

THE IMPACT OF THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION ON THE SURVIVAL OF EMPLOYEE SKILLS SETS IN THE RETAIL ENVIRONMENT

SARIKSHA RAMLALL – 16009152

SUPERVISOR: DR HENNIE PELSER

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY – RESM8419

THE INDEPENDENT INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

BACHELOR OF COMMERCE HONOURS IN MANAGEMENT

WORD COUNT: 11 324

*I HEREBY DECLARE THAT THE RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED FOR THE
BACHELOR OF COMMERCE HONOURS IN MANAGEMENT DEGREE TO THE
INDEPENDENT INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION IS MY OWN WORK AND HAS NOT
PREVIOUSLY BEEN SUBMITTED TO ANOTHER UNIVERSITY OR HIGHER
EDUCATION INSTITUTION FOR DEGREE PURPOSES.*

Abstract

The Fourth Industrial Revolution has taken the world by storm through advanced technology. The various technologies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution are blurring the lines between the physical, digital and biological spheres of global production systems (Martin, 2017). The current pace of technological development is exerting profound changes on the way people live and work in which, employee skills sets have to constantly be improved to keep up and remain relevant in line with the technologies of The Fourth Industrial Revolution (Martin, 2017). Employees have had to improve their skills sets to survive this industrial revolution as well as familiarise themselves with the new modern forms of technology.

In the retail environment online shopping has increased due to mobile applications and artificial intelligence, whilst this innovation keeps growing many jobs are being lost at the same time. This study was conducted using an interpretivist, qualitative approach to gain a rich in-depth understanding of how employees in the retail environment are going about to ensure the relevance of their skills sets within the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Semi – structured interviews formed the data collection method, which enabled the researcher to gain a greater understanding on the research participants views. Thereafter the transcripts were analysed to develop themes around the first - order data. The theoretical framework of this study is based on the skills development theory, Katz' three skill approach and Mumford's skills model of leadership.

This study concludes that due to the rapid growth and advancements of artificial intelligence as well as various other technologies, businesses have had to consistently evolve and keep up with these advancements. There has been a huge gap in employee skillset and the technology of today. Employees have had to attend various forms of training regarding such technologies. On the other hand, many employees in the retail environment have lost their jobs either because their jobs were replaced by artificial intelligence or because they did not meet the necessary skills sets requirements to remain relevant enough in their jobs.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	2
Chapter One.....	6
1. Introduction.....	6
1.1 Background	6
1.2 Rationale.....	7
1.3 Problem Statement	7
1.4 Purpose Statement	8
1.5 Research Question	8
1.6 Research Objectives.....	8
Chapter Two	9
2. Literature Review.....	9
2.1 Introduction	9
2.2 Theoretical Foundation	14
2.3 Summary.....	17
Chapter Three.....	19
3. Methodology.....	19
3.1 Research Paradigm	19
3.2 Research Design.....	21
3.3 Research Plan	21
3.3.1 Population:	21
3.3.2 Sampling:.....	22
3.4 Data Collection Method:.....	23
3.5 Data Analysis Method:.....	24
3.6 The steps used in Data Analysis are:.....	24

Chapter 4.....	27
4. Findings and interpretation of Findings.....	27
4.1 Discussion and Analysis of Themes	27
4.1.1 Theme 1: Skills Development	27
4.1.2 Theme 2: Interpersonal Skills	29
4.1.3 Theme 3: Adjusting to Technology	30
4.2 Links to Previous Literature and Theoretical Foundation.....	31
4.2.1 Theme 1: Skills Development	31
4.2.2 Theme 2: Interpersonal Skills	31
4.2.3 Theme 3: Adjusting to Technology	32
4.3 Trustworthiness and Rigor	32
Chapter Five	34
5.1 Summary of Findings	34
5.2 Implications of findings for future practices	34
5.3 Contribution of study.....	34
5.4 Ethical Considerations	35
5.5 Limitations.....	36
5.6 Conclusion	37
References.....	38
A. Information sheet for participants	41
B. Consent form for participants.....	44
C. Consent for audio-recording.....	45
D. Interview questions.....	46
E. Ethical Clearance Letter.....	47
F. Word Cloud of transcripts	50

G. Thematic Map	51
H. Originality report	52

Chapter One

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

What is certain is that people will shop for their daily needs, but will retailers be ready to fulfil their demands for fashion, value and most importantly speed? We are experiencing times in which technology has become so advanced that some stores have sensors that can tell when customers have picked up merchandise and in which customers do not have to wait for cash registers to add up their purchases but rather check out with a simple tapping of their card. According to (Meyer, 2019), 2019 has been the year with the highest number of store closings to date and there will continue to be more closures unless retailers adjust the way they do business. Most retail stores are now choosing to deal directly with customers, it is now the trend that will force traditional stores to have more exclusive brands and private labels to retain their customer loyalty.

As said by Robert J. Shiller, “We cannot wait until there are massive dislocations in our society to prepare for the Fourth Industrial Revolution.” In the near future, the market will be defined by emerging technologies that change the way consumers interact with their favourite brands as well as products that they purchase. An increasing number of consumers are shopping with their emotions instead of their wallets. There is a great change in preferences and social consciousness which have already impacted how retail brands present and position themselves. This trend has resulted in brands having to equate their internal culture with their exterior identities. Therefore, companies are largely engaging consumers outside of the traditional shopping parameters and now becoming cultural figures. These changes have put employees under pressure to adjust the ways in which they contribute.

1.2 Rationale

There are various factors that have contributed to the steady growth of the retail sector however, one of the main factors responsible is the rise of digitization along with modern technology, which has now led to the birth of retail 4.0. After the introduction of advanced technologies, there are multiple processes in the retail workflow such as purchase, inventory management, customer service, accounts, and supply chain management that have become automated. Enhanced communication platforms have created a much more connected landscape across the board. Thus, the retail industry is witnessing a shift in the work culture with the help of retail 4.0, giving rise to innovative business models. Another benefit of digitization in retail is the adoption of a data-driven approach that has given rise to consumer-centric product strategies. Online shopping has now also made it much easier for many people and therefore results in fewer individuals physically going to stores and thus, resulting in many jobs being lost. Employees therefore have grown and have expanded their retail knowledge and look towards advancing their skills within the context of a technological and digital revolution (Joshi, 2019).

1.3 Problem Statement

The Fourth Industrial Revolution has brought about employees having to reconsider their skill sets to survive in the retail environment. The Fourth Industrial Revolution has caused employees skills sets to become irrelevant which has resulted in the uncertainty of the skills required by employees, to survive this revolution in the retail environment. The Fourth Industrial Revolution has brought about change as well as innovation at an extremely unpredictable rate, that is fueled through technological advancements such as artificial intelligence which therefore requires employees to continuously improve their skills in order to keep up with this Revolution (Marr, 2018). Employees must position themselves for the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution in the Retail Environment.

1.4 Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research study is to determine, how employees in the retail industry are preparing themselves in terms of their skills sets for the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution in the retail market. Employees must position themselves for the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution in the retail environment. This study will show the various ways in which employees are improving their skills to secure their jobs within the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

1.5 Research Question

How are employees in the retail environment going about to ensure the relevance of their skills sets within the context of 4IR?

