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GJSD. Sharing today. Shaping tomorrow.

In a world where change is constant and challenges arise unexpectedly, the need for adaptable, forward-thinking leaders and a resilient workforce is more critical than ever. As we journey through this unpredictable landscape, the GILE Journal of Skills Development (GJSD) remains dedicated to fostering conversations on how education and skills development can evolve to meet these pressing demands.

We are proud to announce that, due to an exceptional volume of high-quality submissions in 2024, we are publishing an additional issue this year - *Volume 4, Issue 3*. This issue is centred on the critical themes of workforce agility, leadership, and decision-making in response to the pressures posed by a VUCA environment. It brings together diverse perspectives that offer fresh insights into how individuals and organisations can adapt, grow, and lead in this rapidly changing world.

The Guest Column titled *Differentiating Grapes from Wine: The Education-To-Work Transition* was written by **William E. Donald and Michael Healy**. This article provides a reflective and metaphorical discussion of the education-to-work transition, emphasising the need for scholars across graduate employability and career development fields to use terminology consistently. They propose that education-to-work transition acts as the umbrella term, encompassing school-to-work transition, university-to-work transition, and vocational training-to-work transition as distinct sub-types.

Shifting towards a more industry-specific focus, **Siyabonga Sirayi, Vusumzi Msuthwana, and Noxolo Mazibuko** present their paper *Developing Managerial Framework to Cultivate Critical Skills in the South African Automotive Retail Industry*. This article introduces practical frameworks for managerial skills development in a sector known for its rapid changes, illustrating how theoretical concepts of agility and leadership can be applied in real-world contexts.

On the more personal side of leadership, **Bianca Briciu**'s article *The Inner Leader in Transformative Leadership: Personal Transformation through Trauma Integration and Spiritual Development* explores the deep internal processes that shape transformative leaders. Her work offers a compelling look at how trauma integration and spiritual growth can empower leaders to thrive in a VUCA environment, highlighting the importance of a healthy relationship to oneself, the first dimension of the Inner Development Goals.

Next, **Ben Archer**'s paper *A Future in the Past: Career Opportunities for Australian History Graduates* explores how educational backgrounds traditionally viewed as non-vocational, such as history, can foster critical thinking and adaptability. His work links the value of a broad educational foundation to workforce agility, reinforcing the importance of diverse skills in an uncertain environment.

Continuing the discussion of skill development, early-career researcher **Stuart Evans**, in his paper *Maintaining Skill Development in Newly Qualified Physical Education Teachers: Mentorship After Graduation*, underscores the importance of mentorship for newly qualified professionals. His research highlights how mentorship supports leadership development and workforce agility by providing the continuous guidance necessary to navigate early professional challenges.

Ian Fellows offers a timely review in his paper *What the Literature Tells Us About the Transition of Second-Career Academics into Higher Education*. By focusing on individuals transitioning from other professions into academia, the Author discusses how higher education institutions can better support second-career academics, facilitating their skill development and integration into the academic workforce and what individuals should do to mitigate issues that are commonly faced.

We close with a "food for thought" article that addresses the balance between employability and well-being, particularly for Generation Z. **Ponn P. Mahayosnand and S M Sabra**, authors of the paper, *Generation Z: Increasing Self-Perceived Employability and Well-being through Serious Leisure*, advocate for the inclusion of "deep leisure" in education and career preparation, underscoring the importance of mental health in long-term professional success and well-being.

Before concluding, I want to take a moment to sincerely thank the incredible GJSD editorial team who make this journal possible. Their dedication, passion, and willingness to go above and beyond are the driving forces behind each journal issue. Despite the challenges and time commitments, their hard work continues to elevate the quality and impact of our journal. I am deeply grateful for all the effort you have invested in bringing this issue to life.

As we conclude this issue, I encourage you to dive into the articles with curiosity and reflection. The diverse perspectives shared by our contributors offer fresh ideas and practical insights that are sure to spark new conversations in the fields of education, leadership, and workforce development.

We hope this issue leaves you feeling inspired and informed, ready to apply these insights to your own work or research.

Thank you for being part of our community. We look forward to continuing this important dialogue with you in the next issue, and as always, we wish you a rewarding and insightful reading experience.

Warm regards,

Dr habil. Judit Beke

Dr habil. Judit Beke is the Editor-in-Chief at GJSD

GILE Journal of Skills Development

Differentiating Grapes from Wine:
The Education-To-Work Transition

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Abstract

There is a growing interest in connecting the literature on graduate employability, career development, and worker employability. However, inconsistent terminology across these fields poses a challenge. This essay focuses on the term 'school-to-work transition'. In career development and worker employability literature, it often refers to the movement from all stages of schooling into the labour market, while in graduate employability literature it is understood to only refer to the transition from secondary school into the labour market. To illustrate this issue, we use a metaphor comparing grapes to wine. Consequently, we propose 'education-to-work transition' as an overarching term, with various subcategories specific to secondary and tertiary education.

Keywords/key phrases: career development, graduate employability, school-to-work transition, university-to-work transition, vocational training-to-work transition, worker employability.

1. Setting The Scene

The literature on graduate employability and career development has developed independently with limited interaction (Healy et al., 2022). This has led to the 'jingle-jangle fallacy' where different researchers use different terminology for the same concept. One key example, and the focus of this essay, is the phrase 'school-to-work transition'. Offering alternative terminology can bridge the graduate employability and career development fields, and address calls for closer integration of the graduate and worker employability literature (Akkermans et al., 2024).

2. Defining The Problem

In graduate employability literature, 'university-to-work transition' refers to university students becoming graduates and entering the labour market (e.g., Donald et al., 2024; Healy, 2023; Okay-Somerville & Scholarios, 2017). In contrast, these scholars understand 'school-to-work transition' as specifically referring to secondary school students transitioning into the workforce. However, in the career development and worker employability literature, 'school-

to-work transition' encompasses movement into the labour market from schooling in its broadest sense, including all forms of secondary or tertiary education (e.g., Blokker et al., 2023; Lo Presti et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2023). The term 'university-to-work transition' does appear in the career development literature, but typically in works where the authors also publish in higher education journals (e.g., Donald et al., 2022). Additionally, in some countries (e.g., Hungary) the term 'school' is colloquially used to refer to 'university'.

To clarify, consider this metaphor. In the initial process of growing grapes, the outcome is grapes, which we use to represent secondary school students transitioning into the labour market after finishing their studies. Some red and white grapes are fermented to make wine, representing students entering university or vocational training and subsequently entering the labour market. When a friend says they will bring you grapes, you expect grapes, not wine. However, using 'school-to-work transition' in career development and worker employability literature often confuses graduate employability scholars, akin to expecting grapes but receiving either grapes, red wine, or white wine. To be clear, we are not suggesting that grapes, white wine or red wine are inherently better or worse than the other, purely that they are distinct.

3. Alternative Terminology

Given the problematic nature of 'school-to-work transition' as an all-encompassing term, what can we use instead to enable researchers from different fields to empower students for sustainable careers (Donald & Mouratidou, 2022) and sustainable career development (Shtaltovna et al., 2024)? We propose 'education-to-work transition' as an overarching term, with 'school-to-work transition', 'university-to-work transition', and 'vocational training-to-work transition' corresponding to the transition from secondary or tertiary education into the labour market, respectively as subcategories. Figure 1 offers a visual representation.

Figure 1. Education-to-work transition
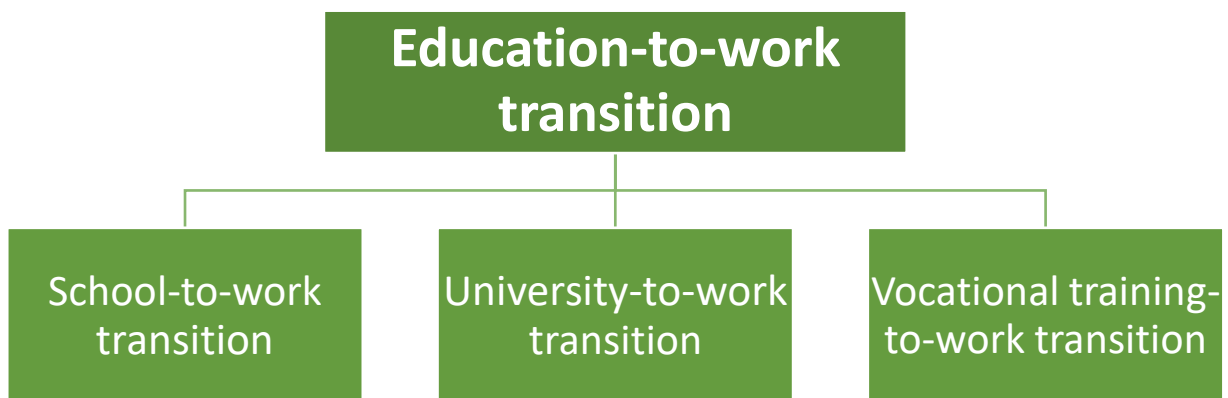
Source: Author's Own Creation, 2024

4. Conclusion

In this essay, we differentiated grapes from wine by suggesting 'education-to-work transition' as an inclusive term, encompassing 'school-to-work transition', 'university-to-work transition' and 'vocational training-to-work transition'. This distinction helps address calls to bridge the graduate employability, worker employability, and career development literature (Akkermans et al., 2024; Healy et al., 2022). In the spirit of collegiality, we acknowledge the valuable contributions of scholars like Blokker and colleagues (2023) in the fields of career development and worker employability. Rather than sew division, we seek common ground to overcome the 'jingle-jangle fallacy' and foster interdisciplinary collaborations.

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Developing Managerial Framework to Cultivate Critical Skills in The South African Automotive Retail Industry

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to develop managerial framework that could be utilised to cultivate critical skills in the automotive retail industry. This would be achieved by providing a comprehensive literature overview regarding skills development strategies including life-long learning, apprenticeship, and mentorship programmes. The study utilised a qualitative research methodology. Data are collected through face-to-face interviews using an interrogation technique. Data collection process was done in participants' natural settings, enabling the researcher to develop new knowledge, and understanding of strategic tools that can be utilised to promote skills development of technicians for the automotive retail industry. The findings reveal a strong collaboration between non-technical and technical high schools as well as technical colleges is essential to ensure the quality of skills development in the automotive retail industry is improved, and thereby improve the market pool of skilled young technicians.

Keywords: skills development; education; life-long learning; apprenticeship; mentorship

1. Introduction

The automotive industry is considered as one of the most technologically advanced industries in South Africa (Alfaro et al., 2012) and a focal point for innovation and job creation (Mateus et al., 2014). The South African automotive industry has thus motivated global motor vehicle manufacturers to grant production contracts to South African factories (Sturgeon & Van Biesebroeck, 2011). As a result, this global investment has made the South African automotive industry one of the greatest contributors to the country's GDP.

The automotive retail sector has been one of the best performing industries within the South African automotive industry, and since 1995, the value added by automotive retail grew at an average of 5% per annum (Ambe & Badenhorst-Weiss, 2013). Since this industry is such an important part of the South African economy, any challenges such as the skills development of a young workforce for sustainable future succession planning, which has a potential to disrupt its growth, innovation and advancement, require attention.

Skills development in South Africa is at the heart of government policy and facilitated by government departments (Skinner, 2018) such as the Departments of Labour (DoL) and Education (DoE) (Balwanz & Ngcwangu, 2016). Hence, Vettori (2018) argues that although the DoL has clearly outlined its objectives for skills development, there are still certain challenges that are faced by the South African industries including the automotive retail industry, and the nature of work that require high quality lifelong learning programmes, remain unchanged (Barchiesi, 2019; Vettori, 2018). Therefore, this study sought to make a positive contribution by ultimately providing strategic managerial tools that can be used to resolve these challenges.

2. Problem Investigated

Skills development is described by Taylor (2016) as the process of identifying a skills gap and developing strategies to fill in the skills gap using formal, non-formal and informal modes of skills development. As Daniels (2007) reveals, one of the challenges facing the automotive industry in South Africa is the shortage of critical skills in the field of engineering such as electrical and mechanical technicians and the shortage of these skills gives an idea that the demand for certain critical skills exceeds supply. Mori and Stroud (2021) add that skills shortages are because of the challenges that are faced by the available skills programmes such as vocational education and training (VET) and sector education training authorities (SETAs). These skills programmes struggle to set new training requirements that will fit the current skills demand with the advancement of new technology. Wolfs, Hargreaves and Saha (2007), as well as Daniels (2007) identify the gaps in the area of engineering for electrical and mechanical technicians as some of the critical skills requirements in the automotive retail industry. In addition, the fourth industrial revolution (4IR) has set the bar high with innovation and advancement of technology in vehicles, and this in turn has led to higher demands for critical skills in the automotive industry (Ilesanmi et al., 2019). Therefore, to remain competitive and meet market demands, organisations must attract the right people with relevant skills that are aligned with the 4IR (Simon & Ferhatovic, 2016). Against this background, the question guiding this study is: *What strategic managerial tools that could be utilised by automotive retail sector to assist cultivate critical skills?*

3. Literature Review

3.1. Skills Development Strategies

South Africa is the biggest and most advanced developing country in Africa in technology and innovation in the automotive industry (Chigbu & Nekhwevha, 2020). Skills development is at the core of the South African automotive industry to assist in developing and equipping young people with critical skills that can contribute to the industry's growth and sustainability (Mendes & Machado, 2015). Particularly, Sector Education and Training Authorities such as the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority (merSETA), have played a major role in developing and equipping employees in the automotive industry (Kraak, 2008).

The Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority (LGSETA) is one of the country's 21 SETAs, which are responsible for facilitating skills development in their respective industries in compliance with the rules as set by the Skills Development Act of 1998 (Van Den Heever et al.,

2021). However, when the key characteristics of South Africa's post-school skills development system are examined against the Covid-19 pandemic and the fourth industrial revolution (4IR), it appears that the system is failing to equip the workforce for the new world of work (Van Den Heever et al., 2021). The system for example, is still preparing students for the market that prevailed fifty years ago (Malik & Venkatraman, 2017). This is one of the challenges that is addressed by skills development strategies such as those of the merSETA although lack of funding to support skills development initiatives remains the biggest challenge in South Africa.

Competition in a global market, is difficult and countries require not only superior technical and vocational capabilities (Khojasteh Pour, 2018), but also a flexible workforce capable of adapting to quick demand shifts (Fragapane et al., 2022). Globally, businesses that lack supply of quality and trained workers, experience a fundamental impediment to their expansion (Johari & Jha, 2019). Therefore, employers all over the world are require new workers to possess both technical and soft skills. Hence, education systems must be geared toward developing young people with strong basic as well as job-specific skills (Maisiri, Darwish & Van Dyk, 2019). Similar to Europe, there are three forms of education in South Africa: namely, formal, non-formal and informal education (Grajcevci & Shala, 2016).

3.1.1. Formal Education

Formal education has been and still utilised as a strategy to contribute to skills development of young people around the globe (Erim & Caferoglu, 2017). Rogers (2019) states that formal education is closely linked to schools and training institutions. Online assessment training modules aim to develop and support graduates in developing a technological mindset that can stimulate knowledge, practical experience, and innovation in the 4IR (Radville et al., 2022), are part of the modern formal education offered by both public and private institutions. According to Markowitsch and Helfler (2019) a robust automotive industry in Europe is built on a regulatory environment that is both supportive and enabling, as well as the foundations of a highly qualified workforce through formal education. Vocational Education and Training (VET) and universities which form part of a formal education strategy, update their programmes by often collaborating with the European automotive industry to better prepare young graduates with critical skills (Li & Pilz, 2023). Therefore, formal education seems to be a traditional strategy for skills development, and it remains amongst the most powerful tools to upskill and equip young people for the automotive industry.

Despite the lack of sufficiently critically skilled workers, vocational schools, colleges, academic and industry cooperation are all still the essential strategies for competence to assist the automotive industry to find better qualified and skilled workers (Oviawe et al., 2017). However, the most common strategies to develop and equip young people with critical skills in any industry are on-the-job training and outsourcing training from universities and research institutes to engineering consultancy companies (Grugulis et al., 2019). Furthermore, automotive manufacturers and retailers have their own internal academic and training centres as part of their skills development strategies for the entire internal workforce including young people who aspire to work in the automotive industry (Krzywdzinski, 2017). Internal training activities, ranging from on-the-job training to mentoring and internal courses, are organised by more than two-thirds of mid to larger organisations (including at least half of SMEs) (Becker & Bish, 2017). Therefore, collaboration between VET and universities and the automotive industry is key to developing skills that can be aligned with the changes in the automotive industry.

3.1.2. Non-formal Education

Non-formal education is related to community and various organisations (Grajcevci & Shala, 2016) and has become a popular strategy for skills development (Pavlinek, 2020). According to Harris and Wihak (2018), non-formal education is adaptable in terms of curricula and methods, however, learning in these environments is not random, rather, it is planned and managed. Harris and Wihak (2018) as well as Grajcevci and Shala (2016) further maintain that during non-formal education, the needs and interests of the students are prioritised through this skills development strategy, and there is no time limit. Additionally, Norqvist and Leffler (2017) point out that there is substantially less contact between students and trainers, and most of the learning occurs outside of class and institutions with practical learning experience. This implies that non-formal education is based on practical training and therefore quick to respond to the changes of the working environment in terms of skills requirements from various industries including the automotive industry (Wochowska, 2015). Therefore, non-formal education helps young unemployed people seeking their first job in the automotive industry or other industries, or those with minimal professional experience, demonstrate and sell their skills and competencies obtained in diverse contexts. Hille (2016) affirms that non-formal education remains the instrumental strategy for skills development. Therefore, the utilisation of non-formal education remains the instrument for practical experience rather than theoretical knowledge.

3.1.3. Informal Education

According to Boykov and Goceva (2019), informal education refers to the process of obtaining skills and knowledge anywhere and with anybody; including at home; on the road; with peers; with children; while watching television; listening to the radio; talking with friends and engaging with co-workers from various departments, hence it is casual, unexpected, supplementary, incidental education to some level (Grajcevci & Shala, 2016), while Gross and Rutland (2017) assert that it is also experiential learning that is not planned and structured in terms of training goals and time. Thus, self-learning and its personal impact on informal education, enters the picture as a significant player. This means paying particular attention to the rapid changes in the knowledge society and the challenge of traditional academic courses to accommodate these changes (Chankseliani et al., 2016). There are numerous options to introduce informal education as a skills development strategy in a straightforward manner, more as a tool than as explicit curricula content for the purpose of upskilling workers and young people aspiring to work in the automotive industry (Diamond et al., 2016). Learning by doing is one of the ways that for acquiring various skills needed for the automotive industry (Van Poeck et al., 2020). This implies that engaging with colleagues and friends who have excellent skills in the automotive industry in a practical manner, can upskill one's skillset. This implies that informal education is a key strategic tool in acquiring and equipping employees with new critical skills that can be incorporated with the development of new technology and innovation for the automotive industry.

Structural changes in the European automotive, for example, industry brought awareness of an informal education strategy for other industries such as information, communication and technology (ICT) industries (Grodzicki & Skrzypek, 2020; Stolfa et al., 2020). This was especially true during the time of Covid-19 where most people utilised an informal education strategy to equip, reskill, upskill themselves in a casual manner that is not systematically planned. This trend was evident for automotive industry technicians who have been utilising the informal education strategy as a continuous way of training and transfer of knowledge and experience to young people who aspire to work as technicians in the automotive industry (Rymer et al., 2018). Although the informal education strategy involves informal and unplanned learning experiences, it made a massive difference during Covid-19 where several people

utilised this strategy to upskill themselves. Against this background, informal education could be utilised as a strategy for skills development in the automotive retail sector.

3.2. Life-long Learning, Apprenticeship and Mentorship Programmes

Ates and Alsal (2012) highlight that the best way to keep the quantity and quality of an active labour force, is to establish life-long learning systems starting from primary level, that has a potential to improve strategic skills development initiatives for the automotive retail industry, which ultimately increases the quantity and quality of critical technical skills in the labour market. However, to achieve this, there is a need for government intervention, such as ensuring the modification of merSETA policies (Petersen et al., 2016) that will be in line with strategic automotive skills development initiatives, whereby policy makers ensure that automotive retailers collaborate with schools starting from primary level.

By offering programs in vocational and technical education and training that give individuals industry-relevant skills and improve their employability, TVET colleges play a significant role in the development of people's skill sets. TVET colleges focus on practical, hands-on learning, preparing students for various careers and addressing the demand for skilled workers in specific sectors, thus contributing to economic growth and reducing unemployment (Mohamedbhai, 2015). To ensure continued support and the success of the collaborative project, the SETA's resource provider and consultant functions are emphasised in terms of the 1998 Skills Development Act (Maririmba, 2017; Petersen et al., 2016). SETAs such as the merSETA, are responsible for identifying and articulating skills requirements, introducing necessary education and training programmes, providing quality control and accreditation services and managing revenues from the skills development levy for the automotive industry (Nagalingam, 2017). Petersen et al. (2016) for example, state that, to address the shortage of recognised private education and training organisations in rural regions, the merSETA facilitates a collaborative arrangement between a local public TVET institution and a private training provider to manage an accredited trade test centre that produces critical skills for young technicians, mechanical and electrical engineers for South African automotive retailers.

