Identity	Liner	Getting ahead	Self development competencies
Type 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recognised expertise in one area</li> <li>- Excitement to tests one's skills and talents</li> <li>- Continued growth and experience</li> </ul>	Technical / Functional competencies or pure challenge		Spiral	Getting high	Lateral transitions, Spiral movements
Type 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stability, predictability, security</li> <li>- Long term commitment, Loyalty</li> </ul>	Security / Stability	Security	Steady-State	Getting secure	Employability
Type 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maintenance of freedom, avoidance of restrictions</li> <li>- Creation of own service or product</li> <li>- A variety of different experiences</li> </ul>	Autonomy / Independence/ Entrepreneurial creativity	Autonomy / Creativity or variety	Transitory	Getting free	Self management, Entrepreneurship
Type 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Balanced life</li> <li>- Respect for personal and family life</li> <li>- Flexible time and job sharing</li> </ul>	Lifestyle			Getting balanced	Quality of life, work-family balance
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dedication to the cause, making a contribution to improve the world</li> </ul>	Service / Dedication	Service			
Criteria of typology		Self perceived talents, values and needs	Self perceived attitudes, values and needs	Frequency time direction of career change	Subjective definition of success	

Source: Adapted from Kim (2005, p 50)



For the purposes of the current study it is needed to delve deeper into the CS orientations as outlined by Kim (2005) referring more specifically to the outline and model suggested by Derr in Kim (2005). The measure used for CS as developed by the researcher for the purposes of this study is based on this model which is discussed in more detail below.

#### **2.3.4.1 Derr's Career Success orientation**

According to Kim (2005), Derr developed a minimum set of useful dimensions based on his research in the US Navy in 1986. In the view of the researcher the orientations proposed by Derr is closely related to the motivational levels proposed by Maslow in his hierarchy of needs. Maslow postulated that any person's motivation for doing something can be measured on various levels ranging from the most basic (food and water) to the more sophisticated motivations of self actualization. With this in mind the dimensions discussed below will form the basis for orientation towards CS as it is used and understood in this study.

These dimensions are as postulated by Derr (in Kim, 2005):

- **Getting ahead:** These refer to the traditional and typically visible CS orientation. It is characterised by upward mobility, advancement in status, opportunities and increased authority. Individuals with this type of orientation seek wealth and prestige.
- **Getting free:** These individuals strive for freedom and avoid any restrictions. They tend to want to experience different things as well as create their own experiences. Autonomy and independence is place high on the agenda for these persons.
- **Getting secure:** This relates to Maslow's motivational level of security. Individuals here seek stability and predictability. They are usually very loyal to organisations and see their organisation as being closely related to their personal meaning of CS.
- **Getting high:** These orientations provide for those people who want to pursue technical and functional expertise. These individuals want to develop their skills and talents and measure their CS in terms of their ability to do what they like and do it very well. They strive to be experts in their fields.

- **Getting balanced:** The conception of work-life balance comes into play and is very important to people with this orientation. These people view their CS in relation to other aspects of their lives.

These orientations are rooted in the needs individuals have in their lives and will drive them to eventual CS be it objective or subjective. The way people shape their future in terms of their career will drive what they do to accomplish their career outcomes. Employability, as will be defined in this next section, forms part of the preparation for eventual CS.

## **2.4 SECTION 3: LINKING DISPOSITIONAL EMPLOYABILITY AND CS**

### **2.4.1 Evidence of relationships**

The field of Human Resource are for the most part a very qualitative orientated field when it comes to research. Little empirical quantitative research has been done on the links between employability and CS and even fewer between the links of DE with CS. Following is a very broad and high-level overview of the studies that have attempted something similar to that of the proposed research study. Although the elements and dimensions tested might not be the same, it should be beneficial to see what other researchers have found in linking a combination of CS, dispositions and employability.

#### **2.4.1.1 *Employability as a mediating factor***

De Vos et al (2011) aimed to find and explain the relationship between competency development, employability and CS. In his overall findings it is stated that employability positively influenced perceived CS. He further notes that employability is of relevance to the conceptual understanding of CS for mainly two reasons namely, that employability influences CS and that the individuals perceptions of their employability has in the past been studied as an indicator of CS (De Vos et al, 2011).

The researcher further concludes that the extent to which workers perceive themselves as marketable (employability) and to be able to add value to current and prospective employers is a good indicator of CS.

The main contributions of this study by De Vos et al (2011) are threefold:

- Competencies increase a person's employability.
- Empirical evidence is provided for the effect of employability on career satisfaction to the extent that employability becomes a requirement for CS.
- Employability becomes a mediator in the relationship between competency development and CS.

#### **2.4.1.2 *Employability and Career Success of knowledge workers***

A study done by Guo et al (2009) incorporated much the same variables as the study done by De Vos et al (2011) but excluded competency development. Their study focused on the relationship between employability and CS of knowledge workers. Making use of hierarchical multiple-regression they came to the same conclusion as De Vos et al (2011), in that employability is positively related to CS (Guo et al, 2009).

#### **2.4.1.3 *Incorporating Dispositions into the equation***

Most studies that incorporate dispositions are in most instances linked to CS. Judge (2007) found in his study titled *Personality and CS*, that most dispositions in the five factor personality model have some form of correlation to CS. Furthermore Seibert and Kraimer (2001) found basically the same results in their study incorporating personality and CS. It could thus be said that if employability is indeed a disposition as proposed by Fugate et al (2006) that it too should have some form of relationship to CS.

In conclusion, all the studies briefly discussed in this section do not include dispositions. Although valuable contributions are made by the researchers they do not incorporate and give notice to the differences inherent and between individual employees as was done in this study.

Investigating the relationship between DE and CS, as done in this research study, should therefore assist in bringing new fresh insights to the views on the constructs and hence contribute to the literature overall. With the evidence from the above named studies a similar study, like the current, will show promising results.

## **2.5 DISPOSITIONAL EMPLOYABILITY AND CAREER SUCCESS: A PROPOSED LINK**

The main focus of this research study is to find out whether or not a statistically significant relationship exists between DE and CS. Instrument developers Fugate and Kinicki (2008) have made a call for investigating in depth the relation DE has to other career related outcomes such as subjective and objective CS. In reviewing literature that relates to this study it has become evident that a big gap in the literature regarding the link between DE and the CS exists. The study thus has potential to contribute to the literature and fill the current gap.

Looking back at the main findings from the literature on CS points to note is as follows:

- CS theory is rooted in career theory
- CS can be viewed as having a duality in that it can be perceived as both objective and subjective
- CS is an outcome of the career that is contextualized in various dimensions.
- CS orientations (the main focus of the study) are what each individual perceives as ultimate CS.

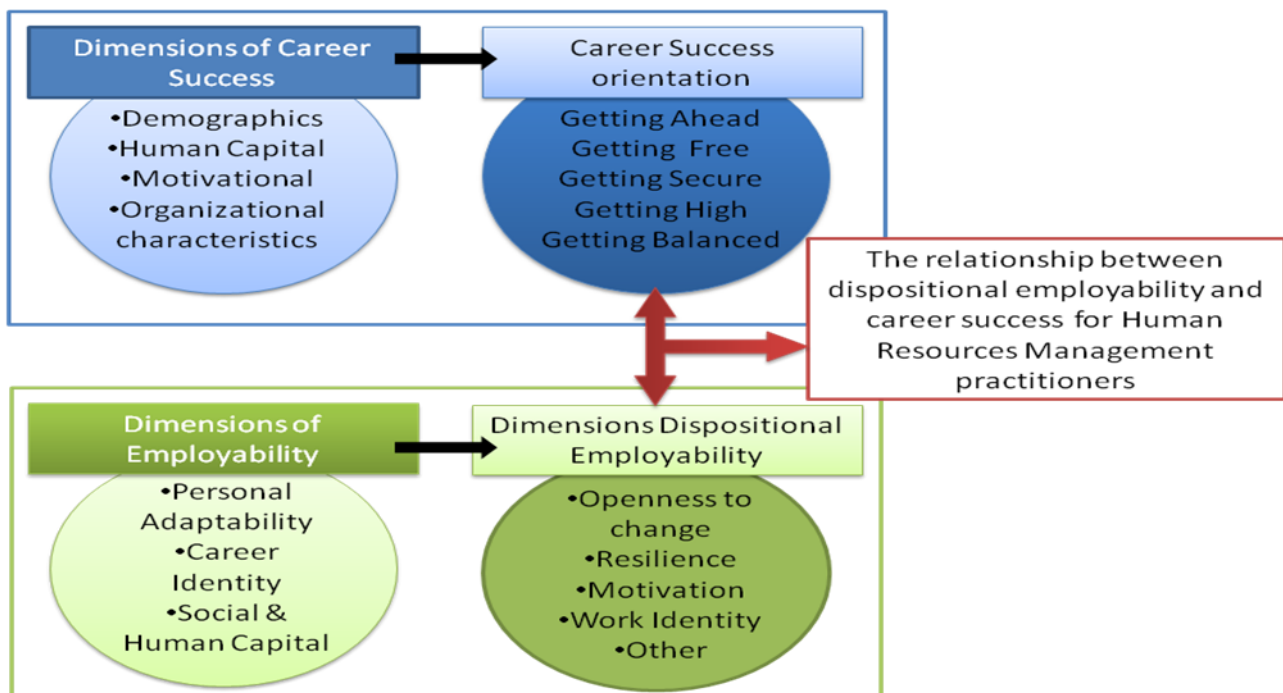
In terms of employability the following is important to recap on:

- Just as with CS employability can be viewed from an objective or subjective side.
- In this study employability is seen from an objective view where employability is what the individual perceives it to be.
- In the current study when referring to employability the researcher will look at persons already employed as opposed to those that are unemployed.

- Employability is seen from the individual level and not the macro or organizational level.
- Key attributes underlining employability includes adaptability, human capital and career identity showing an even more prominent link to CS orientations
- Dispositions are taken into account as the study at hand focuses on a Dispositional approach to employability.

This current study links DE to CS. The proposed link which is deduced from the literature is as shown in Figure 2-4. The assumption made is that CS in its pure form forms the basis and links to CS orientation from which the measurement instrument was designed. On the other hand these studies looks at the underlining dimensions of employability and links this to DE as postulated in the literature as its basis and finally will then try and find the relationship between CS orientation and DE.

**Figure 2-4: Proposed Link between Dispositional Employability and Career Success**



## 2.6 CONCLUSION

This literature review took the proposed constructs of the topic at hand and investigated the underlining meaning of both to gain a greater understanding of the concepts. The

review concluded with a proposed link model as deduced from the literature on the outcomes of the study.

The literature that relates to the main objective of the current study is few and far in between, confirming once again that the current study will contribute to the academic literature related to HRM. This review will form the basis for the analysis and interpretation. Following in the next chapter a discussion on the methodology used.

## CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This section of the paper provides a description of the research methodology and design used in this study: it is unpacked in terms of the research questions, objectives, propositions and paradigm, as well as the strategy of enquiry to be used and the overall research design. Furthermore in this Chapter the study population, sampling method, sample size and data collection approach, research methods and instruments are discussed and outlined. The actual analysis procedure is also discussed in terms of data storing and preparation, analysis techniques and specific tests to be used. The research design chapter continues with a discussion on the possible bias and errors that can be present as well as reliability and validity of the entire study and the research ethics that need to be taken into consideration. Finally three propositions are set that will be statistically tested to establish the objectives of the study.

### 3.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study is guided by the following research questions, divided into a main question and sub questions. These questions are in line with the research objectives as discussed in the next section.

*Main research Question:*

- Does a significant relationship exist between Dispositional Employability and Career Success for Human Resource Practitioners in South Africa?

*Secondary objectives:*

- What is the Dispositional Employability of Human Resource Practitioners in South Africa?
- What is the Career Success orientation of Human Resource Practitioners in South Africa?

- Does there exist any significant differences between Human Resource Practitioners, with regards to Dispositional Employability, based on their demographic characteristics?
- Does there exist any significant differences between Human Resource Practitioners, with regards to Career Success, based on their demographic characteristics?

### **3.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

From the research questions as stated above the following are the specific research objectives that will guide this study:

#### *Main objective*

- To investigate whether a significant relationship exist between Dispositional Employability and Career Success for Human Resource Practitioners in South Africa.

#### *Secondary objectives:*

- To determine the Dispositional Employability of Human Resource Practitioners in South Africa;
- To determine the Career Success orientation of Human Resource Practitioners in South Africa;
- To determine whether any significant differences exists between Human Resource Practitioners, with regards to Dispositional Employability, based on their demographic characteristics;
- To determine whether any significant differences exist between Human Resource Practitioners, with regards to Career Success, based on their demographic characteristics.

### **3.4 RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS**

Flowing from the above research questions and objective the following propositions and sub-propositions were developed and will guide the research process and interpretation.



*Main Research Proposition:*

P1: A significant positive relationship exists between Dispositional Employability and Career Success for Human Resources practitioners in South Africa.

This main proposition was set in a directive manner based on findings in the literature available on these topics. The rationale behind this research proposition is that from the literature review on both constructs many underlying dimensions were identified. There is some degree of overlap in the labelling and discussion regarding the dimensions of each construct. The researcher hence wants to test if this translates into a relationship between the two main constructs, DE and CS. There is evidence from the literature that this relationship should exist and that it will be a positive relationship (De Vos et al, 2011; Guo et al, 2009).

The sub propositions that was set, relates to the demographics of the sample group and whether or not this causes a statistically significant difference in the DE and the CS of the respondents. These propositions are P1.1 and P1.2 respectively

P1.1: No significant differences exist between Human Resources Practitioners, with regards to Dispositional Employability, based on their demographic characteristics.

P1.2: No significant differences exist between Human Resources Practitioners, with regards to Career Success, based on their demographic characteristics.

This sub proposition was set in a non- directive manner as there is a lack of evidence in the literature available on these topics to suggest that differences would exist. The rationale behind the setting of these propositions are that, as discussed in the review of literature, a person's individual characteristics might influence the way they act and perceive things. This rings true for the constructs of CS and DE. However based on the lack of available literature this proposition is stated in a non-directive manner.

### 3.5 RESEARCH PARADIGM / PHILOSOPHY

Filstead (in Ponterotto 2005, p127-128) defines a paradigm as a “set of interrelated assumptions about the social world which provides a philosophical and conceptual framework for the organised study of that world”. In essence this guides the research in all assumptions made regarding a particular study. A research paradigm in essence is the same thing in that it sets the context for the study to be undertaken (Ponterotto, 2005).

Creswell (2009) defines the notion of a research paradigm more simplistically by calling it a worldview, which in essence is a basic set of beliefs that guides and directs action. A research paradigm includes assumptions regarding ontology or the nature of reality, epistemology or the relationship between the researcher and the research participant; and axiology or the role a researcher’s personal values play in the research process, rhetorical structure and finally the method to be used. (Kotze, 2010).

This study has been conducted from a positivistic paradigm. According to Kotze (2010), this paradigm can be briefly described as being modelled on the natural science approach as it strives to achieve objective knowledge that can in the end be used to ascertain cause-and-effect relationships. The main ontology, epistemology, axiology, rhetorical structure and the method that characterise the positivistic approach is summarised in Table 3-1.

**Table 3-1: Research Paradigm Descriptions**

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Positivistic assumption</b>
Ontology	Nature of reality	One true reality that is identifiable, measurable and apprehendable. It is not context or time bound and can be generalised.
Epistemology	The relationship between the researcher and research participant	Independent of each other. The research does not influence the participants and vice versa.
Axiology	The role of values in the research process	Values have no place and must be carefully controlled.
Rhetorical Structure	The language and presentation of the research	Objective, third person who is scientific and detached from the research process.

Dimension	Description	Positivistic assumption
Method	The process and procedure of the research	Only Quantitative strategies of inquiry.

The positivistic paradigm is appropriate to the study at hand as it attempts to find a relationship between two constructs and makes use of objective measurement instruments and data gathering and analysis procedures.

The paradigm is also appropriate in light of the fact that the study makes use of a survey design and is furthermore aimed at quantifying attributes related to DE as well as CS. The study furthermore aims to generalise the results to the sample population as the results have the potential to be valuable to various groups and add to the literature.

The function of the researcher in the study is to be objective, impartial and unbiased while hoping to reproduce as far as possible a stringent scientific methods and procedures (Ponterotto, 2005).

The assumptions on which this study is based fall in line with the paradigm the researcher adopts. These assumptions were discussed in Chapter 1 of the study.