1.6 Research Objectives

The purpose of this research study is to determine, how employees in the retail industry are preparing themselves in terms of their skill sets for the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution in the retail market. Employees must position themselves for this impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution in the Retail Environment. This study will show the various ways in which employees are improving their skills consistently to secure their jobs in this Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Chapter Two

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Technology has advanced in the various fields of human life; we are therefore entering into the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) which is said to be the answer to many of South Africa's problems regarding the integration of computerization to digitize many areas of our lives. The Fourth Industrial Revolution is described as a "post-work era" in which human relevance is at the risk of redundancy. The advent of this Revolution has caused various debates about the challenges and opportunities that it poses to the future of work and skills development (Pillay, 2019). The Fourth Industrial Revolution has brought about employees having to reconsider their skill sets in order to survive in the retail environment and has also caused employees skillset to become irrelevant which has resulted in the uncertainty of the skills required by employees, in order to survive this revolution in the retail environment. Kamaruzaman and Rasul (2019) have outlined that the risk to job losses is directly linked to the mismatch of the skills required by jobs that will be relevant in the era of The Fourth Industrial Revolution. Therefore, employees working in the retail environment need to ensure they are fully equipped to meet the ever-changing skills needed which is the key focus of this research.

This Revolution has brought about change as well innovation at an extremely unpredictable rate, that is fueled through technological advancements which has introduced digitalization, automation, robotics and artificial intelligence (AI) that have generated opportunities for the economy and society as a whole, there is great uncertainty regarding job security in this new era which therefore requires employees to continuously improve their skills in order to keep up with the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Marr, 2018).

Due to the Fourth Industrial Revolution it is extremely important for employees in the retail environment to improve their skillset. Kamaruzaman and Rasul (2019) conducted a study in Malaysia to determine which skills would be an essential requirement in the 4IR by employees and related fields such as the retail environment, which this research focuses on. The study has revealed that in the year 2022 which is when The Fourth Industrial Revolution will be in full effect, seven key skills would be required namely; complex problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, system analysis, emotional intelligence, judgement and decision making and lastly service orientation (Payle, 2020).

However, Dhaou and Manda (2019) suggest that the Fourth Industrial Revolution demands for a “new breed of workers”, one that is skilled, “technologically savvy” and innovative, therefore increasing the need for new ‘future’ skills which might not exist at this stage to ensure that humans are not replaced through automation. This shows us the direct link to the mismatch of skills required by jobs that will be relevant in the era of The Fourth Industrial Revolution and job losses. Thus, emphasis needs to be put onto education and training, and the need to ensure that employees of the future need to be well equipped with the appropriate skills to be able to contribute in the 4IR.

The literature on the impact of The Fourth Industrial Revolution on jobs and skills has undergone a reversal from a pessimistic outlook to a more optimistic outlook. The report, Future of Jobs, published at the World Economic Forum in 2016, predicted that this Fourth Industrial Revolution will result in five million job cuts with a widening of the skills gap (Picken, 2016). To reduce a variance in skills there is an urgent need to reskill and upskill all employees to keep up with the technological advances that the 4IR will bring. Dhaou and Manda (2019) acknowledge that the Fourth Industrial Revolution brings new challenges and opportunities that require both human intelligence as well as skills. This renews the hope that humans will not be redundant

in this new revolution as well as highlights that “only one type of organization will thrive a human one”. Thus, emphasising the need for human touch in the 4IR.

For retail businesses to remain competitive they need to rethink how and where work is done and therefore potentially reshape their organisational structures, cultures and processes in order to fit the changing developments of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Armstrong, 2018). Due to the speed of technological updates, the speed of current and future talent is surpassed and must be upskilled and trained which leaves a gap between the skills needed and the skills available. In such an environment in which employees in the retail environment will acquire new job roles and thus, knowledge in multidisciplinary fields, will be a necessity (Pillay, 2019).

The Fourth Industrial Revolution has massively affected the four main aspects of the retail industry, that being customer expectations are continuously changing at such a rapid rate; products are being enhanced by data which in turn improves asset productivity; new partnerships are being formed since now companies have learnt the new forms of collaboration and lastly operating models are being transformed into new digital models (Naidoo, 2019).

The digital age of the Fourth Industrial Revolution is now about accessing and using data therefore, customer expectations are redefined into experiences since technology of The Fourth Industrial Revolution affects all aspects of our lives (Naidoo, 2019). Customers are now able to access various shopping channels and websites with the lowest level of effort. Consumers are far more connected than ever before because of the various new technology, which connects them with each other, products as well as brands. Customers are now in control as they dictate when and how they will contact retail stores for service and are well aware of the high standard of service that the new technology has given rise to and therefore have no patience for any stores that are unable to keep up with the advanced technology.

Customers live in a world of convenience in which The Fourth Industrial Revolution has increased the presence in customer service technology. Technological platform options provide great service in the most convenient way to shoppers. Not all businesses have these platforms and are now beginning to realise that to keep their customers happy as well as to retaining these customers, they must introduce such technological platforms. This means that retailers need to be more proactive (Naidoo, 2019).

Even though technology has allowed the retail industry many opportunities such as meeting, and servicing consumers needs much more efficiently and at a faster rate many jobs have been lost on the other hand. Instead of employees in the retail environment explaining the details of a product, this is now done seamlessly through data that informs the customer about the types of products being sold as well as available in which shopping can be done online. Online shopping also records the shopper's preferences which allows their shopping to become much more convenient than going to an actual store. Therefore, this has decreased the foot count of stores (Naidoo, 2019).

The Fourth Industrial Revolution has given rise to advanced technology that has taken the retail world by storm making customers more connected than ever before to the various brands and products. Customers have the power to choose where they want to spend their money. Customers have also experienced the high level of service they receive through technology and now do not support companies that are not keeping up with the evolving standards.

According to (Naidoo, 2019) some of the advantages that The Fourth Industrial Revolution has on the Retail Environment is that it has enabled the retail industry to have the potential to:

- Reduce costs and improve efficiency,
- Allow customers to transact seamlessly and in real time,
- Improve providers' understanding of customer behaviour and needs,
- Allowing for the personalisation of shopping experience and customer services.

Another advantage of The Fourth Industrial Revolution is that it presents, several opportunities for the retail industry to meet and as well as exceed customer needs. One way that has made it possible is the convenience for a customer to make a purchase without carrying lot of money to a retail store. Customers now have an option of using the tap and go service on the point of sales, or e-wallet or zipper to make payment (Naidoo, 2019). This shift towards automation has created great opportunities to improve efficiency however, this impacts the Retail Industries skill requirements, which gives rise to the establishment of the “low-skill low pay” and “High-skill high pay” labour divide.

Data that is captured online helps retailers in understanding their consumers as well as the demographics they belong to. Such data offers an informative approach for recognising consumer demands by identifying those products that are of high demand as well as those products that are not doing well in the market. This type of data helps retailers to easily determine the price that consumers find suitable for a product which enables them to explore the changing industry trends as well as niche consumer demands (Naidoo, 2019).

For example, Dis-Chem created a pregnancy prediction model with the help of their baby-shower registry, purchase patterns, customer support queries, credit card use, survey responses, website use, and personal data. This model distributed baby product promotions to specific customers timeously, based on their stages of pregnancy. Therefore, gathering consumer data, creates a consumer-centric business atmosphere that caters for the various individual consumer needs (Naidoo, 2019). Employees therefore need to familiarise themselves with such models and improve their skills in this regard.

