Distance Learning Students' Graduateness as Predictors of Their Job Satisfaction and Optimism about Future Career Prospects

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ABSTRACT This study explored whether individuals' graduateness skills and attributes (measured by the Graduateness Scale) significantly predict their job satisfaction and optimism about their future career prospects, and whether race and gender groups differ significantly regarding these variables. A random sample of 272 adults employed in the South African service industry and registered as distance learning students in the economic and management sciences field at a South African open distance learning higher education institution participated in the study. A quantitative survey design was used. Multiple regression analyses indicated enterprising skills as a significant predictor of the participants' job satisfaction. Continuous learning orientation and presenting and applying information skills significantly predicted the participants' optimism regarding their future career prospects. The race and gender groups differed significantly regarding their graduateness skills and attributes, with Indians scoring higher than the other race groups, and females scoring higher than their male counterparts. The new knowledge obtained may be used to inform organisational training and development and higher educational curriculum design practices concerned with optimising the graduateness of employees in their role as students and lifelong learners in a knowledge-driven global business economy.