Organisations require a young skilled workforce, and opportunities should be presented to young people for development (Cinque, 2016), which could be achieved through apprenticeship. According to Hanks, McGrew and Zessoules (2018), apprenticeship programmes provide on-the-job training together with classroom instructions. In this study, apprenticeship programmes refer to on-the-job apprentices who completed their studies at technical high school level and have interest in becoming qualified technicians in the automotive retail industry. Shola et al. (2019) assert that TVETs are in a better position to assist in the areas of skills enhancement. As a result, TVET colleges and technical high schools are acknowledged as a potential solution to improve the quality of skills development of technicians for the automotive retail industry.

4. Research Design and Methodology

4.1. Research Design Approach

This study adopted a qualitative research approach, while the logical approach was the deductive reasoning. The case study was chosen as the research methodology since it is both exploratory and descriptive. Face-to-face interviews were performed to collect data, which is done using an interrogation technique. Data collection process was done in participants' natural settings, enabling the researcher to develop new knowledge and understanding of strategic tools that can be utilised to promote skills development of technicians for the automotive retail industry.

4.2. Population, Sampling and Measuring Instrument

In this study, the population included 14 automotive retailers operating in the Nelson Mandela Bay area, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. Participants were principal dealers and service department managers of the selected automotive retailers. Purposive sampling was performed, which is a non-probability strategy based on the researcher's assessment. Because a qualitative sample size is usually small, criterion sampling was used, and the researcher was able to find, pick and fine-tuned information-rich examples linked to the phenomenon under enquiry.

4.3. Data Collection and Analysis

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from a sample of 10 principal dealers and service department managers. The empirical data collected was analysed utilising six phases of reflexive thematic analysis as recommended by Campbell *et al*. (2021) because it is theoretically flexible interpretive technique to qualitative data analysis that makes it easier to find and analyse patterns or themes in a set of data. Trustworthiness was tested to ensure the quality of data interpretation, where credibility, transferability and confirmability were among the criteria used. Conducting interviews with the principal dealers and service department managers of these automotive retailers provided a holistic view of the managerial guidelines that could be developed to cultivate critical skills in the automotive retail sector. For ethical reasons, anonymity was exercised to protest the identity of the participants and were give identification code of A to J.

5. Empirical Findings

5.1. Skills Development Strategies and Initiatives

There are two themes that were developed regarding skills development strategies and initiatives. These themes include strategic initiatives, and factors informed initiatives. They are presented and discussed with their codes in Table 1. below.

TABLE 1. SKILLS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES AND INITIATIVES

Themes	Codes
Strategic initiatives	• *Apprenticeship programmes*: According to Hanks et al (2018), apprenticeship programmes provide on-the-job training together with classroom instructions. In this study, apprenticeship programmes refer to on-the-job apprentices who completed their studies at technical high school level and have huge interest in becoming qualified technicians in the automotive retail industry. • *Bursary programme*: In the current study, the bursary programme is similar to an apprenticeship except that it is offered to employees who would like to further their studies at university or college while working for automotive retailers. • *Online training modules*: Online assessment training modules aim to develop and support graduates in developing a technological mindset that can stimulate knowledge, practical experience, and innovation in the fourth industrial revolution (Radville et al., 2022). In the current study, employees complete online module assessments every week to continuously develop new knowledge and skills that will stimulate innovation. • *Technical high schools*: Technical high schools make provision for the application of knowledge rather than theory.

	• *TVET colleges:* By offering programs in vocational and technical education and training that give individuals industry-relevant skills and improve their employability, TVET colleges play a significant role in the development of people's skill sets. TVET colleges focus on practical, hands-on learning, preparing students for various careers and addressing the demand for skilled workers in specific sectors, thus contributing to economic growth and reducing unemployment (Mohamedbhai, 2015). • *Universities:* Universities are essential for the development of talents because they offer a thorough education that blends theoretical learning with hands-on training, giving students the abilities required for their desired careers. • *Mentorship programmes:* The development of leadership abilities for those in positions of authority is greatly aided by supervisory and management training, which gives them the tools and information they need to lead teams and accomplish organizational objectives.
Factors informed initiatives	• *Scarcity of available relevant technical skills in the market*: Industries and organizations are significantly impacted by the lack of marketable appropriate technical skills, which limits their capacity to innovate and adjust to technological changes. • *Technology advancement in new vehicle models*: The automotive industry is rapidly changing because of technological developments in new vehicle models, necessitating the constant updating of technicians' skills and expertise to efficiently diagnose and repair these intricate systems.

Source: First author's own construction

The themes and codes presented in Table 1. above are based on strategic initiatives that are currently employed by automotive retailers. Strategic initiatives are described by Grigorievna et al. (2021) as well-thought-out organisational strategies that are tailored to achieve high-level sustainability and competitiveness. The factors that informed the development of these strategic initiatives are also presented in Table 1. above.

The reasons for the implementation of the above strategic initiatives are because of the scarcity of available relevant technical skills in the market and continuous technological improvement in new vehicle models every year. The participants stated that strong collaboration with local technical high schools and TVET colleges is encouraged to produce a sufficient pool of technical skills in the market. Furthermore, the participants highlighted that while the strategic initiatives are currently in place, there is still a need to improve these strategies to ensure the quality of skills development in the automotive retail industry. Below are some of the answers provided by the participants C and E:

"There is definitely a shortage of diagnostic technicians specifically that's on the electrical side. Another fact is shortage of African diagnostic technicians. So, from an employment equity point of view and market demand, there's definitely a lack of availability" (Participant C).

"So, what we do is we we've got a programme where we identify, we go to schools, we go to technical colleges, we introduce ourselves, and we then get guys to come in for interviews, we then place them within our apprenticeship programme, but the partnership or call it collaboration is not as strong as we would like it to be. I think the high schools and colleges do not encourage their students enough and that makes it difficult for us to get the relevant skills in the market" (Participant E).

The participants in the current study demonstrated an understanding of the skills development strategic initiatives that are currently in place in the automotive retail industry. Most of the participants were concerned that young people from technical high schools do not have much interest in becoming technicians; moreover, they regard it as a career that gets one dirty:

"*We need technical high schools to get more involved and try to encourage students to join the automotive retailers. We are really struggling the to get the young ones because they actually regard technician career as dirty job*" (Participant E).

"*With the number of interviews that I've been in, people are not always wanting to just work as a mechanic as we call it or technician, they want to do a nice office job. So, technical skills are quite scarce in the market*" (Participant I).

The participants also understand that there are university graduates with higher qualifications, but no practical skill. The requirement is not only having qualifications; it is about the desire and ability to do work. This view is supported by Participant D who stated that:

"*We need the entry level guide, the apprentice, the school, the guy that's interested in becoming a technician, and interested in having practical skills. In other words, somebody that hasn't just had a piece of paper. It one thing to have theory, but you have got to have the ability as well*" (Participant E).

The research participants also mentioned that skills development does not end at being a qualified technician; rather the development continues up to the supervisory and managerial level. They stated that even the experienced and qualified technicians are often sent to supervisory and management training every year to prepare them for managerial positions. Notably, Participants A and D stated that:

"*We go above and beyond the development of only being a qualified technician because I believe that development does not end. In other word, I mean, it is a continuous process. That is why we often send our experienced employees to supervisory and management training every year and I think so far, we have been getting positive feedback from the facilitators.*"

In summary, the study findings indicated that strong collaboration between non-technical and technical high schools as well as technical colleges is encouraged to ensure the quality of skills development in the automotive retail industry is improved, and thereby improve the market pool of skilled young technicians. This is supported by the work of Shola et al. (2019), who assert that TVETs are in a better position to assist in the areas of skills enhancement. As a result, TVET colleges and technical high schools are acknowledged as a potential solution to improve the quality of skills development of technicians for the automotive retail industry.

FIGURE 1. SUMMARY OF THE MANAGERIAL FRAMEWORK TO PROMOTE CRITICAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES
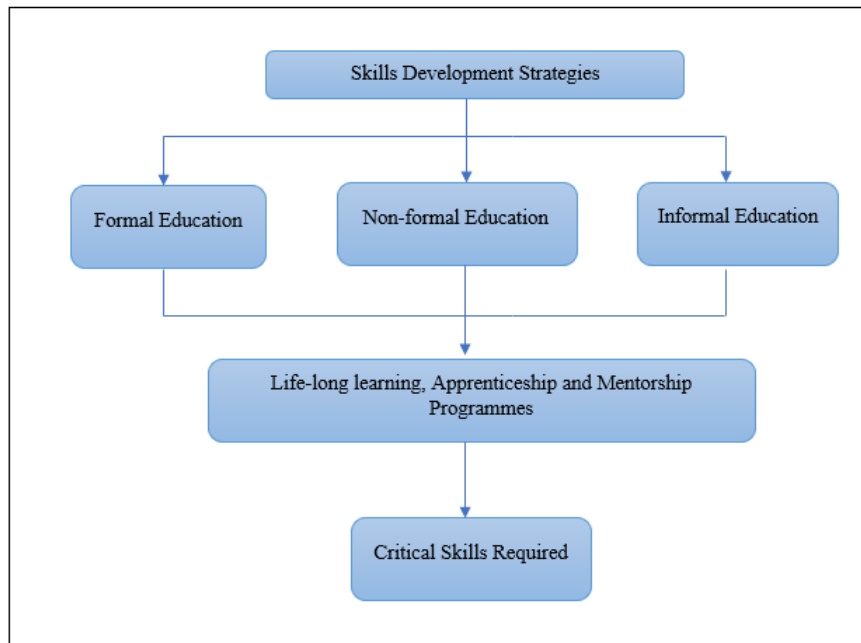
Source: First author's own construction

6. Discussion and Conclusion

The automotive retail industry should promote skills development by offering continuous training opportunities and workshops; these should focus on transferability of knowledge, transformation, and modern managerial styles. Skill development is a multifaceted concept that requires innovation; therefore, the automotive retail industry must not only rely on formal education but devise strategic alternatives to improve the quality of skills development by implementing both non-formal and informal education initiatives. These strategic alternatives could also include life-long learning programmes, apprenticeship, mentorship as well as collaboration with local non-technical and technical colleges and technical high schools. Therefore, government and the automotive retail industry should continuously work closely to monitor skills development across the sector. This could lead to a larger pool of young people showing interest in joining the automotive retail industry to become qualified technicians. Hence the study findings reveal how skills development strategies could improve a long-term transferability of knowledge which could result to the improvement of critical skills development in the South African automotive retail industry.

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The Inner Leader in Transformative Leadership: Personal Transformation through Trauma Integration and Spiritual Development

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Abstract

This article analyzes the role of personal transformation in the context of transformative leadership, focusing on the processes of trauma integration and spiritual development. Trauma integration facilitates access to the inner leader through a gradual process of increasing awareness of unconscious patterns. Spiritual development expands consciousness developing the capacity to hold in awareness both the inner and the outer world, contributing to the self-transforming mind, an open and adaptive engagement with the world. These two aspects of personal development support leaders to de-construct oppressive structures in their own consciousness and engage in awareness-based social transformation. Trauma integration and spiritual development contribute to the Being dimension of the Inner Development Goals framework, creating access to the inner compass and increasing self-awareness, authenticity, openness and presence.

Keywords/key phrases: transformative leadership, inner leader, personal transformation, trauma integration, spirituality, self-transforming mind

1. Introduction

Leadership is a complex, dynamic concept that transcends disciplinary boundaries, as it involves psychological development, interpersonal relationships, social and organizational structures. Empirical research on leadership has mainly focused on leaders' behaviour, interpersonal power relations and organizational skills, but in the last few decades we have witnessed an increased interest in the inner world of leaders, their personal capabilities and their spirituality (Berkeley et al., 2024; Fry, 2003; Ritz & Rimanoczy, 2021; Bruce & McKee, 2020; Scharmer, 2018). Leaders are increasingly invited to understand what really matters for people at a deep, human level, by connecting to their own core humanity and transforming their consciousness (Hougaard & Carter, 2018). What strategies contribute to the inner development of leaders so that they contribute to positive and sustainable social transformation?

The framework of Inner Development Goals (IDG) provides a model of integral development that includes aspects previously ignored in leadership theories, such as unconscious psychological barriers in one's relationship to the self and others that influence behaviour

(Ankrah et al., 2023). Personal growth or transformation implies changing mindsets and beliefs, expanding consciousness and a more open way of being the world (Neal, 2018). This article relies on psychological theories of trauma integration and spiritual development to offer a nuanced approach to the meaning of personal transformation in transformative leadership as a process of deep consciousness shift through increased awareness of the unconscious. This shift is possible by restoring access to the inner leader, expanding self-awareness to include unconscious elements, and developing capacity for self-transformation.

Our focus on the Being dimension of the IDG frameworks complements other studies on the IDG competencies. Shtaltovna et al. (2024) analysed the development of diverse cognitive skills crucial for engaging in the VUCA world, arguing for an integrative, democratizing curriculum design in business schools. Cognitive skills such as complexity awareness, sense-making and visioning are interconnected with the level of consciousness development and awareness that underpin the Being dimension we will analyse here. Strategies for the development of cognitive and collaborative skills are more well-known in the leadership scholarship than the ones for developing capacities of Being with its subscales of inner compass, self-awareness, integrity and authenticity, presence (IDG, 2024). While the process of personal transformation has been examined by many scholars as a shift to more complex consciousness (Frizell & Banner, 2018), there are fewer accounts of the important role of trauma integration in leadership development, a contribution we hope to make in this paper.

We will use Schwartz's (2021) theory of Internal Family Systems to explain the process of trauma integration as increased access to the inner leader. Spiritual development will be explored through the framework of self-transforming mind (Kegan & Lahey, 2009), a capacity developed through mindfulness and presencing. The self-transforming mind refers to the ability to hold in awareness both the inner and the outer world, adapting one's worldviews to new contexts.

The inner leader has been defined as the spiritual core of the psyche (Schwartz, 2021). It is comprised of a set of capabilities that Schwartz (2011) outlines as the 8 Cs: compassion, courage, curiosity, calm, confidence, clarity, creativity and connectedness. The inner leader is a regulatory function of the self, based on complex self-awareness and constant, open adaptation to new learning. The inner leader is the equivalent of the inner compass in the IDG framework, a self-regulating, core function of consciousness. Traumatic experiences destroy trust in the inner leader, fragmenting the psyche in repressed and protective parts, with the latter taking control over the functioning of consciousness (Schwartz, 2021).

The basic practices for reconnecting to the inner leader are trauma integration, mindfulness, self-awareness and self-reflection, a commitment to testing and improving the results of one's actions (Taylor, 2015, p. 184). The inner leader emerges through a process of increased awareness and integration of unconscious content in one's awareness. It governs the process of vertical growth as a movement towards second level of awareness when people can examine and transform the frames of references, they unconsciously use to see the world (Kegan & Lahey, 2009). Trauma integration increases awareness of unconscious patterns that perpetuate suffering for oneself and others, a particularly important process for leaders (Hübl & Avritt, 2020; Kass, 2017). We explore trauma integration and spiritual development as two strategies for personal transformation in the context of transformative leadership, an integral leadership framework that highlights personal, organizational and social transformation (Anello et al., 2014; Shields, 2020).

2. Personal Transformation in Transformative Leadership: Self-Awareness, Integrity and Ethical Commitment to the Common Good

Transformative leadership is a critical leadership theory that emphasizes "inclusion, equity, excellence, and social justice" (Shields, 2011, p. 3). Shields (2020) highlights transformative leadership as a response to the urgent needs we witness in a world fractured by injustice, inequality, ecological crisis and dramatic changes that cannot be addressed only through rational and technical approaches. Her framework emphasizes social justice, equality, human dignity and democracy as principles grounded in leaders' universal values and moral courage. Caldwell et al. (2012, p. 176) highlight integrity and moral duty as character traits of transformative leaders that are needed to complement professional competence. This focus on integrity, positive inner traits and moral duty situates transformative leadership as a paradigm deeply rooted in self-awareness and personal transformation. The invitation to become a transformative leader is an inclusive and courageous "ethical stewardship" that implies integrity, realization of the harm created by social injustice and ethical commitment to the common good (Caldwell et al., 2012, p. 177).

There are three crucial differences between transformative leadership and other leadership paradigms: first, leaders are not only people in power position but anyone in a position of influencing others (Anello et al., 2014; Montuori & Donnelly, 2018). From that perspective, everyone is invited to take responsibility for the kind of world they create through their influence. Second, the purpose of leadership is not to promote the agenda of a particular organization, but to uphold the humanistic ideals of social justice and the common good by engaging in organizational and social transformation (Shields, 2020). The third specific aspect of transformative leadership is the crucial role of personal transformation as a necessary condition for overcoming bias, prejudice, fear, limiting unconscious beliefs, and becoming anchored in the universal aspirations for social justice, freedom and well-being for all (Shields, 2020; Anello et al., 2014; Caldwell et al., 2012; Bruce & McKee, 2020).

Transformative leaders need more than adaptability and effective response to complex social systems in order to innovate and re-construct them according to these aspirations. They need to uproot and transform patterns of oppression in their own minds and access their inner leader as a source of compassion, courage and creativity. Sustainable, positive social transformation is possible through increased awareness of the inner and outer oppressive structures, creation of new practices based on commitment to social justice and universal values. The mindset of transformative leaders implies an expansion of consciousness, as leadership that engages spirituality in the quest for social justice (Montuori & Donnelly, 2018).

Shields (2020) grounds transformative leadership theory in two main premises: first, that oppression, lack of safety, fear and marginalization limit achievement and second, that encouragement and equality of individuals increase their capacities to build democratic systems (p. 8). The opportunity for creating democratic systems lies in the development of people against the existing limitations caused by social injustice and inequality. It also lies in increased awareness about ways of being and mental models that contribute to and perpetuate suffering. Transformative leaders can create conditions for inclusion, democracy and equality if they first transform their own internalization of oppression or injustice. Secondly, transformative leaders in positions of privilege need to examine their unconscious bias and limiting beliefs, becoming aware of their blind spots and internalization of harmful ideologies. Oppressive social

conditions create oppressive inner conditions that leaders can unconsciously reproduce in organizational cultures (Briciu & MacDonald, 2024; Palmer, 1994). Transformative leaders need to be grounded both in the contemplative and the political world, an idea that places awareness of one's inner world as equally valuable to knowledge about the social and political system (Shields, 2020, p. 18).

Shields (2010) highlights 8 tenets of transformative leaders: "acknowledging power and privilege, articulating both individual and collective purposes, deconstructing social-cultural knowledge frameworks that generate inequity and reconstructing them, balancing critique and promise, effecting deep and equitable change, working towards transformation…demonstrating moral courage and activism" (p.8-9). Along the same line with Shields (2020), Anello et al. (2014) define transformative leadership as strongly grounded in universal ethical principles and evidence-based understanding of reality. They focus on six dimensions of transformative leadership as guiding principles: "service-oriented leadership, personal and social transformation, moral responsibility to investigate and apply the truth, essential nobility of human beings, transcendence and development of capabilities" (Anello et al., 2014, loc. 1406-07, Kindle ed.). The authors ground the principles of transformative leadership in an ethics of universal values, highlighting the importance of individual integrity, commitment to self-development, and the ongoing cultivation of leadership capabilities anchored in love, justice and courage (Anello et al., 2014). Anello et al.'s (2014) transformative leadership model includes the spiritual values of transcendence and seeing the nobility of all human beings that are not present in Shields' (2020) definition. The framework of transformative leadership highlights the importance of personal development as the cultivation of leaders' self-awareness, integrity and positive inner qualities.

Transformative leadership aims to deconstruct oppressive power structures through the commitment to personal, organizational and social transformation for the common good. This process of personal transformation starts with trauma integration and increased awareness of internalized power structures that create fragmentation, fear and inner conflict. It means accessing the inner leader that can regulate the diversity and complexity of the mind through awareness and self-reflection. In order to allow others to be whole, leaders need to access their own integrity and overcome their inner fragmentation. Taylor (2015) uses the metaphor of the craft of leadership, where the raw material for improving and mastering the craft is the self of the leader. What do we mean by the self of the leader and how is it implicated in personal transformation?

Personal transformation implies the expansion of consciousness, transcending the limitations of one's familiar frame of reference, deepening of awareness and openness to change, a constant process of evolution (Neal, 2018, pp.9-10). The processes of deepening self-awareness through trauma integration and spiritual development correlate with expansion of awareness, conscientization, more complex and adaptive behaviour (Day & Lance, 2004, p. 45). Personal transformation engages the Being dimension of the IDG framework as a process of increased awareness of one's unconscious mind, integrity and authenticity, and the capacity for self-transformation.