Online shopping is growing at such a fast rate in South Africa, which therefore presents a great opportunity for retailers to increase their sales. Retailers need to capture this lucrative market to prevent any disruptions by other sectors. However, on the other hand this opportunity means that employees will have to continuously improve their skillset to remain relevant and keep up with this revolution (Naidoo, 2019).

2.2 Theoretical Foundation

An article by (Ojansivu, 2019) states that, for employers to lead their employees during this exceptional time of Technological Revolution (4IR) leaders need to be equipped not only to help employees to survive but to thrive in it. Therefore, this challenging era requires a new kind of approach, an alternative to the traditional fear-based leadership style. The key theories that my research will focus on are:

2.2.1 The Skills Development Theory – According to Burkus (2010) the skills development theory links closely with the trait approach and common traits amongst employees and leaders. This theory focuses on the traits and characteristics that make employees and leaders effective. It is said that “A person cannot do things the same way and expect different results.” Therefore,

to see a change and difference employers need to continuously develop the skills of their employees. An organization cannot expect to see growth if they do not invest in skills development. Employees keep a company going and they need to have the skills and knowledge that it takes to ensure that the company will always be ahead of its competitors (Metropolitan, 2015). In terms of the skills development theory, the most important reasons for skills development in the retail environment are:

1. It is essential for employees to not think of what they do as a job, but rather a career instead. When employee skills are continuously developed employees learn that, what they are doing is more than just a job.
2. Due to the world moving so fast and rapidly changing, employers need to make sure that their employees are skilled and are well equipped to deal with these rapid changes.
3. Skills development always leads to competitive advantage. Therefore, employees must be trained to give off their best and continuously learn. Employees need to stay learning to grow.
(Metropolitan, 2015)

2.2.2 Katz' Three Skill Approach – The skills approach looks at the idea of the abilities leaders possess which enable them to serve as effective leaders. Robert Katz contributed the Three Skills Model namely Technical Skills (Knowledge and proficiency in a certain area), Human Skills (the ability to work with and relate to people) and lastly Conceptual Skills (refers to the ability to work with ideas and concepts) (Lombard, 2013).

In the retail environment today the skills categories that need to be looked at are:

1. Workforce Readiness – The purpose of workforce readiness is to support and secure employment and success within the retail environment. Work readiness can be achieved by literacy, numeracy

and digital literacy skills, etiquette and social norms that can be taught to employees to limit job losses.

2. Soft Skills – The Fourth Industrial Revolution increases the need for “essential human skills” which are called soft skills that refer to the personal attributes, social skills and the communication abilities that support interpersonal relationships as well as interactions with others. This will entail employees to think critically and adapt to the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Armstrong, 2018). The common thread among soft skills and “social and emotional learning” is that they are particularly “human” traits that are irreplaceable by machines.
3. Technical Skills – Provide the necessary knowledge and capabilities to perform specialized tasks and allow employees to become more advanced and keep up with the various technological advancements (Armstrong, 2018).

2.2.3 Mumford’s Skills model of Leadership- This model will be used to closely examine the relationship employees and leader’s knowledge and their skills. This model looks at 5 components namely:

1. Individual attributes – Mumford (2000) identified four attributes that affect the three leader competencies namely, problem – solving skills, social judgement skills and knowledge and therefore through these competencies, leader performance.
2. Competencies - Competencies affect leadership outcomes. Competencies lead to leadership outcomes, but themselves are affected by a leader’s individual attribute (Mumford, 2000).
3. Leadership outcomes – Mumford (2000) states that individual attributes lead to leader competencies, which lead to leadership outcomes. Leadership outcomes look at effective problem solving in which Mumford developed the skills model to explain variation in the ability of leaders to solve problems and this makes it a capability model

(Mumford, 2000). Leaders with higher levels of competencies will be more effective problem solvers. Lastly, Leadership looks at performance which refers to the individual leader's job performance.

4. Career experiences – Mumford (2000) stated that some career assignments may develop a leader's motivation to be a better problem solver or be better at interacting with people.
5. Environmental influences - These refer to factors that are external to individual attributes, leader competencies, and career experiences and that affect leadership outcomes along with the effect of individual attributes through leadership competencies (Mumford, 2000). These are the factors that are beyond the control of the leader (Mumford, 2000).

Katz's three – skills approach implies that it is extremely important to determine each leader's effectiveness in an organization. While, Mumford's leadership skills approach is a much more complex model of leadership. Mumford's model suggests that leadership effectiveness as measured by outcomes is a direct result of leadership competencies and the indirect result of individual attributes, working through leader competencies (Mumford, 2000).

2.3 Summary

Employers are struggling to fill job vacancies due to the mismatch between employee skills and employer needs as the Fourth Industrial Revolution is transforming business and jobs faster than workers can adapt (Renjen, 2018).

This study concludes that the future of technology as well as business in The Fourth Industrial Revolution cannot be accurately predicted and therefore it is difficult to predict what other changes will be required from employees to adapt and stay afloat with The Fourth Industrial Revolution. This research has helped in coming to the

conclusion that people need to determine how they can focus on creating more jobs within The Fourth Industrial Revolution rather than focusing on whether there will be an increase or decrease in the number of Jobs (Pillay, 2019).

The Fourth Industrial Revolution strongly indicates that there is a desperate need to ensure that individuals are continuously learning since the education systems will not be enough any longer. Employees will have to ensure that they are continuously adapting and re-adapting their skills as these technological advancements require people to be able to unlearn old technologies and practices and re-learn new ones. This will, therefore, give people the potential to easily address the implication of rapidly changing skills demand. Those retail stores that can adapt and thrive during the seasons of change will be the ones that will survive and succeed in this Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Chapter Three

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm refers to the set of values, beliefs as well as assumptions of researchers and how these shared characteristics influence and play a role in the performance of the research conducted (du Plooy - Cilliers, 2014).

An interpretivist paradigm is employed in this research as interpretivism relates to the study of meaningful social interactions. An interpretivist paradigm indicates that people are different to that of objects and should therefore be studied. This paradigm allows for people to be studied in their natural environment.

This research study will be based on an interpretivist paradigm and is linked to a qualitative study through which an in depth understanding of the challenges faced by employees in the retail environment are facing due to the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The experiences of the participants in the Retail environment will be researched. This research will consist of people's subjective experiences of the external world and their attempts to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign (du Plooy - Cilliers, 2014).

The data collected in this study will be attained through questionnaires and qualitative interviews of the various retailers within the Liberty Midlands Mall, in which a set of open-ended questions will be asked to the participants and thereafter an open discussion will follow. The main advantage of using qualitative interviews and in this study allows the researcher to gain a rich and in depth understanding of the information gathered which is thus, imperative to qualitative research. This, therefore, allows the opportunity to understand the various perspectives and experiences of the participants.

Table:1 below displays the characteristics of interpretivism, as used in this study, categorised into the purpose of the research study, the nature of reality (ontology), nature of knowledge and the relationship between the inquirer and the inquired-into (epistemology) and the methodology used (Cantrell, 2001).

