

**Gordon Institute  
of Business Science**  
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# **The role of social capital in career management in the global digital advertising industry**

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## ABSTRACT

The world is becoming ever more digitally orientated and in order to remain profitable and be sustainable in the future, businesses and individuals need to keep up with this trend. In particular, the global advertising industry has seen major shifts to serve the rapidly expanding digital consumer market. This disruption has resulted in a number of adjustments to industry structures. It therefore requires individuals and organisations operating in this industry to re-examine their career management techniques in order to remain competitive and relevant. As this is a developing industry, there is a dearth of research for career development and therefore insight for career management in the global digital advertising industry is critical.

As social capital is a key pillar of career capital, this research had a specific focus on the role of social capital in career management in the global digital advertising industry. The four key objectives were to determine (i) whether social capital is a key tool for career advancement in this industry, (ii) how its value is perceived by select stakeholders in the industry, (iii) specific benefits of this form of capital, and (iv) key tools for social capital accumulation. To determine this, an exploratory research method consisting of 18 in-depth interviews across four continents was employed. The sample comprised three sample subsets, namely, senior managers, knowledge workers and HR practitioners/recruitment specialists.

The findings highlighted that the accumulation of social capital has apparent benefits for career advancement in the industry, particularly if developed in the context of a strong foundation of the relating forms of career capital and the introduced concepts of foundational and strategic social capital. A key conclusion is that social capital was found to be most beneficial once the 'knowing-why' and 'knowing-how' forms of career capital have been developed. Senior managers and knowledge workers believe that social capital is more beneficial for career advancement than HR practitioners/recruitment specialists in the industry. Although the accumulation of social capital was found to have both individual and organisational career management benefits, the individual benefits unmistakably out-weigh the organisational benefits. Furthermore, the study provided interconnected models of the stages of social capital as well as a development ladder for the accumulation of social capital for effective career management in the global digital advertising industry.

## **KEYWORDS**

Career Capital, Global Digital Advertising Industry, Social Capital, Career Management

## DECLARATION

I declare that this research is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

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**Lisa Colleen Fraenkel**

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**Date**

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

## 1.1 Introduction

In the changing world of careers, individuals and organisations are constantly seeking means to manage and develop their careers for optimal results. With the rapid rate of change that occurs in the world today, it is necessary to provide relevant and practical insight to individuals and Human Resource (HR) practitioners to aid in career management. Social capital is recognised as a key component in career management (Haslberger, 2013; Inkson & Arthur, 2001; Zikic & Ezzedeen, 2015).

The global digital advertising industry is developing at an exponential rate (PwC, 2015a). It is anticipated to continue to grow significantly in profitability. However, there is limited research on career management for individuals, HR practitioners and recruitment specialists in this industry. There exists, therefore, a need for key insights for career management to be identified for individuals in the global digital advertising industry. For this reason, this study undertook an exploratory examination of the views of some key players in the global digital advertising industry regarding the career benefits of accumulating social capital in this growing, dynamic and fast paced industry. The purpose of this research study was to determine the role of social capital in career management and key social capital tools in driving one's career forward in the global digital advertising industry.

## 1.2 Background

Tymms, Simmons & Zecha (2016) highlight that businesses operate in the digital age and that the global business landscape is being redrawn by digital technology. General Manager (2014), has gone as far as stating that all customers are in fact digital customers due the reshaping of customer behaviour through digital technologies. As consumers continue to adapt and embrace digital platforms it is paramount that knowledge workers, across all industries globally, adjust their career management in line with this growing trend.

## **1.3 Research Problem**

This study focussed on determining the importance of social capital in managing one's career in the global digital advertising industry. It further sought to determine key tools for social capital accumulation in this industry. As social capital or 'knowing-whom' is considered a key pillar of career capital (Al Ariss & Syed, 2011; Bozionelos, 2014; Haslberger, 2013; Rodriguez & Scurry, 2014; Zikic & Ezzedeen, 2015) and that no research was found regarding this form of capital in the global digital advertising a gap for research in this area was determined. There existed a need for exploration of this topic in order to aid individuals in the expanding global digital advertising industry in managing their careers more effectively.

## **1.4 Relevance of the Problem**

The research problem is relevant to both academics and businesses as it plays a crucial role in career management in a sector that is anticipated to dominate the advertising industry globally. The academic and business relevance is outlined below.

### **1.4.1 Academic relevance**

#### **1.4.1.1 The changing world of careers**

Globalisation and technological advancements have driven new forms of working, organisation and career management (Sutherland, Naidu, Seabela, Corsson & Nyembe, 2015). Knowledge workers can no longer depend on the acquisition of traditional job requirements. There is a need to be continually acquiring and building critical competencies for their careers to ensure that they remain employable and are successful career capitalists (Sutherland et al., 2015) in today's unstable and dynamic business environments (Enache, Sallán, Simo & Fenandez, 2013).

De Vos and Dries (2013) illustrated the shifts in career management from talent literature (where the career management responsibility sits with the employer) to careers literature (where career management is considered the responsibility of the employee). This fundamental change means that career management is considered more of a responsibility for individuals (Baruch, 2006) and it has therefore become essential for knowledge workers

to understand how to enhance their career management in order to build sustainable careers. Clarke and Patrickson (2008) highlighted that there is increased focus on concept of employability as a foundation for employment and career success due to the changing career patterns and the attrition of job security in today's global economy. Clarke (2013), however, urged that the organisational career remains relevant and therefore the HR professional, seeking to retain top talent, and the knowledge worker, seeking to advance their career, will benefit from understanding components that aid in successful career management.

#### **1.4.1.2 Career capital**

Haslberger (2013) emphasised that career capital accumulation stemmed from three ways of knowing; why, how and whom. This was unpacked by Arthur, Claman and DeFillippi (1995) as the intelligent career comprising of three pillars of career capital: 'knowing-why', 'knowing-how' and 'knowing-whom'. Sutherland et al. (2015) emphasised that there is a lack of evidence in the literature as to how knowledge workers build career capital as well as how it is best supported by HR practitioners.

#### **1.4.1.3 The role of social capital**

As indicated above, social capital ('knowing-whom') is one of the key components of career capital (Rodriguez & Scurry, 2014) and is therefore a central pillar that knowledge workers need to assess in order to gain further insight into how to manage their careers effectively. Social capital contributes to building career capital by focusing on building alliances to augment prominence at all levels within an organisation and industry (Lamb & Sutherland, 2010). This type of capital represents the value that lies in social networks (Gedajlovic, Honig, Moore, Payne & Wright, 2013; Payne, Moore, Griffis & Autry, 2011). Claus, Maletz, Casoinic and Pierson (2015) emphasised that knowledge workers can access and utilise resources, such as financial or material benefits, information, validity, exposure and sponsorship, from their social networks.

Social capital provides access and information through members of networks, empowers individuals to access resources, and facilitates the achievement of predetermined objectives (Seferiadis, Cummings, Zweekhorst, & Bunders, 2015). Understanding and utilising the

beneficial influence of social capital in one's career is likely to be advantageous in career management and development. Kwon and Adler (2014) opined that research needs to unpack key aspects and components of social capital in terms of relevancy to specific disciplines. Bozkurt and Muhr (2011) noted that although the benefits of social capital are evident for both individuals and organisations in multinational enterprises, the mechanisms for building this form of capital is largely under researched.

#### **1.4.1.4 Lack of research in career management in the global digital advertising industry**

There is a dearth of research pertaining to career management in the global digital advertising. In particular, no research could be found on social capital in the global digital advertising industry. This is an indication that there is a need for research to be conducted to understand the impact of this form of career capital in an industry that will largely be shaped by digital media consumption in the future.

### **1.5 Business relevance**

#### **1.5.1 The global digital advertising industry**

The rise of the digital age has had major implications across multiple industries globally. Bharadwaj, Sawy, Pavlo and Venkatraman (2013) highlighted that business strategies are being fundamentally transformed by digital technologies, a combination of connectivity technologies, communication, computing and information. As identified by PwC (2015a), there have been major shifts in the allocation of budget in the advertising industry from traditional media types to digital advertising. PwC (2015a) estimated that internet advertising will become the largest advertising medium, overtaking TV expenditure from 2017. It is estimated that by 2018 global digital advertising expenditure will reach 252.02 billion U.S dollars (General Manager, 2016a). Digital advertising is clearly on the rise. It is crucial for knowledge workers in the advertising industry to retain relevancy in this increasingly digital world and to understand how to best manage their careers in the digital advertising context. As these individuals are operating in a highly dynamic environment, it is imperative that their career management is adapted to ensure that they are building sustainable careers.



## **1.6 Research objectives**

The chief purpose of this research study is to determine the role of social capital in career management in the global digital advertising industry. This research seeks to establish if social capital plays a key role in career management in the industry and if the perceived importance of social capital varies depending on one's role/level in the industry. Furthermore, the research aims to determine the benefits for accumulating social capital in the global digital advertising industry and key tools for accumulating social capital in this industry.

## **1.7 Limitations of the study**

As unpacked in Chapter 4 below, there were a number of limitations encountered for this study. A key limitation was that time, funding and respondent access constraints required that the research used a non-probabilistic sample. It is therefore important to note that the sample utilised does not represent the population statistically (Saunders & Lewis, 2011).

## **1.8 Proposed outline of the study**

The introduction to the research problem has been examined in this initial chapter, Chapter 1. The six remaining chapters are outlined below as a guide for the remainder of this research project.

### **1.8.1 Chapter 2: Literature review**

A comprehensive literature review is provided in Chapter 2. It that outlines the current context of the career management landscape as well as the importance of accumulating social capital in today's world of work. The current landscape of the global digital advertising industry is examined. This chapter explores academic research to date on social capital, a key component of career capital, and its impact in the global digital advertising industry. The framework outlined below was utilised to explore academic literature and provide the arguments and perspective for the study:

- Careers literature
- Career capital
- Social capital (key components and benefits)
- Global careers in the digital advertising industry

### **1.8.2 Chapter 3: Research questions**

There is a lack of empirical evidence in the globalised knowledge economy regarding the current components of career capital (Lamb & Sutherland, 2010). This research seeks to determine if social capital is a key pillar of career capital that knowledge workers in the global digital advertising industry require to manage their careers more effectively. Chapter 3 includes four research questions that aided in determining the importance of social capital accumulation in the global digital advertising industry, variations in perceived importance by selected sample subsets, benefits of social capital accumulation and tools for developing social capital.

### **1.8.3 Chapter 4: Research methodology**

The research was exploratory by nature and therefore a qualitative research methodology was employed. The research methodology is unpacked in Chapter 4, including an outline of the selected research design, population, sampling, unit of analysis and an explanation of the measurement data collection tool, data gathering process and data analysis approach utilised. The data reliability and validity are also unpacked closing with a consideration of limitations of the study.

### **1.8.4 Chapter 5: Research results**

Chapter 5 unpacks the results of the qualitative interview studies. A total of 18 semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted. These interviews were with three defined sample subsets, namely (i) senior managers, (ii) knowledge workers and (iii) HR practitioners or recruitment specialists in the global digital advertising industry. The 18 interviews were recorded and coded for analysis.

### **1.8.5 Chapter 6: Discussion of results**

The discussion of the results unpacks answers to the research questions posed in Chapter 3 and the research problem discussed in Chapter 1. This chapter contains key learnings from the study with reference to literature review findings in Chapter 2 and results determined in Chapter 5.

### **1.8.6 Chapter 7: Conclusion**

Chapter 7 is the conclusion of the full research report. This chapter emphasises the key findings, their implications for business and academia as well as recommendations for future studies linked to the research topic.

## **1.9 Summary of Chapter 1**

With the rapid rise of digital advertising globally, it is imperative that career management in this profitable industry is understood by both the knowledge worker looking to advance their career and organisations looking to retain talent. Talent retention is likely to remain strong if organisations can assist their employees in career management and growth. This exploratory study unpacks key components of social capital that assist knowledge workers and organisations in the global digital advertising industry and can be used by both cohorts for personal career management and organisational talent retention respectively.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The chief purpose of this literature review is to explore recent literature regarding social capital and its pertinence for knowledge workers in the global digital advertising industry. It is, however, necessary that current careers, managing careers and career capital theories are unpacked to provide context for the academic arguments pertaining to social capital. The first section of this literature review therefore unpacks literature relating to careers, managing careers and career capital. The second section investigates literature on social capital and unpacks key components and benefits of social capital in managing one's career with the aim of providing a thorough investigation of key social capital findings to date. The third and final section of this literature review explores global careers with a specific emphasis on the digital advertising industry.

### **2.2 What is a career?**

A career was explained as the accumulation of work-related practices which one experiences during their life (Greenhaus, Callanan & Godshalk, 2010). Arthur, Hall and Lawrence (1989) unpacked a career as the transforming order of one's work practices over time. As Yarnell (2008) identified, this definition posited by Arthur, et al. (1989) includes the prospect of varying types of employment, from self-employment to non-permanent roles including the sequence of roles that may not involve promotion. Careers can unfold in unexpected directions including horizontal or downward steps in hierarchies and across various organisational boundaries (Yarnell, 2008).

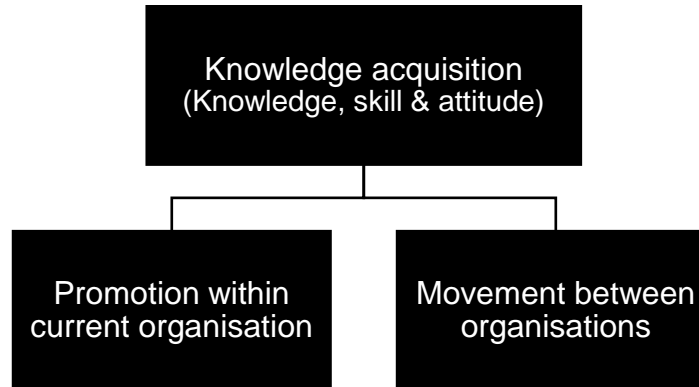
Clarke and Patrickson (2008) emphasised that employability is a significant definition of success in one's career. It was explained by Greenhaus et al. (2010) that a knowledge worker's contentment and sense of fulfilment is influenced by their ability to control the course of their work life. However, numerous individuals lack insight and purpose in their careers. It was concluded by Lyons, Schweitzer and Ng (2015) that individuals with more self-direction in their careers and a demonstration of personal accountability for career success have higher levels of satisfaction in their careers.

## 2.3 The changing landscape of career management

Previously career management was considered the responsibility of the organisation where an individual was employed. However, individuals are now considered responsible for their own career management and planning (Enache et al., 2013; Yildiz, Bskese & Bozbur, 2015). Due to the environment of the modern career being volatile and stressful (Enache et al., 2013; Lyons et al., 2015), the responsibility of career management has shifted to knowledge workers. The changing macro-environments, specifically the economic environment, have influenced the purpose and responsibility for career management with the main modifications existing in organisational and individual control (Yarnell, 2008). Considering organisational restructuring, companies can no longer offer stability and progressive careers and therefore increasingly rely on more short-term staff cycles (Enache et al., 2013). A principle of individual career management is that knowledge workers can exercise significant control over their careers (Greenhaus et al., 2010). For the majority of knowledge workers their careers occupy a considerable portion of the time and energy with investments in skills and building relationships for career management (Clarke & Patrickson, 2008). Career management is considered an inquiring process that involves information gathering, insight acquisition, goal setting and strategy development to attain determined goals (Greenhaus et al., 2010). Effective career management therefore requires strong insight into oneself and the global economy as well as robust decision-making skills (Greenhaus et al., 2010).

Three principal areas for career management have been identified. These include (i) knowledge acquisition (attained knowledge, skills and attitudes), (ii) promotions within one's current organisation and (iii) movement between organisations. As illustrated in Figure 1 below, knowledge acquisition feeds into the second and third areas for career progression, namely, promotion within one's current organisation and movement between organisations. Forrier, Sels & Stynen (2009) discuss movement capital as a person's qualities shaping their career. Movement capital includes the individual competencies, skills, attitude and knowledge impacting an individual's career mobility opportunities (Forrier et al., 2009). Forrier et al. (2009) identified that human capital is a dimension of movement capital.

**Figure 1: Key focus areas for career management**



### **2.3.1 HR practitioners involvement in career management**

It is imperative that the HR practitioners are aligned with the company's purpose to serve the staff and executives simultaneously. Ulrich, Younger and Brockbank (2008) recognised that HR departments have the expectation to function as a business within a business, instead of a separated function of HR practices. HR departments should therefore operate as a business with vision and strategy (Ulrich et al., 2008). As emphasised by Lorre and Orgera (1997), HR departments require defined business objectives that are linked to the overarching business strategy of the organisation. HR practitioners are often considered strategic partners (Ulrich et al., 2008) and employee champions as they ensure that employee commitment and competence remain high (Ulrich, 1997).

Career management is considered a central role in the HR process. As highlighted by Ulrich (1997), HR professionals are required to play both strategic and operational roles, taking responsibility for short and long term goals. Although individual careers are no longer planned by organisations, they do provide the structures through which the movement occurs (Capelli & Keller, 2014). Talent management is a term that spans a range of practices, including career management, employee advancement and success planning that focuses on sourcing the right person for the right job at the opportune time (Capelli & Keller, 2014). An HR professional is required to manage employee contribution which includes the needs of employees (Ulrich, 1997). Career management and progression can be considered a chief need of employees.

### 2.3.2 Careers literature

As identified by Verbruggen (2012), the evolving nature of careers has been a significant emphasis of careers literature. There has been an evident adjustment in the way that knowledge workers are managing their careers. Clarke and Patrickson (2008) emphasised that there is an expectation for individuals to be primarily responsible for their employability instead of depending on their company to manage their career progression. In this new world of work, Garavan (1999), postulated that employees should consider themselves self-employed even during employment at an organisation. Research on modern global careers is largely explored with the perspective of individuals directing their own careers (Al Ariss & Syed, 2011). Yildiz et al. (2015) further emphasised this through recognising that despite any expectation of support from their organisation, knowledge workers are expected to be accountable for their career progression. As highlighted below in Table 1 below, De Vos and Dries (2013) illustrated key differences in careers literature and talent management literature.