### 3.6 DESCRIPTION OF INQUIRY STRATEGY AND BROAD RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Maree (2010, p 145), quantitative research is:

*“a process that is systematic and objective in its ways of using numerical data from only a selected subgroup of a universe (or population) to generalise the findings to the universe that is being studied.”*

From this definition three important elements can be identified which are: 1) objectivity, 2) numerical data, and 3) generalisability.

In terms of objectivity quantitative research is much more free from researcher bias than its counterpart qualitative research in that the researcher is much more removed from the research setting and is not seen as an integral part of the data collection process. The

researchers themselves are not the data gathering instrument and hence a more objective view can be taken.

Quantitative research is also a means for testing objective theories by means of statistically analysing relationships amongst variables (Creswell, 2009). Quantitative research is done from a deductive approach involving the testing of theoretical propositions by the employment of a research strategy that is specifically designed for the purpose of the testing (Suanders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009).

This means that no new concepts will be developed but only something already proposed to be true in the literature is tested. Survey research is seen as a non-experimental means of conducting quantitative research, by means of collecting questionnaire data and analysing it for the intended purpose of answering the research question.

Maree (2010) gives an overview of the Quantitative research process which is shown in Figure 3-1 below:

**Figure 3-1: Quantitative research process**



Source: Maree (2010, p146)

As part of the quantitative research a survey design was employed for the gathering of data. This will be discussed in the following section.

### **3.6.1 An overview of Survey Research**

Survey research is described as a form of quantitative research that involves getting information about groups of people by asking those questions with regard to their opinions, characteristics or attitudes and tabulating these answers in order to draw statistical conclusions from the responses gained (Leedy & Omrod, 2010). Furthermore data collected by means of survey research can be used to suggest reasons and explore possible relationships that might exist between variables (Saunders et al, 2009).

Survey research has the power to contribute to the advance of scientific knowledge (Forza, 2002), by means of capturing a short-lived moment in time and drawing conclusions from one momentary gathering of data (Leedy & Omrod, 2010). This type of research enables the researcher to draw inferences and extrapolate about a certain state of relationships over longer periods of time (Leedy & Omrod, 2010).

The main advantages of survey research are as follows (Mouton, 2001; Saunders et al., 2009):

- The researcher is not forever dependant on the participants in the study and the research can continue long after departure of the sample group. This could lead to better turnaround time.
- Potential to generalise to a large population, given that appropriate sampling techniques are utilised.
- High measurement reliability if the research makes use of proper instruments.
- Increase trust with the sample group; anonymity will be showed by no supervision.

This study attempts to find and explore the relationship between two constructs – DE and the CS – by means of administering questionnaires to the sample group. For this reason

the survey research design seem appropriate for the purposes of answering the research questions and objectives.

### **3.6.2 The classification of the proposed study's overall research design**

The following seven characteristics are deemed to be appropriate descriptors of the broad research design for this study:

- **Empirical research** – This refers to, according to Kotze (2010), to all research that is done in which new data is collected by the researcher for analysis. Furthermore under the classifications of Mouton (2001), survey research is classified an empirical as it is usually quantitative in nature. As this study has gathered first hand information and made use of statistical analysis to explore a relationship between constructs it can be said to be empirical in nature.
- **Basic research** – The main goal in basic research is to expand on the current state of knowledge on a specific subject matter (Saunders et al, 2009). Furthermore this study does not resolve a 'real-life' problem and does not inform managerial decision-making (Kotze, 2010), and hence cannot be classified as applied research. The main aim of this study is to gather information and find the existence of a relationship between two constructs and hence lending only to knowledge generation.
- **Exploratory** – According to Forza (2002), exploratory survey research is used with the objective of gaining insight into a phenomenon. Forza (2002) further states that exploratory survey research helps to uncover evidence for associations amongst concepts which can eventually lead to theory development. This study attempts, as mentioned, to explore the relationship between two constructs.
- **Cross-Sectional** - Creswell (2009) describes a cross sectional survey as one where the data is collected at one point in time only. As the purpose of this study is not to measure changes in responses over a certain time, there is no need for multiple data collection times and hence a cross-sectional design is appropriate.
- **Ex post facto designs** – According to Leedy and Omrod (2010), ex post facto design are used to ascertain and investigate correlations between variables. This study does not call for experimental testing and is only intended to explore a

relationship. This design calls for collecting data to investigate possible relationships between constructs (Leedy & Omrod, 2010).

- **Primary data** - Saunders et al (2009) defines primary data, as data which is collected for the specific research project proposed to be under taken. In this study data has been collected specifically with the intended purpose in mind and thus the data is considered to be of primary nature.
- **Numeric data (quantitative data)** – Quantitative data is seen as numerical data or any data that has been converted to numbers (Saunders et al, 2009). This type of data is then used to perform statistical analysis and draw conclusions thereof. This study has attempted to find a relationship by means of correlation analysis which is a statistical technique and hence the use of numerical data is necessary.

Following this discussion on the nature of the research design and strategy of enquiry, the following section will focus specifically on the sample and sampling techniques used in the study at hand.

### **3.7 SAMPLING**

A sample is simply defined as a “sub-group or part of a larger population” (Saunders et al, 2009). The procedure for selecting this sample is referred to as sampling. According to Maree (2010), the majority of survey research incorporates some form of sampling. Leedy and Omrod (2010) states that, a researcher should pick their applicable sample depending on the intended research question asked and the objectives of the study. Maree (2010) elaborate on this, stating that a sample will depend on the availability of a good sampling frame, money, time and the inherent characteristics of the population.

#### **3.7.1 Target population and units of analysis**

The target population for this study is HRM Practitioners in South Africa. The reasons for choosing this specific population are threefold:

- Ease of access to the participants in terms of location and entry.
- Established sampling frame available from the proper authorities.



- Fits the research objective as the researcher is intending not to make use of participants only in the fields of HRM and Industrial Psychology excluding other occupational categories.

The units of analysis for this study is classified and defined as each individual HRM Practitioner partaking in the study regardless of their demographics. To include the entire population will not be possible and hence the researcher has decided to include only the disciplines of HRM and Industrial and Organisational psychology in the study. This is due to ease of access and logistics. The sample will be gathered from South African workplaces across all industries. Following, a discussion on the specific sampling method used in this study.

### **3.7.2 Sampling Method**

Sampling in essence refers to taking the entire population and selecting only a select number of units in the population to participate in the data gathering. In this study, the researcher made use of non-probability sampling. Non-probability sampling is defined as the “selection of sampling techniques in which the chance or probability of each case being selected is not known” (Saunders et al, 2009, p 596). The nature of the study necessitates the selection of a sample in a way that is more subjective. Due to limited resources the use of non-probability sampling is necessitated. Although respondents will not be randomly selected, all who meet the criteria and that are available and willing to participate will be included.

Two specific sampling techniques were used in conjunction to ensure a representative sample was selected. These techniques are discussed next:

#### **3.7.2.1 *Purposive Sampling***

In this method people or units are chosen for a specific purpose (Leedy & Omrod, 2010). The rationale behind this method choice is that the study was conducted in a specific context including only participants with the characteristics desired by the researcher. These characteristics are shown in Table 3-2:



**Table 3-2: Characteristics of Research Sample**

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>HRM Practitioners</b>
Discipline	HRM Management or Industrial and Organisational Psychology. Any related field.
Institution	Any South African Workplace across all industries

As the characteristics are specific, the use of purposive sampling was supplement with convenience sampling, which is discussed next.

### **3.7.3 Convenience Sampling**

According to Leedy and Omrod (2010), this type of sampling makes no charade of identifying a subset of the population. The reason for use of this sampling method is due to the fact that the researcher has access to some, but not all the HRM Practitioners in South Africa and hence the convenient ones will be used. This implies that the researcher will select participant on the basis of ease of access. These sampling methods have ensured that the objectives and purpose of the study is indeed accomplished. The sample size is discussed in the next section.

### **3.7.4 Proposed sample size**

Kumar (2005) states that as a general rule the larger the sample size the more accurate estimates the researcher will receive. Generalisations about populations from data collected are based on statistical probability (Saunders et al, 2009). The size of a sample directly influences the significance of results obtained from any study.

According to Morse (2000), a number of factors need to be considered in determining sample size in any study. Maree (2010) agrees and gives the following guidelines (especially applicable to survey research):

- Type of research
- Research propositions: Small differences expected leads to large samples needed.

- Financial constraints.
- Importance of results.
- Number of variables studied: More variables lead to larger samples.
- Methods of data collection: Consistent measures lead to smaller samples.
- Accuracy of results: The larger the sample the better.
- Size of population: Large population lead to smaller samples.

The study aimed to explore and analyse a relationship between two theoretical constructs. In essence a correlation analysis was done and hence the sample size was dependant on the needed sample size to acquire statistically significant results in a correlation analysis.

In terms of the accuracy of the results Saunders et al (2009) proposes that depending on the population size and margin of error allowed at a 95% confidence interval for a population can be deducted by making use of sample size tables. Maree (2010) states, with regards to the characteristics of the population, as a guideline the more homogeneous the population is in terms of variables applicable to the study, the smaller sample size can be allowed.

The sample size had to be a minimum of a 150 responses. As stated earlier all willing and able participants were allowed to participate. The final sample consisted of 155 respondents of which the demographics of the sample will be discussed in chapter 4.

The next section deals with the data collection in terms of obstacles faced in the data collection as well as the instruments used for data collection and the overall approach followed to get the required number of respondents.

### **3.8 DATA COLLECTION**

The main methods for data collection in survey research are stated to be interview data or data obtained from questionnaires (Leedy & Omrod, 2010). This study only made use of questionnaires to collect data from the participants. The nature of the data to be collected is primary and relates to the main constructs the researcher intends to investigate. These main characteristics are the participants' CS in as well as their DE. Biographical data will

also be gathered for analytic purposes and testing of propositions to reach the research objectives set out in Chapter 1.

### **3.8.1 Possible obstacles in data collection**

Obstacles in the data collection process are mainly with regard to access. Firstly with regard to access to the participants issues might involve physical access to the population, cognitive access and the interest of the key role players as the main obstacles to gaining access to the intended population (Saunders et al., 2009).

This barrier was overcome by gaining the interest and approval of key role players in the various workplaces targeted for data collection. The physical space obstacle was overcome by distributing the questionnaires electronically by means of Lime Survey to the intended sample group. The second access issue is that of cognitive access, which refers to the ability of the researcher to select a representative sample. By means of sampling methods and research paradigm discussed this problem was overcome. Lastly key role players supported the researcher and the intended study and interest in the outcomes of the study has been evoked.

### **3.8.2 Data collection Instruments**

Two instruments were used to collect the required primary data. This entailed that each construct (CS and DE) was measured by means of its own individual instrument. One of the instruments used (Dispositional Measure of Employability) already existed and hence the researcher did not need to develop a new questionnaire for data collection.

The second questionnaire however, was developed by the researcher using the constructs identified from the literature and generating items from these constructs, the questionnaire was then tested for face validity and adapted before sending out for data gathering.

Together with the questionnaires there was also a biographical sheet for the participants to complete which included the following: gender, racial group, Marital status, home language, age, qualification obtained, region, occupational sector, job level, years in the

current organization and years in current job, the nature of employment and finally whether or not the participants are registered with a professional body.

The questionnaires were used to gain insights into the two constructs on which this study is based are briefly discussed below as the following:

### **3.8.3 Dispositional Measure of Employability (DME)**

The DME is a 25-item questionnaire which measures the DE of individuals. It was developed by Fugate and Kinicki (2008) after extensive analysis with regard to construct and predictive validity.

An example of the questionnaire is attached in Annexure A (p.118) of this document. The instrument measures six constructs underlining DE as shown in Table 3-3 together with the number of individual items for each construct or factor.

**Table 3-3: Constructs measured in the DME**

<b>Construct / Factor</b>	<b>Number of items</b>
Openness to change at work	5
Work and Career Productivity	3
Career Motivation	3
Work and Career Resilience	5
Optimism at work	3
Work identity	6

In the questionnaire participants are told that “we are interested in how you feel about your job, your job opportunities and your career in general. Please indicate to what extent each of the following describes you”. The responses are indicated on a five point Likert-type scale anchored from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

In terms of the validity and reliability, the findings from the study done by Fugate and Kinicki (2008) show reliability of the scale at 0.76 which is highly classified in terms of statistical terms (Field, 2005). In terms of the validity of the scale evidence was found both in terms of construct and predictive validity. The construct validity is shown in Table 3-4.

**Table 3-4: Construct validity for DME**

<b>Construct / Factor</b>	<b>Relation to Employability</b>
Openness to change at work	0.76
Work and Career Productivity	0.55
Career Motivation	0.68
Work and Career Resilience	0.75
Optimism at work	Not indicated
Work identity	0.66

Even though the questionnaire had already been developed and validated it was decided that as it will be administered in a different context from which it was developed that the validity and reliability will be tested statistically to ensure that the results obtained in this study remain valid.

The second instrument used was developed by the researcher as no applicable and satisfying instrument existed that could be used in the study at hand. This instrument is discussed in the following section.

#### **3.8.4 The Career Success Orientation Survey (CSOS)**

For the purposes of this research a suitable CSOS was developed. The measurement was based on the dimensions as identified by Derr (in Kim, 2005). These include:

- **Getting ahead:** This entails advancing up the organisational hierarchy, increased responsibility and authority as well as main focus on high status, prestige and income.
- **Getting free:** This element includes being recognised as an expert in one area together with excitement to tests one’s skills and talents and lastly focus on continued growth and experience.
- **Getting secure:** This entails a need for stability, predictability and security as well as long term commitment and loyalty towards an organisation.
- **Getting high:** This regards maintenance of freedom and avoidance of restrictions as well as a variety of different experiences and a yearning to create your own product or service.

- **Getting balanced:** This element entails the respect for and need for a sufficient work-life balance with emphasis on family life.

This questionnaire can be found in Annexure A (p.118) of this document. This questionnaire was piloted on a small scale to test the face validity of the questionnaire. After the pilot, small changes were made to the questionnaire in terms of wording and general cosmetic care.

The questionnaire consists of 20 items where the responses will be measured on a four point Likert type scale ranging from 1 (insignificant) to 4 (very important).

The validity and reliability of this measurement instrument was tested by means of statistical analyses run on the data to ensure that it will not negatively affect the results of this study. The results will be presented in Chapter 4 and discussed in Chapter 5.

Following the nature of the instruments used for the data collection purpose the following approach was used to ensure that the data obtained was acceptable for use in the study

### 3.8.5 Data collection approach

The questionnaires as discussed are of a self-administering nature. Saunders et al.(2009), states that these types of questionnaires can be completed without the assistance of the researcher and by the respondents themselves. Furthermore they state that self-administered questionnaires can be administered electronically via the internet, posted to the individuals or delivered by hand for later collection. This study made use of electronic questionnaires as the primary data collection technique with postal/per-hand questionnaires as a back-up method. Table 3-5 indicates the main attributes of the types of questionnaire the researcher used.

**Table 3-5: Attributes of electronic and postal questionnaires**

Attribute	Electronic	Postal
Population characteristics	Computer-literate with access to computer	Literate individuals who can be contacted by post
Confidence that the right person has responded	High	Low, but can be checked at collection

Attribute	Electronic	Postal
Likelihood of data contamination	Low	High
Size of Sample	Large and geographically dispersed	Large and geographically dispersed
Response Rate	Variable – 30% if using organisation	Variable – 30% reasonable
Recommended survey length	Fewer screens the better	6-8 A4 pages
Types of questions	Closed questions	Closed questions
Time taken to complete collection	2-6 weeks (depending on follow-up)	4-8 weeks (depending on follow-up)
Financial implications	Low	High
Role of Researcher	None	None
Data input	Automated	Needs to be captured

Source: Saunders et al. (2009, p346)

It can be seen that the attributes of these methods are very similar in terms of the respondents one needs to reach and hence using a combination of the two ensured that a sufficient number of respondents was reached. In terms of the electronic based survey (which was the primary means for data collection) suggestions made by Saunders et al. (2009, p397) for the process are as follows:

1. Pre-survey contact - Give information and create expectancy.
2. Email questionnaire or link with a covering e-mail.
3. Email first follow-up one week after mailing questionnaire.
4. Email second follow-up to respondents who have not responded after three weeks.
5. Use a third follow-up only if response rate is very low.

A very similar process is used for the administering of the postal questionnaire.

The disadvantages and advantages of the two proposed methods are shown in Table 3-6.