Feature	Description
Purpose of research	The impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution on the survival of Employee skill set in the Retail Environment.
Ontology	• There are multiple realities. Reality can be explored, and constructed through human interactions, and meaningful actions. • Discover how people make sense of their social worlds in the natural setting by means of daily routines, conversations and writings while interacting with others around them. These writings could be text and visual pictures. • Many social realities exist due to varying human experience, including people's knowledge, views, interpretations, and experiences
Epistemology	• Events are understood through the mental processes of interpretation that is influenced by interaction with social contexts. • Those active in the research process socially construct knowledge by experiencing the real life or natural settings. • Inquirer and the inquired-into are interlocked in an interactive process of talking and listening, reading, and writing.

	• More personal, interactive mode of data collection.
Methodology	• Processes of data collected by text messages, interviews, and reflective sessions. • Research is a product of the values of the researcher.

3.2 Research Design

The research approach of this study will be qualitative research. With qualitative research, words, and results in data full of meaning are used instead of numbers and statistical data (Creswell, 2016). Qualitative data looks at the participants experiences and thus, gathers data that deals with how individuals engage with their surroundings and the ever-changing environment around them. In qualitative research the methods used to gather data is less structured and is gathered in the form of interviews, observations, and content analysis. Therefore, qualitative research has been decided upon for this study, as it seeks to determine how employees are preparing for the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Creswell, 2016). Primary data will be gathered and collected via in-depth interviews, which will result in highly informative and detailed responses.

3.3 Research Plan

3.3.1 Population:

A population refers to a comprehensive group of individuals or artefacts that possess those common characteristics that are of interest to the researcher. The value of the outcomes measured from these characteristics is referred to as the parameter. In this research study the population were various employers and employees within the Liberty Midlands Mall.

3.3.2 Sampling:

Non-probability sampling was used in this qualitative study, as the study required a carefully selected sample which represented the retailers that are being affected by the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The population for this study will be the retail stores at the Liberty Midlands Mall using the non-probability sampling method as not all participants were given equal chances of being selected. The Non-Probability Sampling that were used are:

- Purpose Sampling – The main idea of purpose sampling is the idea of selecting the sample with a specific purpose and outcome in mind. With purpose sampling only those participants were chosen that met the population parameters. Purpose sampling was used to include the participants in the retail environment in which data was gathered based on their experiences and challenges faced due to the Fourth Industrial Revolution of employers and employees at the Liberty Midlands Mall.
- Snowball Sampling – Snowball sampling is widely used in qualitative research. The researcher has used snowball sampling to identify the types of skill sets that employees had to change due to the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the types of skills they must learn to keep up with this Revolution.
- Convenience Sampling – is the other non-probability sampling strategy that was be applied in this Qualitative study due to the easy access of the participants at the Liberty Midlands Mall (Crossman, 2020).

3.4 Data Collection Method:

A data collection method refers to that method that is used by the researcher to collect the data that they require for their study.

The most suitable data collection method for this study was a semi – structured in-depth interview. The data collected was safely stored in a password protected google drive account to ensure protection of the information gathered. This data collection method allowed for a two-way interaction between the researcher and respondents and provides the researcher with imperative information and understanding of the respondent's views and opinions. Using an in-depth interview approach allows the researcher to gain more clarity on responses that are not clear and allows gives more room to the respondents to explain in detail their views. With a semi-structured interview, the researcher can go into greater detail and elaborate on that information which is important to both the researcher and respondent. The main advantage of using qualitative interviews in this study allows the researcher to gain a rich and in depth understanding of the information gathered. This, therefore, allows the opportunity to understand the various perspectives and experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2016).

The purpose and aim of the interview were to explore the thoughts and experiences of ways in which employees and employers of Liberty Midlands Mall had to improves their skills sets due to the Fourth Industrial Revolution and how this has impacted them. The data collected in this study was attained through the semi – structured in-depth interview as presented in Annexure D, from the various employees within the Liberty Midlands Mall, in which a set of open-ended questions was asked to the participants and thereafter an open discussion followed to gain more understanding of the participants experience.

3.5 Data Analysis Method:

Data analysis refers to the process of organizing the data by structuring it through themes and patterns and making sense of the data.

The main objective of qualitative data analysis is to make sense of the data through an iterative process that consists of the process of consolidation, reduction, and interpretation. Qualitative data analysis is also used to bring order, an in-depth meaning and structure to the data that is achieved.

The interviews were recorded and thereafter transcribed into texts which included the responses that were provided by participants in the completed interviews. Inductive coding was used in which the researcher identified themes from the interview transcripts which were used to connect these themes to the existing literature.

The researcher also used an application called Word Cloud Generator by Monkey Learn which illustrated the most relevant themes from the data set graphically set out in Annexure F, as well as the thematic Map illustrated in Annexure G. This reflects the trail followed to arrive at the set of themes (Garreta, n.d.).

3.6 The steps used in Data Analysis are:

- Step 1: Understanding and familiarization of the data collected

The first step that the researcher took was to fully understand the data collected from the interviews and transcribing them to have an in - depth understanding of the information obtained by reading and re-reading the data transcript multiple times. The researcher made notes of those points that were potentially important and relevant for the data analysis process. This step deals with studying the transcripts, field notes as well as other documents associated with the interviews,

this is done to ensure familiarity with the dataset by analyzing and breaking down the data into segments.

- Step 2: Category Construction and coding

The data is thereafter grouped in coded segments, to reduce the different pieces of data gathered. The research question will play a huge role in noting the initial observations. In this step many possibilities will be opened in the research study in which the research question provides the basis and initial focus for the data and observations which may be referred to as codes. Coding is done systematically to condense the data into smaller bits that can be easily interpreted.

- Step 3: Sorting categories and searching for themes:

The codes were thoroughly examined to draw out the potential themes in relation to the study. Any patterns observed in the data were grouped into meaningful categories. A theme therefore refers to a pattern that captures that information which is significant from the data that is relevant to the research questions.

- Step 4: Reviewing the themes:

The themes were reviewed against the data collected to ensure that the themes reflected the data collected. This step was done to ensure that the themes were not overlapping as well as no contradictions in the themes. Naming the categories in terms of the type of responses and answers received as well as responses that have a common ground.

- Step 5: Defining and naming themes

In this step a detailed analysis of the data in each theme was done. The number of categories were based on the number of common responses received by the

participants (Andersson, 2014). The researcher reviewed the themes to ensure that the themes were coherent and relevant.

- Step 6: Producing the report

The purpose of including information about the processes used in this research study is to allow the reader to evaluate eminence of the research. The Researcher inserted information in the research report that enhanced this research study. Direct quotes from the participants interviews were included to demonstrate the results and findings.

Chapter 4

4. Findings and interpretation of Findings

The data was gathered from 3 participants, who have requested to remain anonymous for the purposes of this research study. All participants were given an information sheet (Annexure B), explaining the study as well as a pseudonym to protect their identity and maintain confidentiality. All participants were employees of retail stores at the Liberty Midlands Mall.

Once the interviews were conducted, they were transcribed to condense and analyse the responses until themes had emerged. From the data collected through the interviews 3 themes had surfaced which are further discussed below in which specific quotations from the participants interviews were used to enhance evidence. Even though the interviews were conducted on a one - on - one basis there was a common thread between the participants experiences. The findings of these interviews will be linked to previous literature in the next chapter.