Scharmer (2018) used the concept of "blind spot" to signal "the source from which leaders' actions and perceptions originate" (p. 33), the unconscious aspects of the self that remain unknown without practices for transformation. The inner journey to self-awareness equips leaders to understand and work with the complexity of their own mind. It also enables them to

self-transform by reflecting on the impact of their worldviews and actions. Personal transformation helps leaders understand the close relationship between their worldviews, emotional patterns and their actions, increasing their capacity to self-regulate and self-transform.

3. The Inner Leader and the Democracy of The Mind

Who is in charge of our inner world, the witness to the "I" of subjective experience and action? What dynamics structure the inner space from which leaders make decisions, influence others and take action? The inner world of leaders is informed by values, beliefs, emotions, thoughts, perceptions and worldviews that emerged through their interaction with their cultural environment. If most leaders lived in cultural environments based on power and privilege, in systems that upheld violence and injustice, how can they free themselves from the pernicious effects of these systems? How can they become aware of the unconscious patterns they developed under the influence of power, oppression and violence? Most theories in psychology speak about the dualism of the self, separated between the conscious and the unconscious mind (Jung, 1967), but we currently have definitions of the mind that explain the interaction between the two (Schwartz, 2021). What was traditionally defined as an individual mind is not an entity but an open, dynamic and complex mind system in constant interaction with the world (Siegel & Drulis, 2023).

We will start with the definition of the mind offered by Daniel Siegel (2020), professor of psychiatry at the UCLA School of Medicine, who developed the field of interpersonal neurobiology. Siegel (2020) sees the mind as "the emergent, self-organizing, embodied and relational process that regulates the flow of energy and information" (p. 4). This definition frames the mind as a dynamic process of interaction between a person's inner world and the outer world, based on subjective experience and awareness of one's subjective experience. He argues that the mind is not reduced to brain activity, but it is also an aspect of the body and relational processes (Siegel, 2020, p. 5). The mind is not a static, internal structure, but a dynamic and adaptive process of interaction. Relationships with others and the environment are constantly re-shaping neural connections. The healthy functioning of the mind relies on optimal self-organization or integration, a harmonizing process of the mind, body and relationships that Siegel (2017; 2020) calls mindsight. Mindsight enable individuals to regulate and integrate various functions of the mind: emotions, memories, thoughts, relationships (Siegel, 2017, p. 123). The inner leader carries the function of mindsight, as the capacity to hold in awareness the diverse aspects of the inner world as a dynamic system that needs harmonizing and regulating to achieve a desired goal. This is a process similar to the way a leader gathers a team and inspires people to work together for achieving a desired goal.

Psychologist Richard Schwartz (2021), the founder of Internal Family Systems, defines the mind as a family of different parts governed by the inner leader. Traumatic events can destroy a person's faith in the inner leader and the inner world starts being dominated by protective parts that try to keep the distressing emotions at bay (Schwartz, 2013, p. 807). IFS views the mind as a dynamic system of parts that are divided into two main categories: the "exiles", and the "protectors" (Schwartz, 2013, p. 808). Exiles are all the emotions and reactions associated with painful, distressing experiences (traumatic events) that have been repressed and are kept away in the unconscious. Protectors intervene to make sure individuals stay away from accessing the painful emotions provoked by exiles, through repression or avoidance (Schwartz, 2013, p. 808). Leaders whose inner world is dominated by protective parts tend to project

unconscious beliefs or repressed emotions onto others, they tend to use power as a protective mechanism, and they have more difficulty relating to others with integrity and compassion (Chappell et al., 2019).

The inner leader is a state of "spacious awareness" that can be achieved through compassionate engagement with protective parts (Schwartz, 2013, p. 809). It has the self-regulating function to lead the complex world of the self in a democratic way without repressing certain parts or giving control to others, while also maintaining a state of open connectedness to others. It enhances self-awareness and capacity for self-transformation. Compassionate integration of the exiled parts of the self and staying with the negative emotions that come from traumatic experiences create the space for self-awareness, integration, and authenticity. The integration of repressed parts in one's consciousness is important for reducing inner conflict and trauma-based triggers, creating more self-aware and intentional responses. This inner structure reflects a democracy of the mind as a way of functioning that is not based on repression, control, and protection. Without access to the inner leader, different parts take overprotective roles, influencing a person's actions and reactions (Schwartz, 2023). Repression reinforces the separation between conscious and unconscious, reducing critical self-awareness and building defence mechanisms (Briciu & MacDonald, 2024). The inner leader restores positive functioning and moves the self towards integration (wholeness) and connectedness with others. Trauma integration means the inclusion of unconscious aspects into one's consciousness and increasing access to the inner leader. This is a missing aspect from most leadership development programs that do not engage the unconscious (Chappell et al., 2019). The inner leader is a self-regulating capacity of the mind through expanding self-awareness, integration and openness of the self to interconnectedness. It contributes to the inner development goal of Being that includes inner compass, self-awareness, openness and authenticity.

FIG. 1. THE INNER DEVELOPMENT GOALS FRAMEWORK

Critical reflection on personal beliefs and assumptions is a foundational principle of transformative leadership (Shields, 2020; Bruce et al., 2020). This requires engagement with bias, power, and trauma conditioning that come from the internalization of oppressive social

norms (de-construction) and the anchoring of the self in ethical intention, universal values and the vision of possibility (re-construction). The evolving expansion of awareness to unconscious aspects of the psyche is a form of personal development that liberates leaders from automatic reactions, habitual ways of thinking, assumptions of being right (Arnold & Schön, 2021, p. 60). This leads to the capacity to observe and change their own thinking, emotional reactions, and behaviour as they engage with others and the world. As Calderon de la Barca et al. (Feb., 2024) state, "deepening awareness of our own unconscious, default trauma responses and assuming accountability for them is a vital capacity for social change leaders, since we carry our trauma history and unconscious trauma responses into the roles we assume in the systems we are trying to change."

Personal development programs that do not address the powerful grip of unconscious, trauma-based patterns on the psyche, attempt to build positive traits on moving sands. Without the integration of the different parts of the self into consciousness, the inner world remains fragmented and dualistic, sabotaging the actions and intentions of leaders (Welwood, 2000). We will examine trauma integration as a process for increasing awareness of unconscious aspects and restoring trust in the inner leader.

4. Trauma Integration: Bringing Exiles into Consciousness

Psychological research on trauma supports the insight of transformative leadership theory that what we call inner world is the result of various socio-cultural and historical factors that influence how we show up in the world (van der Kolk, 2015). Human consciousness is largely determined by the social interactions with the environment, which influence the structure of the inner world.

This section explores the importance of trauma integration for leadership development, an area less prominent in leadership training, since it is mostly seen in the context of therapy. However, it is an important paradigm for the development of leadership skills because of the impact leaders have on others and their influence on organizational culture. Leaders have the "power to create the conditions under which other people must live" and as such, they may cast light or shadow, according to the state of their inner world (Palmer, 1994, p. 24). Leaders' level of consciousness influences the structure of an organization, its culture and dynamics (Neal, 2018, p. 7). The decisions they make have important consequences and ethical implications (Day, 2000). Leaders need to face their own shadows and go in the deep inner journey of facing them because only by doing so, they can connect to their spiritual core, or "the hidden wholeness of their humanity" (Palmer, 2009, p. 28). The journey of trauma integration means increased awareness of repressed content and restoring trust in the inner leader, the core aspect of the Self that is compassionate, courageous, calm and connected.

Trauma research shows how the effects of hegemonic structures, violence, marginalization, oppression and neglect are buried in the unconscious and the body (Hübl & Avritt, 2020; Rizeq & McCann, 2023). These effects "leave traces on our minds and emotions, on our capacity for joy and intimacy, and even on our biology and immune system" (van der Kolk, 2015, p. 1, Kindle ed.). Trauma exists and gets reproduced in social systems that influence psychological functioning and relationships (Calderon de la Barca et al., 2024). The prevailing narrative on trauma focuses on its effects on individuals, obscuring the systemic conditions that contribute to it (Calderon de la Barca et al., 2024). More recent approaches to trauma highlight its intergenerational, collective dimensions that makes it all pervasive and systemic, rather than

isolated, individual experiences (Maté, 2009; Calderon de la Barca et al., 2024). From that perspective, trauma work is an essential aspect of the triad of personal, organizational and social transformation that underlie transformative leadership.

Trauma adaptation is an experience of being stuck in survival mode, spending most of one's energy to protect from the intrusion of repressed content that threatens one's inner world. Traumatic effects range from the distressing symptoms of PTSD to the long-term effects of inner fragmentation, protection mechanisms, disconnection and dysregulation. Trauma leads to difficult relationship to the self and the world, emotional dysregulation, decrease of self-worth and risk behaviour (Rizeq & McCann., 2023). One of the most destructive effects of trauma is the disruption of the relationship to the self and others (Maté, 2009). Trauma blocks access to the inner leader because it creates dissociation, dysregulation and inner conflict.

Trauma integration means for Schwartz (2021) the acceptance of all parts, and engagement with personal suffering through the compassionate and calm perspective of the inner leader. It implies awareness of intense negative emotions that require safe and compassionate accompaniment. This type of work creates the most resistance and it needs a high level of motivation given the vulnerability and sustained effort it entails (Frizzell & Banner, 2018, p. 7). The process of compassionate awareness and discovery of wholeness through an integration of protective parts liberates the energy of the psyche to focus on connection rather than protection, on pursuing one's passion rather than protecting one's pain. It liberates the self from the control of certain parts and enables a person to exercise leadership from a place of open self-awareness. As Palmer (2009) states, "good leadership comes from people who have penetrated their own inner darkness and arrived at the place where we are at one with one another, people who can lead the rest of us to a place of "hidden wholeness" because they have been there and know the way (p. 21-22). The integration of different parts of the self that have been exiled and disconnected by trauma leads to expanded self-awareness, integrity and openness, important capabilities for transformative leadership. The journey into the darkness of the unconscious is a journey of recovering one's wholeness by holding in awareness patterns of fear, shame, pain and despair that structure the inner world as result of traumatic experiences.

The psyche is organized as a system optimized through the inner leader, which requires the same skills as leadership of a group: listening, caring, inclusion, and creating unity in the group of inner parts. Trauma integration implies a re-tracing of distressful events or situations in order to bring back from exile the displaced parts of consciousness and increase access to the core self or the inner leader. While trauma integration is a framework for increasing access to the inner leader and repairing the relationship to the self, spiritual practice enhances the capacity for self-transformation. The next section focuses on spirituality as a means to develop the inner capacities for self-awareness and self-transformation.

5. The Paradigm of Spiritual Development for Self-Awareness and Self-Transformation

Spirituality is an important framework for the personal development required by transformative leadership (Guenther, 2024; Sanders et al., 2003). Anello et al. (2014) highlighted the spiritual aspects of transcendence and recognizing the essential nobility of all beings, while Shields (2020) recognized the importance of mindfulness practice to support the creation of a hopeful vision for the future. While there are no unified definitions of spirituality in leadership, many scholars refer to specific inner capabilities: self-awareness, inner development, self-leadership,

integration of spiritual behaviours in the workplace (Lyons & Rekar, 2022) connections with self, others, environment, and a higher power (Howard, 2002), hope, faith, vision and altruistic love (Fry, 2003); meaning, fulfilment and belonging (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003). Personal transformation through spiritual practice means a process of expanding consciousness through self-awareness and self-transformation (Dent et al., 2005; Wilber, 2000).

Self-awareness implies attention re-directed to the source of our experience, "bending the beam of observation back into its source" (Scharmer, 2013, p. 114). The process of trauma integration increases awareness and critical conscientization of unconscious patterns and impulses (Sherrell & Simmer-Brown, 2017). Self-awareness has been studied in relation to emotional intelligence and mindfulness (Kabat-Zinn, 2014; Pearson, 2020). Self-awareness as a competency of the inner leader means the ability to recognize how trauma and internalized oppressive worldviews influence one's beliefs and actions. It entails awareness of the repetition compulsion tendency to perpetuate trauma, noticing one's blind spots (Scharmer, 2018). While self-awareness is "the building bloc" of the inner leader, self-transformation or adaptability is the capacity to work with this building bloc to solve problems and make decisions (Hougaard & Carter, 2018, p. 23).

The process of expanding self-awareness increases secure relational attachment to the world, integrity and openness as essential qualities of Being (Kass, 2017). While spiritual practice contributes to psychological maturation and development towards the stage of integral consciousness (Wilber, 2000), it needs to be accompanied by trauma work in order to avoid the dangers of shadow issues (Frizzell & Banner, 2018, p. 11). As the first section has shown, transformative leaders need to balance critique and promise, to de-construct systems of oppression in their inner world and in social systems, creating a vision anchored in the common good.

A study done by Potential Project with tens of thousands of leaders highlighted three crucial inner competencies: mindfulness, selflessness and compassion (Hougaard & Carter, 2018, p. 8). Mindfulness creates focus and awareness, which allows an experience of open flow between the inner and the outer world (Kabat-Zin, 2004). It strengthens the capacity for sustained attention and expands self-awareness to include thoughts, emotions and sensations. Mindfulness contributes to psychological maturation as expanded consciousness, intra and interpersonal skills, and ethical action based on complex awareness of context in relation to one's inner world (Frizzell & Banner, 2018, p. 10). The openness of the self enables self-transformation as intentional alignment between one's moral values and one's actions. This is an important trait of transformative leaders as exemplars who walk the talk by aligning their thoughts with words and action (Neal, 2018, p. 13).

Psychologists Robert Kegan and Lisa Lahey (2009) use the concept of "self-transforming mind" to define a developmental level of openness and self-awareness in action. "The self-transforming mind can stand back from its own filter and look back at it not just through it. And why would it do so? Because the self-transforming mind both values and is wary of any one stance, analysis or agenda" (Kegan &Lahey, 2009, p. 73). The self-transforming mind can hold both the inner and the outer world in awareness and remain open to constant adaptation, without clinging to a certain belief, perception of solution. It can hold paradox and increases understanding of one's worldviews and patterns, so they become amenable to change. It facilitates the shift to higher levels of mind complexity as gradual process of differentiation and integration where each element that was subject at a certain level becomes object at the next

one (Day & Lance, 2004, p. 43). This develops the capacity to respond more effectively to the complexity of the world (Kegan, 1994, p. 33). It is a process of increased awareness and ability to self-reflect that frees a person from the unconscious repetition of trauma patterns. Personal development in this case means awareness of the dynamic interaction between one's inner world and one's social context, and the ability to transform one's worldview. The self-transforming mind involves the capacity to question and even transform one's own agenda in light of new information, increasing mental complexity and flexibility (Kegan & Lahey, 2009, p. 74). There are numerous studies that correlate mental complexity with increased leadership effectiveness (Kegan & Lahey, 2009, p. 77). The self-transforming mind for transformative leaders implies an increased level of self-awareness and openness to negotiate their worldviews in the ethical commitment to the common good. It is a level of psychological maturity indispensable for organizational and social transformation needed in our time (Frizell & Banner, 2018, p. 5).

MIT professor Otto Scharmer regards personal transformation as a process of reconnecting the individual self with the collective or higher Self through increased awareness and mindful presence. The individual 'self' (using lowercase s) represents who we are due to our history (i.e. our childhood, education, social and cultural community). The second 'Self' (using capital S) concerns our highest future possibility (Scharmer, 2018). Scharmer argues that the histories of violence inherent in our social systems keep these two aspects of the self-separated, leaving many people disconnected from the deep source of their humanity (Scharmer, 2013, p. 110). This idea of the Higher Self parallels the metaphor of the inner leader as the spiritual core of the self (Schwartz, 2013). Scharmer (2018) introduced the method of presencing as a process that combines mindful presence and sensing the future that wants to emerge. He sees presencing as a process to connect the individual self with the Higher Self. This allows leaders to become aware of their inner world as interconnected with the social world. In order to engage in the act of "presencing," leaders need an open mind, open heart and open will. This framework structures personal development as an increasing level of openness that takes place at all levels of experience: thought, feeling, action. (Scharmer, 2018, p. 31). Spiritual development contributes to all aspects of Being outlined in the Inner Development Goals (See Fig. 1, p. 10). The self-transforming mind is a self-reflective, adaptable worldview that contributes to the Being dimension of the IDG but is also influences all other dimensions. We hope further studies will show its impact on all aspects of the inner development goals.

TABLE 1. TABLE CAPTION

Trauma Integration	Spiritual Development
Access to the inner compass	Mindfulness
Integrity and authenticity	Expanding awareness of inner-outer dynamics.
Complex self-awareness	Self-reflection
Democracy of mind	Self-transforming mind
Openness to change	Skills for dealing with complexity
Presence	Ethical worldview

Source: own compilation

6. Conclusion

This paper examined the meaning of personal transformation in transformative leadership through the two processes of trauma integration and spiritual development. Trauma integration is a process of restoring access to the inner leader as a self-regulating function of the mind, while spiritual development increases the capacity to self-transform creating more alignment between one's intentions and one's actions. The inner leader increases awareness of unconscious trauma patterns and shifts one's consciousness from fear and protection to calm, compassion and connection. It contributes to the inner development goal aspect of Being, as access to the inner compass, self-awareness, integrity and authenticity. Spiritual development contributes to self-awareness and the capacity to self-transform by increasing alignment between one's ethical commitments, values and actions. This study proposed the inclusion of trauma integration and spiritual development approaches in leadership development, with significant implications for the inner development of leaders. These approaches are not common in leadership development programs in business schools but there is more attention nowadays to the ways trauma impacts leadership (Hübl &Avritt, 2020) and the impact of spiritual development on systems transformation. They have practical implications as strategies for awareness and deep personal transformation. The IDG framework provides a platform that validates the important role of ways of being, thinking and relating for social transformation.

Both approaches contribute to the aims of transformative leadership to deconstruct oppressive systems and engage in social transformation from an inner place of self-awareness, integrity and openness. They create a consciousness shift to higher levels of mind complexity better adapted to engage effectively with organizational and social transformation. The commitment of transformative leaders to social justice, inclusion, equity, and the common good can benefit significantly from self-awareness about the ways their own consciousness may reproduce and uphold oppressive structures. Accessing one's inner leader as the core, authentic self, and the spiritual practices of mindfulness and presencing contribute to the self-transforming mind as a way to engage in leadership from an open, expanding consciousness.as the inner source for social transformation.

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A Future in the Past: Career Opportunities for Australian History Graduates

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Abstract

Australia's History educators frequently face challenges regarding the value of post-school qualifications in history. Comments from Australian Government ministers have intensified claims that history degrees lack broad skills valued by employers. This study addresses the dearth of research examining the alignment between learning outcomes from history degrees and occupational skills. A comprehensive analysis was conducted on learning outcomes from 27 history degrees offered by Australian universities. These outcomes were mapped against the Australian Government's Skills Classification Core Competencies and Occupation Listings, employing a rigorous curriculum mapping methodology. The results identified 126 occupations that align with the skills and competencies developed through history degrees. This research not only challenges misconceptions about the employability of history graduates but also provides empirical evidence of the broad applicability of historical skills across various sectors. The findings reveal a significant concentration of history graduates in managerial and professional roles, indicating the high value placed on critical thinking, analytical, and communication skills developed by studying history. However, the study also highlights areas for improvement, particularly in digital engagement and numeracy skills. The research demonstrates that history degrees cultivate a range of transferable skills highly sought after in the modern job market, including advanced communication, critical analysis, research proficiency, and adaptability. These skills position history graduates to excel in diverse fields such as public policy, journalism, law, business, and education. Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of interdisciplinary approaches in curriculum design to enhance graduate employability. This research contributes valuable insights for curriculum development and career guidance in history education, demonstrating that history degrees lead to diverse and meaningful employment outcomes. It also provides a robust evidence base for advocating the value of historical studies in an increasingly skills-focused higher education landscape.

Keywords/key phrases: Australia; history; skills; learning outcomes; employability

1. Introduction

History is often described in the public domain as a discipline where facts, dates and stories are absorbed, and then redeployed in the public consciousness as necessary. With each iteration of the Australian Curriculum comes a new debate as to the purpose of teaching history and the role that history plays in instilling national pride and consciousness.

This has led to calls for the focus of history to be centred on data collection (Burvill-Shaw, 2007), promoting a political ideology (Zarmati, 2012), enhancing patriotism (Clark, 2021), encouraging a national conscience (Cairns, 2022) and highlighting the role of interest groups (Hastie, 2022). In addition to public lobbying with regards to the study of history, students and teachers alike view the study of history as a way of understanding the present (Nuttall, 2021) and setting a clear foundation for the future (History Council of Victoria, 2019). However, this view is far from those history teachers hold in both secondary and tertiary educational settings. History teachers understand that the study of their discipline has a significant skill development component. It is challenging to become a successful student of history without developing skills in critical analysis, communication and an ability to provide context to complex situations (Robson, 2021). On an *a priori* basis, these skills are highly valuable to prospective employers. However, history degrees are often criticised for lacking a clear path to employment (Robson, 2021), and as such often do not attract the attention of prospective students and their parents in the same way that STEM degrees often do (Xu, 2013). Therefore, this presents a need for greater investigation of the skills developed within history degrees in terms of workplace employability.