**Table 3-6: Advantages and disadvantages of electronic and postal surveys**

Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Electronic Surveys</b>	
Cost saving	Sample demographic limitations
Ease of editing and analysis	Lower levels of confidentiality
Faster transmission time	Layout and presentation issues
Easy use of pre-letters	Additional orientation and instructions'
Higher response rate	Potential technical problems
More Candid responses	

Advantages	Disadvantages
Potential quicker response-time	
Wider magnitude of coverage	
Postal survey	
Relativity cheap and easy	Low response rate
Respondents can complete in own time	Conditions under which complete is not controlled
Respondents can check personal records	No assistance with potential problems
Researcher does not influence respondent	Contamination

Source: Adapted from and combination of Maree (2010, p157) and Colorado State University Website.

From the information it can be seen that the chosen methods for data collection were the most sufficient and effective means for data collection. The electronic surveys resulted in 80% of the responses collected, while the per-hand and postal questionnaire resulted in the remaining 20%.

The data collected was of primary nature, meaning that the data is collected for the purposes of the study only and has been done in this way for the first time in this particular context. The study leader of the researcher did oversee the collection of the data to ensure that all the targeted institutions and companies do indeed participate in the study. The administration of the questionnaires does not take long and could be done at a time that is convenient to the respondents.

The next section looks specifically at the data analyses techniques employed in the study to obtain the results needed to reach the research objectives.

### 3.9 DATA ANALYSIS

The main aim of the entire research study is to eventually answer to the research objectives. This only starts happening in the data analysis phase of a study and hence considerations to this part are essential. Data was analysed by means of quantitative techniques, in essence referring to statistical analysis.



### **3.9.1 Record, store and coding of the data gathered**

Responses gathered from the online questionnaires as well as the postal questionnaires were recorded electronically in a database making use of a statistical program called Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). It was stored on two separate computers as well as an external hard-drive to ensure that the data does not get lost. Due to the fact that the data gathering process was completely anonymous there is little need to secure the data, however the consent forms signed by the participants will be stored in a password protected folder for five years and in the case of paper based in a locked cabinet to ensure the participants remain anonymous.

A codebook was prepared that serves as the instruction guide that must be used to convert information obtained from each participant into a format that the SPSS can understand (Pallant, 2007). This document essentially describes the arrangement of variables and records the code allocations of the attributes of variables. The codebook of a study acts as the main guide in the coding process and helps with locating and interpreting the data file during analysis.

Following is a discussion on the preparation of the data for statistical analysis, which is necessary for the exploring of the data and determining its adequacy for analysis.

### **3.9.2 Preparation of data for analysis**

According to Field (2005) exploring data is seen as the first step in any data analysis procedure. SPSS allows many techniques to prepare the data for analysis. Data needs to be screened to ensure that the analysis techniques used will indeed lead to significant results. Before any statistical analysis can be done on the data gathered it is essential to screen and clean data (Pallant, 2007). This was done by SPSS and showed the researcher errors such as missing data, incorrect data entered, irregular distributions and outliers (scores with extreme values) which may all result in distorted statistics and incorrect conclusions (Field, 2005). The data used in this study was screened, cleaned and deemed acceptable for data analysis.

### **3.9.3 Data analysis techniques**

This study will make use of only quantitative techniques of data analysis. Quantitative techniques according to Saunders et al. (2009) can range from simple creation of tables or diagrams that show frequencies to more complex statistical analysis such as comparisons and statistical modelling. In essence quantitative data is data that has been quantified, hence put in numbers. Following are descriptions and motivations for the main types of analysis that will have been done in this study.

#### ***Descriptive statistics***

Maree (2010, p183) describes descriptive statistics as the “collective name for a number of statistical methods that are used to organise and summarise data in a meaningful way”.

The main reasons for use of descriptive statistics are the following (Pallant, 2007):

- To describe the characteristics of your sample.
- To check variables for violation of assumptions underlining statistical tests.
- To address the research question.

Descriptive statistics serve to enhance understanding of the properties of the data as well as identifying any severe inaccuracies in the data. Main forms of descriptive data are the mean, median, mode, standard deviation, counts and the skewness and kurtosis of the data gathered. In this study these statistics have been used to explore data, describe the sample and ensure that the right test is used.

#### ***Inferential Statistics and analysis***

According to Maree (2010) the purpose of most research is to use the data gathered from the sample and generalise the findings back to the population. For this specific reason the use of inferential statistics and analysis is of essence in this study. The field of statistical inference relies heavily on the probability theory (Maree, 2010) as it is by means of probability statements that inferences are made. Inferential statistics are divided into parametric and non-parametric statistics. The first refers to a broad range of statistical procedures or tests that requires data to meet certain assumptions of which normality of sample distribution is most essential (Field, 2005). The second type, non-parametric, refers to the range of statistical tests for establishing relationships between variables without having to meet any assumptions regarding distribution or the nature of the data.

Parametric procedures are seen to have more statistical power than their non-parametric counterparts (Field, 2005).

### **3.9.4 Specific statistical techniques to be used**

The specific tests to be used for the analysis of the data gathered will be discussed next. The specific test is chosen based on the objective of the study it attempts to accomplish. The statistics applied to the data to obtain the necessary results for this study was conducted in three phases discussed next.

#### **3.9.4.1 *Phase one: Describing the Sample Demographics***

In this phase the data gained from the 155 respondents in term of their answers on the biographical information sheet was explored. These characteristics included gender, race, marital status, home language, age, level of qualification, region, sector, job level, years in their current organisation as well as their current job, on which basis they are employed and finally whether or not they are registered with a professional body.

Frequency analysis was used to describe each biographical characteristic of the sample obtained. According to Field (2005) frequency analysis is one of the simplest ways to describe data. Frequency analysis focuses on the description of the sample by means of counts, percentages and means. For the purposes of this study the frequency of the respons and the percentages is used for discussion.

#### **3.9.4.2 *Phase two: Analysis of the Measurement instruments used***

This phase of the data analysis entails establishing whether or not the measure used really reflects the single variable it is intending to measure (Field, 2005) as well as the reliability of that measure. In the case of this study it was needed to determine whether the DME measures DM and the CSOS measures CS.

For this purpose the following statistical techniques where employed:

- **Exploratory Factor Analysis:** This is a specialised statistical technique that is not designed to test a propositions but rather a data reduction technique (Pallant, 2007). Factor analysis attempts to fabricate a smaller number of linear combinations of the original variables in a way that accounts for most of the inconsistency in the pattern of correlations. In essence, factor analysis helps in identifying the dimensions, called factors that the applicable measure consists of. Firstly in the analysis the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of sphericity was conducted to determine the adequacy of the sample for the exploratory factor analysis. The values of the KMO should be above 0.6 at a significance level of 0.05 (Pallant, 2007). Secondly both the measurements were subjected to Principal Axis factor analysis to determine the factor structure of the instrument. Factor loadings can range from -1.0 to +1.0 (Field, 2005).
- **Reliability analysis:** The overall reliability of the scales where measured using Cronbach's Alpha. The results of this analysis show the accuracy of a measurement across time, thus being repeatable (Field, 2005). The general accepted value for the Cronbach's Alpha is above 0.7 although above 0.8 is preferred (Pallant, 2007). This reliability analysis was conducted on both scales and supplemented with the analysis of the descriptive statistics of the subscales as well as their reliabilities, analyses in the same way as discussed here.
- **Descriptive Statistics of the Subscales:** As discussed earlier these descriptive include the mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis. All these describe the data as per subscale leading to more insight into the data as well as determining some of the research objectives set.

Following the discussion on phase two of the data analysis the final phase includes the propositions testing and the actual and eventual aim of the research study.

#### **3.9.4.3 Phases 3: Propositions testing**

For the purposes of obtaining the research objectives set in this study three propositions were set and will be discussed later in this chapter. The statistical tests used in testing the propositions are briefly described below:

### **Proposition one: Correlation Analysis (Objective 1: Finding a relationship)**

Correlation analysis hinges upon the notion of covariance (Field, 2005). In essence finding a relationship between two variables, or constructs as is the case in the proposed study, depends on finding whether or not the variables deviate from their means in the same way (Field, 2005). Pearson's correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) will be used to find whether or not a relationship exists between the variables. Pallant (2007) gives the following guidelines for interoperating correlations:

- *Check information about the sample:* Are all the cases included and excluded as intended by the researcher.
- *Determine the direction of the relationship:* This refers to the mathematical sign in front of the correlation coefficient. A Negative (-) sign indicates a negative relationship between the variables and a positive (+) sign indicates a positive relationship.
- *Determining the strength of the relationship:* This refers to the size of the value of the correlation coefficient. This number ranges from -1.00 to 1.00, where 0.00 indicates no relationship at all and 1.00 indicating a perfect correlation. The interpretations of these values are given by Pallant (2007) as, Small ( $r = 0.1$  to  $0.29$ ), Medium ( $r = 0.3$  to  $0.49$ ) and Large ( $r = 0.5$  to  $1.0$ )
- *Assessing significance level:* This will depend on the significance cut that the researcher has decided to incorporate into the study. For the purposes of the proposed study a value at a 95% confidence interval level ( $p \leq 0, 05$ ) is set (Field, 2005).

The correlation analysis was done for both the two constructs, DE and CS, as well as for between the dimensions of the constructs. It is important to note that with correlation analysis only the direction and strength of the relationship is shown. By means of a correlation analysis one cannot deduct whether or not the one variable causes the change in the other. This method of analysis should ensure that the researcher's main objective is indeed met.

### **Propositions two and three: ANOVA and MANOVA**

These analysis techniques are used to test the difference between groups. The analysis was run on both the constructs DE and CS to test the applicable propositions. Following a brief discussion on these statistical techniques:

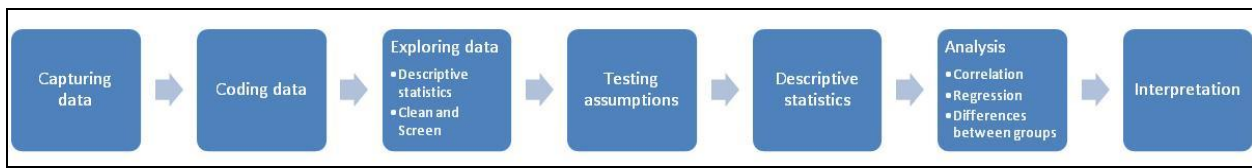
- **ANOVA:** According to Pallant (2007) this analysis is done to test the difference between groups on one categorical independent variable (in this case the biographical information of the sample) and one continuous dependant variable (in this case DE and CS respectively). For a difference to exist the significance value of the ANOVA should be less than 0.05.
- **MANOVA:** The MANOVA test is an extension of the ANOVA and is used when there is more than one dependant and independent variable being tested (Pallant, 2007). For significant differences to exist the significance value of the MANOVA should be less than 0.05.
- **Post Hoc tests:** This is done when a significant difference is discovered and the researcher wants to determine where the difference lies.
- **Effect Size:** This relates to the standardized mean differences between groups (Field, 2005). A small effect is indicated by 0.1, a medium effect size by 0.3 whereas large effects are 0.5 (Field, 2005).

Data analysis is a strenuous process and requires detailed and critical thinking on the part of the researcher. With the aid of SPSS as well as the help of experts in the field the correct analysis methods was selected and applied to the study. Furthermore it is important to note that research results in isolation does not constitute meaningfulness but considerations should also be given to the practical importance of the findings.

#### **3.9.5 The overall data analysis process**

A high level overview of data analysis is shown in Figure 3-2 as conclusion to this section on data analysis.

**Figure 3-2: Overview of Data Analysis for the proposed study**



The next section deals with the quality and rigour of the proposed research design.

### 3.10 ASSESSING AND DEMONSTRATING THE QUALITY AND RIGOUR THE PROPOSED RESEARCH DESIGN

#### 3.10.1 Bias and Errors in Survey Research

Leedy and Omrod (2010) define bias as any influence, condition or set of conditions that in combinations or singlehanded can distort the data. Bias has a way of creeping into research and is easily overlooked. Because bias has the ability to attack the integrity and accuracy of the data the acknowledgement thereof is of critical importance.

In survey research there are four common types of errors that the researcher should minimise to ensure that the survey research does not get halted (Forza, 2002). These four errors are described by Forza (2002) as:

- *Sampling error*: Occurs when the sample chosen has no capability of representing the population (Forza, 2002). This error makes it impossible to generalise back to the population in essence making the research of no value. This error was overcome by employing well thought out and applicable sampling methods to.
- *Measurement error*: This type of error occurs when the instrument used to measure a certain theoretical construct fails in terms of reliability and validity (Forza, 2002), and does not measure the construct as intended. The instruments used in this study were tested for both reliability and validity.
- *Statistical conclusion error*: This refers to the typical TYPE I and TYPE II errors made in accepting or rejecting propositions (Forza, 2002). Many techniques exist that help a researcher minimise the chances of making these errors.

- *Internal validity error.* Forza (2002) states this type of error occurs when a justification is given of what was observed that is less probable than others who have attempted to explain the same concept. These conclusions can then be seen as erroneous. The researcher's plan was followed to ensure that validity is at least to the best of their abilities assured.

A well planned and set out strategy of inquiry followed as best possible can minimise if not assure that these errors do not occur in the proposed study. Following a discussion on the overall reliability of the study

### **3.10.2 Reliability**

Reliability is defined as the extent to which an instrument or data collection technique will yield consistent results from one researcher to another and from one time to another (Saunders et al, 2010). Reliability is statistically measured by making use of Cronbach's coefficient alpha.

In terms of the instruments used for data collection, the following

- DEM: Instrument developers Fugate and Kinicki (2008) found the reliability of the scale was 0.76 which is classified high in terms of statistical terms (Field, 2005).
- CSOS: The reliability of this instrument has been established by means of a small scale pilot as well as looking at the statistical results received after the analysis had been completed. Furthermore statistical test were run on the measurement instrument to ascertain reliability.

In terms of the results of the study, reliability can be assured or at least increased by giving consideration to probable errors that can occur and devising strategies to minimise the effect thereof on the reliability of the study. Reliability was tested by means of SPSS where Cronbach's alpha was calculated for both instruments used for data collection.



### 3.10.3 Validity

According to Saunders et al (2009), validity can be defined in two ways depending on the context in which it is taken. The first has regard to the instrument used for data collection and whether or not the instrument measures what it intends to measure. In terms of the study at hand validity has been checked by instrument developers:

- DEM: Instrument developers Fugate and Kinicki (2008) found evidence for the validity of the scale, both in terms of construct and predictive validity.
- CSOS: For this instrument a small scale pilot was conducted to ensure the face validity of the instrument. Validity was tested making use of exploratory factor analysis.

The second definition of validity postulated by Saunders et al (2009) concerns the extent to which the findings of the study resembles the outcome theorised at the start of the research. This will be assured by following a predefined methodological plan and cross-checking the data that will be used for analysis.

Consideration was given to the research ethics of the study and is discussed in the following section.

## 3.11 RESEARCH ETHICS

Research ethics refer to the appropriateness of the researcher's behaviour in relation to the rights of those who participate in the study (Saunders et al., 2009). Ethical issues should be considered in all stages of a research project including the design and initial access stages, the data collection stage, and the data analysis and reporting stages. According to Leedy and Omrod (2010) the following has to be considered:

- *Protection from harm:* Participants should not be exposed to unnecessary physical or psychological harm. The general rule is that participating in the study should not pose a greater risk than that of the day-to-day activities of the participants.
- *Informed consent:* This entails that the participants in a study should be aware of the specific nature and purpose of the study in which they are participating. Annexure B

(p.123) provides the informed consent form that needs to be read, understood and signed by all participants before partaking in the study.

- *Rights to privacy*: Here the idea of confidentiality, anonymity and privacy comes into play. For this study participation is completely voluntary and no incentive is given for participation. Furthermore the participant is not asked for any information that can identify them directly. The biographical information asked is of such a nature that one will not be able to pin-point individual participants.
- *Honesty with professional colleagues*: This principle has to do with reporting findings in a complete and honest fashion. These entail that the researcher should not allow for any misinterpretations or mislead the readers in any way.

Furthermore it is of utmost importance that the researcher obtains authorisation from applicable authorities to conduct the study. The researcher must also comply with the ethical standards set out in the Faculty regulations and apply for ethical clearance at the applicable Faculty. This application was attached to the final proposal which was submitted to the home department of the researcher.