4.1 Discussion and Analysis of Themes

4.1.1 Theme 1: Skills Development

The participants were asked what new skills they believe they had to acquire for the future to remain relevant and what they had to do specifically to deal with the potential impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. All three participants agreed that in order to remain relevant they had to keep up with trends and had to constantly learn on a daily basis about the new types of technologies they had to use in their stores, for instance digital marketing and online shopping.

This was illustrated by the interviewees' responses:

Participant A: *You must keep yourself updated with each application and new instrument released. If not without even realising it, you fall behind in the advancement of the world. I have had to go to various marketing training programmes to learn about the different ways in which marketing can now be done online.*

Participant B: *Change is only constant. Change must be embraced with an open mind and the constant urge to learn something new about all technologies possible. As employees we need to ensure that we are up to speed at tills since customers do not have to wait in lines to shop for their favourite items online. To match this standard, employees must be faster and more efficient at their jobs. The retail industry has undergone a significant transformation over the past decade and continues to evolve quickly. Even so, the face to face of the market is evolving just as fast and retailers have had to adapt to these new shifts in terms of demographics, attitudes, and consumer preferences.*

Participant C: *Change is inevitable. It is scary how much we must learn to not be replaced by a machine or robot and to fit into a world of people who are keeping up with these changes.*

It was noted that when the participants spoke about what they were doing specifically to deal with the potential impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution their responses outlined that they were embracing this change as it was the only way to move forward with such advances in technology and AI.

Participant B: *Change is only constant and must be embraced to ensure you are not left behind whilst everyone else is advancing before you.*

Participant A: *We must become a part of this advancement to survive the impact of such a revolution.*

4.1.2 Theme 2: Interpersonal Skills

The participants were then asked about the processes they had to follow to ready themselves for the future the common response revolved around people management skills and physical human interaction.

Participant B: *The focus of being an employee, in a store here at the mall is ensure that every customer has the best possible experience when shopping. This helps in bringing the feet back to the physical store. We have had to enhance our people management skills in this sense, to keep the customer as satisfied as possible. The internet continues to be a source of growth in which Apps are becoming so user friendly to the extent of recalling merchandise that consumers contemplate to by sending them gentle reminders which often leads them to buying the item. Therefore, as employees of the retail environment we must ensure that we give our customers the best shopping experience ever when they enter our store to prevent them from wanting to shop online instead.*

Participant C: *Online shopping does not provide the physical human interaction compared to that of an experience with a customer that we physically meet. This is the one thing that technology cannot take away from us. My people management skills are constantly growing to keep maintain that human touch.*

From the responses received it is evident that because many shoppers are choosing to now shop online employees working in the retail store have to ensure that they give those customers that physically come to the store the best possible shopping experience. They must ensure that the customer has a good experience to drive more feet to their stores to keep them open and maintain their jobs. Technology cannot replace the interaction between human beings and therefore employees in such an environment must use this advantage to the fullest. Employees are being sent to various team building and human interaction training programmes to enhance their ability to keep customers happy and draw them to the store to maintain the physical shopping experience compared to shopping online.

4.1.3 Theme 3: Adjusting to Technology

Even though all three participants were from 3 different types of stores at the Liberty Midlands Mall they had common experiences when asked about how they have been impacted by the Fourth Industrial revolution and if this impact has been a positive or negative one.

Participant B: *The Fourth Industrial Revolution has had a positive impact on my job as it helps a lot with identifying what the new trends are and what types of trends are doing well. In this sense it allows us to stock up on those items that are trending as well as those items that are doing well in the store.*

Participant A: *The introduction of new applications and platforms has enabled me grow in terms of digital marketing. It has impacted my job positively as my work is now much easier. The negative part of it is obviously the number of staff that were cut down on because this type of thing can be done by one person only since digital marketing is now made quick and easy. The number of employees in my team were reduced as there is no longer the need to physically stand and advertise outside the store etc. I also had to adjust to the different online marketing methods and platforms such as for example the international email marketing drive which has only become popular of recent due to a rise in digital applications.*

Participant C: *I feel like the advancement in technology has impacted me negatively in the sense that we as humans are under the constant pressure of learning about the new trends and technologies. It has also resulted in many job losses here at the store as now with easy pay mechanisms customers can merely do almost everything on their own from purchasing not just clothing but food items online and pay easily by means of apps.*

From the feedback received for this question we can clearly see that employees are now becoming comfortable and are being impacted positively by the Fourth Industrial Revolution. However, there are those who are facing the pressure of having to

constantly learn and advance with these technologies just to save their jobs, while for some work is now made much easier and less stressful.

4.2 Links to Previous Literature and Theoretical Foundation

The main purpose of this discussion was to highlight the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution on employee skills sets within the retail environment. The findings lead back to the skills development theory, Katz' three skill approach and Mumford's skills model of leadership.

4.2.1 Theme 1: Skills Development

The participants believe that they can strongly survive this Fourth Industrial Revolution by improving and advancing their skills sets by remaining open minded and attending the necessary skills development programmes that are arranged for them. This allows them to become critical and innovative thinkers (Burkus, 2010). The common traits noted amongst the participants was that they had to have the urge to learn new things about the technologies around them. They had to work on their communication as well as interpersonal skills as this helped them communicate, interact, and understand their customers at an enhanced level.

4.2.2 Theme 2: Interpersonal Skills

This Theme reflected on Mumford's Skills Model of Leadership. The participants responses enabled us to look at their individual attributes, competencies, and leadership outcomes. The participants had to examine their skills and determine which skills needed to be improved and those skills that needed attained to survive this revolution. The skills that stood out were physical human interaction skills and people management skills. They required these skills to give their customers the type of experience they do not get from shopping online and that experience that is exclusive to physically being inside a store.

4.2.3 Theme 3: Adjusting to Technology

This Theme reflected on Katz' Three Skill Approach which focused on technical skills, human skills and conceptual skills, explained in chapter two. Here the research participants drew our attention to how important having the correct skills are which helps enable them to adjust easily to the modern and advanced technology. Without having any human or conceptual skills it is difficult to keep up to the expectations of customers and their experiences at the store and without the necessary technical skills employees in the retail environment can easily be replaced.

4.3 Trustworthiness and Rigor

Reliability and Validity are used in quantitative research as they deal with the Measurability and generalisability of the research results. The concepts reliability and validity ensure that the results of the study can be trusted (Middleton, 2019). In qualitative research this process refers to trustworthiness which is measured via:

- Credibility- refers to the accuracy with which the researcher interpreted the data that was provided by the participants. The researcher had spent approximately 45 minutes to an hour interviewing each research participant and carefully asked in-depth semi-structured, open ended questions to gain a better in rich understanding of the research participants perspectives. The other measure used to ensure credibility included the weekly debriefing between the researcher and their supervisor in the form of collaborate pod sessions.
- Transferability – looks at the ability of findings being applied to a similar situation which delivers the same results. Transferability refers to the degree in which the results and analysis can be applied beyond this research project specifically. To promote transferability, the researcher ensured that the research participants were strictly from the phenomenon being studied, that being employees impacted by the Fourth Industrial Revolution in the retail environment at the Liberty Midlands Mall. Purpose sampling in this research

enhanced transferability further, as the sample was representative of the retailers at the Liberty Midlands Mall.