Changes in career management can be attributable to the change in career development for knowledge workers. Traditionally, careers generally developed within one organisation and progressed hierarchically along a pre-determined career path. However, lifetime employment is no longer the norm and changing employers and professions is not uncommon (Eby, Butts, & Lockwood, 2003). Yildiz et al. (2015) highlighted that historically organisations adhered to rigid hierarchical structure and operated in an environment that was stable where careers were secure, linear and predictable. In today's work life the organisational system is more dynamic and flexible and the career management of employees is not in the hands of the organisations where they are employed (Sutherland et al., 2015). Organisations no longer offer a guarantee of life-time employment and knowledge workers are experiencing inter-organization mobility on an increasing level (Enach, et al., 2013). Similarly, Yildiz et al. (2015) clearly indicated that knowledge workers should be accountable for their career management and career planning.

**Table 1: The careers versus the talent management literature: conflicting assumptions**

(De Vos & Dries, 2013, p. 1817)

CREDO	CAREERS LITERATURE	TALENT MANAGEMENT LITERATURE
		<i>'Build a career in which I can use and develop my talents in view of my personal career drivers and goals'</i>
1. <b>Importance attached to continuity</b>	Low	High
2. <b>Focus of career management</b>	Individual (psychology)	Organisational (strategy)
3. <b>Accountability for career management</b>	Self (protean)	Organisation (paternalistic)
4. <b>Mobility preference</b>	Inter-organisational (boundaryless)	Intra-organisational (bounded)
5. <b>Number of formalised career management practices</b>	Low (focus on career self-management)	High (focus on organisational career management)

### 2.3.3 New career perspectives

Briscoe, Hall and Frautschy DeMuth (2006) identified that with the decline of the traditional organisational career two key views on careers have emerged: the protean career and the boundaryless career. Clarke (2013) highlighted that these new models of career offer a more suitable fit for both individuals and organisations. Boundaryless and protean career attitudes have been viewed as constructs that are interrelated, however autonomous (Briscoe et al., 2006).

The protean career is one where the accountability for career management is considered the responsibility of oneself (Briscoe et al., 2006; De Vos & Dries, 2013). There is a move



from organisational accountability for career management to personal accountability for career management (De Vos & Dries, 2013). Protean career orientation is an approach towards one's career that embodies personal ambition, freedom and realising decisions grounded on one's individual values (Briscoe & Hall, 2006). Individuals with protean career attitudes are more likely to make self-directed decisions with internally developed standards and are more likely to seek external direction and assistance in their career management (Briscoe et al., 2006).

Boundaryless careers are those that transcend (organisational) boundaries (Briscoe & Hall, 2006; Eby et al., 2003; Verbruggen, 2012). Briscoe and Hall (2006) identified persons with high boundaryless attitudes to be comfortable about building and maintaining relationships beyond organisational boundaries. A study by Verbruggen (2012) found that individuals with boundaryless mind-sets tended to have higher earning potential and received more promotions where organisational mobility preferences resulted in fewer promotions and experienced poorer levels of job fulfilment and satisfaction in their careers. Boundaryless careers carry an implied move across borders which is appropriate for the study of international careers (Haslberger & Brewster, 2009).

Clarke (2013) identified that alongside the boundaryless and protean career theory, there is a post-corporate career and kaleidoscope career theory. Clarke (2013) explained that kaleidoscope careers are those that are repeatedly modified in order to enable individuals to master changing responsibilities, roles and relationships. Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) identified that a number of women were following kaleidoscope career models. Peiperl and Baruch (1997) highlighted that the post-corporate world is one with major shifts from large organisation career paths where knowledge workers are moving out of large companies and generating their own employment.

## **2.4 The case for the organisational career**

Although there is much evidence that the organisational career is no longer relevant, Clarke (2013) argued that it remains pertinent. It is apparent that the employers who offer developmental opportunities which aid their employees in the comprehension of the definition of employability will have an advantage in the marketplace (Clarke & Patrickson, 2008). Greenhaus et al. (2010) emphasised that HR specialists have a need to develop

effective career management systems within their organisations to assist employees with the task of career management. Kulkarni (2016), identified that although a career is likely to be specific to a knowledge worker, it is highly influenced by the organisation. This is due to internal career paths which predetermine positions, their required competencies and interrelationships (Kulkarni, 2016).

### **2.4.1 A key driver: talent retention**

Career strategies have developed significantly with time in response to changing work environments coupled with the imperative for companies to attract and retain talent (Yarnell, 2008). Modern organisations are under immense pressure to ensure excellent levels of service and productivity whilst optimising cost efficiency, therefore knowledge workers are increasingly considered a significant source of competitive advantage (Yarnell, 2008). Chen, Chang and Yeh (2003) stressed that a knowledge worker's job satisfaction can be positively impacted through enhanced career management by their company with improved retention rates. Furthermore, De Vos & Dries (2013) postulated that there is a need for empirical research in talent management. Kukarni (2016) affirmed the need for such research through emphasising that career development projects can be viewed as an interrelated structure of employee development or as a collection of career management and career planning practices.

Considering the realities of the evolving world of work, it is apparent that there is a need for knowledge workers and organisations to adjust to the transforming nature of career management to allow for successful careers and companies to be established. Research on how to develop career capital will therefore be beneficial to both the individual knowledge worker and the HR professional.

## **2.5 Career capital**

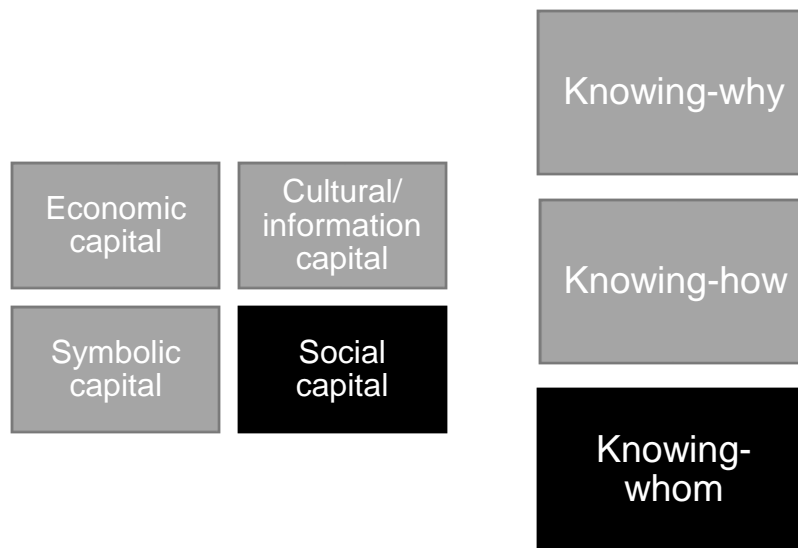
Career capital has been explained as a knowledge worker's past learning experiences that can be invested in current project activity (Arthur, DeFillippi & Jones, 2001). Bourdieu (1986) identified four pillars of career capital, namely economic capital (monetary), symbolic capital (rules that are applicable in various social contexts), cultural and information capital

(attainment of cultural status and education gained through exposure to cultural contexts) and social capital (relationships and social networks). Career capital is a tradable commodity among and within organisations (Sutherland et al., 2015) and is recognised as a non-financial capital (Inkson & Arthur, 2001).

Career capital accumulation was explained as being related to an investment action whereby constructive investment has successful returns for the knowledge worker (Lamb & Sutherland 2010). It has been identified that HR professionals need to have a thorough comprehension of the career capital components that are appealing to knowledge workers in their industries in order to aid the organisation in attracting and retaining talent (Sutherland et al., 2015). It is apparent that gaining career capital will have positive career returns for knowledge workers. It has been seen as imperative that knowledge workers remain relevant in this new world of work, therefore through understanding aspects of career capital that drive their careers forward and working to increase their career capital, knowledge workers will be at an advantage (Lamb & Sutherland, 2010).

Further to the four key pillars of career capital, DeFillippi and Arthur (1994) highlighted three forms of career capital or 'ways of knowing'. Zikic and Ezzedeen (2015) examined the three forms of career capital: (i) career motivation and purpose or 'knowing-why', (ii) knowledge or 'knowing-how' and (iii) relationships/networks or 'knowing-whom'. The three forms of career capital are considered currencies that function interdependently, are complementary (Haslberger, 2013; Inkson & Arthur, 2001) and are referred to as the "intelligent career" (Arthur et al., 1995, p. 7). As highlighted in Figure 2 below, social capital or 'knowing-whom' is the only construct that exists in both Bourdieu (1986) and DeFillippi and Arthur's (1994) formulations of career capital, illustrating its considered significance. The 'knowing-how' competencies of knowledge and skills, as well as the 'knowing-why' competency of attitude, play a key role in one's aptitude in their occupation and future career progression.

**Figure 2: Social capital in Bourdieu’s (1986) four key pillars of career capital as well as DeFillippi and Arthur’s (1994) three forms of career capital**



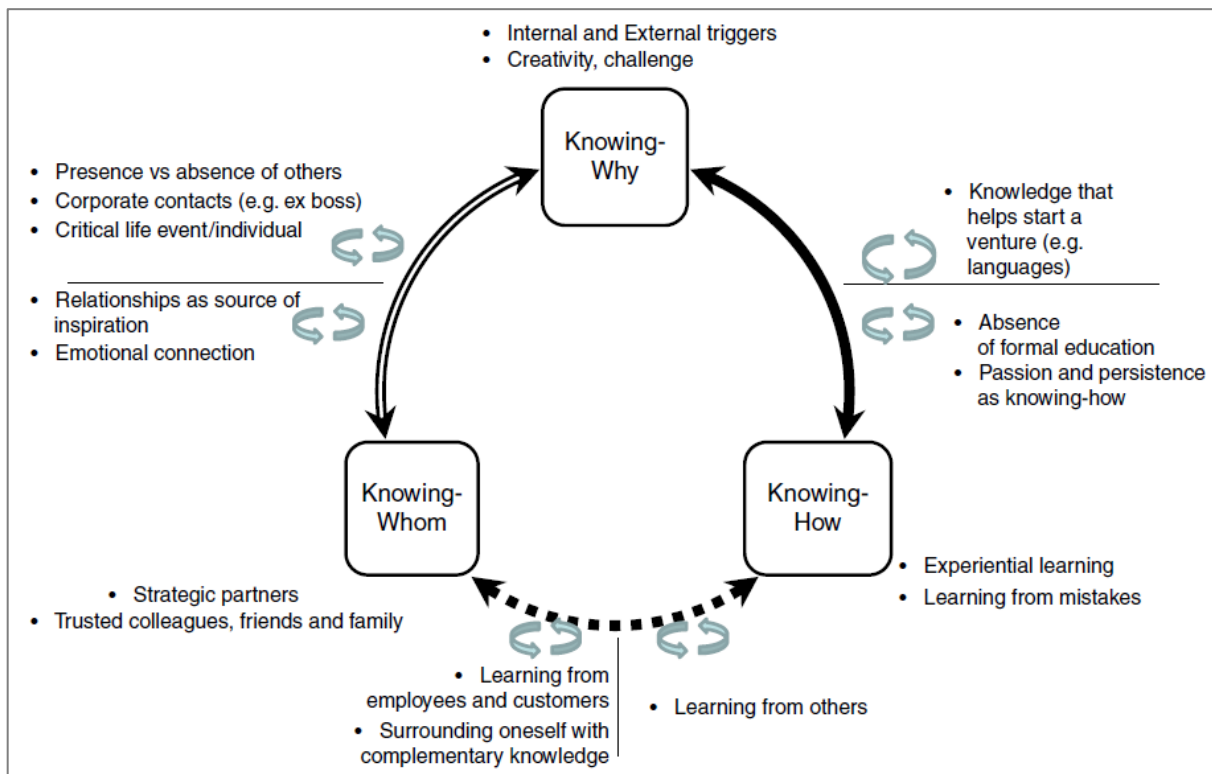
### 2.5.1 Unpacking the intelligent career

As indicated above, the intelligent career comprises of three pillars: (i) 'knowing-why', (ii) 'knowing-how' and (iii) 'knowing-whom'. Inkson and Arthur (2001) exhorted career capitalists to amplify their investments in the three ways of knowing. Lamb and Sutherland (2010) explained that the (i) 'knowing-why' component of the career capital model is generally demonstrated in the early stages of the majority of careers as the individual develops a sense of purpose in their tasks. 'Knowing-why' extends to the knowledge worker's motivation and identification with their work (Inkson & Arthur, 2001). Haslberger (2013) unpacked (ii) 'knowing-how' as an individual's skills, knowledge and abilities required to complete tasks in the workplace. 'Knowing-how' can be explained as both the tacit and explicit knowledge accumulated and drawn from one's career, as well as skills and expertise gained (Inkson & Arthur, 2001). Zikic (2015) discussed 'knowing-how' as accrued experience and knowledge. Lamb and Sutherland (2010) explained (iii) 'Knowing-whom' as the networks, reputation and relationships that one forms throughout their career. 'Knowing-whom' contacts can include colleagues within the organisation and connections with outside professionals (Inkson & Arthur, 2001). These relationships may come from the work or non-work context, for example friends, alumni, family relations and acquaintances (Inkson & Arthur, 2001).

Haslberger (2013) highlighted that an investment in one of the pillars of career capital has a positive effect on the supplementary pillars. As an example, investing in the latest knowing-how will drive an individual's professional reputation and as a result networking and developing professional contacts ('knowing-whom') will progress with ease (Haslberger, 2013). As indicated in Figure 3 below, the three pillars of career capital are interrelated (Zikic & Etzebeben, 2015).

**Figure 3: Flow of three forms of capital**

(Zikic & Etzebeben, 2015, p. 761)



## 2.6 Social capital

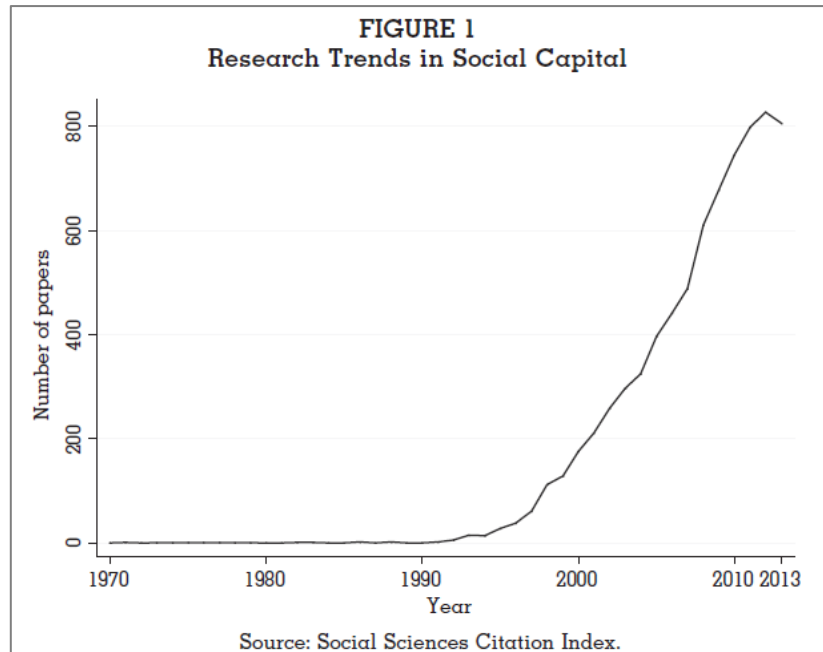
As discussed in section 2.5, social capital is considered a key career capital pillar. It is the 'knowing-whom pillar' of career capital defined as relationships, networks and group memberships (Sutherland et al., 2015) that contribute to the advancement of one's career. Characteristics of this currency of career capital include relationships, reputations and the

attachments one forms over their career (Lamb & Sutherland, 2010). Understanding and utilising the beneficial influence of social capital in one's career is likely to be advantageous in career management and development. Zikic and Ezzedeen (2015) argued that the 'knowing-whom' pillar tends to be a crucial form of career capital as internal social networks, built by knowledge workers, had a high impact on organisational career progressions.

Kwon and Adler (2014) recognised that social capital has developed into an entire scope of research. As illustrated in Figure 4 below, Kwon and Adler (2014) determined that the utilisation of the term 'social capital' in title abstracts and journal article key words increased from a zero base in the 1990's to over 800 in 2013. It is evident that academic discussion of this form of career capital is topical and relevant to today's knowledge worker. Social capital has influenced both business management and organisational research (Kwon & Adler, 2014).

**Figure 4: Research trends in social capital**

**(Kwon & Adler, 2014, p. 413)**



Portes and Vickstrom (2011) and Seferiadis et al. (2015) highlighted that sociologists Pierre Bourdieu and James S. Coleman were responsible for the original conceptualisation of the concept of social capital. These two theorists appear to be the first authors of significant academic literature on the subject. The concept of social capital was, however, made popular by political scientist Robert Putnam (Portes & Vickstrom, 2011).

Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam all had varying social capital definitions (Portes & Vickstrom, 2011). Bourdieu explained social capital as a resource inherent in one's network of relationships that has the capability of being developed into other modes of capital, namely cultural and economic (Portes & Vickstrom, 2011). Putnam (2000) explained social capital as both a public commodity and a private commodity; social capital accumulation goes to by-standers as well as to individuals making the investments. Coleman's definition resided between the two definitions of Bourdieu and Putnam (Portes, 2011). Coleman defined social capital as associated with the concentration of social ties and their capability to drive the status quo (Portes & Vickstrom, 2011).

Bourdieu and Coleman's definitions of social capital were built from embedded relationships of individuals and families as well as the depths and features of these networks (Portes & Vickstrom, 2011). Seferiadis et al. (2015) highlighted that social capital recognised that there was value in our social communities. Social capital is the cumulative attained or latent resources accrued through relationships (Bourdieu, 1986; Kurul, 2015). The seminal work of Bourdieu (1986) explained that social capital includes acts of exchange and social networks and that it could be categorised as association with a group.