A scoping review methodology was initially used to assess the existing literature, revealing a striking dearth of research examining the alignment between history degree learning outcomes and occupational skills. Therefore, a methodological adaptation was needed and thus a move to outcome mapping was used to provide an overview of the employability skills of history graduates. To achieve this, this study examined all tertiary institutions in Australia that are classified as an 'Australian University' as designated by the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Authority (TEQSA) and identified 32 undergraduate degrees where History was either a major specialisation of study or consisted of more than 50% of a major specialisation of study. Each degree was examined for its publicly available Learning Outcomes (LOs) and benchmarked against the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Undergraduate Level 7 (Bachelor Degree) then organised within the Australian Skills Classifications (Jobs and Skills Australia, 2022).

History as a discipline seeks to bring together sequences of perceived events and create compelling narratives that can be used to inform future action (Curthoys & Docker, 2010). As a discipline, history demands a high degree of research skills to access and assess perspectives on events (Carr, 2008). The historian must be discerning in their quest, being conscious of bias and agendas within the research process. Once a clear perspective on an event is established, the onus is on the historian to construct a narrative that is appealing to both the general reader, but also the informed and educated critic in the hope that the activities undertaken by people in the future are shaped and directed by past experiences (Curthoys & Docker, 2010). These are not skills that come easily, and as such, there is significant value within a history degree to enhance and develop these skills. The outcome of this study demonstrates that the skills possessed by people who graduate from history degrees are highly valued by employers across many industries, and not just within academia and education.

2. Project Background

Since the establishment of the Job-Ready Graduates scheme in Australia in 2020 (Department of Education, 2022), there has been a significant focus on employment outcomes for university students. The scheme was designed to provide financial incentives to potential university students to choose degrees that are considered important for Australia's economic recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic (Department of Education, Skills and Employment, 2020). As part of this initiative, history was explicitly mentioned by the then-education minister Dan

Tehan as a degree where the skills are "silo'ed" within the discipline, meaning that the skills developed within the degree are not seen as relevant outside of the discipline.

This perspective has been enshrined in the fee structure for degrees. Students completing a History degree can now expect to pay up to $14,500 per year for their study, which is $10,050 per year more than a student completing an English degree (Department of Education, 2022). This significant cost difference has resulted in students finding themselves conflicted between choosing a degree for interest's sake and their desire for meaningful employment (Yong et al., 2023).

Prior to these changes, secondary school enrolments in history subjects had remained consistent (Robson, 2021). While student enrolments in history have not grown substantially in any state or territory, they have not experienced the same decline that languages or specialist mathematics have seen (Robson, 2021). However, the new fee structure and government rhetoric have created a challenging environment for the discipline.

Exacerbating the situation is a lack of research examining the learning outcomes from history degrees and how they align with occupational skills. This gap in understanding has made it difficult to counter the perception that history degrees do not lead to clear employment outcomes. As a result, there is a pressing need for a comprehensive study that can demonstrate the workplace relevance of skills developed through studying history and provide evidence to challenge the misconceptions surrounding the employability of history graduates.

2.1. Existing Research into the Employability of History Graduates – A Scoping Review

Currently, there is minimal evidence in career and skills literature that directly examines what skills are developed by undergraduate students of history. To capture the breadth of existing research into History career outcomes, a Scoping Review methodology was deployed. The process aligned closely with the methodology proposed by Arksey and O'Malley (2005) that was later enhanced by Westphaln (2021). The question that informed the review terms was: Do history degree graduates gain careers outside of the discipline of history?

This question was chosen in direct response to the inference made by Dan Tehan in the justification for the establishment of the Job-Ready Graduates scheme. It utilises a population, concepts and context framework to help focus the research question and focus:

Population: History degree graduates. This enables a clear examination of students who complete history degrees. By undertaking a focussed search with this cohort as a population, it ensures little in the way of 'creep' from other disciplines such as archaeology and sociology in the research.

Concepts: Career. While the concept of career is vast, a general definition could be arrived at in terms of seeing a career as a collection, or series of jobs that a person has held in their life (Patton & McMahon, 2021). A person's ability to build a career comes from the skills they develop – as such, the search term focussed on skill development as this would enhance the ability of a graduate to develop a career because of their study of history.

Context: Outside of the discipline of history. As Dan Tehan had noted that history is a silo'ed discipline. This indicates that people who graduate from a history degree will only work in a history context, whether as a teacher, academic or historian.

The second stage of the Scoping Review methodology was to confirm the search terms that would be relevant. Figure 1 outlines the search terms utilised to uncover the existing research.

FIGURE 1. SCOPING REVIEW SEARCH TERMS

Population:

SUB: "history graduates" OR "history students" OR "history degree" AND

Concepts

SUB: "skills" OR "capabilities" OR "competencies" OR "competencies" AND

Context:

SUB: "employment" OR "job" OR "career"

Source: Own compilation

The search outlined in Figure 1 was conducted according to the parameters in Table 1., ensuring an inclusion/exclusion criterion that was open and capturing as broad of a sample of relevant articles as possible.

TABLE 2. SCOPING REVIEW INCLUSION/EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Criterion	Included	Excluded
Databases	• Gale (all) • InformIT (all) • JSTOR • ProQuest (all) • Scopus (all)	All other databases
Publication Type	Academic Journals Grey Literature Industry Journals	All other publications
Languages	English	All other languages
Focus	• Skill development in history degrees • Career outcomes of history degree graduates outside of education & academia	All other focuses

Source: own compilation

The third stage of the Scoping Review methodology screened the studies for duplicates, and relevance by reading through the abstract and full-text of the article. Articles were excluded if they were picked up more than once, were not in English, and if they were irrelevant to the question. A manual search of reference lists, and journals that were relevant was conducted and no additional articles were collected in that process. Figure 2. provides an overview of the screening process and the outcome that resulted in 5 relevant articles selected.

The articles included in the results were from industry journals (*n* = 2), which provided insight into experiences of students but lack academic rigour and peer review. Subsequently, only three academic journal articles were found that examined the career outcomes of history students outside of secondary and tertiary education. All three academic articles are case studies, one

from Iran, one from Nigeria and one from the United Kingdom. The article from Iran (Afkhami, 2019) has a specific focus on pathways between History and Archaeology as separate disciplines. It is worth noting that the requirements for becoming an Archaeologist in Iran is significantly different to Australia, and as such there is limited value in terms of relevance to this study. The case study from Nigeria (Adesina, 2023) was centred on degree entry based on pedagogical methods, which again has limited relevance. Table 2. provides an overview of the articles included in the study. The outcome of the Scoping Review has identified a clear gap in the existing literature in highlighting the ways in which history degrees can prepare students for broader career outcomes.

FIGURE 2. SCOPING REVIEW SCREENING PROCESS

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                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │ Database search │
                    │   (n = 469)     │
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                             │
    ┌──────────────────┐     │
    │ Duplicates removed│────┤
    │   (n = 14)       │     │
    └──────────────────┘     │
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                    │  Title/Abstract │
                    │    screening    │
                    │   (n = 455)     │
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    ┌──────────────────┐     │
    │ Articles excluded│─────┤
    │   (n = 413)      │     │
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                    │Full-text screening│
                    │   (n = 42)      │
                    └────────┬────────┘
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    ┌──────────────────┐     │
    │  Reference list  │     │
    │     search       │─────┤
    │    (n = 0)       │     │  ┌──────────────────┐
    └──────────────────┘     ├──│ Articles excluded│
                             │  │    (n = 37)      │
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    │   Manual search  │     │
    │    (n = 0)       │─────┤
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                                │     review       │
                                │    (n = 5)       │
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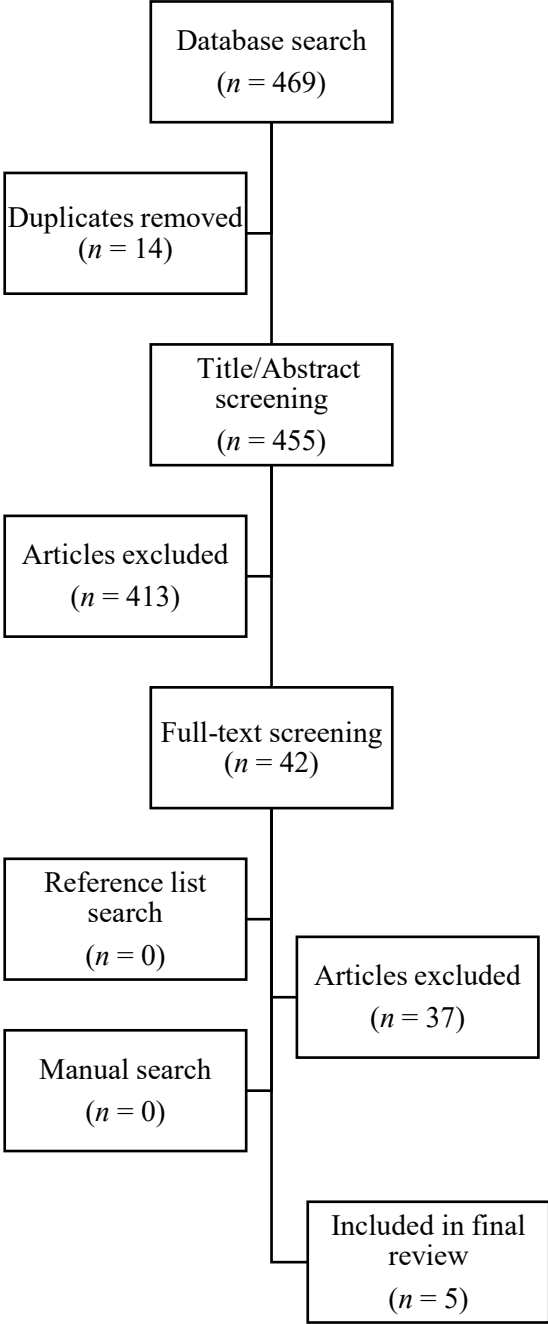
Source: own compilation

TABLE 2. ARTICLES INCLUDED IN THE REVIEW

Author	Year	Title	Publication	Article Focus
Adesina, O.	2023	Teaching History in Twentieth Century Nigeria: The Challenge of Change	History in Africa	Examination of pedagogy and student outcomes
Akfhami, B.	2019	Interpretive approach to applied archaeology and its status in Iran	Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development	Examination of transition pathways from history degrees into archaeology profession
Burvill-Shaw, S.	2007	History: preparing for Australia's future	Principal Matters (Industry Journal)	Critique of John Howard's comments regarding of the status of history in the Australian curriculum
Munslow, A.	2005	Getting on with History	Rethinking History	Epistemological discussion of the place of careers for history students in the United Kingdom
Robson, J.	2021	History graduates: Job-ready and in demand	Teaching History (Industry Journal)	Reflection upon graduate outcomes of history students at University of Sydney

Source: own compilation

3. Methods

Given the dearth of research outlined in Table 2., there is little to formulate the development of a framework through which employability from history degrees can be arranged. A similar problem was encountered by Klein and Lewandowski-Cox (2019) in their examination of employability skills within Music Technology degrees. This paper will build upon the methodology deployed by Klein and Lewandowski-Cox (2019) by applying the connections between degree Learning Outcomes, the AQF and the Australian Skills Classification. This

enhances the unique place of this research in that it places a significant emphasis on the specific learning outcomes and how they can be integrated into the job market.

The learning outcomes are categorised according to the with every higher education institution with university designation examined for degrees in which history was its own major, or history units comprised of at least 50% of a major course of study. Out of the 43 universities in Australia, 34 offered degrees that met this criterion. However, 7 universities were excluded due to their graduate learning outcomes for the degree not being publicly available. Each university was assigned a unique identifier (AU01 through to AU27), with each degree examined assigned an identifier based on the university identifier above (e.g., degree 1 from AU01 is identified as AU01deg1).

Each learning outcome was then aligned with the Core Competencies of the Australian Skills Classification utilising NVivo software. The Core Competencies were chosen as a benchmark due to their broad applicability across both vocational education and higher education systems (Jobs and Skills Australia, 2022). The usefulness of the Australian Skills Classification enables a review of potential occupations that history graduates could enter based on the skills developed during the degree, as the Classification has been developed from an occupational skills perspective, as opposed to a graduate outcomes perspective. While the Australian Skills Classification is founded using principles from the Vocational Education sector, there is a stated desire that they be utilised across both Vocational Education and Higher Education (National Skills Commission, 2022). To facilitate the effectiveness of the Core Competencies, the Skills Classification Framework scores the proficiency in each skill from 1-10 and aligns the score with a Proficiency Level of Basic (1 – 3), Intermediate (4 – 7) and High (8 – 10). Table 3. provides a list of the competencies with an example activity undertaken at the Score of 4 – 7 at the Intermediate Proficiency Level.

TABLE 3. AUSTRALIAN SKILLS FRAMEWORK CORE COMPETENCIES

| Core Competency	Score	Anchor Value
Digital engagement	4	Recognise different ways to connect to the internet (e.g. Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, hotspot)
	5	Build and maintain an effective online profile for career management
	6	Use software on a portable device to document a building inspection by recording measurements, checking compliance and uploading photos
	7	Write software for keeping track of items in an inventory
Initiative and innovation	4	Continuously and systematically look for ways to improve your performance at work
	5	Confer with co-workers to coordinate work activities
	6	Find a more efficient way to produce end-of-month reports
	7	Coordinate sales campaigns
Learning	4	Learn how to operate new machinery safely and efficiently
	5	Learn a new filing system that groups documents by type, security classification, subject and date

Core Competency	Score	Anchor Value
	6	Determine the impact of new menu changes on a restaurant's purchasing requirements
	7	Effectively apply change management techniques while managing a diverse team
Numeracy	4	Use a blood pressure machine and accurately record the results
	5	Create charts and graphs to accurately convey the results of a customer satisfaction survey
	6	Calculate the square footage of a new home under construction based on plans using scales and ratios
	7	Write a detailed report based on a comprehensive statistical analysis of the causes of workplace accidents
Oral communication	4	Give clear, sequenced instructions on how to use a hand-held drill
Oral communication	5	Answer a customer's questions about which product would work best for them
	6	Give instructions to a lost driver
	7	Participate in a work meeting and ask appropriate follow-up questions
Planning and organising	4	Schedule time for updating a manager on the progress of work
	5	Use an organisational file-sharing and storage system
	6	Plan and organise your own activities as requirements change
	7	Write a research report that presents recommendations after developing a project methodology, planning the research and developing a timeline
Problem-solving	4	Break a complex problem into manageable parts and follow a plan of action
	5	Find evidence to support a history essay in a rare document
	6	Redesign a floor layout to take advantage of new manufacturing techniques
	7	Evaluate a construction project and recommend changes to comply with external standards and regulations
Reading	4	Read directions on how to operate a piece of machinery safely
	5	Read and interpret instructions and technical drawings in an equipment instruction manual
	6	Read a memo from management describing new personnel policies
	7	Read a book on leading and managing change in a diverse and evolving workplace.

Core Competency	Score	Anchor Value
Teamwork	4	Cultivate a small informal network of people who may be able to advise on a project from a diverse range of perspectives.
	5	Recognise and avoid inappropriate behaviours, such as use of discriminatory language, that undermine effective group interaction
	6	Initiate team problem-solving sessions
	7	Share knowledge, experience, information and resources with others as an integral part of work relationships
Writing	4	Write a job history as part of a job application
	5	Prepare a standard operating procedures document
	6	Write a memo to staff outlining new directives
	7	Write a detailed literature review

Source: Jobs and Skills Australia (2022)

It is worth noting that this study does not examine the employability experiences of history graduates, nor does it claim that completing a history degree guarantees employment in the occupations described. Rather, this study is designed to provide an overview of potential occupation areas that history graduates can use their acquired skills in. As the Australian Qualifications Framework is centred on outcomes, Learning Outcomes are used to demonstrate evidence of skills developed during the course of study (Australian Qualifications Framework Council, 2013). This study then applies the Learning Outcomes to the Australian Skills Classification, and then distilled into potential occupations. Figure 3. distils the connection between the three levels of outcomes, with reference to the Generic Australian Skills Classification Outcomes, Graduate Learning Outcomes, the Australian Skills Classification Core Competencies and Occupational Skills.

FIGURE 3. CONNECTION FROM AUSTRALIAN QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK GENERIC SKILLS AND AUSTRALIAN SKILLS CLASSIFICATION CORE COMPETENCIES
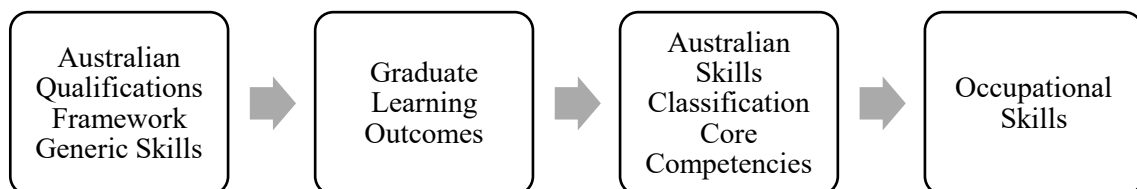
Source: own compilation

The Australian Skills Classification Core Competencies are divided across Occupational Skills, with each Occupation providing an overview of the Core Competencies required as part of the role. The Occupational Competencies are scored in the same way as the Core Competencies, with an example task provided. This provides an insight into the types of occupations that History graduates could find employment in, using skills developed throughout the degree.

4. Results

Across the 32 degrees examined, only 5 had Learning Outcomes that addressed all 10 of the core competencies. Each of the remaining 27 degrees had at least one gap across the core competencies, with Numeracy being the competency least represented. The majority of degrees had Learning Outcomes that met competencies on multiple occasions. For example, AU20deg1 has a major in History that has 13 Graduate Learning Outcomes, with 5 outcomes within the "Learning" competency.

Table 4. provides an overview of the number of individual learning outcomes that are assigned to each competency within the dataset, with a percentage of degrees that had at least one competency within its learning outcomes.

TABLE 4. NUMBER OF LEARNING OUTCOMES PER COMPETENCY

Competency	Number of Learning Outcomes	Presence in Degrees
Learning	73	100%
Planning and Organising	65	100%
Initiative and Innovation	58	100%
Writing	55	100%
Oral Communication	53	100%
Teamwork	42	96.29%
Problem-Solving	41	100%
Digital Engagement	16	59.25%
Reading	8	29.62%
Numeracy	7	25.92%

Source: own calculations

A search of the Skills Classification Framework by Occupation then occurred utilising only the top 7 skills in the study above. As Digital Engagement, Reading and Numeracy are present in less than 60% of the degrees examined, they were excluded from the remainder of the study. To be included in the occupation list, the occupation must have at least 5 of the above competencies listed in the Skills Classification at a score of 7 in alignment with the AQF level of a Bachelor's degree, and 8 in alignment with the AQF level of a Bachelor's with Honours. Occupations were excluded if more than 50% of their skill allocation was assigned to technical skills that would require an alternative qualification. Examples include specialist engineers, paediatricians and psychiatrists. Results are available on request.

126 occupations were found, with several occupations where core competencies comprised of 100% of the competencies for the occupation. Table 5. provides an overview of the ANZSCO fields that the occupations are classified.

The findings regarding the low representation of Digital Engagement and Numeracy in History degree learning outcomes are particularly noteworthy and warrants further exploration within university curriculum teams. These skills are widely considered essential in today's rapidly evolving workforce, yet they appear to be underemphasised in many History degree programs.

Digital Engagement, present in only 59.25% of the degrees examined, is a critical skill in our rapidly evolving digital landscape. This low representation indicates a significant gap between academic curricula and the digital literacy demands of modern workplaces. Universities must invest greater time, energy, and resources in equipping their students for a future that is

increasingly digitally involved. The advent of Artificial Intelligence further underscores this need, as AI technologies are reshaping industries and job roles across sectors (Baruch & Sullivan, 2022). This discrepancy could leave graduates underprepared for jobs that require proficiency in digital tools, data analysis, AI interaction, or online collaboration (Bankins et al., 2024). Universities need to urgently reassess how they integrate digital skills across various disciplines, including history, ensuring students are well-equipped to navigate, leverage, and critically engage with digital technologies and AI systems in their future careers.

The presence of numeracy skills in just 25.92% of the examined degrees represents a critical gap in history curricula. This deficiency is particularly concerning given the increasing importance of data-driven decision-making across all sectors. Numeracy skills are no longer the sole domain of mathematicians or statisticians; they are ubiquitous requirements for workers of all backgrounds (Yamashita et al., 2023). From budgeting to data analysis and statistical interpretation, quantitative competencies are essential in roles ranging from project management to policy development. The low representation of these skills in history degrees suggests a significant misalignment between academic preparation and workplace demands. As AI and digital tools continue to generate and process vast amounts of data, the ability to understand and critically evaluate quantitative information becomes even more crucial (Guthrie & Vallée-Tourangeau, 2018). Universities must address this gap to ensure history graduates can effectively engage with the quantitative aspects of their future roles, regardless of their specific career paths.