- Dependability – is reflected through the research design and the implementation of the research design. Dependability was strengthened by the researcher through the researcher's analysis process which enabled other persons to follow the researcher's decision-making process.
- Confirmability – indicates the researcher's findings that are derived from the original data acquired by the researcher and not as a result from the researcher's imagination. Confirmability will be achieved through an 'audit trail' to ensure that the researcher obtained the data in a transparent manner that allows the observer to trace the steps and procedures followed in the research project.

Chapter Five

This final chapter concludes the research study by answering the research questions and offering recommendations in the form of ways employees can improve their skills sets to survive the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. This chapter will also address the anticipated contributions together along with the ethical implications and limitations of the study.

5.1 Summary of Findings

This section of the study identified employee skills sets that were impacted due to the Fourth Industrial Revolution as well as the processes and ways employees have had to enhance their skills to remain relevant in order to enable their stores to survive this impact. Due to the Fourth Industrial Revolution companies have had to consider the image their brands convey to the world and work to create cultures that match the consumers ever changing values and world views. Stores must evaluate new ways to use technology in their stores to differentiate themselves from other stores to survive this Revolution.

5.2 Implications of findings for future practices

This research study provides a framework for employees in the retail environment that are being impacted by the 4IR. The findings from this study provide other employees with information regarding ways they could improve their skills sets to survive the impact of this Fourth Industrial Revolution.

5.3 Contribution of study

This study will add value to employee's skills in the retail environment. The feedback shared by the employees will provide a deeper understanding on the methods and training they had undergone to improve their skillset to remain relevant in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. This study will further contribute to previous studies done on the

impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution on employee's skillset in the retail environment. Lastly, this study is expected to show the extent to which employees have to improve their skills to remain relevant through which other employees can use to advance their skills by learning the knowledge shared by those that participated in this study.

5.4 Ethical Considerations

Ethics is a fundamental consideration in this research conducted, together with its findings. It is the responsibility of the researcher to analyse the role and impact on the research process and the results (Glesne, 1999). For this research study the researcher carefully considered the ethical issues to ensure that the research study was ethically conducted. The stakeholders of this research study were the participants, the researcher, and the Liberty Midlands Mall at which the research took place. The researcher ensured that the information provided by the participants is kept safely and confidentially by password protecting the folder on a laptop as well as password protecting access to Google drive.

With this type of research, there is a big responsibility to be sensitive towards participants and their opinions and responses. The study will ensure sensitivity and respect towards participants by:

- Stating that the participation in this study is voluntary
- By having respondents complete a consent form once participation is confirmed.
- Being always being objective.
- By not causing the respondent any stress, humiliation, and discomfort at any point in time.
- Ensuring that anonymity is guaranteed and that responses will be treated as confidential
- Stating the aim of the study before questions are administered (Creswell, 2016).

Ethical considerations are concerned with the falsifying and editing of data to reflect an intended or specific outcome. The researcher ensured that the research was

conducted in a transparent manner, which will enable another researcher to follow the same methodology and arrive at similar findings. This eliminates the possibility of the researcher falsifying any information. The researcher only used the data collected for this research, and for no other reasons whatsoever.

5.5 Limitations

Limitations refer to the constraints that the researcher has no control over, and the researcher acknowledges that limitations were encountered during the study. Due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic, the interviews could not be conducted Face-to Face and therefore the interviewer could not view the interviewees facial discomfort/expressions etc. These interviews had to be conducted via Zoom and telephonically over calls.

Another limitation of the research study is the sample size. The research study is limited to the Liberty Midlands Mall only due to time constraints as well as the Coronavirus outbreak. The sample is therefore limited to the retail stores trading at the Liberty Midlands Mall only. For a more comprehensive and wider insight more than one shopping centre would have been ideal. This limitation was caused due to environmental factors such as lockdown restrictions with limited movement for the study, and the researcher had a due date for the assignment.

There will be a limitation on the amount of information the researcher can collect due to the length of the study. The researcher was given a due date for research proposal and the interviews occurred after the methodology was completed, therefore the researcher only had approximately 1 month to collect data, which limits the amount of information that the researcher could collect.

5.6 Conclusion

This research study has answered the question of how employees in the retail environment are going about to ensure the relevance of their skills sets within the context of the 4IR as research the research participants agreed that personal human interaction cannot be replaced by technology and that the main purpose of maintaining customer loyalty is to serve and treat customers the way they want to be treated in. This makes them want to come back to the store for that customer experience once again as customers now also seek a more engaging experience. The only way employees can help their stores survive this Revolution is by creating engrossing experiences for their customers as shoppers are now benefitting from interacting with the product in person. The latest trends in retail are driven by a combination of an evolving technological landscape and the shifting preferences of consumers. By embracing these trends and preparing for the, retailers can use 2020 as another positive opportunity to grow.

References

Andersson, N., 2014. *Categorising Data Analysis*. [Online]

Available at:

[https://www.researchgate.net/post/Can anyone explain how to define code category and theme](https://www.researchgate.net/post/Can_anyone_explain_how_to_define_code_category_and_theme)

Armstrong, K., 2018. *Global Business - Deloitte*. [Online]

Available at:

<https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/global/Documents/About-Deloitte/gx-preparing-tomorrow-workforce-for-4IR.pdf>

Burkus, D., 2010. *Skills Theory*. [Online]

Available at: <https://davidburkus.com>

Cantrell, 2001. *Research Methodology and Design*. In: s.l.:s.n.

Creswell, J., 2016. *First Steps in Research*. Pretoria : Van Schaik Publishers.

Creswell, J. W., 2016. *First Steps in Research*. Pretoria : Van Schaik Publishers .

Crossman, A., 2020. *Purpose Sampling*. [Online]

Available at: <https://research-methodology.net>

Dhaou.B.S & Manda.M., 2019. *Responding to the challenges and opportunities in the 4th Industrial revolution in developing countries*. Australia: s.n.

du Plooy - Cilliers, F., 2014. *Research Matters*. Claremont : Juta and Company Limited .

Garreta, R., n.d. *WordCloud Generator by MonkeyLearn*. [Online]

Available at: <https://monkeylearn.com/word-cloud/result>

Glesne, C., 1999. *Becoming qualitative Researchers*. Volume 2.

Joshi, N., 2019. *How The Retail Sector Will Transform In The Fourth Industrial Revolution*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.allerin.com/blog/retail-4-0->

Kamaruzaman, F. & Rasul, M., 2019. Conceptual framework for the development of 4IR skills for engineering graduates. *Global Journal of Engineering Education*,, 21(1).

Lombard, C., 2013. *Three Skills Approach*. [Online]

Available at: <https://sites.psu.edu>

Marr, B., 2018. *What The Fourth Industrial Revolution Will Mean For Careers*.

[Online]

Available at: <https://www.forbes.com>

Martin, C. a. L. H., 2017. Technology and Innovation for the future of production: Accelerating Value Creation. *World Economic Forum*, Volume 1.

McGivern, Y., 2013. *The Practice of Market Research*. 4th ed. United Kingdom: Pearson Education Limited.

Metropolitan, N. M., 2015. The importance of skills development. *Business Essentials*.