Although accumulation of social capital was considered to be highly beneficial it also received much criticism with its usefulness questioned (Seferidis et al., 2015). Portes (1998) unpacked four adverse implications of social capital. These include: (i) exclusivity (strong group ties excluding outsiders), (ii) an excess of claims on group members, (iii) constraints on individuals freedoms, which often results in conformity, and (iv) downward levelling norms (Portes, 1998). Rubio (1997) classified social capital as being positive, 'productive social capital', or negative, 'perverse social capital.' Seferiadis et al. (2015) concluded that social capital does not necessarily equate to positive outcomes with outcomes being context-dependent.

### **2.6.1 Advantages of social capital**

Social capital has been found to have benefits for both knowledge workers' career advancement and organisational development (Bozkurt & Mohr, 2011; Bozoinels, 2014). The advantage in social capital comes from the individuals or groups one is relating to (Portes, 1998). Lazarova and Taylor (2009) emphasised that it has been an organisational and an individual asset. Individuals have benefitted from social capital aiding in driving their careers forward and firms have become dependent on the networking efforts of its employees for further advancement of the organisation (DeFillipi & Arthur, 1994).

### **2.6.2 Advantages of social capital accumulation for knowledge workers**

It is evident that building social capital has multiple benefits for knowledge workers in today's global economy. Osman-Gain and Rockstuhl (2008) identified that knowledge workers gain more support from stronger ties than weaker ties. Granovetter (1973) unpacked that depth of a tie is likely an amalgamation of the duration of the relationships, mutual confiding, the emotional strength and the reciprocity of the relationship. The degree of social isolation a knowledge worker experiences may be regulated by their social capital accumulation (Zhang et al., 2016). Key identified advantages range from promotion and future employment opportunities (Biemann & Braakmann, 2013; Dickmann & Harris, 2005; Lin & Huang, 2005), to reduction of uncertainty (Osman-Gani & Rockstuhl, 2008; Zhang et al., 2016) and support (Osman-Gani & Rockstuhl, 2008; Zhang et al., 2016) as well as the flow of resources (Bozionelos, 2014; Osman-Gani & Rockstuhl, 2008; Seferiadis, et al., 2015; Sutherland et al., 2015). An individual's ability to network effectively influences the diverse accumulation of social capital (Zhang et al., 2016). These benefits are further unpacked below.

Lin and Huang (2005) indicated that social capital is a key driver for accelerated promotion and that this form of career capital has had an impact on positive career outcomes. In a study by Dickmann and Harris (2005) it was found that a good social network was one of the strongest forces in building one's way to the top of the organisation. The study further revealed that the 'knowing-whom' capital was regarded as one of the most important forms of capital (Dickmann & Harris, 2005). Furthermore, increasing one's social capital has been found to assist in providing future employment opportunities (Biemann & Braakmann, 2013).

Social capital has been seen to aid knowledge workers in reducing uncertainty when adapting to varying global contexts. As posited by Osman-Gani and Rockstuhl (2008), in the



context of an expatriate assignment study, a key benefit of social capital is the reduction of uncertainty. This is achieved with resource acquisition through social capital and social learning. It has been observed that knowledge workers who are skilled at accumulating social capital have more power in controlling their lives (Zhang et al., 2016).

The likelihood of experiencing social alienation is reduced for employees who build social capital (Zhang et al., 2016). Osman-Gani and Rockstuhl (2008) examined social capital theory as a culmination of informational, instrumental and emotional support that allow for clear channels that enable the exchange of social resources. These authors further asserted that informational support contributes to the reduction of uncertainty through reshaping attributions that may overlook the cultural context of business operations. Instrumental support assists in the reduction of uncertainty with the aid of personal resources such as time, money and labour that contribute to knowledge workers integrating socially (Osman-Gain & Rockstuhl, 2008). Guidance around appropriate behaviours, namely feedback support, aids in reducing uncertainty through increasing a knowledge worker's skills to achieve goals (Osman-Gain & Rockstuhl, 2008). Rich social capital is particularly advantageous for creative employees as the development and campaigning of creative concepts is heavily dependent on the amount of support that they receive (Zhang et al., 2016).

'Knowing-whom' social ties can facilitate the knowledge worker in achieving career goals (Bozionelos, 2014). A key benefit of social capital is that it enables knowledge workers to access resources through information gained from members of one's networks (Seferiadis, et al., 2015). Sutherland et al. (2015) highlighted that social capital is useful for facilitating knowledge acquisition and sharing. Network ties have also been considered to boost resources (Osman-Gani & Rockstuhl, 2008). It was identified by Bozkurt and Mohr (2011) that social ties can expedite the achievement of tasks. Key knowledge workers can offer access to resources that are beneficial for career development and work-related goal accomplishments (Shaffer, Kraimer, Chen & Bolino, 2012). Social capital empowers knowledge workers to attain resources, provides access of information through members of networks and facilitates the achievements of predetermined objectives (Seferiadis et al., 2015). Florin et al. (2003) identified that social resources found in networks were considered to reduce efforts in gathering information.

### **2.6.3 Advantages of social capital accumulation for organisations**

Collings (2014) stressed the benefit of social capital theory for the integration of multinational enterprises and global talent management systems. In a study conducted by Bozkurt and Mohr (2011), it was observed that in order to accomplish some organisational tasks, employees mobilised their social networks. Zhang, Chan, Zhong & Yu (2016) determined that shared group identities facilitate the access to resources. In a work organisation, access to people and information can be attained through employees' individual networks of social ties (Florin, Lubatkin & Schulze, 2003). This naturally creates opportunity for the flow of resources which can benefit both individual knowledge workers and the organisation as a whole. Lengnick-Hall and Lengnick-Hall (2006) highlighted that social capital can afford organisations the opportunity to incur benefits. Leana and Van Buren (1999) identify the ability of social capital to foster successful collective action and build a shared identity. Bozkurt and Mohr (2011) determined that social capital can aid multinational enterprises realise organisational goals. It was observed in one of their studies that knowledge workers utilised their social networks for the achieving organisational goals (Bozkurt and Mohr, 2011). Seferiadis et al. (2015) accentuated that social capital has driven the achievement of shared goals. Social capital has been considered a tool that individuals can utilise for their own benefit and the benefit of others (Seferiadis, 2015). Rubio (1997) highlighted that social capital has been significant in the transfer of values. Furthermore, social capital aids in driving the cooperation of knowledge workers, which is a key for achieving objectives successfully (Requena, 2003).

Social capital aids in career development and driving employee commitment to the organisation. Sutherland et al. (2015) unpacked the need for productive networking within organisations to facilitate career development. As stipulated by Requena (2003), social capital contributes to integration, social support and social cohesion within an organisation. Strong networking skills enables employees to build a social net with functional and emotional attachments resulting in higher levels of commitment to the organisation (Zhang et al., 2016).

### **2.6.4 Key tools for accumulating social capital**

It is evident that there are numerous benefits of accumulating social capital for career management and advancement. It is therefore crucial that tools for accumulating social

capital are understood. Bourdieu (1986) posited that investment strategies result in one's network of relationships. These investment strategies span across multiple levels: intra- and inter-firm as well as professional and social relations (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994; Dickmann & Harris, 2005). Approaches for engaging on these levels include mentoring programs, interpersonal relationships and client relationships (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994). Where intra-firm networks include career-supportive mentoring relationships and task-supportive work relationships between knowledge workers within the same organisation (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994), inter-firm networks looks at those relationships across firms. Zhang et al. (2016) postulated that HR managers should aid in providing more opportunities for employees to establish connections for idea exchanges within their organisations. Over the initial phases of a knowledge worker's career, mentors and self-found sponsors offer key support for growth and development (Lamb & Sutherland, 2010). Zhang et al. (2016) accentuated the significance of social capital for organisational advancement through stressing that managerial support for developing relationships, both within and outside of the organisation boundaries should be prioritised. It is highly beneficial for knowledge workers to actively seek out mentors and other networks as well as to determine what career capital is the currency in their particular industry (Sutherland et al., 2015). Virtual teams, informal meetings and communication reinforced by instant messengers can aid in enhancing the accumulation of social capital as well as provide support for innovation (Zhang et al., 2016).

Professional relationship networks encompass all bonds built in the business context including colleague, client and supplier networks. For knowledge workers to further harness the benefits of social capital, it is imperative that the most beneficial tools at each network level, namely intra-and inter-firm as well as professional relationships are understood. Further research is required to determine these tools in the global digital advertising industry.

Portes (1998) identified social capital as an intangible form of capital as it inheres in the structure of an individual's relationships. This form of career capital can be built in formal business environments and informal non-business contexts. Social capital has the potential to be accumulated in virtual spaces (social networking sites, instant messaging and emails) and non-virtual spaces (telephonically and formal/informal meetings or gatherings). With the intense time pressures of operating in the global digital advertising industry, knowledge workers have limited resources for focusing on developing their careers. It is therefore imperative that a knowledge worker comprehends the importance of social capital in their industry to allow for appropriate investments to see the benefits of this form of capital.

Although social capital is considered a powerful tool in successful career management, there remains little evidence as to which tools for accumulating social capital are the most relevant for accelerated career management. This creates a need for research in this area.

## **2.7 Global careers in the digital advertising industry**

### **2.7.1 Global careers**

With the internationalisation of business it is evident that organisations operate in a global economy (Al Ariss, Cascio & Paauwe, 2014; Baruch, Dickmann, Altman & Bournois, 2013; Farndale, Pai, Sparrow & Scullion, 2014). Crowley-Henry (2012) highlighted that as knowledge workers have been adopting boundaryless career management approaches, there has been a higher affinity to moving across geographies. Contemporary organisations consider globalisation as having a major impact on business operations (Altmen & Barch, 2012). Baruch et al. (2013) acknowledged the development of international work configurations. It is evident that global business and global careers are pertinent role players in the future of business. Therefore knowledge workers who understand how to successfully build their careers globally will have a strong advantage for successful career management. In the Brookfield's 2015 Global Mobility Trends report that examined responses from 163 global mobility professionals, it was determined that the need for international assignments is not diminishing (General Manager, 2016b).

### **2.7.2 Current landscape of the global digital advertising industry**

Stone and Woodcock (2014) highlighted that today most companies have to advertise in a digital world. Chao, Corus and Li (2012) emphasised that the development of online advertising has driven businesses globally to focus marketing efforts around online media. It is estimated that by the end of 2016 there will be 3.30 billion individuals (45% world's population) using the internet on a monthly basis (General Manager, 2016c). It is apparent that digital advertising has a chief role to play in the marketing and communications industry globally. The revenue of global internet advertising was expected to rise from US\$135.42bn in 2014 to US\$239.87bn in 2019, which is a compound annual growth rate of 12.1% (PwC, 2015a).

The impact of the digital age has had a weighty effect on the global advertising industry. There has been a rapid adoption of digital media platforms by consumers worldwide and a decline in traditional media is evident (Himmelboim, McCreery & Smith, 2013) with digital platforms creating aggressive competition for traditional media platforms (Ksiazek, Peer & Lessard, 2014). This transformation is further reemphasised in the budget allocation shifts from traditional to digital media investments (PwC, 2015a).

### **2.7.3 Careers in the global digital advertising industry**

The global digital advertising industry comprises of a number of career paths and occupations. There exist three key 'employment avenues' in the digital advertising industry: (i) media owners (suppliers of the digital advertising space), (ii) advertising agencies (digital and media strategy, digital creative, social media, digital performance and digital programmatic) and (iii) digital brand marketing teams. The various digital advertising streams include: customer relationship management (CRM), social media marketing, web design, ecommerce, Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), email marketing, web analytics, digital strategy, publisher display, mobile marketing, performance specialisation, digital video, programmatic specialisation, content/native marketing and affiliate marketing (General Manager, 2016d; General Manager, 2016e). For the purpose of this research the 'global digital advertising industry' encompasses all organisations and individuals globally that engage in any digital marketing and promotions.

## **2.8 Summary of Chapter 2**

With the shortage of research in career management in the global digital advertising industry, research into career capital accumulation and specifically social capital, a noted key pillar of career capital, will be highly beneficial for individuals in this industry. Through an investigation of how knowledge workers discourse about learning when interrogated about their careers, Mallon and Walton (2005) found that knowledge workers have a sense of responsibility for their own learning and career progression, however, they are uncertain of what action steps to take. Furthermore, Sutherland et al. (2015) determined that there is a lack of evidence in academic literature as to how knowledge workers can build career capital and how HR practices can provide this support to knowledge workers. Considering

the current and anticipated continued growth of the digital advertising industry globally, the need for research to guide individuals building careers in this industry is bound to increase. Due to the often complex technical understanding that knowledge workers in the digital advertising industry require, 'knowing-how' is an essential career capital pillar in this industry. For a knowledge worker to reach an influential level in any organisation in the global digital advertising industry, a certain level of motivation ('knowing-why') is assumed. This research seeks to unpack the importance of developing the 'knowing-whom' or social capital pillar of career capital (Arthur et al., 1995).

## CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

### 3.1 Introduction

As highlighted in the literature review, there is a lack of empirical evidence in the globalised knowledge economy regarding the current components of career capital (Lamb & Sutherland, 2010). This research seeks to determine if social capital is a key career capital component that knowledge workers in the global digital advertising industry should focus their limited resources on building and developing in the management of their careers. This research will further aim to determine the key tools for accumulating social capital in the global digital advertising industry as well as factors that influence the perceived importance of social capital for knowledge workers. Suter (2011) explained that a research question is a summary of the purposes of research specified in a question that can be answered. The purpose of this research is apparent in the research questions listed below.

#### 3.1.1 Research question 1

*Is social capital ('knowing-whom') a key form of career capital in the global digital advertising industry?*

This question sought to establish the importance of social capital in the global digital advertising industry relative to the other forms of knowing, namely 'knowing-how' and 'knowing-why' (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994).

#### 3.1.2 Research question 2

*Does the perceived importance of social capital vary between senior management, knowledge workers and HR practitioners/recruitment specialists in the global digital advertising industry?*

This research question examined if one's position in the industry influenced the perceived importance of social capital and at what stage social capital becomes more pertinent in an individual's career in the global digital advertising industry.

### **3.1.3 Research question 3**

*What are the benefits of accumulating social capital in the global digital advertising industry?*

Research question 3 explored the benefits social capital accumulation in this industry. Considering the fact that social capital benefits both individuals and organisations, benefits pertaining to both groups were examined.

### **3.1.4 Research question 4**

*What are the key tools for accumulating social capital in the global digital advertising industry?*

The research question sought to determine the key tools that knowledge workers can utilise for accumulating social capital in the global digital advertising industry. The purpose was to provide individuals and organisations with practical insights for career advancement through social capital in this rapidly advancing and dynamic industry. This question further explored tools relevant for growth in current positions, promotion in one's current organisation, and movement across organisations.



## **CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The employed research methodology for this study is discussed in this chapter. The study conducted was exploratory by nature and therefore qualitative research methods were utilised (Zikmund, Babin, Carr & Griffin, 2013). The qualitative nature of the study is evident in the research design, sampling and data analysis techniques utilised. This is also reflective in the data collection method of semi-structured, in-depth interviews of senior managers, knowledge workers and HR practitioners/recruitment managers in the global digital advertising industry.

### **4.2 Research design**

Research on the role of social capital in career management in the global digital advertising industry could not be found. Therefore, the proposed research required insights to be drawn to help develop theories and for this reason, qualitative research design was utilised (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). As posited by Merriam (2014), qualitative research aids researchers in understanding people's interpretations of their experiences, how their worlds are constructed and the meaning that they attribute to their experiences. Qualitative research focuses on expressive descriptions, stories, visual portrayals and meaningful characterisations with a key focus on discovering new insights (Zimund et al., 2013).

An inductive qualitative research approach was employed for this investigation. Saunders and Lewis (2012) explained an inductive approach as one that conducts and develops theory from explanations that arise in the research. The utilisation of this research design allowed for the observation of patterns as well as any repeated occurrences of phenomena that will aid in the formation and use of academic hypotheses for further investigation of the topic (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Douglas (2003) emphasised the methodical process undertaken for data collection, handling and analysis one uses with an inductive qualitative research approach. Suter (2011) highlighted that inductive reasoning is considered a progression from the specific (observations, ideas or experiences) to the general (theory).

Exploratory studies are those that purpose to seek new insights through asking new questions and assessing topics from a new point of view (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). This

type of research is considered the initial research that is done to aid in clarifying and determining the nature of a problem (Zikmund, 2003). The role of social capital in career management in the global digital advertising industry is not implicit and therefore an exploratory design was used to aid in discovering general information about the topic (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

### **4.3 Population**

The research population (universe) is the complete list of group members that share a common set of distinct traits (Zikmund, 2003) and it provides the sampling frame for the research (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The universe selected for this study included three key populations. The first group included senior managers in the global digital advertising industry. The second group comprised of knowledge workers that do not hold senior management positions in the global digital advertising industry. The third and final group included HR and recruitment specialists in the industry. The inclusion of these three key populations provided broad perspectives on the role of social capital in career management in this global industry.

### **4.4 Sampling**

Sampling is the process of making conclusions about the whole population through the use of parts or a small number of items of the population (Zikmund, 2003). As emphasised by Suter (2011), in qualitative research there is greater focus on selecting fewer participants who can best respond to the research question and less focus on generalising findings to a large population from a sample. The sampling technique adopted for this research was purposive/judgmental sampling. Purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling (Welman & Kruger, 2001; Zikmund et al., 2013) and therefore the change/probability of each member of the universe is unknown and the selection of the sample is not done at random (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The researcher's judgement is used in the selection of the sample when using the purpose/judgmental sampling method (Zikmund, 2003). This form of sampling was employed as the selected universe was exceedingly broad.