### **3.12 CONCLUSION**

This chapter looked at the theoretical research conducted and presented in Chapter 2 and in line with this documented the applicable research design and methodology that was used in this study. The main statistical analysis tests that were run to test the propositions and achieving the research objective as set out in Chapter 1 was presented and discussed. Furthermore consideration was given to the validity, reliability, quality and rigour as well as ethics applicable to this study was discussed.

The following chapter shows the results of the empirical statistical analysis done as discussed in this chapter.

## CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

This chapter presents the results obtained from the data analysis done by means of SPSS as per the research design and methodology discussed in Chapter 3. This chapter includes all results obtained from the empirical statistical tests run on the data with regards to the objectives set for the study together with the applicable propositions.

This chapter is structured in three distinct phases as follows:

- Phase 1: The presentation of the sample demographics and descriptive
- Phase 2: Analysis of the data measurement instruments, the dispositional measure of employability and the CS orientation measure respectively
- Phase 3: Propositions testing

Following first the presentation on the demographics of the sample used in this research study presented as phase one of data analysis.

### 4.1 PHASE 1: SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

The following section shows the demographics of the sample group used in this study with regards to the biographical information supplied by the respondents. The sample group was chosen from the population that was targeted in the study, which are HRM Practitioners in South Africa. From the 500 questionnaires distributed a sample of 155 responded which equates to a 31% response rate.

The following information reflects the demographics of the 155 respondents as supplied by them in the biographical section of the survey that was distributed. These include gender, race, marital status, home language, age, level of qualification, region, sector, job level, years in their current organisation as well as their current job, on which basis they are employed and finally whether or not they are registered with a professional body.

Table 4-1 shows the gender distribution of the 155 respondents that participated in the study. The majority of the respondents (65.8%) are female HRM practitioners, while the remaining respondents (34.2%) were male.

**Table 4-1: Gender Distribution of the sample**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	53	34.2
Female	102	65.8
Total	155	100.0

The racial demographics are shown in Table 4-2. The sample group is predominately white (74.2%) followed by black (14.8%) and then coloured (6.5%). The remaining percentage is attributed to Indian (3.9%) and other (0.6%) where the respondent specified themselves to be of Asian descent.

**Table 4-2: Racial Distribution of the sample**

Racial Group	Frequency	Percentage
White	115	74.2
Black	23	14.8
Indian	6	3.9
Coloured	10	6.5
Other	1	.6
Total	155	100.0

The next demographic descriptive is that of Marital status where respondents were asked to indicate their current relationship status. Table 4-3 shows the distribution of this biographical variable. A little more than half of the sample group indicated that they are married (55.5%) followed by 22.6% of single or widowed respondents. The third most selected marital status is labelled “engaged or in a relationship” (14.2%) and the remaining 7.7% is divided amongst divorced (6.5%) and separated and remarried both at 0.6%.

**Table 4-3: Marital Status Distribution of the sample**

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single/Widow/Widower	35	22.6
Engaged/In a relationship	22	14.2
Married	86	55.5
Divorced	10	6.5
Separated	1	.6
Remarried	1	.6
Total	155	100.0

For the analysis of the home language distribution of the sample group, all 11 official languages were supplied as options for the respondents to choose. However with the analysis all the indigenous languages were grouped. Table 4-4 shows this distribution. Afrikaans is the home language of just over half of the respondents (58.1%), followed by English (27.1%) and finally indigenous (14.8%). These distributions make sense when looking at the racial profile of the sample which is predominantly white.

**Table 4-4: Language Distribution of the sample**

	Frequency	Percentage
Afrikaans	90	58.1
English	42	27.1
Indigenous	23	14.8
Total	155	100.0

The next biographical characteristic of the sample group is age. Respondents were asked to state their age in years after which the given ages were categorised into specific age groups as shown in Table 4-5.

**Table 4-5: Age Distribution of the sample**

Age Groups	Frequency	Percentage
20-29	40	25.8
30-39	39	25.2
40-49	40	25.8
50-59	30	19.4
60-69	4	2.6
70-79	2	1.3
Total	155	100.0

From this it can be seen that responses were predominately gathered from persons under the age of 50, comprising 76.8% of the entire sample. These are divided in ascending order as, between the ages 20-29 and 40-49 which were both calculated as 25.8% followed by the age group 30-39 at 25.2%. The rest of the sample was over the age of 50 with the percentage of respondents decreasing as the age of the respondents increase, i.e. 50-59 (19.4%), 60-69 (2.6%) and 70-79 (1.3%).

The qualification profile of the sample group is shown in Table 4-6. What can be deduced from this table is that the majority of respondents in this sample have furthered their studies as 87.7% of the entire sample has a qualification higher than grade 12.

**Table 4-6: Qualification Distribution of the sample**

Qualification Level	Frequency	Percentage
Grade	19	12.3
3 Year Degree	23	14.8
4 year Diploma/ Honours	34	21.9
4-7 year degree	6	3.9
Masters	43	27.7
Doctoral	30	19.4
Total	155	100.0

The greatest percentage of the sample group is qualified at a Master degree level (27.7%), followed by a 4year degree or diploma (21.9%). The doctoral qualification was found to be at 19.4% which is substantial. The other categories in descending order are a 3 year degree (14.8%), Grade 12 (12.3%) and lastly a 4-7year degree (3.9%). Table 4-7 shows the geographical distribution of the sample group. As the study only incorporates HRM Practitioners in South Africa there are no indications of foreigners.

**Table 4-7: Geographical Distribution of the sample**

Region	Frequency	Percentage
Gauteng	105	67.7
Western Cape	13	8.4
Eastern Cape	11	7.1
Free state	2	1.3
Northern Cape	7	4.5
KwaZulu Natal	5	3.2
North West	9	5.8
Limpopo	3	1.9
Total	155	100.0

Gauteng is the area in which the most responses (67.7%) were collected. As the study made use of an electronic survey the other regions was also reached, where the most responses was from the Western Cape (8.4%) followed by the Eastern Cape (7.1%) and then North West (5.2%). The rest of the provinces where calculated at 4.5% in the Northern Cape, 3.2% in KwaZulu Natal and 1.9% and 1.3% for Limpopo and the Free state irrespectively. In conclusion to the geographical distribution it is important to note that all nine provinces across South Africa were reached.

The different workplace sectors in which the respondents operate in is depicted in Tabel 4-8. A category labelled other was included to ensure that respondents not belonging to any of the supplied categories are accommodated as well.

**Table 4-8: Sectorial Distribution of the sample**

Sector	Frequency	Percentage
Financial Services	63	40.6
Chemical/ Petroleum	4	2.6
Information Technology	6	3.9
Education/ Teaching	16	10.3
Government	27	17.4
Retail	1	.6
Telecommunications	3	1.9
Professional Services/ Consulting	19	12.3
Other	16	10.3
Total	155	100.0

The largest percentage of responses were gathered from the financial services sector (40.6%) followed by Government (17.4%) and Professional services and consulting (12.3%). The categories of education and teaching as well as other both individually make up 10.3% of the sample. The remaining 9% of the sample is made up of, in descending order, information technology (3.9%), Chemical and petroleum (2.6%), telecommunication (1.9%) and Retail (0.6%).

The following three tables refer to characteristics specific to the respondent's job in which they are currently operating. Table 4-9 specifically refers to the current occupational level at which the respondent is functioning.

**Table 4-9: Occupational Level Distribution of the sample**

Occupational Level	Frequency	Percentage
Operational Level	41	26.5
Junior Management level	34	21.9
Middle Management level	49	31.6
Senior Management level	25	16.1
Executive level	6	3.9
Total	155	100.0

The sample group is reasonably equally distributed across all occupation levels of the organisation, however the majority of the respondents function on a middle management

level (31.6%). This is followed by the operational level (26.5%) and junior management (21.9%). The higher occupational levels make up the minority of the sample being senior management (16.1%) and executive level (3.9%). It is however important to note that organisations may differ in their definitions of occupational levels and that a senior manager in a larger company could be the same as an executive in a smaller company.

The second demographic characteristics with regards to the respondents current job is twofold being number of years in their current organisation and number of years in their current job. The results are shown in Table 4-10.

**Table 4-10: Years at current organization and in current job of the sample**

Number of years	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Years at Current Organisation</b>		
0-10	100	64.5
10.-20	28	18.1
21-30	21	13.5
31-40	5	3.2
41-50	1	.6
<b>Years in Current Job</b>		
0-10	124	80.0
10.-20	19	12.3
21-30	8	5.2
31-40	3	1.9
41-50	1	.6

It is noticeable that as the number of years increase the number of respondents decrease. Most respondents have been with their current organisation for less than 10 years (64.5%) followed by 10-20 (18.1%), 21-30 years (13.5%) and 31-40 years (3.2%). There was only one respondent who work for the same organization for more than 41 year (0.6%).

In terms of the years worked in their current position the same trend is visible. The majority of respondents have been in their current position for less than 10 years (80%) followed by 11-20 years (12.3%), 21-30 years (5.2%) and 31-40 years (1.9%). The same respondent that stated to have been working for more than 40 years, also indicated that they had been in the same position (0.6%).

The last demographic characteristic relating to the respondent's current job is the nature by which they are employed. Table 4-11 indicates these results.



**Table 4-11:Nature of employment distribution of the sample**

Nature of Employment	Frequency	Percentage
Permanent	135	87.1
Temporary	7	4.5
Fixed Term	9	5.8
Hourly Paid	4	2.6
Total	155	100.0

The majority of respondents are permanently employed (87.1%) while the remainder are temporary in various degrees be it fixed term (5.8%), on temporary assignment (4,5%) or hourly paid (2.6%).

The last demographic characteristic that was asked of the respondents is whether or not they are registered with a professional body.

**Table 4-12:Registration with a professional body of the sample**

Registration Status	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	41	26.5
No	114	73.5
Total	155	100.0

As is shown in Tabel 4-12 , the majority indicated that they are not registered (73.5%) while 26.5% indicated that they are.

The demographics of the sample shows to be quite representative as each category presented to the respondents has a value. This entails that the sample that was gathered comes from a great variety of respondents and that even though it might not be generalisable to other occupation other than Human Resources it is well representative of the HRM Practitioners population at which this study is aimed.

Taking all of the above demographic characteristics into consideration the sample can be described (in terms of majority) as: Predominantly white female, who is married and Afrikaans speaking, in the age group 20 to 49, qualified to some degree, based in Gauteng and operating in the financial services sector. In terms of the current occupation most likely on middle management level for less than 10 years working for the same company on a permanent basis, and is not resisted with a professional body.

Following this discussion on the sample group the next section will look at the data obtained from the empirical analysis of the measurement instruments used in this study.

## 4.2 PHASE 2: RESULTS PERTAINING TO THE INSTRUMENTS

The following section will present the results obtained from both the measures, DE measure and CSOS, used in this study. Each measure will be discussed in terms of its adequacy for analysis, reliability and descriptive statistics of the subscales.

### 4.2.1 Dispositional Measure of employability

The following statistics pertain only to the dispositional measure of employability. The data was first checked for adequacy and sphericity after which a principle factor analysis was run, finally the overall reliability of the scale as well as the descriptive of the scales and their reliability.

#### 4.2.1.1 *Sampling adequacy and sphericity*

Sample adequacy was tested making use of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of sampling adequacy, while sphericity was tested making use of the Bartlett's test of Sphericity. These tests are run to ensure that the data is indeed adequate for any data analysis to be deemed empirical. The results of these two tests are shown in Tabel 4-13 below.

**Table 4-13: KMO and BARTLETT'S TEST**

<b>KMO and Bartlett's Test</b>			
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.			.788
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square		1366.983
	df		300
	Sig.		.000

The KMO of 0.788, at a significance level of 0.000 was attained for the Dispositional measure of Employability. According to Pallant (2007), the KMO should be above 0.6 and the significance value of the Bartlett's test should be less than 0.05 for the sample to be deemed appropriate. From Tabel 4-13 it is clear that this matrix is suitable for further factor analysis to determine validity.

#### 4.2.1.2 *Exploratory factor analysis and Factor Matrix*

After consideration has been given to the KMO and Bartlett's test, the sample was deemed adequate for a first order factor analysis. The method used in this study for this specific measure is that of Principle Axis Factoring extraction.

A Principle axis factor analysis was conducted on the 25 item Dispositional Measure of Employability. The Eigen-values of the initial analyses showed 5 factors. A closer inspection of the factor matrix indicated that all the items loaded on one factor. Furthermore five items showed problematic loadings. They included item 1 (i.e. *"I feel changes at work generally have positive implications"*) item 3 (i.e. *"I would consider myself open to changes at work"*) item 17 (i.e. *"In uncertain times at work, I usually expect the best"*) item 20 (i.e. *"I define myself by the work I do"*) and item 22 (i.e. *"It is important to me that other think highly of my job"*). These items showed loading below 0.3 (Pallant, 2007) and were thus omitted from further factor analysis.

A Principal Axis factor analysis was conducted again omitting the items discussed above. One factor was specified in the analysis. The total variance explained statistics is provided in Table 4-14.

**Table 4-14: Total Variance Explained for DME**

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.019	30.095	30.095	5.317	26.585	26.585
2	2.012	10.059	40.154			
3	1.646	8.228	48.382			
4	1.342	6.710	55.092			
5	1.175	5.875	60.968			
6	.986	4.931	65.899			
7	.875	4.373	70.272			
8	.816	4.078	74.349			
9	.777	3.883	78.232			
10	.603	3.013	81.246			
11	.560	2.802	84.047			
12	.508	2.541	86.588			
13	.482	2.410	88.998			
14	.423	2.116	91.114			
15	.404	2.020	93.134			

16	.329	1.645	94.779
17	.300	1.502	96.281
18	.292	1.461	97.742
19	.263	1.316	99.059
20	.188	.941	100.000

The results in this table indicate one factor contributes to 30.095% of the variance. This factor was labelled DE.

The factor matrix for the Dispositional Measure of Employability is shown in Table 4-15.

**Table 4-15: Factor Matrix for DME**

	Factor
	1
DE2	.518
DE4	.593
DE5	.407
DE6	.418
DE7	.604
DE8	.539
DE9	.520
DE10	.381
DE11	.384
DE12	.408
DE13	.546
DE14	.477
DE15	.501
DE16	.574
DE18	.690
DE19	.533
DE21	.624
DE23	.630
DE24	.436
DE25	.364

The results presented in the factor matrix for the dispositional measure of employability shows acceptable factor loadings.

#### 4.2.1.3 *Reliability*

##### **Overall Reliability**

The overall reliability statistic for the dispositional measure or employability was calculated by means of the Cronbach's Alpha. According to Pallant (2007) for a scale to be deemed

reliable the Cronbach's Alpha should be above 0.7 although values above 0.8 are preferable. These statistics is shown in Table 4-16.

**Table 4-16: Reliability statistics of the DME**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.868	20

As can be seen from the results obtained from the Cronbach's Alpha, the dispositional measure of employability with a value of 0.868 suggests very good internal consistency reliability.

### Descriptive stats of overall scale and reliabilities

Table 4-17 shows the descriptive statistics of the Dispositional Measure of Employability as well as those of its subscales. The information obtained here in essence shows how the data looks and how it is distributed. The skewness and kurtosis values presented provide information with regards to the nature of the distribution of the data (Pallant, 2007).