Meyer, L., 2019. Concepts around the Fourth Industrial Revolution. *Advancement at Boston City Campus and Business College*, 1(1).

Middleton, F., 2019. *Measuring Reliability*. [Online]

Available at: www.scribbr.com

[Accessed 3 July 2019].

Mumford, M., 2000. Leadership Skills: Leadership skills for a changing world. In: *The Leadership Quarterly*. s.l.:s.n., pp. 11-35.

Naidoo, C., 2019. Analysis of the 4th Industrial Revolution towards planning of the Retail sector in South Africa. *Regenerates Syndicate Group*, Issue 1.

Ojansivu, J., 2019. Fourth Industrial Revolution with Rising Generations Creating Demands on Better Workplaces. 1(1).

Payle, C., 2020. *Essential skills for the 4th Industrial Revolution*. [Online]

Available at: skillsportal.co.za

Picken, F., 2016. *The future of jobs: employment, skills and workforce strategy for the fourth industrial revolution*, Geneva, Switzerland: World Economic Forum.

Pillay, N., 2019. Industry 4.0 and its impact on skills development: A South African Perspective. *Research gate* , 1(1).

Renjen, P., 2018. Preparing tomorrow's workforce for the Fourth Industrial Revolution. September, pp. 3-58.

University, N. M. M., 2015. The importance of skills development. *Business Essentials*.

Virkus, S., 2013. *Mumford et al Skills Model*. [Online]

Available at: <https://sites.psu.edu>

Annexures

A. Information sheet for participants

To whom it may concern,

My name is Sariksha Ramlall, and I am currently completing my Bachelor of Commerce Honours in Management at Varsity College Pietermaritzburg. I am completing my dissertation under the supervision of Dr. Hennie Pelser. The topic of my research study is, the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution on the survival of Employee skill set in the Retail Environment. The aim of this research study is to determine, how employees in the retail industry are preparing themselves in terms of their skill sets for the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution in the retail market. This research study will be used to determine how employees are positioning themselves for this impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution in the Retail Environment. This study will show the various ways in which employees are consistently improving their skills, to secure their jobs in this Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Therefore, I would like to invite you to participate in my research study. The research conducted in this study is guided by the Independent Institute of Education's ethical guidelines which upholds and ensures the participants right to confidentiality and anonymity. The researcher will follow the ethical guidelines when formulating the questions and conducting the interviews.

To explain to you what your participation in this study involves, I have formulated questions that I will answer so that you can make an informed decision regarding your voluntary participation in this study. Once you have read and understood all the

information, and are willing to participate in this study, please complete and sign the consent form below.

What will I be doing if I participate in your study?

I would like to invite you to participate in my study because you are an employer/employee of the retail environment that is part of the fourth industrial revolution, and you therefore fit the population parameters of the study. I would like to interview you regarding how the Fourth Industrial Revolution has impacted your skillset as an employee.

As the interviewee, you can decide whether to participate in this study, and you can withdraw at any time or decide not to answer the interview questions.

Are there any risks involved in participating in this study?

Whether or not you choose to participate in this study, there will be no negative impact on you. If you find at any stage that you are uncomfortable with the line of questioning, you may withdraw or refrain from answering any question.

Do I have to participate in the study?

- Your inclusion in this study is completely voluntary.
- Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without explanation.
- If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right to do so.

Will my identity be protected?

Prior to the conducting of the research interviews, the researcher was permitted to conduct research on employers/employees in the retail environment in which the identity of the interviewee will be protected and remain anonymous. I would like to ask your permission to record the interviews, but only myself and the supervisor will have

access to the recordings. I would like to use direct quotes when discussing my findings, however your name and details will be withheld.

What will happen to the information I provide?

Once I have completed the interviews, I will write summaries to be included in my research report, which is a requirement to complete my Bachelor of Commerce Management Honours. Upon request, I will email a copy to you if you so wish.

What happens if I have more questions about the study?

Please feel free to contact myself or my supervisor if you have any additional questions or concerns about participating in this study. You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed.

Should you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or my supervisor.

Sariksha Ramlall

Hennie

Pelser

Thank you for your time reading this, and I look forward to your contribution in this research study.

Kind Regards,

Sariksha Ramlall

B. Consent form for participants

I, _____, hereby agree to participate in the research study conducted by Sariksha Ramlall, as part of her research dissertation under the Independent Institute of Education and Varsity College.

The research topic and aims have been explained to me and I fully understand what my participation in this study will involve. I agree to the following terms:

1. I agree to be interviewed by the researcher.
2. My responses will be used for the research study, although my personal details will be kept confidential and private.
3. I may be directly quoted when the research is published, however my identity will be hidden.
4. I may choose to not answer any of the questions in the interview.
5. My participation in the study is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw at any given moment without repercussions.

Signature:

_____/_____/_____
Date:

C. Consent for audio-recording

I, _____ hereby consent to Sariksha Ramlall audio-recording the interview as part of the research study on the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution on the survival of Employee skill set in the Retail Environment

The research process has been explained to me and I understand the purpose of the audio-recording of the interview. I understand the following:

- 1) My confidentiality is of utmost importance. My personal details will be withheld.
- 2) The researcher and research supervisors will be the only person/s with access to the audio-recordings.
- 3) The audio-recordings will be stored on a password protected folder on the researcher's laptop.

Signature

____/____/____
Date

D. Interview questions

- How do you as an employee / employer ensure your skills are current and relevant.
- Looking towards the future what new skills do you believe you have to acquire.
- What processes are you following to ready yourself and employees for the future.
- In what ways do you believe Artificial Intelligence will impact your work in the future? Positively and Negatively.
- What specifically have you done to deal with the potential impact of Artificial Intelligence?
- Has the Fourth Industrial Revolution impacted you and your store in a negative or positive way?
- Whom else should I visit to learn more about my questions?

E. Ethical Clearance Letter



17 July 2020

Student name: Sariksha Ramlall

Student number: 16009152

Campus: Varsity College: Pietermaritzburg

Re: Approval of BCom Honours in Management Proposal and Ethics Clearance

HONOURS ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

Your research proposal and the ethical implications of your proposed research topic were reviewed by your supervisor and the campus research panel, a subcommittee of The Independent Institute of Education's Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Your research proposal posed no significant ethical concerns and your supporting documents and instruments are to proceed. We hereby provide you with permission to proceed with your research. In the event of you deciding to change your research methodology in any way, kindly consult your supervisor to ensure all ethical considerations are adhered to and pose no risk to any participant or party involved. A revised ethical clearance letter will be issued.

We wish you all the best with your research!

GENERAL CONDITIONS TO BE FULFILLED IN RELATION TO RESEARCH

Permission is granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met and may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted.

Please note: The panel has not considered the merits, accuracy, or ethical soundness of the research. The only merits examined are the use of The IIE as a sample.

Permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The researcher will need to obtain informed consent in writing from all the participants in their sample if the study is not anonymous.
2. The researcher may only use the data collected for research purposes and in no other way.
3. Photographs of human subjects may only be taken if relevant to the research, informed consent was obtained, and even with informed consent, the photographs may not be published on any online platforms.
4. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising their own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes, and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
5. No names or identifying information of participants may be used within the research and the research must be voluntary.
6. Please make it clear that the information will not be used punitively in any way and participants may in no way be counselled/advised based on this.