The underrepresentation of digital engagement and numeracy skills in history degrees raises significant questions about the long-term employability of graduates and the capacity of higher education to meet evolving workforce needs. This deficiency directly challenges the political rhetoric that history skills are 'siloed' within the discipline (Tehan, 2020). In fact, it is the absence of these crucial cross-disciplinary skills that risks isolating history graduates from broader employment opportunities.

Universities must take responsibility for ensuring an interdisciplinary curriculum that integrates these fundamental skills across various subject areas, rather than confining them to specific courses or programs. This approach directly counters the misconception that history degrees are narrowly focused and instead demonstrates their potential for developing versatile, employable graduates.

By incorporating digital literacy, data analysis, and quantitative reasoning into history curricula, universities can equip students with a more comprehensive skill set that aligns with contemporary workplace demands. This integration would not only enhance the employability of history graduates but also enrich their historical analysis by providing new tools and perspectives.

Ultimately, the onus is on higher education institutions to design curricula that bridge disciplinary boundaries, ensuring that graduates possess both deep subject knowledge and the transferable skills demanded by a rapidly evolving job market. This interdisciplinary approach is essential for maintaining the relevance and value of history degrees in the face of political scrutiny and changing economic landscapes.

TABLE 5. NUMBER OF OCCUPATIONS IN ANZSCO FIELDS

ANZSCO Category	ANZSCO Category Description	Number of Suitable Occupations
1	Managers	28
2	Professionals	94
3	Technicians and Trades Workers	2
4	Community and Personal Service Workers	7
5	Clerical and Administrative Workers	6
6	Sales Workers	2
7	Machinery Operators and Drivers	0
8	Labourers	0

Source: own compilation

The occupational distribution of history graduates challenges prevailing misconceptions about their employability. With 28 graduate occupations entering Managerial roles and 94 in Professional positions, it's clear that the skills developed through studying history are highly valued in leadership and specialised knowledge roles. This concentration in high-level occupations suggests that critical thinking, analytical, and communication skills honed in history curricula align well with the demands of the modern knowledge economy (Perales & Aróstegui, 2024). The presence of history graduates across diverse fields, including Technicians and Trades Workers, Community and Personal Service Workers, and Sales Workers, demonstrates the adaptability of historical skills. This wide-ranging employability directly contradicts the notion that history skills are 'siloed' within the discipline, instead highlighting their broad applicability across multiple sectors.

However, the data also reveals areas for improvement in history curricula. The lower representation in technically oriented or physically demanding roles likely reflects the identified gaps in digital engagement and numeracy skills within many history programs. Addressing these deficiencies could further expand career outcomes for history graduates. The findings underscore the need for an interdisciplinary approach to curriculum design, integrating digital literacy, data analysis, and quantitative reasoning alongside traditional historical methodologies. Such an approach would not only enhance graduate employability but also enrich historical analysis with new tools and perspectives. These results reinforce the value of history education in developing versatile, adaptable professionals. They also highlight universities' responsibility to evolve their curricula to meet changing workforce demands, ensuring history graduates possess both deep subject knowledge and broad, transferable skills required in our increasingly complex, technologically driven job market.

5. Conclusion

The results of this study provide compelling evidence that History graduates are highly employable across a diverse range of disciplines and industries. This finding directly challenges the assertions made by prominent government officials, such as Tehan (2020), who characterized History as a 'siloed' discipline, and Hastie (2022), who suggested it was merely the realm of special interest groups. Instead, our research demonstrates that history graduates possess a versatile skill set that is valued by employers across various sectors, often in areas of high demand.

The wide range of Learning Outcomes examined in this study reveals the breadth and depth of skills developed through history education. However, it also highlights a critical need for institutions to reconsider the place of Digital Engagement, Reading, and Numeracy in their degree programs. While one could argue that these skills are implicit and met through Inherent Requirements for degree entry, the rapidly evolving digital landscape demands explicit attention to these competencies. The National Skills Commission (2020) has identified a wide range of emerging occupations with a unique digital focus, yet less than 60% of the degrees examined had explicit Digital Engagement competencies in their outcomes. This gap indicates a clear area for future development within history curricula.

To address this shortfall in the short term, there is potential for adjusting secondary school curricula to enhance student Digital Engagement before they enter tertiary education. This approach could provide a foundational level of digital literacy for all students, regardless of their chosen field of study. However, universities must also take responsibility for integrating these skills more thoroughly into their history programs to ensure graduates are fully prepared for the digital demands of the modern workplace.

The skills developed within a History degree, such as critical thinking, research, and communication, can be further augmented by targeted development in digital literacy, data analysis, and quantitative reasoning. This combination of traditional historical skills and contemporary technical competencies would create a powerful skill set for graduates, enhancing their employability across an even broader range of occupations.

Future research in this field could explore several avenues to build upon these findings. One potential area of investigation is the influence of dual degrees on the employability of History graduates. As interdisciplinary approaches become increasingly valued in the workforce, understanding how the combination of History with other disciplines impacts career outcomes could provide valuable insights for curriculum development and student advisement.

Additionally, gathering empirical evidence on the specific occupations that History graduates obtain would further substantiate the findings of this study. Such research could involve longitudinal studies tracking the career trajectories of History graduates over time, providing a more detailed picture of how the skills developed in History programs translate into various professional roles.

In conclusion, this study not only challenges prevailing misconceptions about the employability of History graduates but also provides a roadmap for enhancing history education to meet the evolving demands of the job market. By addressing the identified gaps in digital and quantitative skills and continuing to leverage the strong analytical and communication abilities fostered by historical study, universities can ensure that History graduates remain highly competitive and valuable contributors across a wide spectrum of industries and professions.

Teachers of history in both secondary and tertiary education can utilise the results of this research to highlight core competency development as a selling point of the study of history. The study of history is not just focussed on recalling dates (Burvill-Shaw, 2007), promoting political ideologies (Zarmati, 2012), enhancing patriotism (Clark, 2021) or encouraging a national conscience (Cairns, 2022). Rather, this research demonstrates the applicability of history as a discipline of study to a broad range of occupations.

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Maintaining Skill Development of Newly Qualified Physical Education Teachers: Mentorship After Graduation

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Abstract

High percentages of newly qualified teachers drop out during their first 5 years of teaching in the classroom. Often, formal support systems are put in place to overcome 'practice shock'. Yet this practice shock is generally associated with traditional academic subjects such as mathematics, humanities and science. The often-marginalised subject of physical education can be largely neglected when newly qualified teachers are considered. One strategy to reduce practice shock is that of an established mentoring program. The large volume of literature on mentoring across an array of education subjects suggests that mentoring is a valued skill. However, while mentoring is acknowledged as an essential prerequisite for successful teacher induction, its effectiveness in physical education may vary depending on the mentor's quality of support and the mentee's initial professional beliefs. This article draws on a structured analysis of research-based articles on mentoring for newly graduated physical education teachers and explores the discipline between mentee and mentor to make more valid inferences about the roles, responsibilities and outcomes of mentoring. The need for clarity around a physical education teacher's role as a mentor and associated responsibilities relative to the provision of emotional support and guidance are examined along with suggestions for explicit transmission-oriented mentoring approaches to support beginning teachers' professional development.

Keywords/key phrases: mentorship, physical education, graduate teachers.

1. Introduction

Recent graduates of a Physical Education (P.E.) teacher education undergraduate bachelor's degree may be underprepared and overwhelmed when starting work in metropolitan and regional, rural schools. This especially applies to graduate teachers who have had little to no prior practical professional experience or those whose experience was ultimately compromised by poor mentorship and guidance during practical placement as part of their teaching degree. There remains a significant increase in teacher and education-focused research on the influence P.E. teacher education has on overall physical education. Nevertheless, keeping recently qualified physical education teachers in front of a classroom (or on a football pitch or cricket oval) is not an easy task. Arguably, the task is becoming more complex due to the increasing demands placed on the contemporary teacher.

Figures imply that teacher attrition rates have been rising steadily since the 1970s, although there continues to be a wide variation across countries (e.g., McKenzie et al., 2005). A more recent analysis shows that 30–50% of teachers exit the profession in the first 5 years of their career (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Delvaux et al., 2013). Meanwhile, others have verified that little has changed to stem the attrition. For instance, Martinez (2004) found that one in six Australian teachers departed the profession in the first two years of employment. In actuality, the number of teachers leaving the profession within the first five years could be higher. For this attrition, different reasons have been suggested such as the increased possibility for teachers to take different jobs, but also the practice shock for which they are not adequately prepared theoretically, practically, or mentally (Høigaard et al., 2012).

It has also been suggested that one reason for the high attrition rates among commencing teachers lies in inadequate guidance and support (Gaikhorst et al., 2014). The authors reasoned that a support structure such as those activities that schools undertake to assist their beginning teachers, including guidance from a coach, opportunities to gradually grow into the teaching profession and the provision of an introductory handbook may make a difference. In most schools, this support is offered in the form of 'mentoring'. Yet implicit is the assumption that the mentor and mentee relationship is one that is mutually beneficial for both. Also implied, or assumed, is that the mentor has the designated knowledge and skills, both practical and personal, to provide the mentee with the resources needed to navigate the early years of teaching.

2. Methods

The current integrative review has a staged approach. The first stage focused on elaborating what definitions have been applied to a physical education teacher mentor and the associated responsibilities relative to the provision of emotional support and guidance. Articles were then examined for suggestions of explicit transmissions of mentoring approaches to support beginning physical education teachers' professional development. For this study, when reviewing the research literature, the researcher (the author of this study) interpreted each author's notion of what a quality mentor in physical education might be. The researcher moved iteratively between interpretations of parts of the text and interpretations of the whole text to gain an emerging understanding of each author's perspectives and views (Ellis et al., 2020). The aim of reviewing the literature on the mentoring of newly graduated physical education teachers and mentorship was to identify the elements that constitute mentorship for newly qualified physical education teachers. However, a broader view of the literature on the machinations of mentorship included publications focussing on the perceptions of physical education as a subject discipline, the roles, behaviours and responsibilities expected as a mentor, the existing mentoring frameworks, and the ongoing support needed by both the mentee and the mentor.

The literature was studied and synthesized in a methodical and transparent manner. There is a systematic presentation, and amalgamation, of the findings of all the studies included and the implications are discussed. On the other hand, a deliberate focus attempting to assess the validity, or judge the quality, of the findings of the studies included in the review did not occur. As Kennedy (2007) notes, this decision may help to avoid the possibility of limiting the range of themes that might emerge through the analysis of data. Further to the approach used by Ellis et al. (2020), the rationale of this approach was to capture the full range of ideas and themes articulated in the scholarly literature.

2.1. The Literature Search

A search of the literature was conducted using the data bases Google Scholar, Scopus and Informit. A combination of the following key terms was initially used: "mentor" OR "mentorship" AND "graduate physical education teacher" OR "newly qualified physical education teacher" AND "mentee". The search was later expanded to include related terms such as: "beginning teaching", "early career teacher", "graduate teacher" and "graduate teacher physical activity". The search was restricted to journal articles, chapters, and books, written in English, that had been peer-reviewed and published. Work from other sources, such as unpublished theses and dissertations, was not included in the search. While the review might not be exhaustive, it was felt that it was comprehensive and methodical enough to present a sound overview of contemporary notions of what constitutes mentorship and the determinates of mentorship in physical education.

2.2. The Selection of Articles

The above search generated, in total, almost 109 publications, however, 67 of these publications were largely focused on conceptualising the roles of mentor teachers during student teaching, examined mentoring from a pre-service teacher perspective and not a recently graduated teacher perspective; or examined the socialisation of newly graduated teachers not the explicit role of mentoring. Of the remaining 42 publications, the titles and abstracts of these publications were scrutinised to determine if the work was relevant to the research question. Those publications which identified one or more optimal features of the concept of mentoring and the common frameworks of mentoring combined with clarity around the mentor's role and associated responsibilities relative to the provision of emotional support and guidance were deemed suitable for selection. Publications deemed suitable were then targeted to be read in full and included in the analysis of data. Nevertheless, during the process, a small number of publications were eliminated from the review as a reading of the complete text found the focus of the work not to be relevant to the research topic.

2.3. Analysis of the Articles

The analysis used grounded theory, rather than thematic analysis, wanting theory generation to emerge from, rather than exist before, the data (Cohen et al., 2011). Specifically, Cohen et al. (2011) advocate this methodology for developing a theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analysed. An open coding (Ezzy, 2013) was used to label the different concepts that emerged in the analysis of the literature. This was then carefully reflected on and was used to label the different concepts that emerged in the analysis of the literature, and which were subsequently presented as themes. Finally, the results were interpreted, and a final report was compiled.

3. Review Findings

In this section, the results are summarized and explained with examples from the publications reviewed and discussed. Initially, an overview of the reviewed paper characteristics (e.g., journal type, concepts) was completed before different elements or indicators emerged in the analysis of data. Subsequently, the paper assesses types of career development outcomes, and relationships between types of outcomes and mentoring approaches in physical education as well as exploring how the mentor is supported in what can be an underrepresented subject. Each of these indicators was then grouped under one of seven major themes and discussed below.

3.1. Theme 1: The Concept of Mentoring

The data indicated that the formative years in a teaching career have been identified as a decisive influence on professional learning. Anspal et al. (2012) identify that the primary concern for student teachers during a teacher education program and into the first years of teaching focuses mainly on the self. For example, a novice teacher may want to confirm and authenticate their image as a teacher, although arguably this may have been formed, rooted in the teacher's own schooling and learning experiences. To support this transition into teaching, a mentor can act as a sounding board, can supply guidance and can assist in supporting beginning teachers to learn and implement curricula. A mentor can support with non-teaching related issues that commencing teachers may face in the transition to the workplace. Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) indicate that reflection is established as a means by which teachers can become more in tune with their sense of self and with a greater understanding of how these fit into a larger context which involves others. So, reflection is a component in the shaping of character which shares important pedagogical, practical and cultural ground, and mentoring has become a vital tool with which to develop confidence, self-reflection and problem-solving capabilities in early career teachers.

3.2. Theme 2: Existing Mentor Models and Frameworks

Awareness of the mentees' experiences in the mentoring programme – for instance, the successes and challenges – is suggested to contribute to ongoing planning for effective transition for teachers. In Australia, there is an emphasis on the importance of the mentor teacher who supports the trainee teacher during professional experience as part of their initial teaching education program. This mentorship role is monitored by appointed university staff to help with wellbeing and satisfaction (from a school and student perspective) and to meet the requirements of the trainee teacher's undergraduate degree. However, once the trainee gains qualification to teach, the oversight or lack of rigour applied to the mentor-mentee relationship is largely determined by the school by which the person gains employment.

To facilitate the transition from university to work, a range of theoretical frameworks have been applied to the much-contested notion of mentoring. This focus has changed over time due to mentoring models that have evolved due to necessity, or from a transmission orientated focus to one of professional responsibility (Parker et al., 2021). Others have introduced the importance of a range of aspects including an institution's commitment, values and ethos.

Orland-Barak and Wang (2021) classify the mentoring approaches in initial teacher education as personal growth, situated learning, core practice and critical transformation. The authors conclude that it is not possible to limit the mentoring experience to a single approach, but that a multi-dimensional experience exists. Yet the approaches and frameworks provide an underpinning architecture for mentoring (Cunningham, 2007). Such frameworks are noble and adaptable, but it is argued that mentoring for a newly qualified teacher requires further analysis, and therefore a more rigorous and theoretical approach is needed that supports the newly qualified P.E. teacher. However, specific models and frameworks for mentoring programs have been developed alongside observational learning opportunities that permit those in attendance to display role-model desired behaviours (Table 1).

TABLE 1. COMMONLY USED MENTORING MODELS

Mentoring model	Description	Sources
OSCAR Mentoring Model	Acronym for Outcome, Situation, Choices, Actions, and Review. Used for coaching, and personal and professional development. Individual goal setting and achievement of goals. Group goal setting and achievement of group goals.	Gilbert, A. & Whittleworth, K. (2009). *The OSCAR Coaching Model.* Lulu.com.
GROW Mentoring Model	Acronym for Goal, Reality, Options, and Will. Designed to help mentees clarify their goals, assess their current reality, explore their options, and commit to their goals.	Whitmore, J. (2019). *Coaching for performance*. London: Brealey.
CIGAR Mentoring Model	Acronym for Challenge, Insight, Goal setting, Action-planning, and Review. For coaching processes, help ensure that each coaching session is productive and focused. Challenge focuses on setting objectives and identifying areas for improvement.	Greene, J. & Grant, A. M. (2003). *Solution-focused coaching: Managing people in a complex world.* London: Momentum Press.
STRIDE Mentoring Model	Acronym for Self-awareness, Target setting, Reflection, Innovation, Development, and Evaluation.	Thomas, W. & Smith, A. (2009). *Coaching solutions: Practical ways to improve performance in education* (2nd ed.). New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.

While all these models offer benefits and limitations, they are not a 'one size fits all' approach. Critical to the success of a mentorship program is valuing the experiences of people in the field and permitting leaders to obtain the capacity of others through the lens of those experiences (Filatov & Pill, 2015). These experiences could be positive and negative and might negatively influence the newly qualified P.E. teacher if left unabated. The provision of formal opportunities to build leadership capacity and expertise that experiences constant change (Leggett & Joll, 2007) is seen as imperative for teacher success, motivation and ultimately teacher retention. There is also the consideration of adapting and compensating for constant change and how this is communicated to the mentee within an appropriate framework that can be adequately monitored.

These frameworks vary in duration and intensity in that mentoring programs can vary from a single meeting between mentor and protegees at the start of a school year, to an extremely structured program including frequent meetings over a couple of years amongst mentors and protegees who are offered time away from their normal teaching timetable (Ingersoll & Smith,

2004). Mentoring programs also differ concerning how much consideration they assign to the match between mentor and mentee. Though some mentoring programs endeavour to see that new primary school P.E. teachers are assigned mentors with experience, other programs do not. Finally, Ingersoll and Smith (2004) state that a mentorship program should consider a battery of items designed to elicit information on the varieties of possible induction and mentoring supports received by new teachers within the structure of a formal mentorship program. These include information on whether the candidate was: :

- Supplied with a mentor and whether the mentor was in the same subject area.

- Briefed on experience of the mentor provided.

- Required to have participated in common planning time with other teachers in their subject area.

- Required to have collaborated with other teachers on issues of instruction.

- Expected to have participated in a network of teachers (e.g., one organized by an out-side agency or over the internet).

- In regular supportive communication with their principal, other administrators, or department chair.

Does receiving any of these supports matter to P.E. teacher retention? Notwithstanding data that indicates that the number of new P.E. teachers who receive some kind of formal induction and mentorship has expanded, the level of attrition amongst newly qualified teachers has risen. Within this context, a largely unknown level of variability exists within P.E. mentorship programs, and the type of support offered by the schools frequently contrasts.

3.3. Theme 3: The Student Physical Education Teacher

Arguably the perception of physical education emphasises adventure pursuits, team-based movement, athletics, dance, games, gymnastics, sport, and health related physical activity. It is largely a truism that a typical physical education curriculum is less burdened by the formalities of other curriculum foci. Therefore, it is appealing to conclude that from an outsider's vantage point, a P.E. teacher engages in a less formal learning environment. This perception remains contentious as the formal learning environment will vary depending on the learning institution. In Australia, some universities offer a Health and Physical Education specific bachelor's degree in which students undertake subjects in physiology, biomechanics, motor control, P.E. pedagogies, sport and movement analysis, and kinesiology to name but a few. Other institutions do not offer such a broad suite of subjects available for the student P.E. teacher. In the latter example, for students wanting to become a P.E. teacher specialised subjects are offered as elective subjects only, and commonly elective subjects are offered in years 3 and 4 of a teaching qualification. Here, student P.E. teachers could, in some instances, have to wait until the 3rd year of their bachelor's degree before they have opportunity to put into practice the pedagogical theories they have learned in years 1 and 2. Given that P.E. requires that students have basic movement analysis skills, dynamic and static ability to measure and assess motion and the ability to correct human movement from primary to high school level, there is a strong argument that student P.E. teachers are essentially, albeit perhaps unintentionally, destined for failure.

The combination of the decline in fitness standards of young people, high drop-out rates, and inadequate pathways to accessing physical activity (Hardman, 2008) and the substantial increase in the prevalence of overweight and obesity among children and adolescents around the world remains a concern (Eisenmann, 2006). Notwithstanding this, many schools have reduced their physical education programmes in recent years, putting a substantial focus on

academics to further equip students for college and the career (Harris, 2019). Yet the oxymoron is that while it is commonly acknowledged that there is a decline in physical activity levels, inclusive of strength and conditioning in both young children and adolescents, schools have reduced the duration of time allocated for children to pursue physical activity. The work of today's student P.E. teacher has ostensibly become harder in that they need to do more with less (time). The support network by way of P.E. mentorship is seldom afforded strategic oversight for the right of P.E.'s equal standing amongst the more academic-oriented subjects.