A form of snowballing was evident in this research in that, when potential respondents were approached who did not fit the required criteria, they would refer the researcher to individuals they knew who did fit the required criteria. A motivation for the use of purposive sampling was to aid in selecting respondents from a variety of global regions in order to avoid a sample that represented few geographic regions/countries. As highlighted by Myers (2013) it is advantageous to interview a variety of people representing diverse views when conducting qualitative research. The contact approach for connecting with the respondents was primarily through the researcher's employment at the multinational corporation, Dentsu Aegis Network (DAN), and through relationships with Global Digital Media Owners. DAN is a group of global media and digital marketing agencies. Digital media owners are suppliers to DAN.

A total of 18 in-depth interviews were conducted with respondents that had a minimum of two years working or recruiting experience in the global digital advertising industry. Six participants were selected in each of the below sample subsets:

- (i) Senior managers: individuals holding senior management positions (such as managing directorship or c-suite positions) at organisations in the global digital advertising industry.
- (ii) Knowledge workers: individuals in non-senior management positions in the global digital advertising industry.
- (iii) HR practitioners/recruitment specialists: individuals operating in an HR or recruitment capacity in the global digital advertising industry.

The use of the three varying groups allowed for comparisons and insights to be drawn in relation to the research problem. It also allowed for triangulation. As unpacked by Saunders and Lewis (2012), triangulation is the process whereby two or more independent sources of data/data collection methods are employed to aid in confirming research findings.

## **4.5 Unit of analysis**

Defining the unit of analysis is considered a crucial component of the problem definition in research (Zikmund, 2003). The unit of analysis for this research study is the opinion of key individuals, namely senior managers, non-senior management knowledge workers and HR practitioners/recruitment specialists, in the global digital advertising industry.

## **4.6 Measurement**

### **4.6.1 Data Collection Tool**

In qualitative research the researcher is the primary research instrument (Welman & Kruger, 2001) and therefore plays a key role in the data collection process. Qualitative researchers are intricately involved in the research process and the development of the results with a focus on observing, listening and interpreting the interview data (Zikmund, et al., 2013). Considering that the nature of the research was explorative, the measurement instrument utilised was a semi-structured, in-depth interview. The semi-structured method is a type of data collection whereby the interviewer queries themes using a selection of predetermined questions. However, the sequence in which the themes are covered and the questions are posed may vary (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). This form of research includes the use of some pre-formulated questions that carry no compulsory adherence to them and allow for new questions to emerge during the interview (Myers, 2013). With this interview approach, the interviewer was enabled to probe to ascertain the meanings for any ambiguous responses, ask for expansion of any unanswered questions (Welman & Kruger, 2001), omit some of the topics and questions as well as pose additional questions (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Myers (2013) highlighted that, in most qualitative research methods, interviews are the technique of choice that allow the researcher to gather rich data from an array of people in various roles. Probing questions are considered key when conducting in-depth interviews (Zikmund et al., 2013).

#### **4.6.1.1 Interview format**

As three sample subsets were included in this study, the interview questions were adapted to suit the various respondents. For this reason, two separate interview guidelines were utilised. The interview guideline in Appendix 1 was utilised for employees in the industry, namely senior managers and knowledge workers. The interview guideline in Appendix 2 was utilised for the HR practitioners/recruitment specialists in the industry. Both interview guidelines worked from the same base of questions. However, they were phrased to suit the particular roles of the participants. Following the interview guidelines (Appendix 1 and Appendix 2), the participants were asked to advise on information pertaining to their current position and previous work experience. Once this information was gathered, participants were asked to complete the fixed sum scale as per Table 1 entitled 'Fixed sum scale: career

capital importance ranking' in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. During the course of the interview definitions were provided of both career capital and social capital to ensure the respondents had a clear understanding of the topics discussed. After definitions were supplied, questions were posed regarding career capital and social capital. Following the nature of the research format, the researcher allowed for discussion to flow freely over strict adherence to the format of the designed interview guideline.

The final phase of the interview involved respondents stating the tools that they had found to aid in accumulating social capital in the global digital advertising industry. These components were recorded as stated by the participants and placed by the researcher in the first column of Table 2 (Appendix 1 and Appendix 2) entitled 'Key tools for accumulating social capital in the global digital advertising industry'. Once listed, the participants were asked to select which social capital tools were applicable to (a) knowing how to do their job (b) promotion in their current organisation (c) movement across organisations. Throughout the interview process, respondents were queried further on key statements that they made when answering the research questions.

#### **4.6.2 Data gathering process**

The interviews were limited to one hour in duration to both respect the interviewee's time constraints and to increase the likelihood of agreement for participation in the study. The average duration of the interviews was 47 minutes. The longest interview lasted 62 minutes with the shortest interview lasting 33 minutes. This timing does not include when the recording was paused to allow some interviewees time to complete the fixed sum scale.

Considering geographic limitations that a global research project implies, it was not feasible to conduct physical face to face interviews with most of the respondents. In such instances, video conferencing tools, such as Skype, Lync (a Skype business tool), Zoom and Google Hangout were utilised. Three of the interviews were conducted face to face. Interviewees were requested to sign an informed consent form ahead of commencement of the interviews. All interviews were recorded on a smart phone device. Myers (2013) recognised that it is advantageous to record interviews as the researcher has a record of words spoken verbatim by the interviewee. Further to the recordings, brief memos were built during the research process (Douglas, 2003; Myers, 2013). Memos are the researcher's commentary

(thoughts, feelings and actions) on experiences during the research process and are recognised as a useful means for analysing data (Myers, 2013).

Pilot interviews were conducted to test the designed process. Zikmund et al. (2013) explained that a pilot study is the research conducted on a smaller scale with the objective of collecting data from respondents that are comparable to respondents intended to be used in the full study. After the first pilot interview the researcher felt confident to commence the interview process. However, the first interview was converted to a second pilot interview as during this interview the researcher determined further adjustments that needed to be applied. Key findings from the pilot interviews included:

1. Inclusion of step by step notes for the researcher to adhere to when running through the interview for a seamless flow.
2. Ensure technical checks are done ahead of the virtual interviews, such as strong internet connectivity, power for the laptop and ensuring the fixed sum scale is ready to be shared with the respondent.
3. It is necessary for the researcher to guide the conversation to ensure that the interview does not veer off topic.
4. It is necessary to ensure that the respondent has a clear understanding of career capital and social capital ahead of asking questions directly pertaining to these concepts.

As research interviews were conducted, the order and focus of the interview guidelines were adapted to allow for more productive and free-flowing sessions with the interviewees. This flow was updated as per the interview guidelines in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. With the continuation of the interviews it was further determined that the 'components of social capital' should be worded as 'tools for building social capital' as this allowed for ease of comprehension of what was being queried. It was also concluded that the final section (Question 2 in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2) of the interview could prolong the discussions adversely. The final section of the interview was therefore adapted to be moderately shortened in order to avoid interviewee disengagement.

Many of the interviews involved high levels of energy and vigorous discussion regarding career capital and social capital. The majority of participants were highly engaged throughout the interviews. There were two respondents who were particularly invested in

the discussion and as a result did not complete all the questions laid out as per the interview guidelines due to time constraints. However, these respondents expressed an enthusiasm to provide remaining responses over email which was realised with their email submissions. As the interviews were conducted with participants globally, there were instances where language was a barrier and additional time was required to explain concepts and questions to these respondents in detail. This was a particular obstacle when interviewing respondents from Asia.

### **4.6.3 Analysis approach**

Qualitative content analysis involves the researcher searching for structures and patterned uniformities and determining inferences based on established uniformities (Myers, 2013). As Myers (2013) highlighted, qualitative data comprises of high levels of data and it is essential that there is a clear plan for the analysis of collected data. For this reason, the research questions were linked to key items from the interview guideline (see Appendix 3). Qualitative research is dependent on the researcher extracting meaning from unstructured responses and converting it to information (Zikmund et al., 2013). The interview data required reduction and editing of the gathered data into more manageable items (Myers, 2013). Gathered data was analysed by means of content and frequency analysis techniques which allowed for the identification of common themes. For the sake of anonymity, no link was made to the respondents listed on the sample description (see Table 5 in section 5.2 below) and the data and quotes that appeared in the results.

The content analysis was done in Microsoft Excel, through the creation of spread sheets separated into different sections per respondent groups, namely senior management, knowledge workers and HR practitioners/recruitment specialists. Constructs were recorded for each participant. These constructs were then grouped together into key constructs, tallied using frequency analysis and rank ordered from highest to lowest. A comparative approach was utilised to compare responses across the sample subsets. As the research interview comprised of three key sections, namely (i) the fixed sum scale (career capital importance ranking), (ii) interview questions and responses as well as (iii) tools for accumulating social capital, the analysis of this data is discussed in three parts outlined below.

#### 4.6.3.1 Fixed sum scale: career capital importance ranking

The data gathered from the fixed sum scale (see Table 1 in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2) was analysed by means of frequency analysis with the construction of rank ordered frequency tables. The weighting attributed by each participant was analysed to determine the perceived importance of accumulating social capital relative to other variables in managing a successful career in the global digital advertising industry. From the ten items in the fixed sum scale, eight were linked to a pillar of career capital as per Table 2 below. This analysis aided in determining the perceived importance of social capital for the participants.

**Table 2: Fixed sum scale: career capital pillar links**

Heading 1	Heading 2
Education	Knowing-how
Relationships and/or networking in the industry	Knowing-whom
Experience	Knowing-how
Hard work	
Motivation/Ambition	Knowing-why
Attitude	Knowing-why
Knowledge	Knowing-how
Natural talent	Knowing-why
Winning awards	
Skills	Knowing-how
Other, please specify:	

#### 4.6.3.2 Interview questions

Qualitative data is divided into two key types: non-text data (audio, video and image) and text data (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Qualitative data is by nature subjective and therefore requires the discretion of the researcher (Zikmund, 2003). The analysis of this data commenced before the completion of all the interviews. This allowed for follow up on initial insights suggested by earlier interviews (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The interview recordings from the interview questions and responses was analysed and interrogated for any trends, themes and insights.



#### **4.6.3.3 Key tools for accumulating social capital**

The data gathered from Table 2 in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 entitled 'Key tools for accumulating social capital in the global digital advertising industry', was analysed in two phases. The first phase was to determine any trends in tools for accumulating social capital that were listed spontaneously by the participants. The second phase was to gain insight in terms of the top recognised tools for accumulating social capital in the global digital advertising industry.

### **4.7 Data validity and reliability**

Saunders and Lewis (2012) explain that reliability is the extent that consistent findings will be produced from data collection methods and analysis procedures. To aid in ensuring reliable data, almost identical interview guidelines were followed for the three groups of respondents. The only differences were minor wording adjustments to suit the context of the specific dataset. Validity examines the degree to which the selected data collection approaches accurately measure what was intended to be measured and that the research findings are about what they claim to be about (Saunders & Lewis 2012).

Reliability and validity were augmented through the triangulation of the interviews with the inclusion of three sample subsets. Pilot interviews were conducted to aid in the testing of the reliability and validity of the interview as well as to ensure the researcher was familiar with the interview guideline. The researcher has spent over seven years working in the advertising industry and therefore had a good sense of the context that the research respondents operate in, further reducing reliability and validity concerns.

### **4.8 Limitations**

A number of limitations were considered for this research which included:

- The proposed sampling technique was non-probability sampling which does not represent the population statistically (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).
- Considering this research involved conducting 18 interviews globally, it was recognised that it was not possible to be derive a representation for every nation globally.

- Global interviews meant that there was a risk of cultural nuances being misinterpreted.
- Multiple biases were expected to impact the interview process. Key biases considered for this research were interviewer/response bias and social desirability bias as the researcher was an active member in the global advertising industry. Interviewer/response is a bias where the interviewer's presence has an influence on the participants' responses (Zikmund, 2003). Social desirability bias occurs when participants provide responses they think are socially acceptable (Welman & Kruger, 2001).
- A key disadvantage in qualitative research is that results are heavily dependent on the researcher's interpretation and are therefore highly subjective (Zikmund et al., 2013).
- A number of respondents did not speak English as their first language which created a higher potential of misunderstandings of questions posed and responses given during the interview process.

## 4.9 Summary of Chapter 4

Due to the limited research available on this topic, an exploratory study was undertaken. The population for the study included three key population groups: senior managers, knowledge workers in non-senior management positions and HR practitioners/recruitment specialists in the global digital advertising industry. The sampling method employed for the interviewee selection was purposive/judgmental sampling and is non-probabilistic by nature. In total 18 interviews were conducted, recorded and coded for analysis. Acknowledged limitations included that the sample was not representative of the entire population and the exploratory nature of the research brought high levels of subjectivity to the findings.

## CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research sample and the results of the research interviews conducted with all three sample subsets in the global digital advertising industry, namely, (i) senior managers, (ii) knowledge workers (individuals holding non-senior management positions) and (iii) HR practitioners/recruitment specialists. The results of this research are structured in this chapter according to the research questions identified in Chapter 3.

### 5.2 Sample description

Table 3 below reflects the three defined sample subsets. Each sample subset included six respondents with an overall total of 18 respondents. Table 3 outlines the country, designation and company of employment of each respondent when interview was conducted. As is evident in the sample description table below, 15 of the 18 respondents (83%) were employed at/owned multinational digital advertising organisations at the time of the interview. The remainder of respondents were working at specialist organisations servicing the global digital advertising industry. As is reflected in Table 3, the respondents were sourced from a variety of countries globally.

The complete sample comprised of individuals working across four continents, namely, Europe, Africa, North America and Asia in a total of ten different countries. South Africa and the United States of America saw the highest number of interviewees as highlighted in Table 4 below. A total of five respondents were based in Europe, five respondents were based in Africa, four respondents were based in North America and four respondents were based in Asia. It was observed that, in general, respondents operating in the Far East came across as more eager to please and were more softly spoken where the respondents from USA were generally exceptionally confident and highly opinionated. In general, the European respondents were highly self-assured and the African interviewees that had face to face interviews appeared far more relaxed during in the interview process.

**Table 3: Sample Description**

<b>SENIOR MANAGERS</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Designation &amp; Company</b>
<b>Niel Bornman</b>	England	Global Chief Product Officer, iProsepct England
<b>Velly Bosega</b>	South Africa	Founder/CEO AdClick Africa Media Group, Director & Publisher SME South Africa, Board Member Mobile Marketing Association of South Africa (MMA)
<b>Jackie Frandsen</b>	Denmark	COO iProspect Denmark
<b>Carrie Tsai</b>	Taiwan	Managing Director, iProspect Taiwan
<b>Yaron Assabi</b>	South Africa	Founder Digital Solutions Group, Non-Executive Director IAB South Africa, Chairman Mobile Marketing Association of South Africa (MMA)
<b>Richard Gill</b>	Scotland	Managing Director, iProspect Scotland
<b>KNOWLEDGE WORKERS</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Designation &amp; Company</b>
<b>Giannis Kollias</b>	Dubai	Brand Activation Specialist, Google Dubai
<b>Brittany Richter</b>	USA: NYC	National Director, Paid Social, iProspect USA
<b>Carol Wang</b>	Taiwan	Digital Media Planner, Isobar Taiwan
<b>Quentin Pirlot</b>	Belgium	Digital Director, Carat Belgium
<b>Darren van der Schyff</b>	South Africa	Business Development Manager, Vicinity Media
<b>Elizabeth Alcott</b>	USA: Detroit	Account Director, Isobar USA
<b>HR PRACTITIONERS/RECRUITMENT SPECIALISTS</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Designation &amp; Company</b>
<b>Mikaela Hurst</b>	USA: Texas	Recruiting Manager, iProspect USA
<b>Karina Olivier</b>	South Africa	Senior Digital Recruiter, Recruit Digital
<b>Lip Teck Choo</b>	Singapore	Director Regional Talent Acquisition DAN, APAC
<b>Michelle Guerrero</b>	USA: San Diego	Senior Recruitment Manager, iProspect USA
<b>Lisa Williams</b>	South Africa	Owner, Definitive Recruitment Solutions
<b>Lily Xu</b>	China	HR Manager, Talent Acquisition, DAN China

**Table 4: Respondents' Country of occupation**

<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONDENTS</b>
Belgium	1
China	1
Denmark	1
Dubai	1
England	2
South Africa	5
Scotland	1
Singapore	1
Taiwan	1
USA	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18</b>

Considering that the global digital advertising industry is a relatively young industry, the respondents have been in the industry for a considerable duration of time collectively. As reflecting in Table 5 below, the respondents have spent an average of nine years in the industry, while the number of organisations worked at averaged at three. This reflects that, on average, the respondents have moved across organisations every three years.

**Table 5: Work experience of research participants (rounded data)**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Average number of years at current organisation</b>	<b>Average number of years working the global digital advertising industry</b>	<b>Average number of organisations worked at in the global digital advertising industry</b>
Senior Managers	8 years	16 years	5
Knowledge Workers	5 years	9 years	3
HR Practitioners or Recruitment Specialists	3 years	6 years	2
<b>TOTAL AVERAGE</b>	<b>5 years</b>	<b>9 years</b>	<b>3 organisations</b>

To ensure the confidentiality of respondents that participated in this study the researcher allocated a respondent number to each respondent in non-chronological order. To further ensure anonymity, the countries of the respondents and names of individuals, companies, institutions and industry organisations cited in the interviews do not appear in the presentation of the results.

## 5.3 Presentation of results

As discussed in Chapter 4 (section 4.6.3) and illustrated in Appendix 3, the interview questions were linked to research questions. Furthermore, content and frequency analysis techniques were used to analyse the qualitative data collected from the 18 interviews.