Supervisor: Dr HJ Pelser

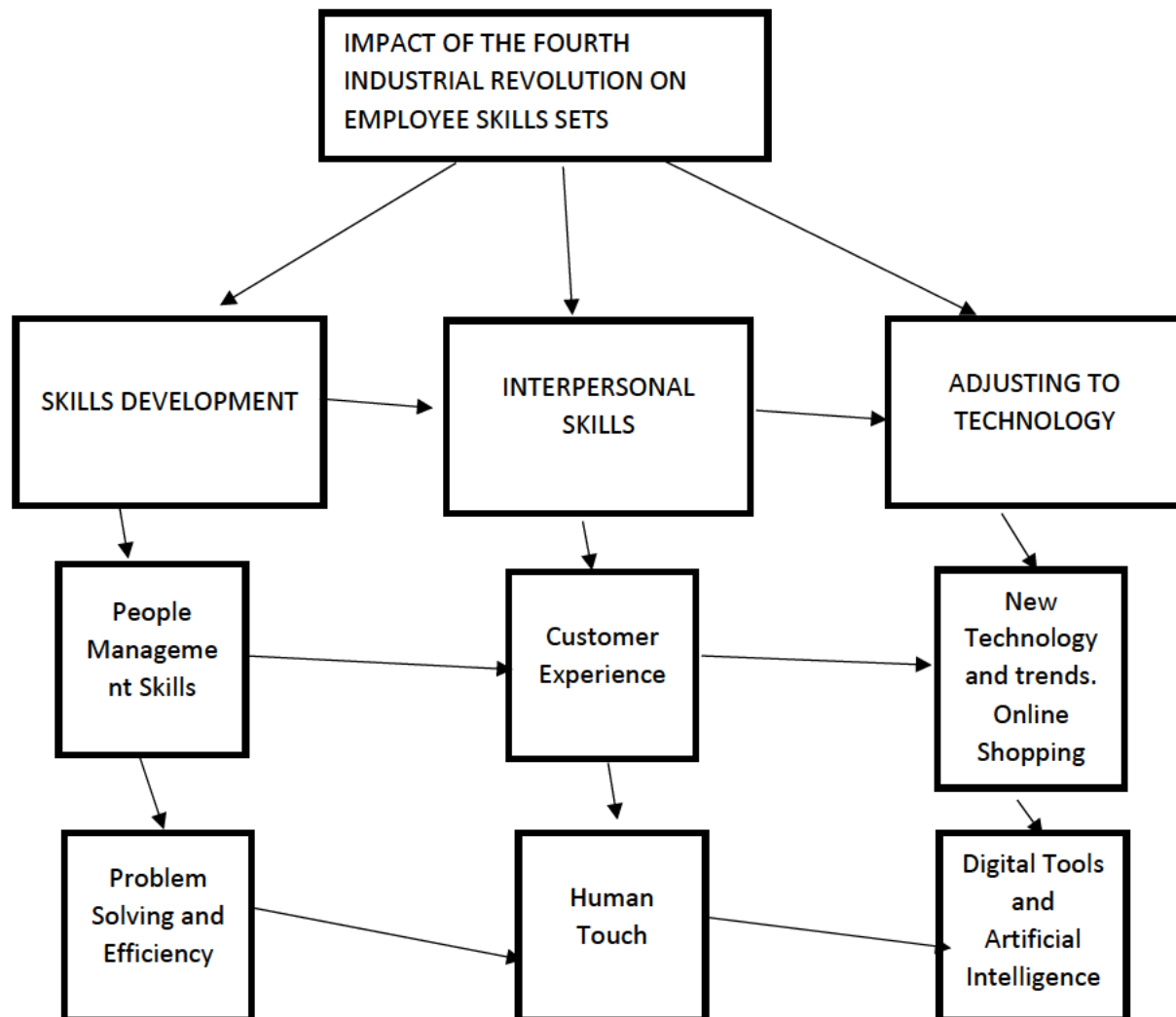
Campus Postgraduate Coordinator (CPC): Dr HJ Pelser

Research Purpose/ Objective	Primary Research Question	Research Rationale	Seminal Authors/ Sources	Literature Review – Conceptual Framework	Paradigm	Approach	Data Collection Method(s)	Ethics	Anticipated Findings	References
<i>The purpose of this research study is to determine how employees in the retail environment preparing themselves in terms of their skillsets for the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution in the retail market .</i>	<i>What is the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution on employees' skill sets in the Retail Environment?</i>	This research is worth conducting as there are various factors that have contributed to the steady growth of the retail sector however, one of the main factors responsible is the rise of digitization and modern technology, which has now led to the birth of retail 4.0	<i>Andersson, N. Creswell, J. W McGivern, Y</i>	Theme 1: <i>Skill set required by employees in the Fourth Industrial Revolution</i> Theme 2: <i>Skills development Theory</i> Theme 3: <i>Katz three skill approach</i>	This research study will be based on an interpretivist paradigm and is linked to a qualitative study through which an in – depth understanding of the challenges faced by employees in the retail environment are facing due to the Fourth Industrial Revolution	<i>Qualitative</i> <i>Population</i> <i>Retail stores at the Liberty Midlands Mall</i>	<i>Qualitative interviews</i> <i>Open ended and structured questions</i>	<i>1) Voluntary Participation</i> <i>2) Completing Consent forms</i> <i>3) Always being objective</i> <i>4) Ensuring Anonymity</i> <i>5) Stating the aim of the study before the questions are asked</i>	<i>This Research study will contribute to the body of Knowledge by reflecting the effect and impact the Fourth Industrial Revolution has on retailers as well as the Skill Sets of employees that had to change in order to prepare for this Fourth Industrial Revolution.</i>	<i>Andersson, N. Creswell, J. W McGivern, Y</i>
Research Problem	Secondary Questions/ Hypotheses/ Objectives	Key Concepts	Key Theories	Theme 4: <i>Mumford's skills model of leadership</i>		Sampling	Data Analysis Method(s)	Limitations	Anticipated Contribution	
<i>The Fourth Industrial Revolution has brought about employees having to reconsider their skill sets to survive in the retail environment. The Fourth Industrial Revolution has caused employees skillset to become irrelevant which has resulted in the uncertainty of the skills required by employees, to survive this revolution in the retail environment.</i>	<i>How drastically has employee Skill sets must change to minimize the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution on the Retail Environment. ?</i>	1) Skills Development 2) Skills Required by employees in the 21st Century 3) Leadership	1) The skills development theory 2) Katz' three skill approach 3) Mumford's Skills model of Leadership 4) The three -skill approach (Technical, Human, and conceptual)	Theme 5: <i>The three - skill approach</i>		1) Non - Probability Sampling 2) Purpose Sampling 3) Snowball Sampling 4) Convenience sampling	1) Category Construction 2) Sorting Categories 3) Naming Categories 4) Deciding the number of categories	Not all Retailers will be honest about the measures they have put in place to overcome the effect of the Fourth Industrial Revolution	<i>This Research study will contribute to the body of Knowledge by reflecting the effect and impact the Fourth Industrial Revolution has on retailers as well as the Skill Sets of employees that had to change in order to prepare for this Fourth Industrial Revolution.</i>	

F. Word Cloud of transcripts



G. Thematic Map



H. Originality report