**Table 4-17: Descriptive statistics of the Subscales of the DME**

Scales	Means	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	$\alpha$
DE	4.0416	.44934	-.110	-.103	0.868
<b>Subscales</b>					
Openness to Change at work	4.0116	.54617	-.203	-.042	.772
Work and Career Productivity	4.1032	.65638	-1.025	2.168	.772
Career Motivation	3.9355	.77020	-.472	-.378	.580
Work and Career Resilience	3.9974	.62709	-.427	-.291	.658
Optimism	3.8645	.73335	-.546	.152	.795
Work Identity	4.5065	.54946	-1.364	2.922	.373

The implications of Table 4-17 are the following:

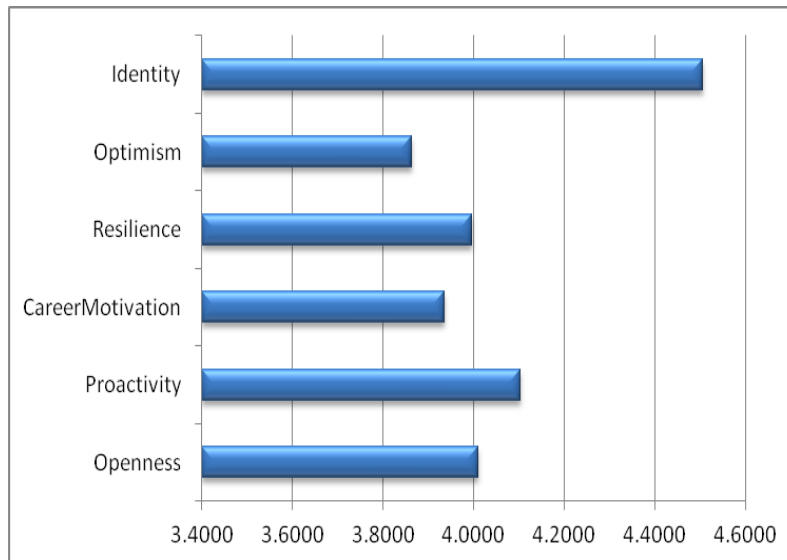
- The mean, which is the mathematical average of a group of scores (Pallant, 2007), in this study for the Dispositional Measure of Employability overall is 4.0416 and for the subscales ranges between 3.8645 and 4.5065.
- The standard deviation, which refers to the statistical indicator that reflects the degree of dispersion in a group of results (Pallant, 2007), for the Dispositional

Measure of Employability overall shows to be 0.44934. For the subscales it ranges between 0.54617 and 0.77020 which shows a small deviation.

- Skewness refers to the symmetry of the distribution (Pallant, 2007). A distribution can be either positively or negatively skewed. The scores for the Dispositional Measure of Employability ranges between -1.364 and -.110. This indicates that the symmetry of the distribution very negatively skewed.
- Kurtosis refers to the degree of steepness or “peakness” of the data distribution (Pallant, 2007). With the kurtosis scores for the Dispositional Measure of Employability being between -.042 and 2.922, the distribution seems to be peaked much more than normal.
- The reliabilities of the subscales showed to be acceptable for further analysis.

The descriptive statistics for the Dispositional Measure of Employability overall and those of the subscales have been discussed. Further on the descriptive of the subscale following in Figure 4-1 it can be deduced that most HRM practitioners fall on the subscale of Career Identity.

**Figure 4-1: DE of HRM Practitioners**



Following on the discussion with regards to the Dispositional Measure of Employability the following section will deal with the results obtained from the CSOS which was analysed in the same manner.

## 4.2.2 CSOS

The following statistics pertain only to the CSOS. The data was first checked for adequacy and sphericity after which a principle factor analysis was run, finally the overall reliability of the scale as well as the descriptive of the scales and their reliability.

### 4.2.2.1 *Sampling adequacy and sphericity*

Sample adequacy was tested making use of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of sampling adequacy, while sphericity was tested making use of the Bartlett's test of Sphericity. These tests are run to ensure that the data is indeed adequate for any data analysis to be deemed empirical. The results of these two tests are shown in below Table 4-18.

**Table 4-18: KMO and BARTLETT'S TEST**

<b>KMO and Bartlett's Test</b>	
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.758
Bartlett's Test of Approx. Chi-Square	1176.461
Sphericity df	276
Sig.	.000

The KMO of 0.758, at a significance level of 0.000 was attained for the CSOS. It is thus clear from the results obtained that this matrix is suitable for further factor analysis to determine validity.

### 4.2.2.2 *Exploratory factor analysis and Factor Matrix*

After consideration has been given to the KMO and Bartlett's test, as discussed, the sample was deemed adequate for a first order factor analysis. The method used in this study for this specific measure is that of Principle Axis Factoring extraction.

Principal Axis factor analysis was run on the 20 item CSOS. The total variance explained statistics is provided in Table 4-19.

**Table 4-19: Total Variance Explained for CSOS**

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.158	25.791	25.791	4.423	22.117	22.117
2	1.755	8.777	34.568			
3	1.533	7.667	42.235			
4	1.397	6.985	49.220			
5	1.213	6.067	55.287			
6	1.098	5.492	60.779			
7	1.002	5.009	65.789			
8	.855	4.276	70.065			
9	.746	3.729	73.793			
10	.717	3.586	77.379			
11	.666	3.332	80.711			
12	.590	2.949	83.660			
13	.578	2.891	86.552			
14	.505	2.526	89.077			
15	.469	2.343	91.420			
16	.428	2.141	93.561			
17	.398	1.990	95.551			
18	.351	1.754	97.305			
19	.286	1.432	98.736			
20	.253	1.264	100.000			

The results in this table indicate that one factor contributes to 25.791 variance. Although the eigen values showed 7 possible factors, closer inspection of the factor matrix indicated that all items loaded on one factor. A Principal Axis Factor Analysis was conducted again on the 20 items with one factor specified. The factor was labelled Career Success. The factor matrix is reported in Table 4-20 below.

**Table 4-20: Factor Matrix for CSOS**

	Factor
	1
CS1	.456
CS2	.379
CS3	.662
CS4	.300
CS5	.689
CS6	.600
CS7	.564
CS8	.468
CS9	.487
CS10	.384
CS11	.377
CS12	.326
CS13	.510



CS14	.451
CS15	.385
CS16	.472
CS17	.481
CS18	.401
CS19	.366
CS20	.420

The results presented in the factor matrix for the CSOS shows that only one factor was extracted and showed acceptable factor loadings.

#### 4.2.2.3 Reliability

##### Overall Reliability

The overall reliability statistic for the CSOS was calculated by means of the Cronbach's Alpha. According to Pallant (2007) for a scale to be deemed reliable the Cronbach's Alpha should be above 0.7 although values above 0.8 are preferable. These statistics is shown in Table 4-21.

**Table 4-21: Reliability statistics of the CSOS**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.837	20

As can be seen from the results obtained from the Cronbach's Alpha, the CSOS with a value of 0.837 suggests very good internal consistency reliability.

##### Descriptive stats of overall scale and reliabilities

Table 4-22 shows the descriptive statistics of the CSOS as well as those of its subscales. The information obtained here in essence shows how the data looks and how it is distributed. The skewness and kurtosis values presented provide information with regards to the nature of the distribution of the data (Pallant, 2007).

**Table 4-22: Descriptive statistics of the Subscales of the CSOS**

Scales	Means	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	$\alpha$
CS	3.3087	.38050	-.460	.489	0.837

**Subscales**

Getting Ahead	3.0226	.62378	-.447	-.323	.610
Getting Free	3.4113	.54112	-.673	-.312	.730
Getting Secure	3.0210	.58523	-.271	-.212	.645
Getting High	3.4839	.47132	-.736	-.113	.635
Getting Balanced	3.6048	.44673	-1.274	1.471	.631

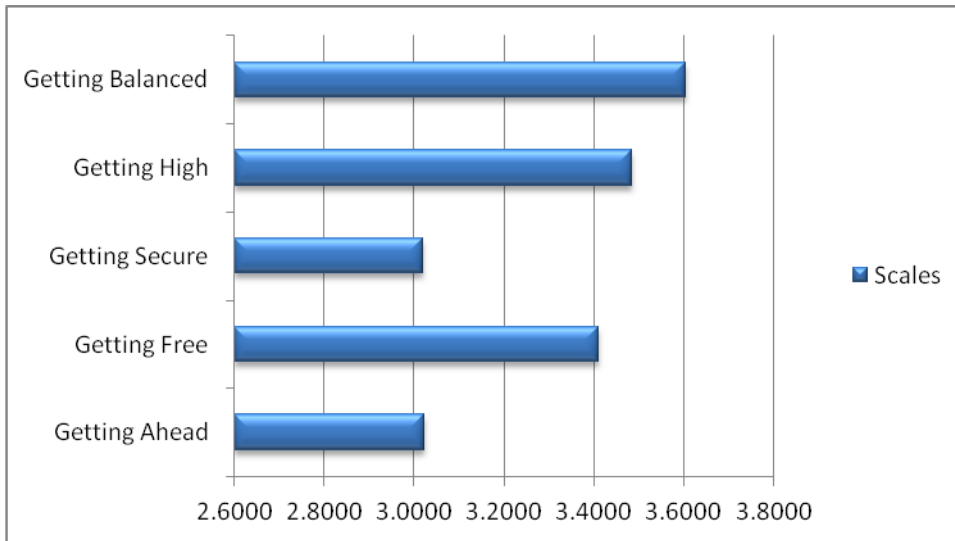
The implications of Table 4-22 are the following:

- The mean, which is the mathematical average of a group of scores (Pallant, 2007), in this study for the CSOS overall is 3.3087 and for the subscales ranges between 3.0210 and 3.6048.
- The standard deviation, which refers to the statistical indicator that reflects the degree of dispersion in a group of results (Pallant, 2007), for the CSOS overall shows to be 0.38050. For the subscales it ranges between 0.44673 and 0.62378 which shows a small deviation.
- Skewness refers to the symmetry of the distribution (Pallant, 2007). A distribution can be either positively or negatively skewed. The scores for the CSOS ranges between -1.274 and -0.271. This indicates that the symmetry of the distribution very negatively skewed.
- Kurtosis refers to the degree of steepness or “peakeness” of the data distribution (Pallant, 2007). With the kurtosis scores for the Dispositional Measure of Employability being between -0.113 and 1.471, the distribution seems to be peaked much more than normal.
- The reliabilities of the subscales showed to be acceptable for further analysis.

**The descriptive statistics for the CSOS overall and those of the subscales have been discussed. Further on the descriptive of the subscale following in**

Figure 4-2 it can be deduced that most HRM practitioners fall on the subscale of Getting Balanced. It is however important to note that the difference in means scores are not that big indicating that HRM Practitioners can be classified on any of the subscales.

**Figure 4-2: CS of HRM Practitioners**



Following on the discussion with regards to the CSOS the following section will deal with the second phase of data analysis, the testing of propositions that link to the objectives of the study at hand.

### **4.3 PHASE 2: TESTING OF PROPOSITIONS**

For the purposes of this research study three propositions were formulated. The statistical tests run for these propositions are briefly discussed below, as well as an indication of whether or not the propositions is accepted or rejected.

#### **4.3.1 Propositions 1**

The first propositions set is:

P1: A significant positive relationship exists between Dispositional Employability and Career Success for Human Resources practitioners in South Africa.

This propositions relates to the main objective of the research. This propositions was tested by means of a correlation analysis make use more specifically of the Pearson correlation coefficient.

### 4.3.1.1 Results

Pearson Correlations were used to test the propositions as stipulated above, hence to ascertain whether or not a statistical significant relationship exist between DE and CS for the particular sample group. The analysis was first performed between the independent variable (DE) and the dependant variable (CS). The results are shown in Table 4-23.

**Table 4-23: Persons Correlation between DE and CS**

		DE	CS
<b>DE</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.280**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	155	155
<b>CS</b>	Pearson Correlation	.280**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	155	155

Statistically significant:  $p > 0, 01$

+ Practically significant correlation (medium effect):  $r > 0, 30$

++ Practically significant correlation (large effect):  $r > 0, 50$

What the results of this analyses show us it that a significant relationship exists between DE and CS ( $r_{(df = 155)} p < 0.000 = .280$ , small effect).

Following this finding, Pearson correlations were done for all the subscales of the two measurements to determine the significance for relationships between the dimensions of DE and CS. These results are shown in Table 4-24.

**Table 4-24: Correlations between dimensions of DE and CS**

		Openness to changes at work	Work and Career Productivity	Work and Career Resilience	Optimism at work
<b>Getting Free</b>	Pearson Correlation	.208**	.107	.235**	.148
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	.186	.003	.066
	N	155	155	155	155
<b>Getting Secure</b>	Pearson Correlation	.035	.017	.233**	.109
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.667	.835	.004	.178
	N	155	155	155	155
<b>Getting High</b>	Pearson Correlation	.133	.207**	.226**	.279**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.099	.010	.005	.000



	N	155	155	155	155
<b>Getting Balance</b>	Pearson Correlation	.105	.005	.069	.095
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.192	.948	.391	.240
	N	155	155	155	155

- The CS dimension Getting Free correlated to Openness to Change ( $r_{(df = 155)} p < 0.000 = 0.208$ ) as well as Optimism ( $r_{(df = 155)} p < 0.000 = 0.148$ ) both to a small affect. No statistically significant correlation was found between Getting free and Productivity as well as Resilience.
- The CS dimension Getting Secure correlated to Resilience ( $r_{(df = 155)} p < 0.000 = 0.233$ ) to a small effect. No statistically significant correlation was found with any of the other DE dimensions.
- The CS dimension Getting High correlated significantly to Productivity ( $r_{(df = 155)} p < 0.000 = 0.207$ ), Resilience ( $r_{(df = 155)} p < 0.000 = 0.226$ ) as well as Optimism ( $r_{(df = 155)} p < 0.000 = 0.279$ ) all to a small effect. No statistically significant correlation was found with regards to Openness and Getting high.
- The CS dimension Getting Balanced showed no statistical significant correlation to any of the dimensions of DE.

On the basis of the above discussion on the correlations between the two constructs and between the dimensions of the construct, Propositions 1 is accepted as, although to a small effect, a relationship does exist between DE and CS

#### 4.3.2 Propositions 1.1

The second propositions set for this current study relates to the third secondary research objective and is stated as:

P1.1: No significant differences exist between Human Resources Practitioners, with regards to Dispositional Employability, based on their demographic characteristics.

This propositions was tested by means the statistical analysis procedure call the One-way between groups ANOVA.

#### 4.3.2.1 Results

#### ANOVA

The results presented in Table 4-25 is that of the one-way ANOVA conducted on the continuous dependant variable, DE, and all the categorical independent variables, the demographic characteristics of the sample.

**Table 4-25: Anova analyse for DE and Demographic characteristics**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Gender	Between Groups	8.064	37	.218	.951	.556
	Within Groups	26.813	117	.229		
	Total	34.877	154			
Home Language	Between Groups	13.372	37	.361	.598	.963
	Within Groups	70.667	117	.604		
	Total	84.039	154			
Race	Between Groups	13.496	37	.365	.437	.998
	Within Groups	95.890	115	.834		
	Total	109.386	152			
Age	Between Groups	45.176	37	1.221	.787	.797
	Within Groups	181.534	117	1.552		
	Total	226.710	154			
Qualification	Between Groups	111.449	37	3.012	1.033	.433
	Within Groups	341.093	117	2.915		
	Total	452.542	154			
Job Level	Between Groups	53.535	37	1.447	1.105	.336
	Within Groups	153.201	117	1.309		
	Total	206.735	154			
Years in Organisation	Between Groups	23.221	37	.628	.744	.848
	Within Groups	98.676	117	.843		
	Total	121.897	154			
Years in current Job	Between Groups	17.052	37	.461	.869	.682
	Within Groups	62.084	117	.531		
	Total	79.135	154			
Registered	Between Groups	6.989	37	.189	.954	.551
	Within Groups	23.166	117	.198		
	Total	30.155	154			

From the results of the significance values obtained it can be seen that no significant difference exists between the DE of HRM Practitioners based on their demographic characteristics.

## MANOVA

Following the findings from the ANOVA analysis a MANOVA analysis was done to assess the relationship between DE and the demographic variables (gender, Home language, Age, Qualification, Job level, race, years in current job, years in the organisation, and registration with a professional body).

Results were tested for significance using the Wilk's Lambada test. The results of this are shown in Table 4-26.

**Table 4-26: MANOVA for DE**

	Value	F	Propositions df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Gender	.942	2.308 <sup>a</sup>	4.000	150.000	.061	.058
Home Lang	.927	1.443 <sup>a</sup>	8.000	298.000	.178	.037
Age	.845	1.260	20.000	485.177	.200	.041
Qualification	.895	.823	20.000	485.177	.686	.027
Job level	.854	1.495	16.000	449.730	.097	.039
Race	.906	.928	16.000	449.730	.537	.025
Years in Job	.922	.754	16.000	449.730	.738	.020
Years in organisation	.831	1.761	16.000	449.730	<b>.034</b>	.045
Professional registration	.960	1.558 <sup>a</sup>	4.000	150.000	.188	.040

From these results it is evident that in most cases no statistically significant difference exists between DE of HRM practitioners based on their demographic characteristics (sig > 0.05). One demographic characteristic however showed a significant difference (sig < 0.05), leading to the conclusion that a significant difference exists between people with a different number of years in the organisation based on their DE. Further post hoc analysis however revealed no significant differences between the groups based on DE.

The above analysis leads to a partially rejection of Propositions 2 as there is a significant difference between the group with regards to DE based on their current years in the organization but on none of their other demographic characteristics.