### 5.3.1 Results for research question 1

*Is social capital ("knowing-whom") a key form of career capital in the global digital advertising industry?*

Research Question 1 explored social capital in the context of the two other key pillars of career capital, namely 'knowing-how' and 'knowing-why.' Results for Research Question 1 are reflected in sections 5.3.1.1 to 5.3.1.5 below. These results are built from the aggregated responses across all three sample subsets obtained from the following items in the interview guideline:

- Question A: Fixed sum scale responses
- Question B: *'In your opinion is 'what you know' or 'who you know' or 'why you know' (i.e. your attitude/motivation) more important for individuals in advancing their careers in the global digital advertising industry?'*
- Question C: *'Do you believe that social capital helps individuals advance their careers in the global digital advertising industry?'*
- General comments given during the interview process

#### 5.3.1.1 Fixed sum scale responses

Table 6 was built from the fixed sum scale in the interview guideline. Respondents were required to allocate points to various components of career capital accumulating to no more

than 100. These points were captured and the point allocations were averaged across the full sample of respondents. This data was subsequently rank ordered to reflect the highest average selected component in rank position one. The last two components had a data average of 0.3 (rounded to 0) due to the low aggregate rating each received. A number of respondents verbalised that this was a difficult exercise to complete. The majority of respondents took a considerable amount of time to complete the fixed sum scale and this further illustrated that this task was experienced with difficulty.

**Table 6: Relative importance of elements contributing to a successful career in the global digital advertising industry: All respondents**

<b>RANK</b>	<b>COMPONENTS</b>	<b>RANGE</b>	<b>SAMPLE AVERAGE</b>
1	Experience	5 to 30	13
2	Knowledge	0 to 20	12
2	Motivation/Ambition	5 to 20	12
2	Attitude	5 to 22	12
3	Hard work	0 to 20	11
4	Skills	3 to 20	10
5	Relationships and/or networking in the industry	0 to 20	9
6	Education	0 to 30	8
7	Natural talent	0 to 10	5
8	Winning awards	0 to 5	2
8	Other: Entrepreneurship	0 to 15	2
8	Other: every day learning/ keeping up with digital trends and changes	5 to 15	2
9	Other: Entrepreneurship, EQ, Strategic Leadership, Persuasion/Influence	0 to 20	1
9	Other: Intelligence	0 to 10	1
9	Other: Determination	0 to 10	1
9	Other: Flexibility	0 to 10	1
10	Other: Integrity	0 to 5	0
10	Other: Value contribution to society	0 to 5	0
<b>Total</b>			<b>100</b>

As illustrated in Table 6, the average results of all the sample subsets rank *Relationships and/or networking in the industry* as the fifth most important component for building a successful career in the global digital advertising industry. The top five ranked components are majority 'knowing-how' (*Experience, Knowledge and Skills*) and 'knowing-why' (*Motivation/Ambition and Attitude*) components. For respondents that opted to include an *Other* category, it was observed that, in general, a high allocation of their relative points were placed under this additional category.

A ranking analysis of each respondent's point allocation revealed that seven respondents ranked *Experience* with the highest point allocation. Both *Knowledge* and *Attitude* were each graded with the highest points by five respondents. There were only two respondents (one senior manager and one knowledge worker) who ranked *Relationships and/or networking in the industry* highest. Zero respondents ranked *Winning awards* highest with the majority of respondents ranking this component as the lowest. It is interesting to note that there is only a four point variation in points for the highest ranked component, *Experience*, and *Relationships and/or networking in the industry*. The top six components are all very closely ranked.

#### **5.3.1.2 Responses to Question B: 'In your opinion is 'what you know' or 'who you know' or 'why you know' (i.e. your attitude/motivation) more important for individuals in advancing their careers in the global digital advertising industry?'**

Table 7 illustrates the total sample responses to the question: '*In your opinion is 'what you know' or 'who you know' or 'why you know' (i.e. your attitude/motivation) more important for individuals in advancing their careers in the global digital advertising industry?'*'. One point was allocated to each pillar that respondents felt was the most important one for career advancement. A point allocation of 0.5 was allocated to pillars where respondents indicated equal importance to top ranking pillars.



**Table 7: Career capital pillar ranking: All respondents**

	<b>KNOWING HOW</b>	<b>KNOWING WHOM</b>	<b>KNOWING WHY</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>10.5</b>

As Table 7 reflects, respondents considered the 'knowing-why' pillar of career capital to be the most significant pillar (10.5 points) for individuals looking to advance their careers in the global digital advertising industry. 'Knowing-why' received a significantly higher point allocation than the other two pillars with 'knowing-how' ranking second and 'knowing-whom' ranking last. It was observed that a number of respondents paused and took some time before responding to this question. Many participants verbalised how difficult it was making a selection from the three stated pillars of career capital. Discussion demonstrated that many respondents considered all three components of career capital important and/or that they are interlinked for building a successful career in the global digital advertising industry. This is shown in the selected statements listed below.

Respondent 4: "You can't be really successful if you don't have some in all three of them"

Respondent 18: "...it's hard to say one is more important than another because I think they build upon each other. You have to have one or you can't have the other"

Respondent 10: "...but how is related to why. Do you understand me when I say?"

Interviewer: "Yeah, I get you."

Respondent 10: "... and who, well, who is a result..."

Respondent 7: "Knowledge and experience will land you a job but the why will make you progress and help you build relationships..."

Respondent 11: "... they are actually quite even. Will probably be between how and who."

Although the 'knowing-whom' pillar of career capital was only given a point allocation of 2.5, the majority of respondents recognised the value of accumulating social capital for career success. This was particularly evident when respondents were asked if they believed that social capital helps individuals advance their careers in the global digital advertising industry. Responses to this question are discussed in section 5.3.1.3 below.

### 5.3.1.3 Positive responses to Question C: ‘Do you believe that social capital helps individuals advance their careers in the global digital advertising industry?’

Fifteen of the respondents expressed views illustrating that they strongly believed that social capital aids in the advancement of one’s career. The majority of these statements were made with confidence and enthusiasm. Some of these responses are highlighted below:

*Interviewer: "Do you believe that social capital helps individuals advance their careers in the global digital advertising industry and if so why?"*

Respondent 4: "In any, in any industry [laughs] that will help of course... that's pretty much a fact... relationships and network is extremely important for people..."

Respondent 5: "Yes, I do."

Interviewer: "Even if you don't agree with it? [Laughs]"

Respondent 5: "No, I do, I do, look (pauses) I do agree with it. I just don't believe it's everything."

Respondent 8: "Yes."

Interviewer: "Ok. Cool. And, I meant to say if so, why?"

Respondent 8: "Yeah, um, I think that everyone and everything is interconnected, like we keep talking about convergence when we seem to think about media but it's also true of the people in the industry, everything comes full circle, people work at one place now and somewhere else later and everyone and everything really is so connected..."

Respondent 11: "Yes, definitely, without a doubt... it's extremely important... you may work with someone on [a client] now and they move to another brand and you work with them again."

The below example given by a senior manager displays benefits of social capital accumulation:

Respondent 6: "I was invited to a networking event for alumni of [a university] two weeks ago. I met the ex-chairman of [company name] outside of the US and I've got a squash game with him next week. He has a bunch of digital businesses he wants me to advise him on in a plural career as a non-exec on board... How important is the education? Not important at all. How important is the relationship you build through the

education? Extremely important in my opinion. The fact that I've got an exceptional relationship with the head of Marketing for [company name] when she goes to the next company, if I was still in [country name], I guarantee you she would pull out the pitch and I say I want this guy and his company to pitch for me. So it's wherever I go, I see it's about the relationships.”

#### **5.3.1.4 Responses with reservations to Question C: ‘Do you believe that social capital helps individuals advance their careers in the global digital advertising industry?’**

Respondent 3, 10 and 16 were the only three respondents in the entire sample of 18 respondents who did not give affirmative answers regarding the perceived benefits of social capital in career advancement in the global digital advertising industry. Although their responses were not completely positive they did not disregard the value of social capital completely, as is reflected in the quotes by Respondent 3 and 16 below.

Interviewer: “So does the social capital not help you to get further?”

Respondent 3: “It will help you at the very beginning for some support, but not is the one to drive you to become the best or... it can help only in certain levels. Help you to upgrade to another level. That’s my point of view.”

Respondent 16: “Ok so, if we are talking about ‘the who’, knowing who, which I think ends up winning most of the time...”

The three respondents listed above had reservations about social capital. However, they did acknowledge the benefits of social capital at other stages of their interviews. As highlighted below, Respondent 3 discussed a number of instances that social capital has been beneficial for career development:

Respondent 3: “If I have some problem, I will talk to some friend... they are more senior than me and they have the different point of view.”

Respondent 3: “I saw the people in start-up and I see that the relationships are very important to them.”

Interviewer: "...do you have any examples of when 'knowing who' has helped you or has helped people that you've worked with?"

Respondent 3: "For example when I set up [company name] in [country X], I talk to the [country Y] team because I know [country Y] is more successful office around the world so that's why I write mail to [country Y] team: 'I want to learn from you.' They share everything with me so I know how to quicker build up the team."

Respondent 3: "And right now I have lots of, for example I know the innovation APAC [country Z]... So I try to, yeah, borrow, their resource to enhance my team."

Respondent 3: "...for example I can leverage my resource. I also do another project right now, I want to leverage the [Holding Company] resource in the right way."

Respondent 10 and Respondent 16 made claims during their interviews that illustrated that they recognised that social capital is a beneficial resource to acquire:

Interviewer: "And have you got any personal examples of where relationships have benefitted you, or helped you, or guided you? Is there anything that you can reference in your career in the digital advertising industry?"

Respondent 10: "...yes... when I just launched the agency at the beginning, it was totally new so I had conversations with people just explaining what I wanted to do...people is always helping. Then, having a real solution coming from someone else, no, never. As I mentioned at the beginning knowing a lot of people, it always helps you, for sure."

Respondent 16: "... so this one [the relationships and networking component] I struggle with, at first I gave it a 10 and then I took it away as well, because, ok, relationships are important in an industry like ours, in a sense... if it's a small and very niche market everybody know everybody and then for you to actually get anywhere you need to know somebody who's somebody."

### **5.3.1.5 General comments**

Further comments made during the course of the interviews, indicated that social capital is seen as both beneficial and something that is worthwhile pursuing and acquiring to advance one's career in the global digital advertising industry:

Respondent 18: "... it is so important the social aspect of everything. I mean, people sometimes don't realise sometimes how important it is to build relationships and I think in general building relationships is really the, the foundation of any, you know, anything in your career... as a manager you need to build relationship with team members so they trust and respect you and do better work for you...and then it's key to, you know, finding your next opportunity or having someone internally push you..."

Respondent 6: "...you can be brilliant at knowing what to do and know why you are doing it but unless you build a relationship you not going to build a global career."

Respondent 7: "So I'm not saying that if you don't have the knowledge or the skills or if you don't have the motivation, you can still advance just because you know the right people. Of course you need to have the knowledge, of course you need to have the skills, of course you need to have the motivation. But at the end of the day there are a lot of people who have them... I would say these are all that you acquire through time and by growing your career. But knowing-whom is...that is the key to help you get more opportunities for... more opportunities at the end of the day."

Respondent 7: "At the end, it's people who give you the opportunities"

Interviewer: "Has this thing of 'knowing who' impacted your career in any way?"

Respondent 8: "Yeah, yeah for sure... I wouldn't have done the same thing if I hadn't been connected to certain people in the US, I wouldn't have been connected to people on the global team and I wouldn't have gone to global summit..."

### **5.3.2 Results for research question 2**

*Does the perceived importance of social capital vary across senior managers, knowledge workers and HR practitioners/recruitment specialists?*

Research Question 2 explored if the respondent's perceived importance of social capital varied depending on their position; their sample subset. The results for Research Question 2 compare responses across the three sample subsets obtained from the following:

- Question A: Fixed sum scale responses

- Question B: *'In your opinion is 'what you know' or 'who you know' or 'why you know' (i.e. your attitude/motivation) more important for individuals in advancing their careers in the global digital advertising industry?'*
- Question C: *'Do you believe that social capital helps individuals advance their careers in the global digital advertising industry?'*

### **5.3.2.1 Senior managers**

Table 8 reflects the top six ranking components contributing to a successful career in the global digital advertising industry by the senior manager sample subset. The table illustrates that, *Relationships and/or networking in the industry* was ranked by the senior manager respondents in a shared third position for the most important component for building a successful career.

Components ranking higher than relationships and/or networking in the industry are a combination of 'knowing-how' (*Experience*) and 'knowing-why' (*Motivation/Ambition and Attitude*) career capital components. The *Other* category comprised of the following components: *Entrepreneurship, Intelligence, Determination* and a selection of grouped *Key business leadership qualities (EQ, Strategic Leadership, Persuasion/Influence and Entrepreneurship)*. A ranking analysis of the individual point allocations revealed that two respondents allocated the highest number of points to more than one component. There was only one respondent that allocated the highest number of points to *Relationships and/or networking in the industry*.

**Table 8: Relative importance of components contributing to a successful career in the global digital advertising industry: Senior managers**

RANK	COMPONENTS	RANGE	SAMPLE AVERAGE
1	Experience	6 to 30	14
2	Attitude	5 to 22	12
2	Motivation/Ambition	5 to 10	12
3	Relationships and/or networking in the industry	4 to 20	10
3	Knowledge	0 to 24	10
3	Skills	5 to 15	10
4	Education	0 to 30	9
5	Hard work	0 to 15	8
6	Natural talent	0 to 7	4

Table 9 below reflects that the highest ranked career capital pillar was ‘knowing-why’ for senior manager respondents. Although ‘knowing-whom’ did not rank highest in the overall pillar response, it was evident from the response to the question ‘*do you believe that social capital helps individuals advance their careers in the global digital advertising industry?*’ that the majority of the senior manager respondents recognised the value of social capital in building a successful career in the global digital advertising industry, with five of the six respondents responding favourably to this question.

**Table 9: Career capital pillar ranking: Senior managers**

	KNOWING HOW	KNOWING WHOM	KNOWING WHY
TOTAL	1	1	4

### 5.3.2.2 Knowledge workers

Table 10 reflects the top six components contributing to a successful career in the global digital advertising industry as ranked by the knowledge worker respondents. As reflected in Table 10, *Relationships and/or networking in the industry* was ranked second in terms of importance for the knowledge worker subset.

**Table 10: Relative importance of components contributing to a successful career in the global digital advertising industry: Knowledge workers**

RANK	COMPONENTS	RANGE	SAMPLE AVERAGE
1	Knowledge	9 to 20	13
1	Hard work	10 to 20	13
1	Motivation/Ambition (Understood as Passion by Taiwanese respondent)	10 to 15	13
1	Attitude	10 to 20	13
2	Relationships and/or networking in the industry	5 to 15	10
3	Experience	5 to 15	9
4	Skills	5 to 10	8
5	Education	0 to 15	7
6	Natural talent	3 to 10	6

As Table 10 shows, a combination of *Knowledge*, *Hard work*, *Motivation/Ambition* and *Attitude* were, on average, the top ranked components for building a successful career in the global digital advertising industry. The majority of these attributes form part of the ‘knowing-why’ or ‘knowing-how’ pillars of career capital. *Hard work* was the only component that ranked as the most important by more than two respondents. Other items listed by the knowledge worker subset included: *Everyday learning* and *Communication*. *Relationships and/or networking in the industry* was ranked the highest by one respondent in this sample subset.

**Table 11: Career capital pillar ranking: Knowledge workers**

	KNOWING HOW	KNOWING WHOM	KNOWING WHY
TOTAL	1.5	1.5	3

Table 11 summarises the respondents answers to the question ‘*In your opinion is ‘what you know’ or ‘who you know’ or ‘why you know’ (i.e. your attitude/motivation) more important for individuals in advancing their careers in the global digital advertising industry?’*. The table illustrates that knowledge workers consider the ‘knowing-why’ pillar of career capital to be the most significant pillar for individuals looking to advance their careers. There is a 0.5



allocation to the ‘knowing-how’ and ‘knowing-whom’ pillars as one respondent ranked both of them as the most important in building a successful career in the global digital advertising industry.

The majority of the knowledge worker respondents saw social capital as playing a significant role in advancing one’s career in the global digital advertising industry. This came through very strongly in responses to Question C: ‘Do you believe that social capital helps individuals advance their careers in the global digital advertising industry?’, with five of the six respondents giving highly affirmative responses to the question. One of the six knowledge worker respondents, Respondent 10, held social capital in low regard in terms of career development. It was observed that, although this respondent did not express a positive response to Question C, s/he did not altogether disregard the benefits of social capital and, at times during the interview, acknowledged many benefits of accumulating social capital and went as far as providing examples.

### 5.3.2.3 HR practitioners/recruitment specialists

Table 12 highlights the top six ranked components by HR practitioners/recruitment specialists in the global digital advertising industry. The table shows that *Relationships and/or networking in the industry* was ranked the sixth most important component for building a career in the global digital advertising industry by this sample subset.

**Table 12: Relative importance of components contributing to a successful career in the global digital advertising industry: HR practitioners/recruitment specialists**

RANK	COMPONENTS	RANGE	SAMPLE AVERAGE
1	Experience	10 to 25	17
2	Knowledge	10 to 20	14
3	Motivation/Ambition	5 to 20	12
4	Skills	3 to 20	11
4	Hard work	5 to 15	11
4	Attitude	5 to 20	11
5	Education	0 to 20	9
6	Relationships and/or networking in the industry	0 to 10	6

*Experience* was the highest ranked component by the HR practitioners/recruitment specialist respondents. This component was also ranked the highest by four respondents. As reflected in Chapter 4 (section 4.6.3.1), *Experience* was categorised under the ‘knowing-how’ pillar of career capital. *Knowledge* was the second highest ranked component, categorised under the ‘knowing-how’ pillar of career capital. Zero HR practitioners/recruitment specialist respondents ranked *Relationships and/or networking in the industry* as the highest component. *Other* items listed by this sample subset include: *Integrity* and *Keeping up with digital trends and changes*.