Why physical education is not always regarded as an academic discipline or given the same equal stature as to well-learned subjects is a matter of conjecture. Physical education teachers are responsible for teaching movement, which is a science – the science of how we move, why we move proficiently (or not), the forces of such movement (kinetics) and analysis of motion (kinematics) requires just as much subject matter knowledge as a mathematics teacher. However, this scientific approach to physical education is commonly not perceived by the student nor the mentor.

In the contemporary Australian school curriculum context, the Health and Physical Education (HPE) learning area is being called upon to serve many diverse purposes. It is apparent that physical educators are becoming more accountable than ever before as their role continues to evolve as many pursue opportunities to facilitate activities that engage students and provide education on lifestyle choices and healthy behaviours. Traditional approaches to teaching HPE in schools have been characterised by content structured around popular sports and recreational activities and teaching approaches that have focused on the development of prerequisite skills (techniques) and tactics and strategies.

Across Australia, there is a growing trend to structure school curricula and pedagogy, at least in the compulsory years of schooling, around the promotion and development of more generic educational outcomes, rather than those that have a specific discipline or learning area focus. Newly qualified P.E. teachers require pedagogical, practical, and cultural support when they graduate and enter the teaching workforce. Mentoring has become a vital tool with which to develop confidence, self-reflection and problem-solving abilities in trainee and early career teachers. The caveat being that while mentoring is needed, the mentor assigned to this role should be equipped with the necessary experience, skills and knowledge. Regrettably, it is at this juncture that little oversight is given to the core skills and appropriability needed to make the role sustainable and accessible to the graduate.

3.4. Theme 4: Marginalisation

Research that focuses on enhancing the professional development of teachers has revealed that both physical education teachers and their subjects are marginalised (Ferry & Westerlund, 2023). Marginalisation refers to a social phenomenon in which a person or group is given a low status or position outside the central focus or functioning of a culture or social group (Lux & McCullick, 2011). Notably, in physical education, marginalisation occurs when school structures prioritise traditional cognitive subjects like science, mathematics, and language (Sakalli & Senel, 2024). Furthermore, physical education has been given a low priority relative to other academic subjects (Beddoes et al., 2014). Therefore, teachers may experience physical and intellectual isolation from their colleagues, contributing to their feelings of marginalisation (Stroot & Ko, 2006). In other words, physical education can be marginalised in schools by being considered less academic than other disciplines and by being perceived as having less educative value.

Examining the contributing factors and relationships to improve this situation is critical (Ferry & Westerlund, 2023), particularly for a novice entering the profession. This raises a frequently overlooked question: if the mentor has experienced marginalisation and has had little support provided by the school to mitigate or reverse this social phenomenon, to what extent is the marginalisation essentially being handed to the next generation of physical education teachers? The baton of marginalization should not be handed nor passed but discussed, addressed and mitigated. Failure to do so may well increase the revolving door of teachers and add to the misconception that physical education is of a less academic focus. This could mean that role socialisation, or strategies to increase the teacher's social role within the school environment is needed.

Role Socialisation Theory (RST; Richards, 2015) addresses how physical education teachers' expectations of their roles are socially constructed and contextually linked to the school environment. Teachers may experience role ambiguity when school administrators neglect to provide clear guidelines for evaluation (Washburn et al., 2020) and role overload when their responsibilities are too numerous to account for during the school day (Richards et al., 2018). From here, role conflict can occur. Role conflict has been described as when teachers receive insufficient support from their principals and colleagues (Blankenship & Coleman, 2009). It is associated with feelings of marginalisation. What can follow is a negative perception from other teachers assuming that physical education is not considered teaching in the traditional sense; or that other teachers see the subject as a release from 'high status' subject work rather than an integral aspect of students' education (Milić et al., 2022). This can result in the discipline of physical education receiving less emphasis, time and resourcing compared to traditional subjects such as mathematics, science and humanities. The role of a mentor in this situation can serve many purposes. For instance, Hobson and Maxwell (2020) highlight the significance of a supportive school environment for the mentoring process. This process should be supportive and collaborative and is determined by local conditions.

3.5.   Theme 5: Roles and Responsibilities

Regardless of any approach adopted for mentoring, it is apparent that an accurate and clear understanding of roles and terminology is important. To raise the profile and elucidate the role of a physical education mentor, emphasis on identifying the key responsibilities of the mentor is important in delivering reliability in the quality and experience of newly graduated teachers. For instance, mentors should have excellent subject knowledge that is based on the latest pedagogical developments and at a minimum, a rudimentary understanding of the scientific disciplines applied to physical activity, exercise and sport. A mentor should be an excellent teacher, evidenced by a strong report card. A mentor should be able to support early career teachers by identifying needs, providing constructive feedback, and creating an environment where the newly qualified teacher can progress and learn. This environment should not be one of marginalisation. Heikkinen et al. (2018) identify three roles of a mentor: (1) supervision, to assist new teachers pass through probation, (2) professional and emotional support, and (3) collaborative self-development through the social construction of professional skills and competence.

3.6.   Theme 6: Personal and Professional Support

Typically, physical education teachers hail from a sporting background and have an interest in physical activity, exercise and sport. This focus on skills and competitive activities can mean they are not tuned in to the needs and feelings of less 'sporty' students. Having a sport-centric background could also mean that such teachers could be unable to make a clear distinction between physical activity, exercise and sport, as each component differs in psychological, physiological and biomechanical aspects of task achievement and purpose. As noted by

Whewell (2022), there is a significant domination of content-focused teaching in school physical education, and there remain challenges for early career teachers when mentors favour traditional-content-led approaches to teaching. This could mean that early career teachers feel obliged to conform to socio-cultural norms in the school and department within which they work. Thus, if the mentor is marginalised or believes that they are marginalised and imparts this bearing onto the early career teacher, the stigma of marginalisation will continue. This has been dubbed teacher occupational socialisation where probable physical education teachers establish and mirror the traits and attitudes of those around them rather than forming their own beliefs and practices (Whewell, 2022).

Schatz-Oppenheimer (2017) states that the role of a mentor is to support the novice teacher in understanding and adapting to the school norms and aid with socialisation. Yet this will be a challenge if the physical education department and mentor prescribe a more traditional method of teaching or is marginalised. It is suggested that early career teachers infrequently question or contest the existing practices in a school, particularly if employment at the school has only recently commenced. However, assumptions that new teachers are powerless to make change are inaccurate. Although this may appear in a minority of cases, early career teachers can be regarded as active strategists and agents of change who challenge traditions and assumptions. An active strategist can be an active reformer. Thus, the mentor can help to support the early career teacher to understand and perhaps challenge conflicting discourses. The significance of this is that early career teachers may come to recognise and reduce historical poor habits and develop skills of empathy and understanding of the needs of their diverse student population.

3.7.   Theme 7: Emotional Support and Guidance

The early stages of a teacher's career are essential for fostering teaching skills and learning to adeptly apply pedagogical models. A mentor teacher fulfils a role that is multifaceted and highly influential. When a positive relationship is forged with a mentor, they can offer many significant influences such as offering advice, developing confidence, and guidance related to workload and time management. Spooner-Lane (2016) is clear in that a mentor only offers emotional support to reflect on their progress. This does not fulfil the role of a mentor completely. This means that there needs to be appropriate performance monitoring to ensure that role responsibility is being applied.

Meaningful teacher well-being and retention can be intrinsically combined to permit early career physical education teachers to express their true feelings about a situation and environmental context, regardless of whether they are positive or negative. After all, it is a teacher's obligation to control the emotional climate of their lesson, and if a teacher is showing negative sentiments, then this will in turn influence the climate in the classroom and reduce student motivation; the reverse is realised where positive emotions are established. A goal for the mentor should be to provide sage advice about good practice, that is – emotive control, application of teaching strategies and support to acquire both a deep knowledge of students and the institution. An early career teacher who exhibits emotional exhaustion will often display negative emotions or will likely struggle to regulate their emotions due to fatigue. The effects of enduring negative emotions due to exhaustion and fatigue are feasible pathways to burnout and an early exit from the profession.

Teacher burnout is a phenomenon whereby teachers experience feelings of emotional exhaustion during their career and is purported to be caused by high levels of stress associated with the job (Roloff & Brown, 2011). Emotional exhaustion is a leading cause of teachers leaving the profession alongside increasing expectations, increasing numbers of children with emotional and other needs, and increasing class. Recognising burnout prior to it happening can

be notoriously difficult, and it is not the role of the mentor to informally diagnose if burnout is occurring. Despite this, a fundamental responsibility of the mentor could be to be cognisant of the warning signs of this occurring and to offer support and guidance, and ensure the situation is taken to a higher level within the institution. An effective mentor teacher could integrate aspects of teacher knowledge through demonstrating social norms, classroom practice, and organisation of learning through examples of effective teaching. Effective mentoring processes do not assume that early career teachers are passive in these processes; on the contrary, early career teacher's actions are critical to success.

Mentors should be acutely aware of the range of opportunities that present possibility for learning and know how to maximize these for the benefit of their mentee. One way of managing this during the early stages of a new P.E. teacher's career would be to deliver opportunities for the mentee to experience a range of teachers, curriculum areas, pedagogies, and educational philosophies. For these reasons, a mentor whose practice and dispositions match the mentee should occur, but that is not always the case. Mentor standards, expectations and goals aligned with the P.E. curriculum should be defined so that they can provide a safe learning space for the new P.E. teacher where he/she is free to take risks and explore praxis (theory-informed practice) in a variety of contexts.

Bartell (2005) proposed that an effective mentoring program could reduce high attrition rates in newly qualified teachers. While this may be true, the underlying personal and societal qualities and responsibilities needed by the mentor arguably necessitate a greater skill set than previously acknowledged due to the complexities and demands on contemporary teaching and classroom management both in practical and theoretical settings. This is especially true in a subject often marginalised such as physical education.

4.   Limitations

Finally, it is important to note that limitations exist. This review focuses on recently qualified students, that is – graduate physical education teachers and their role as a mentee. For existing school-based physical education teachers, classified as the mentor, this review did not obtain first-hand empirical research from either the mentee or the mentor. Therefore, this review was not able to attain every distinction in the mentee-mentor physical education development relationship such as directly examining geographical differences, socioeconomic factors, gender (i.e., male versus female) or ethnicity that may influence this relationship. A lack of data in the literature, as well as limitations pertaining to the subject of physical education, prevented this analysis. Nonetheless, where possible, the review does provide an insight into mentoring modalities in physical education teachers. Further research is recommended to expand on the results that have emerged here relating to mentoring modalities, roles and responsibilities, and personal and professional support. Future research could focus on conducting leading research with newly qualified PE teachers and their mentors to assess the practical application of these models and frameworks suggested.

5.   Practical Implications

The findings have inferences for both policy and mentoring practice. The results, for example, imply that universities, industry associations and schools need to continue to work proactively to forge a more collaborative and dialogic relationships between recently graduated physical education teachers and existing physical education teachers; a shared view of good, contemporary teaching in physical education, and a shared vision of each participant's roles and responsibilities. The findings also suggest that a greater focus on role identification and clarification is needed prior to appointing a mentor along with expectations from the mentee. Also, how the mentee-mentor relationship aligns with professional practice and experience in

primary and secondary schools should be clarified along with the possibility of milestones or established targets to increase transparency and effectiveness of the process.

6.   Conclusion

To assume the role of a physical education mentor, individuals should be proficient and competent teachers with both excellent teaching skills and high levels of subject-matter competence. Here, it is argued that to become a physical education mentor an established framework should be established to ensure that the mentor has the relevant knowledge, experience and both practical and theoretical nous to undertake a mentorship role. This may include a strategic approach whereby the aspiring wannabe mentor has gained suitable experience or obtained professional and practical development prior to taking on the role of mentor. However, the themes presented in this paper represent an inventory of factors that may play a role in the mentee and mentorship relationship.

There remains a connection between teacher success and the mentor-and-mentee relationship. Positive relationships are critical in fostering successful mentoring partnerships. Recruiting high calibre P.E. teachers has been shown to be just the first step in providing a quality workforce. It is vital to maintain and retain quality physical education teachers in the profession. The focus on recruitment, retraining and professional development schemes can often overshadow the issue of retention of teachers in schools. Effective yet robust mentoring practices can lead to the effective construction and formation of identity in newly graduated physical education teachers. However, ongoing adherence to a mentoring program with explicit guidelines for both mentee and mentor is relatively unexplored among new physical education teachers entering the profession. More empirical research is needed to address the ongoing issues with attrition.

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What the Literature Tells Us About the Transition of Second-Career Academics Into Higher Education

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Abstract

With the growth and evolution of the higher education sector in recent decades, universities have drawn on more diverse sources from which to recruit academic staff. One such route is for universities to recruit professionals from non-academic backgrounds to teach and research. The transition of career professionals becoming second-career academics is a growing phenomenon, but one that is under-researched in the literature. This paper summarises the findings in the literature on this topic from the last twenty-five years, drawing on forty-four academic articles. Common themes are discussed and presented in a chronological format from the decision-making process prior to transitioning, through the challenges and opportunities commonly experienced by second-career academics making the transition, concluding with a summary of the recommendations presented in the research. In the discussion section that follows, the author draws on their own experience as a second-career academic to summarise pertinent points and offer an additional perspective on the recommendations offered in the literature. The purpose of this article is to offer a summary of what is currently understood in the literature with a view to supporting further research into the transition of second-career academics as an important skills development issue for the higher education sector. The review finds that several recommendations are common in the literature (mentoring schemes, development of academic skills and agency, introduction of reference materials and cultural change) and the viability of these is discussed before recommendations are made for individuals considering transitioning to a career in academia.

Keywords/key phrases: second-career academic, pracademic, scholar-practitioner, professional skills, career transitions

1. Introduction

Given the significant growth in the higher education sector in recent decades, demand for new entrants as academics, administrators, and student support staff continues to grow (Waller et al., 2020). Traditionally, most academics in higher education followed a relatively straightforward career path from undergraduate student to graduate researcher to junior academic and then through the academic ranks. However, as demand for academics has increased, the number of lecturers drawn from other sources has grown (Griffiths & Dickinson, 2023) and is likely to continue to rise (Ong, 2022).

The transition of professionals from other sectors to academic roles in higher education is not new but is relatively under-researched in the literature (Crowder & Mouratidou, 2020; Wilson et al., 2014a). At the same time, these career transitioners are an interesting phenomenon related to the massification of higher education in recent decades (Griffiths & Dickinson, 2021). The literature describes professionals transitioning into the sector in several ways. Terms such as pracademic (Bains, 2024), second career academic (Ong, 2022), practitioner-turned-academic (Pickern & Costakis, 2023), practitioner-academic (Wilson et al., 2014b), transitioned academics (Bandow et al., 2007), dual professional (Griffiths & Dickinson, 2021), practitioner-researcher (Ragland, 2006), developing academics (Wakely, 2021), and scholar-practitioner (Kormanlik et al., 2009) have all been used to describe this group of educators. None of these terms are without flaws as a description. This paper will not use the term pracademic despite its being the most common descriptor in the literature, Since, as Dickfos (2019, p.244) indicates, pracademic is not a specific description but instead, "the term has been used more broadly, to refer to a blend of the practical with the academic (Owens, 2016) or to describe a teaching style that focuses on the practical application of academic theory and knowledge (McDonald & Mooney, 2011)". Instead, this paper will use the less ambiguous term second-career academics, acknowledging that this may not necessarily be an individual's second career and that the discussed publications may use different terminology.

In this paper, a second-career academic is a person who has established a successful career in a different industry and makes a conscious decision to establish themselves in an academic role in higher education. This paper will not distinguish between second-career academics who transition entirely from their previous career and those who continue their previous professional practice alongside their academic responsibilities.

Second-career academics contribute to the academic experience of students in different and complementary ways to traditional academics, broadening the curriculum, incorporating pragmatic pedagogic approaches, and enriching the scholarship. The directly relevant professional experience with which second-career academics supplement the teaching of academic theory supports the skills development and practical understanding of students and serves to enhance their capability to successfully negotiate the labour market upon graduation. In addition to which, the challenging transition experienced by second-career academics that this paper will outline bears many similarities to the transition from study to employment that students face, allowing for the delivery of more empathetic and better-informed student support. In these ways, the presence of second-career academics in the higher education sector offers students a richer and more varied educational experience.

This paper will begin with a concise explanation of the methods utilised to identify relevant papers for inclusion in the review process and the methodological drivers behind the decision-making process. An overview of the findings from forty-four academic papers will follow, with common themes identified and areas of incongruity explained. The presentation of these themes will follow a narrative format that traces the transitional journey of second-career academics from their initial decision to their establishment as academics.

2. Method and Methodology

This paper reviews forty-four academic papers published since 1999, when Volpe and Chandler first coined the term 'pracademic'. It will identify common themes, highlight anomalies where they exist, and offer a cohesive summary of the findings and recommendations presented in the literature. This paper is not presented as being comprehensive or definitive, although the author intended to review the literature as thoroughly as possible. The author identified relevant source materials in two ways: firstly, by way of searching three large-scale academic repositories

(Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and Academia), and secondly, by reading relevant papers cited by publications identified by the first mechanism. To protect the salience and relevance of this paper as the conditions of the higher education sector have significantly changed during the current century, where possible the author chose to exclude publications from the review from more than twenty-five years ago, other than to mention two seminal papers (Boyer, 1996; Lieberman, 1992) which are cited prominently in the literature under review. This review includes several papers by authors discussing their original research in multiple publications (Wilson et al., Gourlay, and Kitchener).

The author of this paper is a second-career academic and, as such, has conducted this literature review as part of a broader autoethnographic reflection on their own transition. This research followed conversations on transition journeys between the author and fellow second-career academic colleagues as part of a collaborative paper on their experiences working in the third space (Whitchurch, 2008) between academia and professional services (Anonymised citation, 2024). Reviewing the literature on "the move into a different role (academic), a different set of skills (teaching, research and service), a different sector as well as into a different organisational culture… that, arguably, has 'many different quirks'" (Kitchener, 2023; p.11) allowed the author to critically evaluate and make sense of the events in their own life. The author's situation necessarily means that this paper may not be wholly objective and is instead intended as a phenomenological reading of the literature (Hammersley, 2012) in which the author has attempted to 'bracket' their preconceptions and personal experiences to allow the literature to speak for themselves rather than foregrounding works that they find particularly familiar, resonant, or comforting.

In keeping with the chosen methodological approach of allowing the literature to speak for itself, a conventional thematic analysis was undertaken (Braun & Clarke, 2017) utilising the coding of each text in sequence. The codes assigned to each text were categorised to allow recurrent themes to be identified and subjected to further analysis (Miles et al., 2019). The iterative coding, categorisation, and thematic analysis process was manually completed by the author alone as a means of ensuring a consistent and comprehensive reading of the texts (Silverman, 2015). While manual analysis naturally introduces the potential for researcher bias, a strict adherence to phenomenological principles mitigates this as far as possible. While this analytical process has the potential to produce qualitative data, no qualitative analysis was undertaken and this potential limitation of the research offers an opportunity for further, complementary analyses in the future.

Given the vague and sometimes overlapping definitions of second-career academics in the literature, this review considers several publications which also discuss other non-traditional academic roles and, in any instances where a publication does not speak directly about second-career academics, it is indicated.

3. Literature Review

3.1. Introduction

The phenomenon of professionals transitioning into higher education and undertaking a second career as an academic is such a significant life event that it has much in common with transnational migration (Wilson et al., 2014a). For the second career academic, the inter-professional transition can result in feelings of culture shock (Wilson et al., 2014a) and require

a significant adjustment period to their new career. Bandow et al. (2007) make the point that existing support structures in higher education were designed for recruits following "the traditional linear transition through university, higher-degree research and on into academia" (Wilson et al., 2014a; p.7), hereafter referred to as traditional academics, and may not be appropriate for second-career academics. Wakely (2021) suggests it may take up to three years for a second-career academic to settle into their new role, even in practice-based disciplines. Despite the significance of this transition and the potential risk it poses for higher education institutions with significant incentives to retain their newly recruited workforce (Mohandas, 2023), there are still significant barriers for the second-career academic to overcome (Wilson et al., 2014b), some of which are outlined in the sections that follow. The reality is that the transition of second-career academics is under-researched (Crowder & Mouratidou, 2020) but the research which does exist overwhelmingly depicts a sector failing to adequately support those transitioning individuals (Kitchener, 2023). This situation should be a matter of concern for anyone in the effectiveness of teaching and learning in the higher education sector and the development of its students. This literature review aims to consolidate current knowledge to support future research.

3.2. Prior to Transitioning

According to the literature, the motivation for transitioning into an academic role for career professionals is a combination of dissatisfaction with the professional career in which second-career academics were previously working and perceptions of what an academic career would entail that were not always accurate or well-informed. This review will consider the push and pull factors that inform the decision-making process for professionals who choose to transition to a career in higher education.