### 4.3.3 Propositions 1.2

The third propositions set for this current study links to the final secondary objective of the study and is stated as:

P.1.2: No significant differences exist between Human Resources Practitioners, with regards to Career Success, based on their demographic characteristics.

This propositions was tested by means the statistical analysis procedure call the One-way between groups ANOVA.

#### 4.3.3.1 *Results*

#### **ANOVA**

The results presented in Table 4-27 is that of the one-way ANOVA conducted on the continuous dependant variable, CS, and all the categorical independent variables, the demographic characteristics of the sample.

**Table 4-27: Anova for CS**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Gender	Between Groups	6.570	30	.219	.959	.534
	Within Groups	28.308	124	.228		
	Total	34.877	154			
Race	Between Groups	36.323	30	1.211	1.596	<b>.040</b>
	Within Groups	94.064	124	.759		
	Total	130.387	154			
Home Language	Between Groups	17.812	30	.594	1.112	.334
	Within Groups	66.227	124	.534		
	Total	84.039	154			
Age	Between Groups	48.313	30	1.610	1.119	.325
	Within Groups	178.397	124	1.439		
	Total	226.710	154			
Qualification	Between Groups	122.683	30	4.089	1.537	<b>.054</b>





	Within Groups	329.859	124	2.660		
	Total	452.542	154			
Job Level	Between Groups	41.536	30	1.385	1.039	.424
	Within Groups	165.199	124	1.332		
	Total	206.735	154			
Years in Organisation	Between Groups	28.116	30	.937	1.239	.207
	Within Groups	93.781	124	.756		
	Total	121.897	154			
Years in current Job	Between Groups	24.405	30	.813	1.843	<b>.011</b>
	Within Groups	54.731	124	.441		
	Total	79.135	154			
Registered	Between Groups	6.494	30	.216	1.135	.308
	Within Groups	23.660	124	.191		
	Total	30.155	154			

From the results of the significance values obtained it can be seen that no significant difference exists between the CS of HRM practitioners based on the demographic characteristics gender, home language, age, job level, year in current organisation as well as whether or not they are registered with a professional body (sig > 0.05).

The remaining demographic characteristics (race, qualification and years in current job) showed a significant difference between the groups (sig < 0.05).

## MANOVA

Following the findings from the ANOVA analysis a MANOVA analysis was done to assess the relationship between CS and the demographic variables. Results were tested for significance using the Wilk's Lambda test. Furthermore effect size needs to be taken into consideration. The classification of effect sizes has become 0.01 is small, 0.09 is medium, and 0.25 is large were used to indicate the magnitude of a finding (Field, 2005). The majority of social research produces small to medium effect sizes, and will be used in this study.

Table 4-28 indicates the results of the Manova statistical analysis of the CSOS.

**Table 4-28: Manova for CSOS**

	Value	F	Propositions df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Gender	.961	1.194	5.000	149.000	.315	.039
Home Language	.917	1.318	10.000	296.000	.220	.043
Age	.754	1.692	25.000	536.438	<b>.020</b>	.055



Qualification	.689	2.281	25.000	540.153	<b>.000</b>	.072
race	.832	1.858	15.000	403.443	<b>.026</b>	.060
Basis of employment	.855	1.580	15.000	406.204	.076	.051
Job level	.655	3.259	20.000	478.544	<b>.000</b>	.100
registration	.954	1.440 <sup>a</sup>	5.000	149.000	.213	.046
Years in Current Job	.903	1.002	15.000	400.683	.452	.033
Years in Current Organisation	.863	1.466	15.000	400.683	.114	.048

From these results on can see that on the variables, gender and home language, basis of employment, Registration, years in current job and years in current organisation no statistically significant difference exists between the CS of HRM practitioners based on their demographic characteristics (sig > 0.05).

On the variables Age, qualification, race and job level a significant difference is shown (p<0.05). Further post Hoc analysis was done on these variables and the results are presented below:

- The Wilks' Lambda for qualifications is equal to 0.689 [F (25, 540.153) = 2.281, p ≤ 0.05]. Analysis of each dependent variable, using a Bonferroni adjusted alpha level of 0,025, showed that the groups differ in terms of Getting Ahead (F<sub>(5, 1.532)</sub> = 4.369, p ≤ 0,05, partial η<sup>2</sup> = .128), Getting Free (F<sub>(5, 0.893)</sub> = 3.277, p ≤ 0,05, partial η<sup>2</sup> = .099), Getting Secure (F<sub>(5, 1.212)</sub> = 3.869, p ≤ 0,05, partial η<sup>2</sup> = .115), Getting High (F<sub>(5, 1.033)</sub> = 5.298, p ≤ 0,05, partial η<sup>2</sup> = .151) and Getting Balanced (F<sub>(5, 0.586)</sub> = 3.140, p ≤ 0,05, partial η<sup>2</sup> = .095). Persons with a Doctoral qualification showed more on the getting ahead dimension as all the qualification groups except master's level respondents. They furthermore showed more on the getting free dimension as both people with four year degrees and 4-7year degrees. Doctorate candidates showed more on getting secured as respondents with 3 year 4 year degrees and 4-7 year degrees. On the getting high dimension they showed more than all groups except people with a 4-7 year degree and finally on getting balanced they showed more than those with only grade 12. The effects are small.
- The Wilks' Lambda for Age is equal to 0.757 [F (25, 540.153) = 1.683, p ≤ 0.05]. Analysis of each dependent variable, using a Bonferroni adjusted alpha level of 0,025, showed that the groups differ in terms of Getting Ahead (F<sub>(5, 0.851)</sub> = 2.287, p ≤ 0,05, partial η<sup>2</sup> =

.072). Further post hoc analysis showed no significant difference between groups in terms of CS. The effects are small.

- The Wilks' Lambda Race is equal to 0.792 [ $F(20, 485.127) = 1.763, p \leq 0.05$ ]. Analysis of each dependent variable, using a Bonferroni adjusted alpha level of 0,025, showed that the groups differ in terms of Getting Free ( $F_{(3, 0.973)} = 3.497, p \leq 0,05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .065$ ), Getting High ( $F_{(3, 0.759)} = 3.595, p \leq 0,05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .067$ ) and Getting Balanced ( $F_{(3, 0.841)} = 4.494, p \leq 0,05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .082$ ). Coloured HRM Practitioners CS was less on the getting free dimension than their Black counterparts. They also showed less on the CS dimension getting high than both their White and Black Counterparts and finally on the CS dimension getting balance their CS was less than all the other race groups. The effects are small.
- The Wilks' Lambda Job Level is equal to 0.655 [ $F(20, 478.544) = 3.259, p \leq 0.05$ ]. Analysis of each dependent variable, using a Bonferroni adjusted alpha level of 0,025, showed that the groups differ in terms of Getting Ahead ( $F_{(4, 1.206)} = 4.824, p \leq 0,05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .081$ ), Getting Secure ( $F_{(4, 1.336)} = 4.257, p \leq 0,05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .103$ ) and Getting High ( $F_{(4, 0.797)} = 3.871, p \leq 0,05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.095$ ). HRM Practitioners on Executive level show less CS on the getting secure dimension than those HRM Practitioners functioning on operational and junior level, while junior level management and operational level HRM Practitioners score less on the getting high dimension than the HRM Practitioners on Executive level. In terms of the Getting Ahead sub dimension further post hoc analysis showed no significant difference between groups in terms of CS. The effects are small.

Based on the above results, Propositions 3 is rejected as there are significant differences that exist between the CS of groups based on their demographic characteristics.

## 4.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the results of the statistical analyses done on the data gathered on DE and CS. First the demographics of the sample were presented making use of descriptive statistics such as frequency of response as well as percentage. The overall finding was that the demographics showed to be representative of all the categories supplied leading one to believe that responses was gathered from a great variety of possible respondents.

The second phase of the data presentation looked at the measurement instruments used in the study. This was done by checking the data for adequacy where both instruments where deemed adequate. An exploratory factor analysis was done and in both instruments it was found that the items loaded on one factor, for the Dispositional measure of Employability, five items were needed to be excluded before further analysis. In terms of the reliability both instruments had high reliabilities overall. Lastly the reliabilities and descriptive of the subscales ware tested where both instruments showed a negative and peaked distribution of the data with overall reliabilities deemed acceptable.

The final phase of the data analysis was with regards to the propositions testing where the following was found:

- Propositions 1 was accepted leading to the conclusion that a significant difference exists between DE en CS
- Propositions 2 was accepted leading to the conclusion that no significant differences exist between the DE of HRM Practitioners based on their demographic characteristics.
- Propositions 3 was rejected leading to the conclusion that significant differences exist between the CS of HRM Practitioners based on their demographic characteristics.

The following chapter will discuss the results obtained in this chapter with regards to the literature as presented in Chapter 2 of this study.

## **CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

This chapter will present the analysis and interpretation of the results presented in chapter 4. The structure of the chapter is laid out as firstly a discussion on the instruments used in the study followed by the actual interpretations of the results with regards to the research objectives and applicable propositions that accompany these. As stated in the purpose statement of this study, this quantitative study has the purpose of investigating whether there is a relationship between DE and CS for HRM Practitioners in South Africa. This was the main objective of the study. Together with these objectives five secondary objectives were formulated. This chapter will provide an overview of the research findings that emerged from the statistical analysis of the data.

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

When the concepts CS and DE are brought to the table many entrancing question come to the mind. The two constructs in themselves are filled with ambiguities as the constructs can be seen as multi-faced. This study attempted to expand on the literature on these constructs by developing research objectives that will guide the researcher in the quest to answer the research question and add to the literature by attaining the purpose of the current study.

The next section looks at the measurement instruments used in the study in terms of their reliability and validity. The results where depicted in Chapter 4 of this study and the following section will only be a discussion on these findings.

### **5.2 ANALYSIS OF MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENTS USED**

#### **5.2.1 Dispositional Measure of Employability**

The DME was developed by Fugate and Kinicki, (2008) as a means to measure dispositional employability as defined by them. This definition includes that DE should be seen as a constellation of individual differences (such as age, gender, educational

background, work experience, etc) that predisposes and individual to proactively adapt to their workplace environment. This measure was specifically designed with regards to the implications for employee reactions on organisational change (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008). The idea of adaptation being central to their study. The measure was furthermore designed in a British context and hence applicability to South African contexts can become problematic when attempting to transfer the measurement as is from the one context to the other.

The findings from the data analysis done on the instrument in terms of validity (done by means of principle factor analysis) found that the 25 item DME loaded on five specific factors. This is problematic as this entails that the measure is not measuring what it intends to measure, but it actually measures more than just the one construct. The five items that showed problematic loadings were:

- Item 1: Which stated “I feel changes at work generally have positive implications”
- Item 3: Which stated “I would consider myself open to changes at work”
- Item 17: Which stated “In uncertain times at work, I usually expect the best”)
- Item 20: Which stated “I define myself by the work I do”, and
- Item 22: Which stated “It is important to me that other think highly of my job”

These items seem to confuse the participants in the study as their meaning in many instances can be seen to be ambiguous. As a result these items were removed for further analysis. This further analysis showed that approximately a third (30.095%) of the variance in responses could be explained by one single factor. The factor loadings were tested and deemed appropriate resulting in confirmation of one factor or then construct underlining the measurement instrument. This factor was labelled DE. It is thus safe to conclude that the DEM, excluding the five items discussed above does indeed measure what it intends to measure. The problematic items however need to be investigated in more depth to determine why they influenced the data in the way they did. It is however suggested that the context (South African) could have impacted on this finding.

In terms of the reliability of the measure, the developers of the instrument initially found a reliability of 0.76 (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008) which is seen as a good reliability. This study found a reliability of 0.868 confirming that the instrument shows very good internal

consistency reliability. Furthermore the reliabilities of the subscales also showed acceptable reliabilities.

It can thus be concluded that the DME as used in this study (excluding the five problematic items) can be seen as valid and reliable for the intended purposes of the study. It is however suggested that for future research the instrument should be refined in the South African context as well as in terms of the underlining dimensions of DE.

Following in the next section is the discussion on the CSOS as developed by the researcher for the purposes of this study.

### **5.2.2 Career Success Orientation Survey**

The CSOS used in this study was not an already developed and tested measurement instrument like the DME. The researcher found no acceptable measure to collect the responses and hence developed one based on the career success orientations as postulated by Derr in Kim (2005). The reliability and validity was tested by the same analysis techniques used for the DME.

The CSOS is a 20 item measure. The results from the exploratory factor analysis showed that 25% of the variances in the response could be explained by one factor, the factor loadings furthermore were also deemed appropriate and hence one factor was extracted and labelled CS. The percentage of variances explained, although sufficient, is not much. It can be concluded, that the measure, measures what it is supposed to measure, but further research and refinement with regards to the validity and underlining dimensions, should be done.

The reliability of the scale and subscales showed to be acceptable, leading to the conclusion that further analysis should be done in terms of the reliability of the scale. This must be done to ensure that the scale will be consistent across time and that the results obtained here can be confirmed. However for the purposes the CSOS was used in this study and one can conclude that it is an appropriate measure for this concept as it

encompasses all aspects of CS as derived from the literature (i.e. subjective vs objective, positive outcome, rooted in career theory or then the organisational contexts).

CS has been researched in the literature since the 1950's with no consensus being reached with regards to the true meaning thereof. The concept of CS is in essence linked to perceptions, in that different people perceive CS differently. The measure developed will help further researchers to be able to validate further the true meaning of CS for people.

It is suggested however that in future research a very specific objective scale be incorporated into the measure, measuring specifically objective indicators of CS such as salary, number of promotions and performance management criteria.

Following next the discussion relating to the main objectives set for the study at hand in terms of the propositions that were tested for the purpose of finding if a significant relationship exists between the two constructs used in the study namely CS and DE.

### **5.3 MAIN RESEARCH OBJECTIVE: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DE AND CS**

The following section will look at the data gathered and analysis done with regards to the main objective of the research study and interoperate this with regards to the literature that was reviewed on the two concepts of DE and CS. It is however important to remember that a study such as the current one had never been done before and hence the findings that relate to this section is in most instances new.

The first objective of the research study was:

To investigate whether a significant relationship exist between Dispositional Employability and Career Success for Human Resource Practitioners in South Africa.

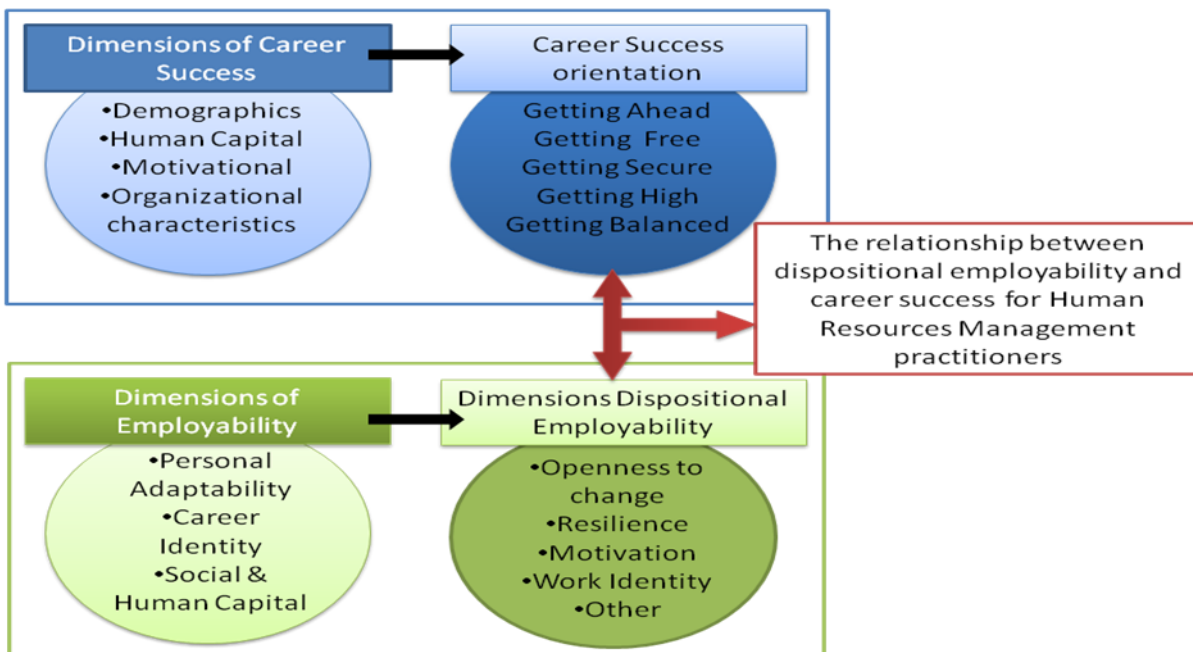
From the literature reviewed on both career success and employability one could easily deduct that some form of relationship should exist between the two concepts. Studies done by researcher De Vos et al (2011), Guo et al (2009) and Seibert and Kraimer (2001)



has found that there is a positive relationship between employability and career success. The problem however that relates to the study at hand is that there is an apparent lack of data and research done of *dispositional* employability. This is not only relating to career success but to any other factors. The developers of the concept dispositional employability Fugate and Kinicki (2008) are the only reserachers to have researched this topic. This apparent gap in the literature is the main motivation behind the current study.