**Table 13: Career capital pillar ranking: HR practitioners/recruitment specialists**

	KNOWING HOW	KNOWING WHOM	KNOWING WHY
TOTAL	2.5	0	3.5

The HR practitioners/recruitment specialists consider the ‘knowing-why’ pillar of career capital to be the most important pillar for career management in the global digital advertising industry, as is evident from Table 13. This table illustrates the respondents’ answers to the question ‘*In your opinion is ‘what you know’ or ‘who you know’ or ‘why you know’ (i.e. your attitude/motivation) more important for individuals in advancing their careers in the global digital advertising industry?’*. There is a 0.5 allocation for the ‘knowing-how’ and ‘knowing-why’ pillars as one respondent ranked both of these pillars as the most important in building a successful career in the global digital advertising industry.

There was an overwhelming positive response to Question C: ‘*Do you believe that social capital helps individuals advance their careers in the global digital advertising industry?’* Five of the six respondents in this sample subset advised that they believe social capital assists with career advancement. There was only one respondent, Respondent 16, who did not answer the question in the affirmative. However, it is evident that this respondent believes that social capital can help individuals advance in this industry, even though s/he does not agree that accumulating social capital to advance your career is right from an ethical perspective.

Respondent 16: "...if you ask me whether it should be, I will say no... I'm sorry if I sound disjointed because, to be honest there is a part of me that, that wants to believe this should not be the case and there is a part of me that sees the reality... I am sorry if I come across as contradicting and disjointed... I think honestly in our industry especially it is about relationship, it is about network, it is about who can be flashier, who can make someone else look good. So I'm not saying everything is like that but I do see examples of it."

### **5.3.3 Results for research question 3**

*What are the benefits of accumulating social capital in the global digital advertising industry?*

Research Question 3 examined key benefits of developing social capital in the global digital advertising industry. Results sourced for Research Question 3 came from data gathered during discussions in the interviews across all three sample subsets. It was identified that there are benefits at both the individual and organisational levels.

#### **5.3.3.1 Benefits of accumulating social capital for the individual**

Table 14 highlights themes that emerged during the research pertaining to the benefits of social capital for individuals in the global digital advertising industry.

**Table 14: The benefits of accumulating social capital for the individual in the global digital advertising industry: All respondents**

RANK	THEME	THEME CONSTRUCTS	CONSTRUCT TOTAL	THEME TOTAL
1	Career advancement	Opens doors for more opportunities.	3	13
		Provides opportunities to showcase one's skills.	1	
		Helps drive promotions.	3	
		References and referees play an important role in interview/employment processes and can often impact the success of an interview/landing a job.	6	
2	Aids in gathering resources	Aids in learning/gaining access to information.	6	12
		Allows for individuals to get answers/help/advice from others.	6	
3	Personal development	Drives development.	2	11
		Provides different perspectives.	3	
		Aids in the achievement of goals.	5	
		Drives motivation.	1	

As is evident from Table 14 above, there are a number of benefits for individuals in accumulating social capital. The top ranking theme, *Career advancement*, includes four constructs. The construct highlighting the benefit of references and referees is ranked the highest for this theme. This is apparent from the following statements drawn from interviews with respondents in the HR practitioners/recruitment sample subset:

Respondent 18: "...sometimes people come to me through networking or referrals. I would say about 50% of the hires that I've made this year have been through referrals. So it's really just current employees, you know, passing me a friend or a former co-worker..."

Respondent 15: "Yes referrals are always great to be able to get in the door, obviously..." time."

Theme two in Table 14 above, shows that social capital *Aids in gathering resources*. These resources can take the form of key information. This is further accentuated in the following selected comments made by respondents:

Respondent 1: "...I surround myself, you know, with people like Dr [Name] who started [Company Name] who's an actuary and he's brilliant and I learn a lot from him..."

Respondent 3: "...no one can know everything so if you know who can do the things you want to do, you can leverage the other resource."

Respondent 12: "...but it's more like, this person has knowledge, that could help me or, you know, could help me do better work"

Respondent 3: "I think that collaboration in nowadays is very, very important. Because no one can know everything. It's [the industry is] dynamic, it's different, it's changing all the time."

The final theme, *Personal development*, was seen to be enhanced through an array of constructs from multiple perspectives to *drive development*, the *achievement of goals* and *motivation*. A senior manager made the following comment on how his affiliation with a key industry body resulted in inspiration to innovate in his business:

Respondent 5: "...I'm on the board of the [Industry Body] so there is a lot of benefit... sitting on the board like the [Industry Body] because you get to network with like global leaders"

Respondent 5: "...so those are very beneficial when you come from those types of conversations or those events... you kind of like are motivated to even now, to do something new or innovate with new business. So, ya, you do benefit a lot."

Two other senior manager respondents highlighted the benefit of viewing situations/challenges from *different perspectives*:

Respondent 3: "...some senior people in the organisation, two or three, they always can give to me a different point of view...they help me a lot because they can inspire me to see from different angles."

Respondent 4: "...they [leaders in his network] also have other points of views which actually make you have a broader view on the world. I think that's really important to, to understand the puzzle or the big picture that you are not just focusing on one thing."

### 5.3.3.2 Benefits of accumulating social capital for the organisation

As illustrated in Table 15 below, three key themes pertaining to organisational benefits of social capital were drawn from the research.

**Table 15: The benefits of accumulating social capital for organisations in the global digital advertising industry: All respondents**

RANK	THEME	THEME CONSTRUCTS	CONSTRUCT TOTAL	THEME TOTAL
1	Propelling business success	Provides new business opportunities.	4	6
		Brings more money into the organisation.	1	
		Aids in achieving success.	1	
2	Talent attraction and retention	Potential for building social capital within the organisation becomes a selling point for an organisation when seeking recruits.	2	4
		Increases the likelihood of employees remaining at the organisation.	2	
2	Drives collaboration and communication	Drives more effective team work.	1	4
		Allows for feedback into your business for improvement.	1	
		Drives idea generation.	1	
		Drives innovation within the organisation.	1	

*Propelling business success* was the highest ranked theme. A number of respondents highlighted that social capital aids in driving business success. An HR practitioners/recruitment specialist made the below comment:

Respondent 17: "At the end of the day you wanna convert leads and if you have a lot of people you can refer back to help you generate those leads you are worth a lot more to the company than the random with the skills who just walks in and doesn't really know anyone in the industry."

A senior manager unpacked the below example of social capital aiding in *propelling business success* in a scenario for a pitch on new business:

Respondent 6: “I’ll give you a great example. On Tuesday I sit in a workshop or in meetings. I get this email from someone in [Country A] saying, ‘Hey, we’ve got this massive request from a client on a pitch, we have to submit it...it’s a very technical paid search thing...can you please help me?’ I’m like no, I have no idea. But guess what? I’ve built a relationship with the ten top paid search leaders in our world. I mailed them quickly, ‘hey, here’s [Country A colleagues’ name] question. I have no idea what she’s talking about because I’m not a paid search expert but I’m hoping you guys can help?’ Within an hour, she basically had her pitch written for her. And those guys did that for me because I’ve asked them.”

The benefit of *talent attraction and retention* was discussed as a key benefit for organisations. The below comment by an HR practitioner/recruitment specialist respondent highlights the positive effect of employees with strong relationships in their place of work:

Respondent 13: “They [employees] will know each other and help each other and love each other so that they would like to work longer with the organisation.”

Respondent 15: “...from a recruitment perspective we’ve had people speak at career events just because people that are seeking employment in the digital space like to hear from people who are actually are employed here doing the work as opposed to me the recruiter talking to them about the roles and people who do the work.”

The theme *drives collaboration and communication* was built from key constructs that speak to focused teamwork. The below response by a senior manager respondent illustrates the benefit of feedback on projects and work that social capital affords organisations in this industry:

Respondent 5: “to be honest, you do get benefit from the relationships, because, you know, obviously you get feedback from the client, they tell you what they are looking for or what they’re gonna be looking for the next coming few months so you kind of get that insight.”

Respondent 13: “...I think to make things happen... [success] is a team work...the person need[s] to set up quite good relationship and network in his or her industry then to clearly know what’s happening there, who is doing, who is the one [who] can help you or work together with you to the success.”

Although a number of benefits were noted for organisations, an HR respondent highlighted negative concerns with social capital. This respondent emphasised that social capital can drive unfair advantages within the organisation:

Respondent 16: “Ok, I won't name names but actually in my department I'm often asked to do favours for people. Right. ‘So and so's son needs a job here, needs an internship here, needs a something...’ and you know, short of twisting my arm they essentially let me know that you know, you are not supposed to say no to this (nervous laugh). How do you deal with that? (nervous laugh).”

Interviewer: “How do you deal with that, that's really hard?”

Respondent 16: “Yeah, so, you know, I had to find a diplomatic way of... Very often I'm not even given the option I'm told that ‘so and so is coming here’ and then when I ask ‘why? We don't have a head count, what's up with this?’ I'm told that ‘oh, because this is the son of some important client’ (nervous laugh).”

Interviewer: “Don't worry, your responses are anonymous, they won't be tracked back to your name just so you know there is freedom to talk, I won't track it back.”

Respondent 16: “It happens very often to be honest. Thankfully it's not for the senior positions. It's almost always for an internship or an entry position. But you know what about the people that fight for it and want it and strive for it...Some people argue they're not taking anything away but there is always opportunity costs. The fact that you're here you take away one of my headcounts that could have been given to somebody who really wanted it.”

Furthermore, a senior manager's comment indicated that social capital can cause people to be favoured who are possibly less skilled and less suited to a position compared to other colleagues:

Respondent 2: “When I was in [City] the culture there was much more about, I would say, who you knew... I saw people who would rise through the ranks and in my own opinion they were probably not the right people. And I saw people who were very talented allowed to leave, who I think should have been in more senior positions.”

#### **5.3.4 Results for research question 4**

*What are the key tools for accumulating social capital in the global digital advertising industry?*



Research Question 4 examined key tools that knowledge workers in the global digital advertising industry can use to build social capital for successful career progression. Question D in the interview guidelines (Appendix 1 and Appendix 2) requested that respondents list key tools for accumulating social capital in the global digital advertising industry. Table 16 below reflects the listed tools for accumulating social capital in the global digital advertising industry.

**Table 16: The key tools for accumulating social capital in the global digital advertising industry: All respondents**

<b>RANK</b>	<b>CONSTRUCTS</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
1	Participating in industry groups, events or organisations	10
2	Developing mentorship relationships	8
2	Developing your LinkedIn profile or engaging in this space	8
3	Building relationships within one's organisation	5
4	Joining cross-industry network groups/programmes	4
4	Participating in global organisation networks (includes summits, etc.)	4
4	Willingness to help others	4
4	Allowing time for informal connections	4
4	Publishing articles/creating content	4
5	Nurturing relationships	3
5	Speaking at events/Lecturing	3
6	Building high quality relationships with fewer people	2
6	Connecting on Facebook	2
6	Maintaining high levels of activity on social media	2
6	Creating a public persona of yourself	2
7	Finding ways to build meaningful connections beyond the workplace	1
7	Attending training in people engagement	1
7	Speaking with one's boss	1
7	Speaking to a key individual outside of the office	1
7	Engaging with like-minded people	1
7	Following global digital organisations	1
7	Giving back to the industry	1
7	Having knowledge and maintaining focus	1
7	Managing your EQ	1
7	Getting international experience	1
7	Creating a social events calendar	1
7	Subscription to newsletters	1
7	Be authentic: express genuine care and listening	1
7	Stay out of social politics in the workplace	1
7	Don't jump jobs too often	1
7	Keeping up to date with industry trends	1

As shown in Table 16, the top three constructs for accumulating social capital in the global digital advertising industry include: (i) *participating in industry groups, events or organisations*, (ii) *developing mentorship relationships*, and *effective management of one's LinkedIn page and engagements on this platform*. The data from this table was then built into four themes illustrated in Table 17.

**Table 17: Themes for accumulating social capital in the global digital advertising industry:  
All respondents**

RANK	THEME	THEME CONSTRUCTS	CONSTRUCT TOTAL	THEME TOTAL
1	Developing or nurturing relationships	Developing mentorship relationships	8	32
		Building relationships within one's organisation	5	
		Willingness to help others	4	
		Allowing time for informal connections	4	
		Stay out of social politics	1	
		Be authentic: express genuine care and listening	1	
		Nurturing relationships	3	
		Building high quality relationships with fewer people	2	
		Finding ways to build meaningful connections beyond the workplace	1	
		Speaking with one's boss	1	
		Speaking to a key individual outside of the office	1	
		Engaging with like-minded people	1	
		2	Industry participation	
Joining cross-industry network groups/programmes	4			
Participating in global organisation networks (includes summits, etc.)	4			
Speaking at events/Lecturing	3			
Following global digital organisations	1			
Giving back to the industry	1			
Creating a social events calendar	1			
Subscription to newsletters	1			
3	Building a reputation online	Developing your LinkedIn profile or engaging in this space	8	18
		Publishing articles/creating content	4	
		Connecting on Facebook	2	
		Maintaining high levels of activity on social media	2	
		Creating a public persona of yourself	2	
4	Managing/developing oneself	Attending training in people engagement	1	6
		Having knowledge and maintaining focus	1	
		Managing your EQ	1	
		Don't jump jobs too often	1	
		Getting international experience	1	
		Keeping up to date with industry trends	1	

As is evident from Table 17, the strongest performing theme is *developing and nurturing relationships* with the highest ranking construct in this theme being the *development of mentorship relationships*. In the interview discussions, references were made to both informal and formal mentorship relationships with mentorship relationships being most beneficial to individuals when there had been a specific need. The importance of developing and nurturing relationships is further highlighted in some key comments stated during the interviews:

Respondent 6: “Newton made the statement that, ‘if I’ve seen farther it’s because I’ve stood on the shoulders of giants...’ and I’ve kind of always believed in that in my career. If I’ve been able to go further in my career it’s because a giant picked me up and helped me, this kind of mentor idea.”

Respondent 8: “I think that getting advice and being able to observe those more senior people...they were like my kind of unofficial mentors, definitely helped me grow faster by being able to see that and be exposed to that maybe sooner in my career.”

*Industry participation* was identified as a key emerging theme, with *Participation in industry* groups, events or organisations carrying the heaviest weighting. There were a number of comments made by respondents regarding involvement in the industry, namely:

Respondent 5: “...you go to an event and you meet someone there and... they ask about what you do and they say ‘hey, you know what, in fact, we’re looking for somebody’ ... I got that once or twice where I was offered a job...”

Respondent 7: “...making sure that you are visible in the industry is part of building your social capital.”

Respondent 18: “I definitely think that being involved in, you know, various networking groups or industry networking groups...they’re different in every location...that’s another way that’s gonna help you keep up with trends ’cos they’re going to be talking about what’s happening in the industry. So I think being present in those type of groups is helpful.”

*Building a reputation online* was a theme with constructs that respondents mentioned regularly throughout the interviews. LinkedIn was the strongest construct in this space.

Respondent 17: "Be very active on social media, make sure that you are, you know, quite active on LinkedIn"

Interviewer: "How do you connect with them [people in your industry]?"

Respondent 5: "Obviously through like your LinkedIn, you know, for me LinkedIn is the number one place that I believe one should start from..."

Respondent 10: "Honestly, I will think LinkedIn is the first one. Really, having a finalised and very attractive and complete profile on LinkedIn...A lot of people told me this, when they meet someone they go directly on LinkedIn and then directly on Facebook..."

As per Table 17, *Managing or developing yourself* sees equal ranking across all constructs. Some comments from respondents linked to this theme included the below statements:

Respondent 4: "I think everybody need[s] some training in working with relationships because that's a skill that is really hard to get. For some it's quite natural, for some it's not..."

Respondent 6: "If you want to build a career, build strong relationships with people and show value in that environment...and move up without stepping on other people's heads and I truly believe that's possible but that I think in the long run, actually you will see a tipping point where your career just suddenly starts going...whereas if you jump around a lot you see that escalation where you go up quickly and then suddenly you hit a ceiling and you can't go further because you don't have the relationships with people who can help you go further. You haven't built the emotional intelligence to help you manage complicated situations of a political nature..."

#### **5.3.4.1 Tools for knowing how to do one's job better in the global digital advertising industry**

After the respondents had advised what they considered key tools for accumulating social capital in the global digital advertising industry (reflected in Table 17 above), they were asked to rank their listed tools against three pillars; *Does the listed tool help individuals in this industry aid with (i) knowing how to do one's current job more effectively, (ii) promotion in one's current organisation, (iii) promotion across organisations.* Table 18 below outlines key social capital tools identified by respondents that aid individuals in doing their current jobs better.

**Table 18: Key social capital tools for knowing how to do one's current job better**

RANK	THEME	THEME CONSTRUCTS	KNOWING HOW TO DO CURRENT JOB BETTER	THEME TOTAL
1	Developing/ nurturing relationships	Developing mentorship relationships	7	21
		Building relationships within one's organisation	4	
		Speaking to a key individual outside of the office	2	
		Willingness to help others	1	
		Allowing time for informal connections	1	
		Stay out of social politics	1	
		Be authentic: express genuine care and listening	1	
		Nurturing relationships	1	
		Building high quality relationships with fewer people	1	
		Finding ways to build meaningful connections beyond the workplace	1	
		Engaging with like-minded people	1	
		Speaking with one's boss	Not ranked	
2	Industry participation	Participating in industry groups, events or organisations	5	14
		Participating in global organisation networks (includes summits, etc.)	4	
		Joining cross-industry network groups/programmes	2	
		Speaking at events/Lecturing	1	
		Giving back to the industry	1	
		Subscription to newsletters	1	
		Following global digital organisations	0	
		Creating a social events calendar	0	
3	Building a reputation online	Publishing articles/creating content	2	6
		Developing your LinkedIn profile or engaging in this space	1	
		Creating a public persona of yourself	1	
		Connecting on Facebook	0	
		Maintaining high levels of activity on social media	2	
4	Managing/ developing oneself	Having knowledge and maintaining focus	1	4
		Getting international experience	1	
		Keeping up to date with industry trends	1	
		Attending training in people engagement	0	
		Managing your EQ	0	
		Don't jump jobs too often	1	

As reflected in Table 18, *developing or nurturing relationships* was considered the most important theme in aiding individual's in knowing how to do their current jobs better. The

highest point allocations across all the themes went towards *developing mentorship relationships* and *participating in industry groups, events or organisations*.