Among the reasons identified by the participants of a study conducted by Wilson et al. (2014b) were limited career choices in their previous profession, an unsupportive workplace, and limited work/life balance. In the case studies provided by Crowder and Mouratidou (2022), seeking a better work/life balance was also one of the critical motivations related to dissatisfaction with a previous career. Leonard et al. (2023) found a range of reasons that motivate accountants to transition to a career in higher education, including negative experiences in their corporate careers and limited career opportunities in their previous role. Jensen et al. (2006; p.4) found that "the corporate experience was not as fulfilling over time, and they each had felt increased pressure and stress at work". Similarly, as Knittel Mabry et al. (2004) found, feelings of corporate burnout and the desire to escape to a different kind of career and life demonstrate that the push and pull factors in a person's decision to transition their career often overlap and inform one another. This analysis supports Wilson et al.'s comparison with transnational migrants "motivated by a complex array of push/pull factors, which may or may not involve a degree of uncertainty and excitement when crossing the respective geosymbolic boundaries" (2014a; p.8).

Compared to the push factors, the pull of a career in academia, as outlined in the literature, is less grounded in extrinsic practicalities and comes from a more intrinsic place rooted in values and aspirations. Pickern & Costasis (2023) state that the most common reason is a desire to teach, but among the three works that they cite in support of this, Crowder and Mouratidou (2020) describe this as a calling that encompasses both a desire to teach and to make a meaningful social contribution. Wilson et al. state that "the motives for making the move to academe usually centre on lifestyle and prestige factors" (2014a; p.8). These alternative

explanations do not contradict Pickern and Costasis's assertion but make the point that the 'desire to teach' is more nuanced than a desire to impart knowledge for its own sake.

Many second-career academics saw academia as a career with a more appealing lifestyle encompassing flexibility (Leonard et al., 2023), prestige (Wilson et al., 2014a), and a new challenge (Gourlay, 2011a). For other research participants, their motivation was to positively transform lives (Jensen et al., 2006), to pursue their interests more thoroughly (Myers et al., 2006), or to remedy a poorly made initial career choice (Bandow et al., 2007).

An infrequent but significant theme in the literature is what Crowder and Mouratidou (2020) called serendipity. Rather than being a careerist calculation (Blenkinsopp & Stalker, 2004), some second-career academics found themselves in a position where they had an opportunity to make the transition, and this inspired them to consider doing so (Leonard et al., 2023; Laari, 2022; Knittel Mabry et al., 2004). This opportunity may be more appealing and available to industry professionals with a higher level of prior education who may experience their career change as a return rather than a transition (Bandow et al., 2007; Owen & Flynn, 2004). Second-career academics with a higher level of prior education may be more attuned to the 'quirks' of higher education (Simendinger et al., 2000) and better prepared to make an informed decision to transition having been 'socialised' in a similar way to academics who have taken a more traditional path (Wakely, 2021), thus enhancing confidence and facilitating an additional motivation to transition.

3.3. Entering the Academy

Participants in the research literature report that transitioning to academia has required them to accept a salary reduction (Leonard et al., 2023; Wilson et al., 2014a; Jensen et al., 2006), although for some, their initial preconceptions were that the field is generously remunerated (Crowder & Mouratidou, 2020). A common theme in the literature is that professionals have inaccurate perceptions of academia as a lucrative and comparatively easy career (Pickern & Costakis, 2023).

The research participants' mistaken preconceptions about the higher education sector are also evident in the literature in form of a previous disdain for academic theory as being separate from 'the real world' (Dickinson et al., 2022) and more broadly of 'ivory tower' academics themselves (Grafström et al., 2023). These preconceptions are reciprocated in turn by academics who view industry professionals as inferior or ill-deserving of a place in academia, a point starkly made by one of the participants in Ombebe's study: "When I applied for a senior role, I was openly informed by a colleague that he had applied to stop me, a non-researcher, getting the role. He also said there had been a discussion 'amongst the researchers' as to who should stand against me to have a better chance of success" (2023; p.6).

This perceived dichotomy between theory and practice is a recurrent theme in the literature (Grafström et al., 2023; Dickinson et al., 2022; Hollweck et al., 2021; Bartunek & Rynes, 2014; Bansal et al., 2012) as a contributory factor to the challenges second-career academics face in transitioning to higher education. Some researchers have postulated that, at least in part, the perpetuation of and, as in the example above, the vehemence with which this divide is adhered to by academics relates to broader concerns about the malign influence of neoliberalism on higher education (Kitchener, 2023; Dickinson et al., 2022; Kolber & Heggart, 2021). While some have called for educators to move beyond rhetorical resistance and deal with the realities

of higher education as they are (Fellows, 2023; Pal, 2022), the literature demonstrates that these issues persist for professionals entering the higher education sector.

In 1992, Lieberman postulated the role of 'boundary spanners' or 'linkers' in bridging the gap between practice and theory, and this neatly summarises both the strengths that a second-career academic can bring and the challenges they will face. Posner identified that 'boundary protection' is used "to establish and institutionalise professional fields in both academic and bureaucratic worlds" (2009; p.19), and Wilson et al. speculate that this may explain the "implicit, unofficial strategy which obliges newly transitioned academics to 'sink or swim' when learning the administrative and institutional ropes" (2014a; p.10). A participant in Jensen et al.'s 2006 study used the same sink or swim metaphor ("In teaching, you are just thrown in, sink or swim; you feel you are on your own and there is less classroom support than expected" (p.5)) and Obembe's 2023 research ("I was dumped into teaching with no experience and limited support, just two weeks after I had started - it was a case of sink or swim" (p.7)) suggesting that the challenge is long-standing, common, and ongoing.

An essential aspect of academia's 'boundary protection' found in the literature is the inadequacy (and sometimes absence) of rudimentary support for new academics from a professional background. Academics who have followed a more traditional pathway of postgraduate study and socialisation within the scholarly community (Barnacle & Mewburn, 2010) face markedly fewer barriers than those experienced by second-career academics. Bandow et al. (2007; p.23) argue that "there are support structures … these structures seek to meet the needs of very young faculty members who have often just left graduate school and who have yet to acquire significant work experience… For the older faculty member who has transitioned from industry, the traditional support system is likely to be inadequate." In a sector that seems "to have issues with onboarding and retention of staff across the board" (Pickern & Costakis, 2023; p.2), being part of a cohort for whom universities leave to 'sink or swim' is problematic.

The personal toll of an unsupported transition on second-career academics is made explicitly clear in the literature, including feelings of anxiety and unworthiness (Gourlay, 2011b), alienation (Herman et al., 2021), incompetence (Dickinson et al., 2022), imposter syndrome (Griffiths & Dickinson, 2023), feeling unwelcomed and unwanted (Pickern & Costakis, 2023), feelings of inauthenticity, uncertainty, and insecurity (Wakely, 2021), and notable levels of stress (Thornton, 2010). Wilson et al. (2014b) identify that second-career academics' inaccurate preconceptions about the sector as collegial, welcoming, supportive, and appreciative of the value of practitioner experience may exacerbate these negative experiences.

3.4. Becoming an Academic

For those professionals who do not "return to the industry within mere weeks of appointment" (Pickern & Costakis, 2023; p. 2), the challenging experience of transition can have a significant negative impact on their professional confidence (Wakely, 2021; Gourlay, 2011b; Blenkinsopp & Stalker, 2004). Second-career academics who experience negative transitional experiences may feel a need to restate their credentials (van Lankveld et al., 2017; LaRocca & Bruns, 2006) and prove themselves (Dickinson et al., 2022; Kitchener, 2020; Simendinger et al., 2000). However, since those negative transitional experiences likely stem from the perceived inadequacy of their professional experience, restating one's non-academic credentials may in practice exacerbate matters as it "perpetuates and promotes the false analytical dualism of theory and practice" (Eacott, 2021; p. 1). Relatedly, the literature frequently shows that the

transition of second-career academics requires their acceptance of a significantly reduced professional status (Obembe, 2023; Kitchener, 2020; Gourlay, 2011a). The loss of authority and prestige, along with the acceptance of a lower salary, may be compounded by the humbling experience of starting on or near the lowest rung of the academic ladder (Crowder & Mouratidou, 2020; Knittel Mabry et al., 2004) leading to further adjustment challenges for second-career academics (Wilson et al., 2014a).

When experienced in concert with the negative impacts of inadequate transitional support, the compounding issues of lost confidence and reduced professional status significantly impact second-career academics just when attempting to form a new professional identity as academics (Herman et al., 2021). Knights & Clarke conceptualised the fragile academic self as a product of "the insecurities associated with 'doing' the job" (2014; p.336), which, as Dickinson et al. (2022) suggest that, for second-career academics manifests as imposter syndrome and significantly reduced levels of self-efficacy. These findings carry significant implications for forming a new professional identity for second-career academics during the initial stages of their transition. Matters of identity repeatedly appear in the literature as a complex but pivotal function of professional-to-academic career transitions (Griffiths & Dickinson, 2023; Obembe, 2023; Dickinson et al., 2022; Laari, 2022; Herman et al., 2021; Hollweck et al.,2021; van Lankveld et al., 2017; Wilson et al., 2014a & b; Smith & Boyd, 2012; Gourlay, 2011a & b; Shreeve, 2011; Bandow et al., 2007). According to Bitzer & De Jaeger (2016), a second-career academic's teaching practice, professional development, motivation, the value that they place on the job and their commitment to it in the long term are all fundamentally influenced by their professional identity. As Hodgson (2017; p.5) noted, interdependent factors, including "self-efficacy, pedagogical agency, mattering, and belonging, which were interrelated with a key aspect of a stable academic identity, pedagogical resilience", directly influence the practice of second-career academics.

Related to themes of mattering and belonging, the alignment of values between the second-career academic and their institution is a significant contributor to their identity formation (Crowder & Mouratidou, 2020; Gourlay, 2011b; Bandow et al., 2007) and is of particular importance for this cohort of academics since the development of a values incongruency in their previous role often drove their impetus to transition (Wilson et al., 2014a). The literature offers compelling participant testimonies of the power of values alignment ("Part of the reason I changed career is making a choice aligned with my values and what I believe I am meant to be. I found a place where my values match up with the values of the institution" (Crowder & Mouratidou, 2020; p. 5)) and incongruency ("discomfort with what she perceived as task-driven values, an individualistic ethos, and a physically and symbolically isolating landscape encountered in Higher Education" (Gourlay, 2011b; p. 601)).

The isolation mentioned by the participant in Gourlay's research is a common feature in the literature on second-career academics transitioning from professional careers (Wakely, 2021; Wood et al., 2016; Wilson et al., 2014a; Gourlay, 2011b; LaRocco & Bruns, 2006). The themes of isolation and the benefits of socialisation experienced by academics who followed a more traditional career path explain the importance placed upon socialising practices for second-career academics in the literature. Writing about career transitions more generally, Crafter et al. (2019) identify social context and resources (for example, peers) as a considerable influence on the success of a career transition. Specifically, regarding second-career academics, Dickinson et al. (2022) identify peer interaction and observations of competent practice as the most

significant factors influencing feelings of effectiveness. Gourley (2011a; p.76) points out, however, that "new types of academic staff … enter complex, implicit fields of social practice, not clearly observable 'communities of practice'" and Mynott & Zimmatore (2021; p.10) report feelings of separation which are specific to the second-career academic "we feel that we stand apart from other people, within our context and both of our identities: practice and academic".

Many universities have sought to institute contractual mentoring programmes to support new inductees (MacPhail et al., 2024). While there have been relatively few studies into the efficacy of these programmes generally and not just for second-career academics (Cornelius et al., 2016), the literature on second-career academics indicates that the programmes have not resulted in significant success. Wilson et al. (2014a) identify that some universities have instituted mentoring programmes, but the research participants in their paper identified mentoring as something they would have liked. Similarly, the participants in Pickern and Costakis' 2023 study identified mentoring as a positive potential support mechanism (along with training and pedagogical help), indicating that it did not exist or was ineffective. Kitchener (2020; p.151) states, "Mentor support can be haphazard and, when it is good, was often attributed to luck". Bandow et al. (2007) identify that, unlike traditional academic recruitment in which similarly qualified candidates join at equivalent stages in their careers, the nature of second-career academics means that they will have diverse needs that do not lend themselves to a standard programme of support. Murray et al. (2014) argue that support may need to be more extensive and take significantly longer than conventional induction processes may offer. Citing Murray et al.'s research, Wakely concluded that mentoring is an insufficient response to these complex induction issues and adds that the nature of academic roles may actively make it "disadvantageous for experienced academic staff to support new staff" (2021; p.659).

3.5. Developing One's Pedagogy

There is little evidence in the literature of adequate support for second-career academics in preparing and delivering teaching materials. While students value the lived experience and real-life examples that second-career academics can use to supplement their teaching (Stevens, 2024; Obembe, 2023; Pickern & Costakis, 2023; Griffiths & Dickinson, 2023; Ong, 2022), this alone is not sufficient to create an effective teaching practice. Stephens (2015) points out that second-career academics may not have experienced a teaching environment since adolescence. For those second-career academics who return to education after a significant passage of time, observations of competent practice may have a beneficial influence (Dickinson et al., 2022). This hypothesis is supported by Obembe's 2023 study in which all those participants who had completed their postgraduate studies found it to be valuable in their transition as second-career academics.

While the challenge of developing pedagogical skills exists for all novice lecturers (Dvir, 2024), there is, according to Gourlay (2011; p.67), an ongoing expectation within the sector that new academics will have already developed their pedagogical understanding through postgraduate study and the "informal processes of learning within a collegial disciplinary context". In the absence of this grounding, second-career academics are reliant upon skills they developed for use in professional settings (Dickinson et al., 2022; Knittel Mabry, 2004), and consequently, "newly transitioned academic tends to prefer to teach post-experience graduate students working toward their MBA or a similar program. This is a group with whom transitioned academics have more in common" (Bandow et al., 2007; p. 24). One of the participants in the research conducted by Dickinson et al. (2022; p.22) likened the requirement to teach without

adequate preparation as making the transition 'like falling off a cliff', but the authors themselves argue that by leveraging their pre-existing skills second-career academics can utilise their "practitioner experience to encourage students to develop their own theories through constructivist learning" (ibid., p.6). However, Crowder and Mouratidou (2020; p.11) offer a note of caution advising that "new academics must therefore be prepared to dig much more deeply into theory and get beyond a 'training' mentality". The mention of training as an inadequate analogue for lecturing contrasts with Knittel Mabry et al. (2004; p.400), who, when speaking specifically about HR professionals transitioning to academia, posited a theory that "understanding of adult learning theory, course design and facilitation will, however, come in very handy".

In a marketised and regulated sector, second-career academics are expected to deliver high-level teaching to students who are accustomed to the teaching practice of more experienced academics. High-quality teaching is a skill developed and honed with time, often supported by reflective practice as part of a taught programme in educational practice (Hodgson, 2017). While important developmentally, the requirements of a taught programme, often a mandatory probationary requirement for the role, add another time-bound and pressurised element to a new lecturer's workload (Griffiths & Dickinson, 2023; Kitchener, 2020; Gourlay, 2011a). The ongoing and developmental nature of this approach naturally requires action before reflection and learning and, as such, is a poor mitigant for the 'sink and swim' approach taken more broadly in academic induction programmes. Some researchers have argued that the programmes themselves, while valuable in general, are fraught with issues for second-career academics due to "the assumption that all participants were already familiar with pedagogical terms" (Kitchener, 2021; p.12) and removed from the immediate needs of a developing practitioner (Trowler & Cooper; 2002). The literature shows that second-career academics are or, at the very least, feel wholly unprepared to teach (Obembe, 2023; Wilson et al., 2014a; Jensen et al., 2006) while being expected to develop for themselves "rich conceptions of teaching, along with an understanding of HE pedagogy and language" (Kitchener, 2023; p.12). Inevitably, it takes a considerable period for second-career academics to become skilled and confident lecturers, with Wakely (2021; p.657) suggesting that even in practice-based disciplines such as occupational therapy or physiotherapy "some new academic staff took up to three years to settle into their academic role".

The challenge of developing an individual's pedagogy is exacerbated for new academics by "the staggering amount of work involved, the relative lack of resources" (Knittel Mabry, 2004; p.399) which, again, participants in many studies were unprepared for (Leonard et al., 2023; Laari, 2022; Kolber & Heggart, 2021; Kitchener, 2020; Crowder & Mouratidou, 2020; Bandow et al., 2007; LaRocco & Burns, 2006; Jensen et al., 2006). A recurrent theme in the literature is the challenge presented by the pastoral side of an academic role and the lack of adequate preparation or adequate support for this (Dickinson et al., 2022; Crowder & Mouratidou, 2020; Wilson et al., 2014a). Many studies also note the significant administrative burden that the role carries (Leonard et al., 2023; Crowder & Mouratidou, 2020; Wilson et al., 2014a; Knittel Mabry et al., 2004) and the challenge of using inadequate and unfamiliar systems and bureaucracies with which the participants work (Obembe, 2023; Wakely, 2021; Kitchener, 2020; Wilson et al., 2014a). Griffiths & Dickinson (2023; p.168) summarise the workload for new academics thus: "Facing multiple, competing demands around achieving a doctorate, publishing research, and being returned in the Research Excellence Framework, alongside studying for a teaching

qualification, taking on module and course leadership, and becoming an academic personal tutor."

3.6. Developing as a Researcher

In many ways, the most significant element of the new academics' workload is the requirement to conduct and publish research, which Hodgson (2017; p.5) argues "was considered an essential aspect of the academic identity". Producing research at an acceptable standard for publication may be an even more pronounced challenge for second-career academics who may not have had the same grounding in methods and methodology as novice academics following a traditional career path. While some institutions will recruit academics to teaching-only roles, these are limited in number, and the absence of research can significantly limit career progression within the academy (Wakely, 2021) or to a limited number of institutions (Crowder & Mouratidou, 2020). In most academic roles there is an expectation that the role holder undertakes significant research that contributes to the existing body of knowledge, however, little additional support in either method and methodology or the requirements of academic writing is made available (Leonard et al., 2023; Kitchener, 2020; Wilson et al., 2014a; Gourlay, 2011a; LaRocco & Bruns, 2006; Knittel Mabry et al., 2004). The absence of support for novice researchers places second-career academics at a significant disadvantage when compared with traditional academics who have previously completed research projects (Dickinson et al., 2022; Wakely, 2021; Adcroft & Taylor, 2013; Posner, 2009) and have already established collaborative research networks (Mynott & Zimmatore, 2021; Wakely, 2021). Research can also be an individualistic process, which increases feelings of isolation, particularly for second-career academics who likely have spent their previous careers in collaborative settings (Wakeley, 2021; Gourlay, 2011a). MacFarlane (2021) highlights the changing nature of academic research, driven by the neoliberal prioritisation of publication metrics, which prioritises "those elements that are measurable (test scores, citations, social media shares)" (Kolber & Heggart, 2021; p. 28). The expectation of establishing a visible and credible online academic identity presents additional barriers for second-career academics who have limited networks in the academic community or experience in research (Eacott, 2020).

Established in the literature is the insightful and actionable way that second-career academics can contribute to the body of literature in their respective fields (Stevens, 2024; Hollweck, 2021; Eacott, 2021; Posner, 2009). They can demonstrate credibility as researchers due to their tacit knowledge of practice and fluency in industry-specific language and customs. Extending this line of thought, Dickfos (2019; p.244) argued that traditional academics should engage in professional practice for significant periods to benefit from "recognising and measuring the impact of their research by validating the practical application of their otherwise theoretical work". Dickfos' position echoes Boyer's (1996) influential argument that research should apply to practice rather than merely to extend knowledge and reinforces the case that second-career academics are well-placed to complete significant research projects because of their combination of "academic prowess and industry insights" (Ong, 2022; p. 120).

As with successful teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, the successful publication of academic research requires second-career academics to engage with both academic theory and the specific conventions of academic writing. The challenge of adopting the expected style and language of academic writing was emphasised in several papers (Kitchener, 2023; Dickinson et al., 2022; Garcia et al., 2021; Wilson et al., 2014a; Gourlay,

2011a; Bandow et al., 2007; LaRocco & Bruns, 2006; Knittel Mabry et al., 2004) reflecting the lack of preparatory support they can access and "the assumption that all participants were already familiar with pedagogical terms" (Kitchener, 2021; P.11).

3.7. Negative Aspects of Career Transitions

Several themes mentioned in the literature were less significant, either mentioned in isolation by single papers or participants or expressed as being of lesser importance. Among these less significant themes are frustration with the slow pace of decision-making and activity in comparison to previous professional experiences (Kitchener, 2020; Knittel Mabry et al., 2004), the unexpected competitiveness of academia (Wakely, 2021; Wilson et al., 2014a; Gourlay, 2011a), the challenge of responding to the degree of flexibility in the role (Kitchener, 2023; Crowder & Mouratidou, 2020), a perceived loss of credibility in their profession resulting from the transition (Kitchener, 2023; Anderson, 2023), and the high likelihood that second-career academics will only be offered employment by less prestigious institutions (Kitchener, 2023; Crowder & Mouratidou, 2020; Ong, 2022).