However, making use of deductive reasoning from the literature reviewed, the research came up with a proposed model for the testing of the propositions. This model was introduced at the end of the literature review chapter, but is presented here for ease of viewing. Figure 5-1 shows this proposed model.

**Figure 5-1: Proposed link model between DE and CS**



Testing of this propositions was done by means of two separate correlation analysis being run on the data. The first was an overall correlation between the two main constructs and the second a correlation done between the sub-dimensions of each construct to ascertain the real nature of the relationship.

The results showed that the overall dispositional employability correlates significantly to career success with a small effect ( $r_{(df = 155)} p < 0.000 = .280$ ). This relationship is positive as

expected and postulated by the researcher meaning that as a person's dispositional employability increases so does one's career success. In addition to the overall correlation the dimension of employability (i.e. Openness to change, Proactively, Resilience and optimism) were related to the dimensions of career success (i.e. Getting Ahead, Getting free, Getting Secure, Getting High and Getting Balanced). The findings were that most of these correlated to some degree although with a small effect.

The most problematic of the scales were the Getting Balanced scale of CS, this scale showed overall low a correlation to any of the DE scales. This finding is unconventional as the idea of work family-life balance (getting Balance) should entail some form of adaptability which in turn is central to the idea of DE (Fugate et al, 2004). The getting free and getting high dimension of CS showed good correlations to all the DE scales which could be attributed to these concepts all including some form of adaptability which is necessary for a person to have DE.

All relationships found were found to be positive. The reason for the low correlations could be that the measures used, have never been used in a South African context and that the questionnaires need to be further analysed and developed in this context. More research however is needed to investigate the relationship between the two constructs overall and more specifically relating to their sub dimensions. Furthermore the CSOS is a new scale developed by the researcher and hence this could have influenced the findings as well.

Overall, the proposition was accepted as there does indeed exist a positive relationship between DE and CS for HRM Practitioners in South Africa. The findings could be further defined with more research that needs to be done on both topics but for the purposes of the research at hand these findings discussed above shows sufficiently that a relationship indeed exists between these two multi-dimensional constructs.

Following in the next section is a discussion with regards to the secondary objectives of the study, taking a more specific view on the construct in isolation and their effect on the sample group as well as that of the sample group on the constructs.

## 5.4 SECONDARY OBJECTIVES

The secondary objectives of the study are in support of the primary objective and will shed some further light on not only the two constructs but also the sample group as a whole. In total four secondary objectives were set which can be divided into two per construct. Following is a discussion on these objectives.

### 5.4.1 Objective 1: DE of HRM Practitioners

The first secondary research objective is with regards to the DE of the population and sample used for the study. This objective was set to gain a greater insight into the sample group by determining their DE. The objective was stated as the following:

*To determine the dispositional employability of Human Resource Practitioners in South Africa.*

The finding of this objective is based on the main scores of the sample group with regards to each dimension of DE. The results of this analysis showed that most HRM Practitioners define their DE as in terms of Career and Work identity.

This translates into that they view themselves in their career context. Their career context influences their personal goals and aspirations. This helps individuals compensate by replacing career structures with individualised psychological structures (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008). The nature of human resources as a profession requires these individuals who fill these roles to add value to the organization on multiple levels (Gubbins & Garavan, 2005). Furthermore DE is viewed by these HRM Practitioners in terms of work and career productivity, a trait that allows a person to actively seek information and create opportunities for success (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008). Key functions of HRM Practitioners include facilitating knowledge sharing and development and enhance learning (Gubbins & Garavan, 2005) and hence this dispositional employability inclination makes sense.

The other dimension of DE (i.e. Openness to change at work, Work and career resilience and career motivation) is also prevalent in this sample, however to a lower degree than the

two previously discussed. The sample group thus perceive themselves as being able to adapt to the changes in an organisation, which makes sense as these practitioners are usually seen as the agents of change (Gubbins & Garavan, 2005).

The overall findings indicate that HRM Practitioners in general view themselves as having DE. It is however important to note that this questionnaire was developed in Britain and is also the first of its kind. It is thus proposed that further research be conducted in a South African context to confirm and elaborate on the finding of this study.

#### **5.4.2 Objective 2: CS of HRM Practitioners**

The second secondary research objective is with regards to the career success of the population and sample used for the study. This objective is much the same as the previous and was also set to gain a greater insight into the sample group. The objective was stated as the following:

*To determine the career success of Human Resource Practitioners in South Africa.*

The results were obtained by graphically depicting the main scores of the responses on the subscales of the CSOS. This analysis showed that most HRM Practitioners define their career as successful in a more subjective than objective way. This shows that rather than view CS in terms of tangibles such as salary and number of promotions over a career path (Arthur et al, 2005), most HRM Practitioners see CS in terms of individual and internal appreciation and assessment of a career in terms of dimensions and criteria that is important to the individual (Arthur et al, 2005), thus more subjectively.

The majority of HRM Practitioners in this study view their careers as successful when there is a balance between their work and family life. This links well to the view they take on DE where they see their work as part of their identity. Furthermore these individuals also view career success in terms of the expertise they have. They strive to become experts in their fields and focus on their ability to do what they like and do it well (Kim, 2005). This correlates well to the view on DE as in that case they see their job as part of who they are.

The two dimensions that relate most to objective career success (i.e. getting ahead and getting secure) was scored the lowest by these HRM Practitioners leading one to believe that they view their CS in a subjective way rather than objective. The final finding to mention is that from the results obtained in this study the CS of the HRM Practitioners were all very close in terms of the mean scores, it can thus be deducted that the CS of HRM Practitioners does not vary much in terms of their view on CS.

The following section relates to the demographic characteristics of the sample group. The propositions set with regards to this relates to whether or not a difference exists between HRM Practitioners on the two constructs of DE and CS based on their individual demographic characteristics.

#### **5.4.3 Objective 3: Differences between groups with regards to DE**

The third secondary objective of this study relates to the influences of the demographics of the sample on the dispositional employability of the sample The objective set was:

*To determine whether a significant difference exists between HRM Practitioners, with regards to DE, based on their demographic characteristics.*

This objective was translated into a non-directional proposition stating:

P1.1: There are no significant differences between the DE of HRM Practitioners based on their demographic characteristics.

The propositions set was partially rejected due to the findings on the statistical test done with regards to the propositions as set out above indicated that there was a significant difference on one particular demographic characteristic, namely years in the current organisation. Post hoc tests however did not show any further significant differences.

The limited research done on the concept of DE makes the interpretation of this finding difficult. Previous research looked at DE in terms of organisational change and people's reactions to this change (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008) but no studies have been done with regards to the differences that might exist between groups. It is thus suggested that this study be further analysed making use of a larger sample group or a different population entirely to authenticate the findings from this study.

#### **5.4.4 Objective 4: Differences between groups with regards to CS**

The fourth and final secondary objective of this study relates to the influences of the demographics of the sample on the CS of the sample. The objective set was:

To determine whether a significant difference exists between HRM Practitioners, with regards to CS, based on their demographic characteristics.

This objective was translated into a non-directional propositions stating:

P1.2: There are no significant differences between the CS of HRM practitioners based on their demographic characteristics.

Based on the results obtained from the study the Propositions was rejected. Statistical significant differences were shown between groups with regards to their level of qualification, age, race and job level in the organisation.

In terms of qualifications the findings showed that persons with a Doctoral qualification showed more dimensions of CS as most if not all groups of different qualifications. In terms of this finding it can be deducted that a person with higher levels of education have higher CS orientation overall. Persons with a Doctoral qualification showed more on the getting ahead dimension as all the qualification groups except master's level respondents. They furthermore showed more on the getting free dimension as both people with four

year degrees and 4-7year degrees. Doctoral candidates showed more on getting secured as respondents with 3 year 4 year degrees and 4-7 year degrees. On the getting high dimension they showed more than all groups except people with a 4-7year degree and finally on getting balanced they showed more than those with only grade 12. The effects are small. These differences in the results should be analysed further by means of a larger sample group to ensure that these findings can be confirmed.

Age differences showed on the dimension of getting ahead which indicates that in terms of CS age groups differ in how important upward mobility, advancement in status and authority is for different age groups (Kim, 2005). It is possible that these differences can be attributed to the different generations that are present in the workforce, however further analysis should be done as the post hoc analysis done in this study did not indicate where the differences lies. It might be necessary to make use of a more diverse population for this further analysis.

Racial characteristics showed many differences with regards to CS or the selected sample group. In South Africa, being the rainbow nation, this once again confirms that the workplace needs to be managed in terms of its diversity on all levels. In South Africa racial differences are vast and this finding thus contributes to the literature in terms of this demographic and CS. It was found that coloured HRM Practitioners CS was less on the getting free dimension than their Black counterparts. They also showed less on the CS dimension getting higher than both their White and Black Counterparts, and finally on the CS dimension getting balanced. Their CS was less than all the other race groups. The effects are small.

In terms of job level groups showed significant differences on the subscales getting ahead, getting high and getting secure. HRM Practitioners on Executive level show less CS on the getting secure dimension than those HRM Practitioners functioning on operational and junior level, while junior level management and operational level HRM Practitioners score less on the getting higher dimension than the HRM Practitioners on Executive level. In terms of the Getting Ahead sub dimension further post hoc analysis showed no significant difference between groups in terms of CS. The effects are small. This could be attributed

to HRM Practitioners at Executive level already perceiving themselves as having attained the status, authority and security needed and that their focus in their career has shifted towards more subjective measures such as becoming experts in their fields. It has been shown that HR Practitioners view HRM as a profession although some negative perceptions still need to be addressed (Van der Westhuizen, Van Vuuren and Visser, 2003). The perceptions these HR Practitioners have with regards to their CS, does shed some light on the view they take with regards to professionalism.

In the diverse workforce characterises South Africa, the individual differences that exist within and between individuals cannot be ignored. Many studies in the field of Human Resource Management take into account the individual differences that are ever present in the workplace. According to Judge et al (1995) several studies have found that demographic variables have a tendency to explain more variation in CS than any other set of influences, this finding is confirmed by the current study. Ballout (2007) explains that human capital variables can have a significant impact on CS, especially objective CS, as it can explain a large portion of the variation in salary.

The findings from this study shows that differences exist between groups with regards to their CS as the perception of what CS is, differs for people of different age groups, which could link to their years of experience with regards to what CS means, as well as their job level leading to one assuming that the more experience gained in the workplace and life in general influences ones perception of CS. It is however important to note that the CSOS as developed for this study is in need of further investigation and analysis to confirm the findings of this study.

The following section will conclude the chapter by highlighting the main findings of this study before moving over to the final chapter of this study.

## **5.5 CONCLUSION**

This study in essence attempted to analyse and explore the relationship between DE and CS as two multi-dimensional constructs that, from the literature reviewed, are similar in



their underlining dimensions leading one to believe that some form of a relationship should exist between and within them.

The results obtained from this analysis shows that a significant relationship exist between DE and CS for HR Practitioners. Relating this back to the HR Practitioner in practice one needs to consider that DE and CS is integral in the up building of Human Resources as a profession. The underlining dimensions of DE and CS compliment those of professionalism know as Mastery of a body of knowledge, commitment to integrity and morality, autonomy and self-regulation, acceptance of a duty to society (Van Rensburg, Basson, & Carrim, 2011). These “pillars” come through in the perceptions these practitioners have with regards to their DE and CS. It is in essence important that HR Practitioners become and is Employable and strive for CS to ensure the upliftment of HR as a profession.

The main findings in this study can be summed up as the following:

- The DME and the CSOS are both sufficient measuring instruments for the purposes of this study, however further validation in the South African context is necessitated.
- The main finding is that there is indeed a positive relationship between DE and CS for HRM Practitioners in South Africa although the correlation is small.
- Most HRM Practitioners view DE on the grounds that their career is part of their identity and part of who they are. Leading to the deduction that HRM Practitioners are well versed in the concepts of organisational change and have the ability to adapt easily to these situations.
- Most HRM Practitioner view their CS as being more subjective in that they will rather internally perceive their career as successful than attribute success to objective criteria’s such as salary and promotions.
- Individual difference exists between the sample group on DE in terms of their current years in the organisation.
- Individual difference exists between the sample group on CS in terms of Age, level of qualification, race as well as occupational level. This leads to the conclusion that life experience, workplace experience and further education leads to differing perceptions of CS.

The findings above are mostly new findings due to the fact that such little research exists on the concept of DE and CS in conjunction. The following chapter will look at the value add, limitations and recommendations of the current research for future research.

## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The final chapter of this study will provide a brief overview of the research done. Furthermore the value adds and significance of the study will be discussed in both academically and practical terms. Finally limitations of the current study will be discussed as well as recommendations for further study on the topic.

First however a brief overview of the study in terms of it's purpose and major conclusions in terms of the chapters.

### 6.2 BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The following section takes a look back at the study at hand. Firstly the purpose of the study will be stated, followed by a brief overview of the chapters with regards to the main conclusion drawn from each.

#### 6.2.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study was to investigate whether there is a relationship between *Dispositional Employability* and Career Success of Human Resource Management Practitioners in South African. In addition to this, the research will also attempt to determine whether a significant difference, with regards to Dispositional Employability and Career Success, exists between Human Resource Management Practitioners based on their demographic characteristics.

The study hinged on the following objectives and accompany propositions:

#### *Main objective*

- To investigate whether a significant relationship exist between Dispositional Employability and Career Success for Human Resource Practitioners in South Africa.

P1: There is a positive relationship between DE and CS

*Secondary objectives:*

- To determine the Dispositional Employability of Human Resource Practitioners in South Africa.
- To determine the Career Success orientation of Human Resource Practitioners in South Africa.
- To determine whether a significant difference exists between Human Resource Practitioners, with regards to Dispositional Employability, based on their demographic characteristics.

P1.1: There are no significant differences between the DE of HR practitioners based on their demographic characteristics.

- To determine whether a significant difference exists between Human Resource Practitioners, with regards to Career Success, based on their demographic characteristics.

P1.2: There are no significant differences between the CS of HR practitioners based on their demographic characteristics.

Guided by the purpose and objectives above the study continued with the following section giving a brief overview of the main findings and conclusions per chapter.

## **6.2.2 Chapter overview**

This section shows the main conclusions from each chapter in this study.

### *Chapter 1: Introduction and Background*

This Chapter outlined the introduction and background as well as the rationality for the research being conducted. The main contributions of this chapter were that the research as postulated in this study is the first of its kind, contributing both to the literature and practice of HRM. This chapter resulted in research objectives that guided the study as discussed.

## *Chapter 2: Literature Review*

The literature review chapter identified and synthesised the main body of knowledge currently available relating to DE and CS. The literature review is structured according to three main sections of literature: 1) Discussion on Career success, 2) Discussion on Employability, 3) Discussion on the link between the two aforementioned concepts. The last section looks at a proposed model in summary of how the concepts are most likely to relate to one another as this form the basis for the study at hand. The main conclusions of the literature are:

- CS theory is rooted in career theory
- CS can be viewed as having a duality in that it can be perceived as both objective and subjective
- CS is an outcome of the career that is contextualized in various dimensions.
- CS orientations (the main focus of the study) are what each individual perceives as ultimate CS.
- Just as with CS employability can be viewed from an objective or subjective side.
- In this study employability is seen from an objective view where employability is what the individual perceives it to be.
- In the current study when referring to employability the researcher will look at persons already employed as opposed to those that are unemployed.
- Employability is seen from the individual level and not the macro or organizational level.
- Key attributes underlining employability includes adaptability, human capital and career identity showing an even more prominent link to CS orientations
- Dispositions are taken into account as the study at hand focuses on a Dispositional approach to employability.