#### **5.3.4.2 Tools for promotion at one's current organisation in the global digital advertising industry**

Key social capital tools recognised by respondents that aid with promotion in one's current organisation are highlighted in Table 19 below. As highlighted in this table, *developing or nurturing relationships* was considered the most essential theme for promotion within organisations. *Developing mentorship relationships* was the highest ranked construct within this theme and overall.



**Table 19: Key social capital tools for promotion within one's current organisation in the global digital advertising industry**

RANK	THEME	THEME CONSTRUCTS	PROMOTION WITHIN CURRENT ORGANISATION	THEME TOTAL
1	Developing/nurturing relationships	Developing mentorship relationships	8	22
		Building relationships within one's organisation	4	
		Willingness to help others	2	
		Nurturing relationships	2	
		Allowing time for informal connections	1	
		Stay out of social politics	1	
		Be authentic: express genuine care and listening	1	
		Building high quality relationships with fewer people	1	
		Finding ways to build meaningful connections beyond the workplace	1	
		Engaging with like-minded people	1	
		Speaking with one's boss	Not ranked	
		Speaking to a key individual outside of the office	0	
		2	Industry participation	
Participating in global organisation networks (includes summits, etc.)	2			
Joining cross-industry network groups/programmes	1			
Speaking at events/Lecturing	1			
Giving back to the industry	1			
Following global digital organisations	0			
Creating a social events calendar	0			
Subscription to newsletters	0			
3	Building a reputation online	Publishing articles/creating content	3	7
		Maintaining high levels of activity on social media	2	
		Developing your LinkedIn profile or engaging in this space	1	
		Creating a public persona of yourself	1	
		Connecting on Facebook	0	
4	Managing/developing oneself	Attending training in people engagement	1	5
		Having knowledge and maintaining focus	1	
		Managing your EQ	1	
		Don't jump jobs too often	1	
		Keeping up to date with industry trends	1	
		Getting international experience	0	

#### **5.3.4.3 Tools for promotion across organisations in the global digital advertising industry**

Table 20 below outlines key social capital tools recognised by respondents that aid individuals with promotion across organisations in the global digital advertising industry. The top ranked constructs for movement across organisations in the global digital advertising industry were *Participating in industry groups, events organisations* followed by *Developing mentorship relationships*.

**Table 20: Key social capital tools for promotion across organisations within the global digital advertising industry**

RANK	THEME	THEME CONSTRUCTS	MOVEMENT ACROSS ORGANISATIONS	THEME TOTAL
1	Developing/nurturing relationships	Developing mentorship relationships	7	19
		Nurturing relationships	3	
		Building relationships within one's organisation	1	
		Willingness to help others	1	
		Allowing time for informal connections	1	
		Stay out of social politics	1	
		Be authentic: express genuine care and listening	1	
		Finding ways to build meaningful connections beyond the workplace	1	
		Speaking to a key individual outside of the office	1	
		Engaging with like-minded people	1	
		Building high quality relationships with fewer people	1	
		Speaking with one's boss	Not ranked	
		2	Industry participation	
Participating in global organisation networks (includes summits, etc.)	3			
Joining cross-industry network groups/programmes	2			
Speaking at events/Lecturing	1			
Giving back to the industry	1			
Creating a social events calendar	1			
Subscription to newsletters	1			
Following global digital organisations	0			
3	Building a reputation online	Developing your LinkedIn profile or engaging in this space	5	12
		Publishing articles/creating content	3	
		Maintaining high levels of activity on social media	3	
		Creating a public persona of yourself	1	
		Connecting on Facebook	0	
4	Managing/developing oneself	Attending training in people engagement	1	4
		Having knowledge and maintaining focus	1	
		Managing your EQ	1	
		Don't jump jobs too often	0	
		Getting international experience	0	
		Keeping up to date with industry trends	1	

#### 5.3.4.4 Comments from the open-ended discussions

There were a number of key constructs, regarding tools for social capital accumulation, which emerged during the open-ended discussions. Top ranking constructs are listed in Table 21.

**Table 21: Open-ended discussion concerning tools for developing social capital in the global digital advertising industry: All respondents**

RANK	CONSTRUCTS	TOTAL COUNTS
1	Having a strategy for forming and developing social capital is vital.	7
1	Build trust to develop social capital.	7
2	Building social capital requires boldness.	6
2	Social capital is role/position related.	6
2	Focus on building your personal brand.	6
3	It is essential that building relationships is done in an authentic and genuine manner.	5
4	First develop knowledge/skill/learning and then build social capital. This will aid in the development of quality social capital as you will be recognised for your capabilities.	4
4	Your personality type has an influence on your social capital development; extroversion vs introversion impacts social capital acquisition.	3
4	Building relationships happens organically.	3

From Table 21, it is apparent that *Having a strategy for the development and maintenance of one's social capital* is considered paramount. Building a strategy is underpinned by individuals being proactive. This is illustrated in selected quotes below:

Respondent 8: "I think just being proactive and... taking ownership of my own exposure...not waiting for someone else to do it for me."

Respondent 17: "Depends on what your goal is, why are you going to this event..."

Respondent 15: "I think someone who is going to schedule those meetings [with one's director] and be proactive will of course advance more quickly than the person who is just waiting for that relationship to grow on its own."

*Building trust* was observed as essential in developing social capital in the global digital advertising industry.

Respondent 7: "He [respondent's mentor] was the one who told me 'Look if you want more, you need to build trust'...Nobody tells you this."

Respondent 6: "You know, if I think about my career, I had a company. Through that company I delivered services to clients. I sold that. One of my best clients which was [company name] said come and work for me. Relationship. 100% relationship based. They didn't worry about the fact that I had no degree, that, nothing, because I built up a relationship based on results and experience and capability and **trust** I suppose. Maybe **trust** is something you should add... My entire career has been based on the relationships that I built."

Respondent 5: "I get to recommend a lot of people in the industry...because it's a **trust** thing. If they **trust** you, then they can come to you, you are the go-to guy."

Respondent 6: "You have to invest time with people, you have to try and build meaningful relationships. The reason I got this job is because whilst I didn't invest a lot of time with [colleague's name], the time I did invest with him was quality time, sought out the right opportunities. I did not know four or five years ago that he was going to become the global president for [company name]."

A number of references were regarding the requirement of *Boldness* in order to accumulate social capital.

Respondent 8: "I'm not afraid to reach out and set up time or take people up on the offer to set up time to talk."

Respondent 1: "Often I will approach people. I'm very proactive... when I started and I wanted to understand, let's say... e-commerce better, I organised myself a telephone interview with [CEO of a top multi-national e-commerce company]... I wrote him an email, said to him, 'listen, I'm starting this company called [company name]. In the early, early days, I bought from [company name], thought it was a great experience. Said to him 'are you interested in Africa?' He says 'not really.' I said to him, 'please can I have ten minutes of your time just to talk to you about it?' So, you know, I have balls."

A further construct that was apparent in the research is that *social capital carries more relevance depending on your role in the industry and the level at which you are employed*. This is highlighted in comments from interview discussions below:

Respondent 9: “I think if my title is more high... I'm not so high level... maybe my next level I will think relationship is good or important for me”

Respondent 13: “I think relationships and networking in the industry, maybe this is important for some senior people, but for junior to middle level, this is not that important...”

Interviewer: “So would you rank relationships a lot higher then if it's later in your career?”

Respondent 14: “Ya, ya I would say so. The first two years don't seem to matter too much because junior people wouldn't have had that much exposure but definitely once you start getting mid-level to senior...”

Respondent 17: “...all depending on the position, if it's within sales we'll probably push a bit hard, ask more questions but depending on the seniority of the candidate as well, you can't expect a junior, you know, an account executive to know everyone in the industry. And if they do, it's great. It means they really have an interest in the industry and they've done their research.”

Respondent 15: “...unless you're client services where you're obviously more of a sales role and you're always trying to gain more business and you know, I feel in those positions definitely this [social capital] is important...”

From the above it is evident that social capital is considered beneficial for more mid-level to senior level positions and client service or sales roles. During the interviews it was suggested that a considerable amount of time must be apportioned to building one's *personal brand*.

Respondent 16: “creating a public persona of yourself I think, gets people places.”

Respondent 1: “Today with social...make sure that you look after your personal brand.”

Respondent 7: “building your personal brand as would say will allow you to meet new people...”

It is apparent that there are a number of tools that individuals can utilise to develop their social capital in the global digital advertising industry.

## **5.4 Summary of Chapter 5**

This chapter outlined key findings from the 18 qualitative research interviews conducted. Each research question identified in Chapter 3 was examined and unpacked with a clear indication of the results to aid the discussion of results and key findings in Chapter 6.

## **CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

### **6.1 Introduction**

Chapter 6 provides a discussion of the results of this research study that were presented in Chapter 5. This chapter was built by means of an examination of Research Questions 1 to 4 in the context of what the explored literature to date unpacked in Chapter 2. References to Chapters 1 to 4 were built into the discussion of each research question to highlight the continuity, as well as the linking of the literature to the methodology and results. The data was drawn from the 18 semi-structured interviews that were conducted and comprised of three sample subsets, namely, senior managers, knowledge workers and HR practitioners/recruitment specialists in the global digital advertising industry (see Chapter 4, section 4.4). Chapter 6 further provides depth of insight into the findings in Chapter 5 and unpacks how the research objectives have been met.

### **6.2 Discussion of sample**

As observed in Chapter 5 (section 5.2), there was a fairly even split of respondents by continent. Five respondents were working in Europe and Africa respectively, while another four respondents were located in North America and Asia respectively. The benefit of the sample's diversity is that it allowed for a diversity of cultural groups to be included and for insights to be drawn from a variety of global perspectives. The total sample's average number of years working in the global digital advertising industry was nine years and the average number of organisations worked at in the global digital advertising industry was three years. It can therefore be concluded that, on average, these respondents in the global digital advertising industry have changed their jobs every three years. This is congruent with the rapidly changing nature of the global digital advertising industry.

### **6.3 Research questions**

It was emphasised in Chapter 1 (section 1.4.1.1) that new forms of working, organisation and career management have been driven by globalisation and technological advancements (Sutherland, et al., 2015). Chapter 2 (section 2.3.1) further explored that with the changes



in the new world of work both individuals (Al Ariss & Syed, 2011; Enache et al., 2013; Greenhaus et al., 2010; Yildiz et al., 2015;) and organisations (Clarke, 2013; Clarke & Patrickson, 2008; Greenhaus et al., 2010; Kulkarni, 2016) require a thorough understanding of the tools that will aid in career management for individual and organisational success. As discussed in section 1.5.1 above, digital technologies continue to fundamentally transform business strategies (Bharadwaj, et al., 2013). The impact of the digital age has had particular influence on the global digital advertising industry (PwC, 2015a).

The overarching purpose of this research report has been to determine the role of social capital in career management in the global digital advertising industry. Each of the research questions outlined in Chapter 3 (sections 3.1.1 to 3.1.4) were constructed to aid individuals in their career management in the industry. First and foremost, Research Question 1 explored the specific relevance of the ‘knowing-whom’ pillar of career capital, relative to the other two pillars of career capital, namely, ‘knowing-how’ and ‘knowing-why’ (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994; Zikic & Ezzedeen, 2015). Research Question 2 examined if the perceived importance of social capital, comparative to the other two pillars of career capital, varied across the three sample subsets, namely: senior managers, knowledge workers and HR practitioners/recruitment specialists. The focus for Research Question 3 was to determine the benefits of social capital for both individuals and organisations. Lastly, Research Question 4 examined key tools for developing social capital in the industry. The results for each research question from the semi-structured interview questions, data coding and analysis of the data are discussed below.

### **6.3.1 Research question 1**

*Is social capital a key form of career capital in the global digital advertising industry?*

Career capital is considered key across career development in today’s global economy. However, the research to date has lacked insight for the global digital advertising industry. As illustrated in section 2.5, Kwon and Adler (2014) highlighted that there has been a significant increase in the academic discussion of social capital. It was determined in section 2.5 that social capital/‘knowing-whom’ is the only construct that exists in intelligent career literature by both DeFillippi and Aruthur (1994) and Bourdieu (1986), therefore, stressing the importance of this form of capital. Results determined from the research regarding social capital as a key form of a career capital in the global digital advertising industry were

unpacked in Chapter 5 (section 5.3.1). Chief findings from these results will be discussed below. The notable findings include:

- All pillars of career capital are considered vital in career management in the global digital advertising industry.
- ‘Knowing-how’ and ‘knowing-why’ pillars rank ahead of the ‘knowing-whom’ pillar of career capital.
- Social capital aids in career advancement in the global digital advertising industry.

#### **6.3.1.1 All pillars of career capital are considered important in career management in the global digital advertising industry**

It was identified that investing in one of the three pillars of career capital has a positive effect on the other two pillars (Haslberger, 2013) as they operate in an interrelated manner (Zikic & Ezzebeen, 2015). In section 5.3.1.2 above, it was noted that respondents expressed difficulty in selecting the single most important pillar of career capital for advancing their careers in the global digital advertising industry. The considerable amount of time that the majority of respondents took during the interview to complete the fixed sum scales further emphasised the close affinity respondents felt towards all three of the pillars of career capital. This conflict indicated that all pillars are considered important for managing one’s career in the industry. These observations support the arguments of Haslberger (2013) and Zikic and Ezzebeen (2015) that all three pillars are beneficial in advancing one’s career. Furthermore, this conclusion complements Inkson and Arthur’s (2001) findings that career capitalists should amplify their investments across all three pillars of career capital.

#### **6.3.1.2 ‘Knowing-why’ and ‘knowing-how’ pillars rank ahead of the ‘knowing-whom’ pillar**

It is apparent from the results that all pillars carry substantial value in advancing one’s career in the global digital advertising industry. However, the fixed sum scale responses (Table 6, section 5.3.1.1 above) and responses to the question *‘In your opinion is ‘what you know’ or ‘who you know’ or ‘why you know’ (i.e. your attitude/motivation) more important for individuals in advancing their careers in the global digital advertising industry?’* (see section 5.3.1.2 above), forced participants to unambiguously rank the three pillars of career capital. With the average ‘knowing-how’ and ‘knowing-why’ pillars ranking ahead of the ‘knowing-

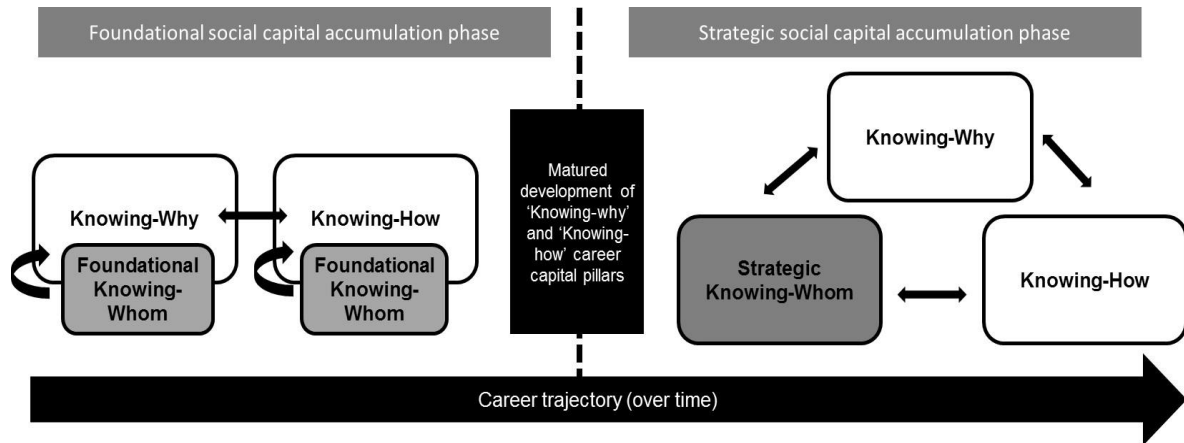
whom' pillar, it became apparent that although social capital is valued by these respondents, 'knowing-how' and 'knowing-why' are considered more important pillars.

The 'knowing-why' pillar saw the strongest overall preference by respondents and a 'knowing-how' component (*Experience*) was, on average, the highest rated component across the complete sample. As the 'knowing-whom' pillar ranked significantly lower than the 'knowing-why' and 'knowing-how' pillars it is necessary to reconsider Zikic and Ezzebeen's (2015) model outlining the flow of the three forms of capital (see Figure 3 in section 2.5.1 above) when utilised in the context of the global digital advertising industry. The 'knowing-why' and the 'knowing-how' pillars of career capital need to extend to a certain level of development before the 'knowing-whom' pillar is prioritised as a focus for the interrelated relationships of the three forms of knowing.

Individuals seeking to successfully manage their careers in the global digital advertising industry must commence with building foundational social capital. Foundational social capital comprises of the relationships that initially enhance motivation and the learning of hard skills within the industry. The chief purpose of foundational social capital is the development of the 'knowing-why' and 'knowing-how' pillars of career capital. Once the 'knowing-why' and 'knowing-how' forms of career capital have matured adequately, individuals can look to build strategic social capital that will effectively drive successful career management in the global digital advertising industry. Strategic social capital is accumulated with fierce intention and significant impact on career development.

Figure 5 below builds on the model developed by Zikic and Ezzebeen (2015) with the introduction of the concepts of foundational and strategic social capital. The model built by Zikic and Ezzebeen (2015) is further modified in Figure 5 below with a sequenced career trajectory and the inclusion of a point in time where 'knowing-how' and 'knowing-why' pillars of career capital have reached adequate maturity and strategic social capital can be developed. An attempt to accumulate strategic social capital prematurely it is not likely to yield optimal career management results in the long-term.