3.8. Positive Aspects of Career Transitions

Despite the multiple challenges and barriers experienced by second-career academics, the overwhelming message from the literature is that research participants were eventually satisfied with having made the transition. Aside from isolated examples offered by Dickinson et al. (2022), Wilson et al. (2014a), Gourlay (2011b), and Knittel Mabry et al. (2004), there is no consistent pattern of second-career academics returning to their previous professions due to dissatisfaction with academia. This eventual satisfaction may be a consequence of the inherent selection bias of conducting research with existing second-career academics, however, the consistent refrain from the literature is that while the transition was challenging in unexpected and significant ways, it was ultimately worthwhile (Obembe, 2023; Ong, 2022; Crowder & Mouratidou, 2020; Wilson et al., 2014b; Gourlay, 2011a; Bandow et al., 2007). Among the many benefits mentioned (often duplicated across multiple studies), participants noted their satisfaction with feelings of freedom and autonomy (Gourlay, 2011b), enhanced work-life balance, flexibility, and a sense of fulfilling a calling (Crowder & Mouratidou, 2020), values-alignment and the satisfaction of developing students who will go on to make a positive impact (Dickinson et al., 2022), gaining recognition and status in a second professional domain (Hollweck et al., 2021), giving something back to a community (Jensen et al., 2006), gaining additional skills (Kitchener, 2023), passion for the subject and a desire to share it (Bitzer & De Jager, 2016), developing collegial relationships (Pickern & Costakis, 2023), and their ability to research things they are interested in (Leonard et al., 2023).

3.9. Recommendations in the Literature

In the literature, multiple researchers offered recommendations to enhance or support the transition of second-career academics into the sector (Kitchener, 2023; Obembe, 2023; Pickern & Costakis, 2023; Dickinson et al., 2022; Herman et al., 2021; Wilson et al., 2014c; Gourlay, 2011a). Wakely (2021; p.662) argues that given the limited literature on the topic, specific recommendations are unwise without additional research and adds that, in general, "suitable support must be fostered both at an individual level and systematically". Systematic support tailored to transitioning second-career academics will require "a multi-dimensional and multi-directional approach" (Wilson et al., 2014c; p.10), meaning that "it may be difficult to simplify

a concept of accommodating exogenous faculty into the form of a coherent set of best practices" (Bandow et al., 2007; p. 24).

Where recommendations appear in the literature, they focus on the following themes:

3.9.1. Mentoring

Developing supportive interpersonal environments through mentoring (Kitchener, 2023; Pickern & Costakis, 2023), collaborative peer networks (Dickinson et al., 2022), or some combination of both in a mentoring network (Obembe, 2023). Herman et al. (2021) expanded this to a focus on developing care-full working communities, which echoed Gourlay's (2011a) call for communities of practice that support personal and professional growth. Wilson et al. (2014c) proposed that second-career academics should seek to develop these networks for themselves by joining committees.

3.9.2. Academic Skills Programmes

Specific programmes to develop academic skills that are either explicitly created for second-career academics (Pickern & Costakis, 2023) or developed from existing programmes (Kitchener, 2023; Dickinson et al., 2022). Again, Wilson et al., (2014c) suggested that second-career academics can proactively bridge this gap by involving themselves in collaborative research to help foster these skills.

3.9.3. Reference Materials

Improved reference information such as a dynamic academic handbook (Kitchener, 2023) created by and for second-career academics, a programme of 'taster' activities which Pickern and Costakis (2023) call a realistic job preview and, as Wilson et al. (2014c) suggest, guest lecturing and student mentoring. Kitchener (2023) also recommended that there be a specific focus on developing academic literacy in transitioning inductees, and Gourlay (2011a; p.76) suggests that information should aim to de-mystify academic careers and "share these less observable practices more explicitly".

3.9.4. Agency

Turning away from a deficit approach to second-career academics, Dickinson et al. (2022) suggest that developing their agency should be an explicit focus of induction activity, echoing Obembe's (2023) call for a culture shift to place more value on the different and complementary skill sets that second-career academics bring to universities. Indeed, Pickern and Costakis (2023) argue that universities should support ongoing industry placements for second-career academics so that their knowledge and connections remain current.

3.9.5. Institutional Changes

Finally, Obembe (2023) argues that university recruitment should map to industry skillsets more effectively, placing greater emphasis on practitioner experience and rewarding this with greater seniority and higher remuneration. Recognising the specific value that second-career academics bring, Kitchener (2023; p.13) proposes that universities should take advantage of those skills and experience to "act as a resource to harmonise discourses and practices".

4. Discussion

The author's reflection on their transition to academia following a business career was the impetus to conduct this literature review. Several themes emerged from the review of the literature and, after removing the phenomenological 'bracket,' reflecting upon the literature, and considering firsthand experiences, the author will discuss the most pertinent of these themes in this section.

4.1. A Form of Hazing

Firstly, the drastic 'falling off a cliff' nature of the transition that the author personally experienced which is a key theme in the literature seems to be even more pronounced than was apparent at the time when viewed with the benefit of hindsight. As some of the research participants in the literature showed, the perniciousness of boundary protection actions and the exhausting toll of navigating new and alien systems, cultures, and terminology verges on intolerable. The author's reading of the literature and personal experience upon transitioning suggests the idea that second-career academics undergo a form of hazing ritual from their new colleagues and institutions to earn their place in the accepted culture. Unlike hazing in its traditional sense, however, there is no evidence that second-career academics will pass on these toxic learned behaviours to colleagues who follow in their path once that initiation is complete. Indeed, the literature suggests that experienced second-career academics should be relied upon as mentors, far removed from the boundary-protecting gatekeeper role that hazing performs.

4.2. Workload Concerns

While the transition from a previous career into academia is undoubtedly jarring and can lead to feelings of confusion and inauthenticity, some of the research commentary on workload risks overstatement. The volume of work is high and complex, academia is by no means an easy alternative to other professional sectors, but the author found the difference to be less pronounced than the literature suggests. The author has previously made the transition from the public sector to the private sector and then from the private sector to the third sector. Each of the author's prior transitions required less of an adjustment in terms of culture, language, and behaviour than the transition to higher education necessitated, but the workloads were broadly comparable. The workload difference that requires the most significant adjustment is the more deliberate pace of work, particularly in comparison to the private sector, and the consequent number of active and ongoing workstreams to manage.

4.3. Authentic Learning and Employability

Given the increasingly developmental nature of academia, which requires more than the mere teaching of skills (Cole & Donald, 2022) while preparing students for a sustainable career (Donald & Mouratidou, 2022) in an evolving employment landscape (Crosta et al., 2023), second-career academics have a vital role to play. Not only do they have relatable and credible experiences of the workplace allowing them to teach with engaging narratives to supplement theory and enable more effective learning (Hedlund, 2021), but they can also credibly create authentic learning and assessment experiences (Manville et al., 2022).

4.4. Non-traditional Learners and Employability

In the literature, there are clear parallels between second-career academics and non-traditional widening participation students (Gourlay, 2011a), and the systemic disadvantages they face in

the workplace reinforce those similarities. For students and graduates, the development of career navigation skills such as resilience and context adaptation are paramount in the current and coming employment climate (Murphy, 2024; Fellows, 2024), and second-career academics who have had to develop and utilise these attributes simply to complete a transition to higher education are well placed to support students of this nature.

4.5. Mentors

The benefits for second-career academics of a combination of formal teaching and informal mentoring, as outlined in the literature, also accord with the author's experiences. When reading Kitchener (2023) on the inaccessibility of academic language for outsiders, an image of a notepad covered in words like 'axiomatic', 'synthesise', and 'andragogy' to look up in a dictionary after the lecture came to the author's mind. In the literature and the author's lived experience, there is considerable value in the provision of informal mentors for second-career academics who are also students (Donald, 2023; Zografou & McDermott, 2022; Cseh Papp & Horváth-Csikós, 2021).

4.6. Research

Research, as a task for second-career academics, was a topic that generated mixed responses in the literature, with its necessity for career advancement and academic credibility being of seemingly higher importance than as a vehicle for personal and professional growth, which is where the mismatch between the literature and the author's lived experience was most stark. The author's more positive inclination toward academic research may be influenced by their having been fortunate enough to have completed their earliest published research with supportive colleagues who were themselves second-career academics (Anonymised citation, 2023) and speaks again to the importance of mentorship for early career researchers (Mahayosnand, 2024). Irrespective of the reasons for pursuing research (Donald & Duck, 2024), the value for second-career academics in gaining experience and credibility as researchers goes far beyond the narrow benefits of an enhanced professional academic profile.

4.7. Loss of Professional Status

The corollary of this is that the more successful a transition one makes into academia, the more successful one has made from one's previous profession which "dilutes the immediacy of that practice-based experience" (Anderson, 2023; p. 2). While not a significant concern for many participants in the literature, with the notable exception of Crowder & Mouratidou (2020), this is discussed by several authors (Obembe, 2023; Dickinson et al., 2022; Ong, 2022; Wakely, 2021; Posner, 2009) and is a concern that inspired the author to continue in practice as a consultant, despite the workload and time-management challenges, throughout and beyond their transition into an academic role.

4.8. Recommendations in the Literature

Many of the recommendations offered in the literature argue that higher education institutions change their practice to accommodate the diverse needs of second-career academics better. Again, the author is at odds with the body of literature on the practicality of these recommendations. The boundary protection that exists in higher education is not yet creating a recruitment crisis despite a shrinking proportion of traditional academics (Hodgson, 2017) and the value that second-career academics can bring in allowing universities to deliver highly skilled entrants to the labour market (Obembe, 2023; Dickinson et al., 2022). Even in what the

literature identifies as less prestigious institutions, there will be a reluctance to adapt unless an urgent need arises. As Bandow et al. (2007; p.23) show, resistance to change will always exist as "non-traditional institutions will experience pressure to adopt traditional models for the sake of their own legitimacy". While enough second-career academics continue to navigate the 'sink or swim' nature of induction into the academy, there is little impetus for institutions to recognise, never mind address, the barriers they and their cultures present. Obembe (2023) may laudably call for a culture change, but the author of this paper sees no evidence that the sector will listen to this call, regardless of the sensible proposals offered. In short, if the issues that Knittel Mabry et al. identified in 2004 remain issues two decades on, which the literature clearly shows is the case, then there seems little prospect of top-down change to mitigate or eliminate the barriers faced by second-career academics happening any time soon.

5. Conclusion

This paper summarised the findings in the literature from the last twenty-five years on the topic of second-career academics transitioning to higher education. Based on the findings in the literature and the author's own experiences, the transition of career professionals into academia as educators is clearly a skills development issue that the sector is failing to address appropriately. The literature clearly outlines the benefits for the sector – and for the students – of broadening the base from which it recruits its academics, highlighting the advantages of diverse pedagogical and assessment styles and the relevancy of 'real-world' teaching examples. The literature also shows the challenges presented to second-career academics making the transition of the boundary protection cultures common in the sector. There are calls for the sector to change and to embrace the benefits brought by second-career academics by providing more supportive developmental pathways for transitioning professionals. However, given the lack of an urgent reason to implement change, it is difficult to envisage the sector moving beyond its current 'sink or swim' mentality. Over time, the sector will naturally become a more accommodating place for second-career academics as their numbers increase and the opportunities for collegial relationships with people who have 'walked the walk' multiply. However, this is a poor substitute for a deliberate, considered strategy to support transitioning professionals. Based on the literature and the author's personal experience it seems that, for now at least, second-career academics transitioning into higher education will, for the most part, continue to have to work things out for themselves. In view of this, the author offers the following recommendations based on the literature and lived experience:

5.1. Testing the Water

Exposure to the realities of academia and academic life should extend beyond this paper and the literature it has discussed and is best sought directly. Potential second-career academics should exploit personal and professional networks to solicit advice, guidance, and anecdotal evidence as well as seek opportunities for guest speaking, guest lecturing, teaching support, exposure to teaching materials, and, perhaps, research.

5.2. Seek a Mentor

Building on the first example, but without relying on a sole source of support or waiting for institutions to provide adequate mentoring solutions, finding a reliable and knowledgeable colleague can be invaluable. Where possible, someone who has transitioned into academia will be able to offer a better-informed perspective on your situation.

5.3. Walk the Walk and Talk the Talk

Being an academic is not something that can be easily simulated. Academia is a competitive profession which, by its very nature, is populated by experts. There is no shortcut to a successful transition into academia, you must read the literature and become comfortable with discussing academic concepts in an appropriate way to signal to your colleagues and students that you do have the necessary academic credibility.

5.4. Don't Lose Sight of What You Have to Offer

For individuals considering transitioning to a career in academia, it is important to recognise the value you add in enriching the academic community and, by extension, your wider communities. Second-career academics are invaluable in developing the skills and attributes of students to prepare them adequately to respond to current and forthcoming challenges both individually and collectively to change the world for the better.

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GILE Journal of Skills Development

Generation Z: Increasing Self-Perceived Employability and Well-being through Serious Leisure

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Abstract

Generation Z (Gen Z) is the best-educated, technologically adept, and most racially and ethnically diverse generation entering the workforce today. Gen Z also has the highest rate of diagnosed depression and anxiety. They prefer to have a side hustle on top of their full-time jobs; however, the act of monetizing their leisure activity has been shown to add more stress. The benefits of serious and casual leisure are shared; with emphasis on the need for Gen Z to engage in more forms of serious leisure to enhance their well-being and self-perceived employability. Employers and schools should encourage, promote and invest in more serious leisure activities for Gen Z. Continuing the emerging focus on research in leisure studies and careers, specifically focusing on Gen Z is highly recommended.

Keywords: Generation Z, Gen Z, workplace burnout, serious leisure, casual leisure, wellbeing, leisure activities, hobbies, mental health

1. Generation Z is a Highly Skilled Workforce Yet More Anxious and Depressed

Generation Z (which includes those born from 1996–2013) has been rapidly entering the workforce and (Mahayosnand & Sabra, 2023), alongside Millennials, are becoming the predominant demographic. These individuals are on track to becoming the best-educated, technologically adept and more racially and ethnically diverse group than any other generation (Cirstea & Anagnoste, 2023; Mahayosnand & Sabra, 2023; Parker & Igielnik, 2020). With the highest rate of diagnosed anxiety and depression (Pichler et al., 2021), these negative impacts on well-being can impact self-perceived employability and organisational performance (Leitão et al., 2021).

Stress and depression showed the strongest associations with burnout and negative productivity (Leitão et al., 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic saw 3 in 4 students and recent graduates in the UK report lower levels of well-being in September 2021 compared to March 2020 (Donald &

Jackson, 2022). Individuals who proactively manage their lives by dedicating time to forms of serious leisure such as hobbies compared to those who dedicate time to casual leisure such as watching TV experience increased productivity and well-being, as improved mental health translates into higher energy levels and enhanced performance (Donald & Nimmi, 2023; Nimmi & Donald, 2023). Therefore, the relentless pursuit of productivity and constant busyness can lead to work-related burnout, resulting in diminished mental well-being and compromised overall health (Leitão et al., 2021). Additionally, employers incur significant costs from burnt out employees because it leads to lower job performance.

2. Self-imposed Stress of Trying to Monetise Side Hustles

Entrepreneurial in spirit, the majority of Gen Z prefer to start their side hustles in addition to and on the side of their primary job (Cirstea & Anagnoste, 2023). While participation in serious leisure increases entrepreneurial intention and well-being in Generation Z (Donald, Mouratidou et al., 2024; Mouratidou et al., 2024), it can also worsen mental health if such side hustles are mandated due to financial necessity (see Donald, Baruch et al. financial capital as a form of employability capital). In the 2023 American Psychological Association Stress in America survey (Medaris, 2023), Gen Z and millennials reported having more stress and financial worries than older populations. This unnecessary pressure to monetize all skills overlooks the importance of balancing work and leisure (Meier et al., 2021). While finding fulfilment in one's side work is crucial, failing to distinguish between work and leisure can lead to increased depression levels due to resource depletion rather than replenishment.

Turning passions solely into commercial pursuits may result in disillusionment and adverse mental health outcomes. This commodification of leisure time restricts personal fulfilment and may lead to increased psychological distress. It's essential to maintain a boundary between personal interests and professional obligations. Embracing opportunities for leisure activities and quality time with loved ones beyond the workplace is vital (Meier et al., 2021). Therefore, while pursuing one's passion can be rewarding, transforming it solely into a commercial pursuit may have negative consequences on mental well-being.

Monetizing leisure activities and hobbies can undermine the intrinsic motivation behind engaging in them. External rewards, such as money, diminish their intrinsic values. It is essential to engage in activities for the sheer enjoyment they bring, rather than seeking mastery or an external validation. Prioritizing intrinsic enjoyment and skill development over external rewards (such as money) can contribute significantly to one's overall well-being and mental health, and increase one's employability (Donald & Nimmi, 2023).

3. The Importance of Casual and Serious Leisure

Engaging in leisure activities is essential as they satisfy life's values and requirements, acting as a recognized factor positively influencing health and well-being. Studies consistently show that exercise, a common leisure pursuit, has antidepressant effects on physiological and neurological functions (Bian & Xiang, 2023). However, engaging in non-physical forms of leisure like reading, texting, watching television shows and movies at home, and digital leisure also promotes better mental health.

Within the sphere of leisure activities, there are two distinct forms: serious leisure and casual leisure (Stebbins, 1992). Serious leisure activities like speaking, writing, or creating content involve active engagement (Bian & Xiang, 2023; Cosma et al., 2021; Mansfield et al., 2020).

Serious leisure activities demand dedication and effort offering greater, sustained mental benefits and increased creativity (Nimmi et al., 2023). Serious leisure pursuits require individual effort hence a "deeper" commitment, and often a greater challenge for individuals. In contrast, causal leisure activities, such as watching shows and scrolling through social media offer immediate pleasure but lack long-term mental health benefits (Stebbins, 1992). In today's fast-paced environment, casual leisure activities have surged in popularity due to their easy commercialization and accessibility through various products and services.

Casual leisure activities, especially when paired with highly stressful workplaces, have the potential to exacerbate work-related burnout. The dependence on instant gratification may hinder individuals from experiencing genuine long-term peace and fulfilment (Cosma et al., 2021). While a balance between serious and casual leisure activities is essential, prioritizing dedicated time and effort in serious leisure pursuits, even after a demanding workday, can lead to heightened energy levels, enhanced well-being, improved work performance and self-perceived employability (Ma et al., 2024).

4. Benefits of Serious Leisure Activities for Gen Z

Serious leisure consists of a person being actively engaged in their activities as opposed to being passively or casually engaged (Iso-Ahola & Baumeister, 2023; Stebbins, 1992). A person seeks to be seriously engaged in their leisure activity such as reading, rather than escaping to a more trivial activity like watching TV. Iso-Ahola and Baumeister state that engaging in such serious leisure activities is beneficial as it helps in creating meaning *in* one's life and increases one's meaning *of* life.

Serious leisure activities have the ability to improve one's physical, mental and emotional health and well-being (Donald & Nimmi & Donald, 2023; Iso-Ahola & Baumeister, 2023; Pichler et al., 2021). Since serious leisure activities typically involve seeking to meet a goal, time spent is purposeful which also increases one's life satisfaction. Iso-Ahola and Baumeister (2023) explicitly differentiate between a "work relation" goal that is extrinsic value such as money, versus seeking to meet a goal without force—having the freedom to seek out a goal. Once such a goal is met, the sense of pride developed also increases one's self-worth. Therefore, there are great benefits for Gen Z youth to engage in serious leisure activities solely for these intrinsic values (Ma et al., 2024).

Self-perceived employability may be increased through serious leisure activities (Donald & Nimmi, 2023; Nimmi et al., 2023). Iso-Ahola and Baumeister (2023) found that serious leisure activities like honing a new skill as a hobbyist or amateur allow one to be challenged and enter a "flow" state. In doing so, a person has the potential to develop rich, new skills without much strain. The acquisition of such skills which are oftentimes work-related or career development skills, thereby may also make Gen Z youth more employable (Ma et al., 2024). For example, one may increase their social interactions in a community of new people who also participate in the shared serious leisure activity. Critical employability skills such as written or verbal communication skills or leadership skills may be further developed.

5. Conclusion

Generation Z can benefit from undertaking more forms of serious leisure as it improves mental health and employability. Although such intensive leisure activities have the potential to become a lucrative side hustle, seeking external rewards such as money can cause increased

stress and take away the joy from engaging in the activities due to resource depletion. As the current and incoming workforce, it is crucial that employers and schools understand that Generation Z is already more depressed or anxious than others. Therefore, employers and schools should support, encourage, promote and invest in more serious leisure activities and programs for Gen Z. While leisure and well-being studies are already a discipline (Mansfield et al., 2020), further research should be conducted specifically with Generation Z and their unique employability and mental health characteristics in mind, such as emerging interest in integrating serious leisure into the higher education and careers literature (Donald, Mouratidou et al., 2024; Ma et al., 2024; Mouratidou et al., 2024; Nimmi & Donald, 2023; Nimmi et al., 2023).

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