Finally a Conceptual model of the possible link between CS and DE was proposed as deduced from the literature.

### *Chapter 3: Research Design*

The research design as related to this study was unpacked in Chapter 3 in terms of the research paradigm, as well as the strategy of enquiry to be used and the overall research design. The main conclusions to be drawn from this chapter are:

- Research was conducted from a positivistic paradigm
- Quantitative survey research was used as the main strategy of inquiry
- The population for the sample was identified as HRM Practitioners in South Africa.
- Sampling was done by means of purposive and convenience sampling methods which are both non-probability sampling techniques.
- Data collection was done by means of two instruments (DME and CSOS) for data collection as well as a standard biographical questionnaire, these were electronic and per-hand self-administering questionnaires
- Data analysis would be done by means of SPSS using the various identified statistical techniques
- Possible bias and errors were identified and dealt with
- Reliability and validity of the study was discussed as well as methods to ensure this.
- Finally research ethics were discussed.

### *Chapter 4: Results*

In this chapter the results obtained from the statistical analysis run on the data of the current study is presented in three specific phases namely, 1) Sample demographics, 2) Empirical analysis of the Measuring instruments used, and 3) Testing of Propositions. This chapter is only for the presentation of the results and does not include interpretation of the results.

### *Chapter 5: Analysis and Interpretation*

The analysis and interpretation of the results obtained and presented was given in chapter 5. The main findings from this chapter is as follows:

- The DME and the CSOS are both sufficient measuring instruments for the purposes of this study; however, further validation in the South African context is necessitated.

- The main finding is that there is indeed a positive relationship between DE and CS for HRM Practitioners in South Africa although the correlation is small.
- Most HRM Practitioners view DE on the grounds that their career is part of their identity and part of who they are. Leading to the deduction that HRM Practitioners are well versed in the concepts of organisational change and have the ability to adapt easily to these situations.
- Most HRM Practitioners view their CS as being more subjective in that they will rather internally perceive their careers as successful than attribute success to objective criteria's such as salary and promotions.
- Individual difference exists between the sample groups on DE in terms of their current years in the organisation.
- Individual difference exists between the sample group on CS in terms of Age, level of qualification, race as well as occupational level. This leads to the conclusion that life experience and workplace experience leads to different perceptions of CS.

In this final chapter of the study, everything is pulled together to present the conclusions drawn from the study as well as the applicable value add, limitations and recommendations of the study.

### **6.3 VALUE ADD AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The following section states the value adds from this current study as can be seen from the overall study. The significance and value add will be discussed in terms of the academic and theoretical, practical as well as methodological value adds of the current study.

#### **6.3.1 Academic and Theoretical value add**

This study will contribute to the literature on both constructs in the following three ways: First, no known study has ever related *Dispositional Employability* and Career Success. As mentioned previously most of the literature on this topic has focused on either constructs in isolation and leading to a narrow view of both constructs.

Second, this study will take on a dispositional approach to employability rather than the conventional employability route, which will lead to a new and fresh approach to both constructs.

Third, this study will take place in a context that has not been explored by other researchers as of yet. Making use of Human Resource Management Practitioners in South African workplaces should lead to fresh and new ideas being brought to the forefront on both constructs and the sample group.

Academically this study contributes by filling a gap in the literature by building on studies that others have done that neglected to take one or the other construct into account (Fugate et al., 2004, Heslin, 2005; Thijssen et al., 2008) thus giving a more holistic perspective on the phenomenon's, while attempting to analyse these in a new context, such as South Africa. Relating these two constructs indeed enhanced the current state of knowledge and contributes to the literature in a meaning full way, by building on the current theoretical basis and expanding upon it.

### **6.3.2 Practical value add**

From a practical perspective, the findings of this study should make a contribution to the field of Human Resources and Industrial Psychology by allowing practitioners in this field to identify and manage Human Resource Management Practitioners in line with their employability and Career Success. Furthermore in practice the findings of this study could enable practitioners to make informed decisions regarding talent management and strategic human resources. This will in turn lead to taking an investment perspective on human resources (Mello, 2006) that spirals up into the gaining of competitive advantage. This study will deliver a contribution, which is both academically and practically (although to a lesser degree) significant to the current body of knowledge.



### **6.3.3 Methodological value add**

In terms of the methodological value add of the study the contribution is that the measurement instruments used were analysed and used in a context it had not been before.

The DME was developed by Fugate and Kinikici (2008) for the purposes of testing DE in terms of the implications it has for employee's reactions to organisational change. In this study however it was used to measure the DE of HRM Practitioners in a South African context leading to some interesting findings. From the original 25 items of the DME only 20 items showed applicability in a South African context. Furthermore the subscale reliabilities showed to be reliable but to a smaller degree that previously proposed. It is thus suggested that this questionnaire be further analysed and developed in a South African context and broken down further to determine the validity of the questionnaire in this context. There is much more to be gained from this measure which still needs to be discovered.

The CSOS was developed by the researcher, adding value to the overall literature and methodology as another means for measuring CS. The instrument developed was done because there were no other applicable measures the researcher wanted to use for the purposes of this because study. Although other measures of CS exist there is none that use the subscales proposed in this study. The validity of this questionnaire needs to be further tested as well as the inter-item reliabilities of the subscales. This questionnaire although developed in a South African context needs to be further assessed in its ability to measure the construct of CS.

The following section looks at the limitations of the current study.

## **6.4 LIMITATIONS**

Following is a discussion on the main limitation of the research study conducted. The limitations are discussed in terms of the methodological as well as theoretical limitations discovered while conducting the research.

Firstly, in terms of the context of the proposed study the main focus was on HRM Practitioners in South Africa. The limitation here entailed the exclusion of participants in the study on two main grounds: 1) No other countries had been included, 2) No other occupational groups was included. This limitation narrowed the scope of the generalizability overall. The study is however not limited in terms of a geographical area within South Africa and any Human Resource Practitioner willing to participate will be included in the sample group. This makes the study very applicable in a South African context which is necessary but limited the study in terms of the instruments that could be used for data collection.

The second limitation is with regards to the theoretical perspectives and main streams of literature that will be used in the proposed study. The literature to be reviewed was primarily from the Human Resources, Industrial Psychology, Social Psychology and Management disciplines. In terms of the theoretical perspectives, the main basis for the proposed study was perspectives on the different facets and types of the proposed constructs. The literature with regards to the study was very limited and hence the researcher had difficulty confirming findings with regards to the literature. The majority of the findings in this study are new and hence more research on this topic is welcomed.

Thirdly, the study was limited in terms of the constructs and relationships to be studied. As the objectives of the study stated, the main focus was on finding a relationship between DE and the CS. Thus the study attempted to find out how dispositionally employable the individual participants were as well as finding their career success orientation. The underlining constructs of the two main constructs was assessed in terms of the overall goal of finding a relationship between DE and CS. The focus was secondarily on the two constructs in isolation. The limitation in this is that the focus was strongly on the relationship finding and less on the individual constructs. Further research is needed in this regard especially into the theoretical construct of DE.

The final area of limitation is with regard to the target population and sampling units. The study focused on Human Resource Practitioners in South Africa as the target population. The sample was mainly drawn from the disciplines of Human Resources or Industrial and Organisational psychology field, hence excluding any other disciplines or occupational

categories. Although the sample was taken from across all industries the limitation remains that the findings cannot be transferred to other occupational categories. The size of the sample furthermore influenced the findings of this research and it is suggested that this study be repeated with a bigger sample group.

Following this discussion on the major limitation in the current study the following section gives recommendations for future study.

## **6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The recommendations for this study follow from of the limitations identified with regards to this study. The first recommendation is with regards to the measurement instruments used. It is recommended that the instruments be scrutinized and analysed further in terms of the construct validity of the instruments. Although the instruments where sufficient for the purposes at hand it will be beneficial to re-evaluate the findings making use of a larger sample group or an entirely different sample. The instrument that was developed for the purpose of the study, the CSOS, should be analysed in terms of the inter-item reliability as well as the construct validity as this was the first time the questionnaire was used. Furthermore the impact of the South African context will bring more light on the uses of the questionnaire for data analysis.

The second recommendation is in terms of the sample group on it's own as well as the context from which the sample was gathered. It is recommended that this study be duplicated making use of a bigger sample group or an entirely different sample group to help with the authentication of the results obtained as this study will form the basis for the literature that was lacking by the time of writing this thesis. This study should be extended to other occupational groups to see the different affects between occupational groups which might shed some light on the current population as well as there is little research with regards to the HRM Practitioner.

In terms of the constructs that was explored in this study, there is a desperate call for more research to be done on the concept DE. The literature on this construct is lacking, leading to a lesser understanding of the construct as a whole. Employability is only a part of this

construct and it is thus recommended that DE be studied in relation to other career outcomes as well as other dispositions such as self-efficiency.

This concludes the recommendation for the current study. Following next is the final word on the study at hand.

## **6.6 CONCLUSION**

The relationship between DE and CS exists, however small, the analysis of this study shows that this relationship is indeed present. The conceptual model that was postulated by the research at the end of the literature review proved to have some form of truth to it. The results obtained in the study taking into consideration the limitations, together with the recommendations for future research can contribute to the literature on CS and DE in a meaning full way.

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## **APPENDIX A**

**- 1<sup>st</sup> draft of data collection instrument(-s) -**

# Questionnaire

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Thank you for taking time in completing this questionnaire. As stated on the consent form, this study is completely anonymous and data gathered only for academic research purposes. It will however be highly appreciated if you would please complete the table on biographical information as thoroughly as possible.

The Questionnaire is made up of three sections:

- Biographical Information
- Questionnaire – Dispositional measure of employability
- Questionnaire – Career Success orientation survey

The entire questionnaire should not take longer than 10 minutes to complete. Please answer as honestly and truthfully as possible and please complete the questionnaire in full.

## **PART 1 - Biographical information:**

**1. Gender:**

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**2. Race Group:**

White	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black	<input type="checkbox"/>	Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coloured	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
If other Please specify					

**3. Marital Status**

Single/Widow /Widower	<input type="checkbox"/>	Engaged/ In a Relationship	<input type="checkbox"/>	Married	<input type="checkbox"/>
Divorced	<input type="checkbox"/>	Separated	<input type="checkbox"/>	Remarried	<input type="checkbox"/>

**4. Please indicate your home language**

Afrikaans	<input type="checkbox"/>	English	<input type="checkbox"/>	SePedi	<input type="checkbox"/>	SeSotho	<input type="checkbox"/>
SeTswana	<input type="checkbox"/>	SiSwati	<input type="checkbox"/>	TshiVenda	<input type="checkbox"/>	IsiZulu	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsiXhosa	<input type="checkbox"/>	XiTsonga	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify)	<input type="text"/>		

**5. Please State your Age in Years: \_\_\_\_\_**

**6. Please indicate your Highest level of Education/ Qualification**

Highest Grade	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	year	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	year	Degree	/	<input type="checkbox"/>
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	Degree	Honours
4-7 year degree	Masters	Doctors

If you selected Highest Grade please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

7. **Please indicate your region.**

Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape
Limpopo	KwaZulu Natal	Gauteng
Mpumalanga	Free State	North West

7. **Please indicate the sector in Which you operate:**

Financial Services	Chemical/ Petroleum	Information Technology
Education/Teaching	Government	Retail
Telecommunications	Professional Services/Consulting	Other: Specify:

8. **Please indicate at which level you operate in your organization:**

Operational Level	Junior Management	Middel Management
Senior Management	Executive	

8. **How many years have you been in your current organization?** \_\_\_\_\_

9. **How many years have you been working in your current job?** \_\_\_\_\_

10. **On What basis are you employed?**

Permanent	Temporary	Fixed- term	Hourly
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11. **Are you registered with a professional body?**

YES	NO
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12. **If yes to question 11 please specify:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **PART 2 – Dispositional Employability Questionnaire**

We are interested in how you feel about your job, your job opportunities, and your career in general. Please indicate to what extent each of the following describes you.

**Meaning of the scale:**

- 1: Strongly disagree
- 2: Disagree
- 3: Neutral
- 4: Agree
- 5: Strongly Agree

Please indicate your response by placing a **cross** in the applicable block next to the statement as is shown in the example question with regard to the meaning of the scale given above.

NR	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Example</b>						
ex	I generally feel happy with what I do					X
<b>Start of Questionnaire</b>						
1	It is important to me that I am acknowledged for my successes on the job.					
2	I feel that I am generally accepting of changes at work.					
3	It is important to me that I am successful in my job.					
4	I can handle job and organizational changes effectively.					
5	I am involved in my work.					
6	I stay abreast of developments in my institution					
7	I am a believer that "every cloud has a sliver lining" at work.					
8	I stay abreast of developments relating to my type of job.					
9	In uncertain times at work, I usually expect the best.					
10	I have a specific plan for achieving my career goals.					
11	My past career experiences have been generally positive					
12	I am optimistic about my future career opportunities.					
13	I feel changes at work generally have positive implications.					
14	I have control over my career opportunities.					
15	I have sought job assignments that will help me obtain my career goals.					
16	I take a positive attitude toward my work.					
17	I have participated in training or schooling that will help me reach my career goals.					
18	I always look on the bright side of things at work.					
19	I stay abreast of developments in my discipline.					
20	I define myself by the work I do.					
21	I am able to adapt to changing circumstances at work.					
22	It is important to me that others think highly of my job.					
23	I would consider myself open to changes at work.					
24	The type of work I do is important to me.					
25	I feel I am a valuable employee at work.					

### **PART 3 – Career Success orientation survey**

We are interested in how you feel about your career and your career success in general. Please indicate to what extent each of the following statements are important to you with regards to your view of your Career Success.

**Meaning of the scale:**

- 1: Insignificant
- 2: Unimportant
- 3: Important
- 4: Very important

Please indicate your response by placing **a cross** in the applicable block next to the statement as is shown in the example question with regard to the meaning of the scale given above.

NR	Statement	1	2	3	4
1	I feel that my career success is linked to advancing up in the organization by means of promotions				
2	I will feel more successful in my job if I have increased responsibility and authority				
3	I have a need for higher status and prestige				
4	I measure my career success by the amount of money I make				
5	I need to be recognized as an expert in my area to feel successful in my career				
6	The testing of my skills and talents is absolutely necessary to perceive my career as successful.				
7	I need to grow continually and gain experience daily to feel successful in my career				
8	I need to learn more about what I do now and become a specialist in my field to view my career as successful				
9	I perceive my career as successful if I have stability and security in my work				
10	I have a need for predictability in my work				
11	I want to work at one place for a long time				
12	I need to show commitment and loyalty towards my employer and my work in general				
13	I have a need for autonomy in work and to determine my own tasks				
14	I need to work in an environment where I can be creative				
15	I will feel successful in my job if I get to have a variety of different experiences				
16	I do well in an environment where I can work freely and without restrictions				
17	I perceive my career as successful if there is a balance between work and family life				
18	I would like to be able to work flexi time				
19	I would like to work in an environment where personal and family life is respected				
20	I would like to work in an environment where the workload is fairly distributed				



**APPENDIX B**  
**- Informed consent form -**

**Informed consent for participation in an academic  
research study**

**Dept. of Human Resources Management**

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISPOSITIONAL EMPLOYABILITY AND CAREER  
SUCCESS FOR STUDENTS AND LECTURERS IN SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER  
EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

Research conducted by:  
Ms. K. Botha (26205662)  
Cell: 072 508 1882

Dear Respondent

You are invited to participate in an academic research study conducted by Karien Botha, a Masters student from the Department Human Resources Management at the University of Pretoria.

The purpose of the study is to find whether a relationship exists between Dispositional Employability and the meaning of Career Success for academics in South African higher education institutions.

**Please note the following:**

- This study involves an anonymous survey. Your name will not appear on the questionnaire and the answers you give will be treated as strictly confidential. You cannot be identified in person based on the answers you give.
- Your participation in this study is very important to us. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may also stop participating at any time without any negative consequences.
- Please answer the questions in the attached questionnaire as completely and honestly as possible. This should not take more than 20 minutes of your time
- The results of the study will be used for academic purposes only and may be published in an academic journal. We will provide you with a summary of our findings on request.
- Please contact my supervisor, Dr. N. Barkhuizen at Nicolene.Barkhuizen@up.ac.za if you have any questions or comments regarding the study.

Please sign the form to indicate that:

- You have read and understand the information provided above.
- You give your consent to participate in the study on a voluntary basis.

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**Respondent's signature**

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**Date**