**Figure 5: Stages of foundational and strategic social capital ('knowing-whom') accumulation for optimal career management in the global digital advertising industry**



### 6.3.1.3 Social capital aids in career advancement in the global digital advertising industry

The overwhelmingly positive responses to the question, *'Do you believe that social capital helps individuals advance their careers in the global digital advertising industry?'* (see section 5.3.1.3 above) gives a strong indication that this form of career capital aids in career management in the global digital advertising industry. Furthermore, the spontaneous comments and discussion around the benefits of social capital, as well as the examples of personal experiences where social capital has assisted individuals in advancing in this industry (see section 5.3.1.5), are a clear indication that this form of career capital positively contributes to career management in the global digital advertising industry. This finding supports the literature that claims social capital aids in accumulating resources that promote career management (Bourdieu, 1986; Kurul, 2015; Seferiadis et al., 2015).

### 6.3.1.4 Conclusive findings for research question 1

The social capital pillar of career capital was not ranked as the most influential pillar compared to the 'knowing-how' and 'knowing-why' pillars. However, the data collected concerning social capital confirm that it is a highly beneficial career capital pillar to build in conjunction with developed 'knowing-why' and 'knowing-how' pillars of career capital. Concepts of foundational social capital and strategic social capital were introduced and

unpacked in the model, 'Stages of foundational and strategic social capital ('knowing-whom') accumulation for optimal career management in the global digital advertising industry' (Figure 5 in section 6.3.1.2). For individuals to develop social capital in this suggested phased approach, the quality and returns gained from accumulating social capital will be more effective for one's career development.

### **6.3.2 Research question 2**

*Does the perceived importance of social capital vary across senior managers, knowledge workers and HR practitioners/recruitment specialists?*

This research question explored the varying opinions regarding the three forms of knowing (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994) with a particular focus on 'knowing-whom' ranking against the three sample subsets, namely, the senior managers, the knowledge workers and the HR practitioners/recruitment specialists. Limited literature was available for this research question, further stressing the need research. Insights were drawn from the results in section 5.3.2 above and prominent findings include:

- All sample subsets recognise that social capital is beneficial for career advancement in the global digital advertising industry.
- Senior managers and knowledge workers mind-sets tend to vary from the HR practitioners/recruitment specialists mind sets.

#### **6.3.2.1 All sample subsets recognise that social capital is beneficial for career advancement in the global digital advertising industry**

It is evident from the data captured across all three sample subsets in section 5.3.2 above that social capital is considered important for the majority of respondents in each sample subset. Across all sample subsets six of the five respondents answered the question '*Do you believe that social capital helps individuals advance their careers in the global digital advertising industry?*' favourably, indicating an equal response across sample subsets regarding the relevant importance of social capital in the global digital advertising industry. All three respondents that did not answer this specific question positively made comments at other points during their interviews, indicating that they considered social capital as highly beneficial in the global digital advertising industry. It can therefore be confirmed that all

respondents across all sample subsets recognise that social capital accumulation is beneficial for successful career management in the global digital advertising industry.

### **6.3.2.2 Senior managers and knowledge workers mind-sets tend to vary from the HR practitioners/recruitment specialists mind sets**

A comparison of the fixed sum scale results in Table 8 (section 5.3.2.1 above), Table 10 (section 5.3.2.2 above) and Table 12 (section 5.3.2.3 above) reflect that the component of *Relationships and/or networking in the industry* is considered of higher importance to senior managers and knowledge workers than HR practitioners/recruitment specialists in the global digital advertising industry. This component ranked third for the senior managers, second for the knowledge workers and in a much lower, sixth position for the HR practitioners/recruitment specialists. The senior managers and knowledge workers had an average score of ten for this component with a range of 'four to twenty' and 'five to fifteen' respectively. The HR practitioners/recruitment specialists had an average score of six with a much lower range of 'zero to ten'. The data indicates that the mind-set of HR practitioners/recruitment specialists varies to that of senior managers and knowledge workers with regards to social capital. Considering that HR departments are required to not operate in isolation from the rest of the organisation (Ulrich, et al. 2008), it is concerning that there is such an evident disparity in mind sets in this industry.

The majority of respondents in each sample subset ranked the 'knowing-why' pillar of career capital highest when posed the question '*In your opinion is 'what you know' or 'who you know' or 'why you know' (i.e. your attitude/motivation) more important for individuals in advancing their careers in the global digital advertising industry?'*'. This pillar received the highest ranking from the senior manager respondents, with four respondents selecting this pillar. The HR practitioners/recruitment specialists allocated 3.5 points to the 'knowing-why' pillar. Lastly, the knowledge workers allotted three points to the 'knowing-why' pillar. The 'knowing-whom' pillar was ranked last by all the sample subsets with the HR practitioners/recruitment specialists as the only sample subset with zero points allocated to this pillar. This once more reinforces that the HR practitioners/recruitment specialists place less emphasis on social capital accumulation in the global digital advertising industry than the senior managers and knowledge workers in the industry. As HR practitioners/recruitment specialists appear to attribute lower weighting to social capital in career advancement than

the senior managers and knowledge workers, there is an indication that social capital plays a more important role in career advancement if individuals are looking to make advancements in their careers without utilising recruitment specialists and having a heavy reliance on HR department.

### **6.3.2.3 Additional comments**

It was observed during the interviews that the knowledge worker subset of respondents considered hard work to be more vital than the senior manager subset of respondents. This sentiment is further evident in the knowledge workers ranking of hard work compared to the senior managers. Senior manager respondents had an average point allocation of ten points for *hard work*. *Hard work* ranked fifth (after eight components) in the fixed sum scale analysis for senior managers. The knowledge workers placed *hard work* in a shared first position. The senior managers' discussions revealed that they had experienced more benefit through building strong relationships than through working hard.

### **6.3.2.4 Conclusive findings for research question 2**

On complete analysis of the data, all respondents across all sample subsets acknowledged that social capital is beneficial for advancing one's career in the global digital advertising industry. It is, however, clear that there is a variation in the perceived importance of social capital by the sample subsets. The senior managers and knowledge workers have a higher affinity to social capital being a significant contributing factor in building a successful career in the global digital advertising industry where the HR practitioners/recruitment specialists appear to place less emphasis on this pillar of career capital for career advancement.

### **6.3.3 Research question 3**

*What are the benefits of accumulating social capital in the global digital advertising industry?*

As highlighted in section 2.6.1 above, social capital has been considered beneficial for both knowledge workers and organisations (Bozionelos, 2014; Bozkurt & Muhr, 2011; Lazarova & Taylor, 2009). Section 2.6.1 further unpacked that firms become dependent on the networking efforts of its employees where individuals experience benefits of social capital



through career advancement (DeFillipi & Arthur, 1994). This research report examined key benefits of social capital for both individuals and organisations in the global digital advertising industry. As unpacked in section 5.3.3 above, the majority of these findings came through open-ended questions and discussions throughout the interviews across all three sample subsets. The data revealed that there were recognised benefits for both individuals and organisations in the global digital advertising industry.

### **6.3.3.1 Individual benefits more evident than organisational benefits**

Although key themes emerged from the data for both individual benefits and organisational benefits, on further examination, it is evident that a higher total point allocation was allotted to individual benefits than organisational benefits. This reveals that social capital carries more benefits for individuals than organisations.

### **6.3.3.2 Three key benefit themes determined for individuals**

A number of benefits of social capital for individuals in the global digital advertising industry emerged in the research that was conducted. As illustrated in section 5.3.3.1 above, there were three key themes that were apparent for the individual benefits of social capital: (i) *career advancement*, (ii) *gathering of resources* and (iii) *personal development*. These themes saw little variation in the overall theme totals and the realised themes were consistent with the literature on social capital.

The **career advancement** theme was ranked highest and concurrent with the finding in literature that advantages of social capital include promotion and future employment opportunities (Biemann & Braakmann, 2013; Dickmann & Harris, 2005; Lin & Huang, 2005). As highlighted through Table 14 (section 5.3.3.1 above), *references and referee support* was the highest ranking construct within this theme. This construct links to the supposition of Dickmann and Harris (2005) that social capital was found to be a force in driving oneself to the top of an organisation. A key construct in the career advancement theme was that respondents considered social capital as a *force to help drive promotions*. This is further in line with the conclusion of Lin and Huang (2005) that social capital accelerates promotion and drives positive career outcomes. The constructs *opens doors for opportunities* and *provides opportunities to showcase one's skills* are in line with findings by Biemann and



Braakmann (2013) that social capital aids in the provision of future employment opportunities. It is apparent that social capital can be a key tool in accelerating one's career forward in the global digital advertising industry.

The second highest ranked theme was **gathering of resources**. This theme is in line with the findings in the literature review that social capital assists individuals in the accessing of resources (Osman-Gani & Rockstuhl, 2008, Seferiadis, et al., 2015; Shaffer et al., 2012). The reduction of efforts in gathering information (Florin et al, 2003) is apparent in the construct that social capital *aids in learning and gaining access to information*. The second key construct in this theme, *allows for individuals to get answers, help or advice from others* is congruent with the finding by Sutherland et al. (2015) that social capital facilitates knowledge acquisition and sharing. In an industry that is dynamic and constantly changing it is imperative that individuals have access to pertinent information and the high ranking that these two constructs received is therefore substantiated.

The **personal development** theme included an array of constructs that drive personal development for individuals in the global digital advertising industry. The top ranking construct for this theme is that social capital aids in the achievement of goals. This high ranking is in line with the acknowledgement made by Bozionelos (2014) that social capital can facilitate the achievement of career goals. A construct that was not sourced in the literature is that social capital provides an array of perspectives. The data revealed that social capital is a driver of motivation and development. This conclusion is consistent with the findings of Shaffer et al. (2012) that determined that important knowledge workers provide access to resources that enhance career development. Individuals that desire to develop personally in their careers are likely to benefit from pertinent relationships that they build.

### **6.3.3.3 Three key benefit themes determined for organisations**

As it was made apparent in section 2.6.3 above, social capital creates opportunities for firms to incur benefits (Lengnick-Hall & Lengnick-Hall, 2006). This claim was supported in the results highlighted in in section 5.3.3.2 above where key determined themes were that social capital (i) *propels business success forward*, (ii) *supports talent attraction and retention within the business* and (ii) *drives collaboration and communication within the organisation*. As unpacked below, these three findings are consistent with literature on the topic.

The top ranking theme, **propelling business success** saw high ranking by respondents. It was determined by Bozkurt and Mohr (2011) as well as Seferiadis et al. (2015) that social capital is a strong driver for the attainment of shared organisational goals. Assumed that an organisation's strategy is sound, achieving organisational goals should in turn drive business success. The top ranked construct for this theme and overall for organisational benefits was that social capital *provides new business opportunities*. Social capital can therefore be considered to carry return on investment for an organisation as accumulation of this capital is seen to drive business forward for the organisation. The provision of new business opportunities arises through key connections being formed where resources can be capitalised.

An analysis of the respondents' discussions indicated that **talent attraction and retention** was seen as a driving factor for organisations to push for the accumulation of social capital. Zhang et al. (2016) established that development of this form of capital is key in building strong attachments that drive augmented commitment to the organisation. In the global digital advertising industry the employees in the organisation provide the primary business offering (such as skills and services) and are therefore crucial to the existence of the business. Any tool that can aid in attracting and retaining talent is considered extremely valuable in this industry. There is evidence that social capital "breeds" social capital in that individuals are drawn to organisations where they can develop strong social capital through networks with key individuals in the industry. For an organisation to invest in the development of social capital for individuals it is likely to result in the attraction and retention of valuable talent in the industry.

Social capital was discussed by respondents as a tool for **collaboration and communication** within the organisation through its development of innovation and ideas, effective team work and the opportunity it creates to provide feedback into the organisation. The literature revealed that social capital has been found to support effective collective action (Leana & Van Buren, 1999) and the cooperation of employees which becomes crucial for the successful achievement of outlined organisational objectives (Requena, 2003). Innovation is a strong driver for success in the global digital advertising industry and therefore idea generation and collaboration with effective communication is highly advantageous for businesses operating in this space. As social capital helps to drive collaboration and communication, it carries strong business value for this industry.

#### **6.3.3.4 Conclusive findings for research question 3**

It is evident that social capital has a number of benefits for both individuals and organisations operating in the global digital advertising industry, with overall importance ranking higher for individual than organisational benefits. Social capital is a pillar of career capital that individuals and organisations in this industry can look to develop to aid with career advancement and business growth respectively. Themes that emerged for benefits for individuals included (i) *career advancement*, (ii) *gathering of resources* and (iii) *personal development*. Emerging themes for benefits of organisations included that social capital (i) *propels business success forward*, (ii) *supports talent attraction and retention* and (iii) *drives collaboration and communication within the organisation*. As the research has revealed that social capital is beneficial for career advancement in the global digital advertising industry, an understanding of key tools to assist in the accumulation of social capital will be highly beneficial for career advancement in this industry.

#### **6.3.4 Research question 4**

*What are the key tools for accumulating social capital in the global digital advertising industry?*

Research Question 4 explored specific tools that aid in the accumulation of social capital. As displayed in section 5.3.4 above, this was explored through a direct question posed to respondents regarding a suggested list of tools for accumulating social capital in the global digital advertising industry.

##### **6.3.4.1 Four key themes identified as a toolkit for accumulating social capital in the global digital advertising industry**

As was highlighted in section 5.3.4 above, four key themes of tools for accumulating social capital in the global digital advertising industry emerged in this research study, namely: (i) *developing or nurturing relationships*, (ii) *industry participation*, (iii) *building an online reputation* and, (iv) *managing or developing oneself*. The top ranking constructs within these themes included *developing mentorship relationships*, *participating in industry groups, events or organisations* and *developing and maintaining one's LinkedIn profile*.

**Developing and nurturing relationships** saw heavy weighting as an overall theme. References to mentorship relationships in numerous interviews highlighted the significance of this tool for social capital accumulation. The emphasis placed on mentorship relationships makes it apparent that individuals in this industry should prioritise seeking both mentors and mentees. Sutherland et al. (2015) emphasised that individuals should seek out mentors. Lamb and Sutherland (2010) stressed that career mentors offer support and growth for development. *Building relationships in one's current organisation* ranked second under this theme and is considered an important construct that may require less effort than others as opportunities to engage with individuals in one's organisation are likely to require less effort than developing relationships in the broader industry.

The key construct under the **industry participation** theme is *participating in industry groups, events or organisations*. This construct was the heaviest weighted when compared against the full set of constructs and therefore the overall most important construct. It is apparent that individuals will benefit through industry membership and participation. Participating in networks beyond the industry and one's country's borders is also considered a key tool in the accumulation of social capital.

Social media was considered a strong driver for the accumulation of social media. *Developing a LinkedIn profile* and maintaining consistent engagement in this space ranked as a fundamental construct for accumulating social capital in this industry. **Building an online reputation** was not limited to LinkedIn and also included publishing articles and getting content out in the market place. It was made apparent that strategically building an online profile and personal brand should be a key area of focus in accumulating social capital in the global digital advertising industry.

**Managing and developing oneself** was considered a key theme for accruing social capital. The majority of constructs under this theme pertained to active engagements such as *attending training in people management, managing one's EQ* and *getting international experience*. As social capital is a relational form of capital, *developing one's ability to successfully relate to people* is going to enhance one's ability to amass this form of capital.

#### 6.3.4.2 Minor variation in social capital tools for specific requirements

Sections 5.3.4.1 to 5.3.4.3 above explored the tools that are most beneficial across the three focus areas of career capital (see Figure 1 in section 2.3 above), namely: (i) *knowing how to do one's current job better*, (ii) *promotion in one's current organisation* and (iii) *movement across organisations*. Comparison of these three pillars reveals that the ranking of the themes is consistent. All pillars run with the following ranking order: (i) *developing and nurturing relationships*, (ii) *industry participation*, (iii) *building an online reputation* and, (iv) *managing and developing oneself*. A slight variation in theme constructs for each pillar was observed.

Tools that ranked highest in **knowing how to do one's job better** included *developing mentorship relationships* and *participating in industry groups, events or organisations*. Comparatively, *having informal discussions outside of the work environment* is seen as more beneficial for knowing how to do one's job better than across the other two pillars. *Developing mentorship relationships* was considered significantly more important than other constructs for the second pillar, **promotion in one's current organisation**. The overall theme of *developing or nurturing relationships* ranked significantly higher than *industry participation*, *building an online reputation* and *managing or developing oneself*. For the **movement across organisations** pillar, *participation in industry groups, events or organisations* was the highest ranked construct. This pillar was the only pillar with two themes ranking high scores: *developing or nurturing relationships* and *industry participation*. It is apparent that if one seeks to improve in their current role, or get promoted in one's current organisation in the global digital advertising industry, *developing mentorship relationships* will be highly beneficial. If individuals seek to move across organisations the best tool to focus on developing is *participation in industry groups, events or organisations*.

#### 6.3.4.3 Additional considerations

Further to the key themes determined in sections 6.3.4.1 and 6.3.4.2 above, it was established that a **strategy** for accumulating social capital is required for maximum success. This is consistent with Bourdieu's (1986) claim that investment strategies result in one's network of relationships. The results indicate that these strategies should be built with **trust development** as a key focus, sufficient **boldness** to approach an array of individuals and a clear focus for building one's **personal brand**. Further insights include that it is essential for

relationships to be built with **authenticity**. Strategic social capital should only be a focus once a certain level of knowledge and skill has been attained as individuals will develop more credibility and therefore more impactful social capital. These insights are unpacked in a development ladder that supports social capital accumulation for successful career management in Figure 6 below. This development ladder must be considered in conjunction with the model developed in section 6.3.1.2, Figure 5 above, the ‘stages of foundational and strategic social capital (‘knowing-whom’) development for optimal career management in the global digital advertising industry’.

**Figure 6: Development ladder for social capital accumulation for successful career management in the global digital advertising industry**

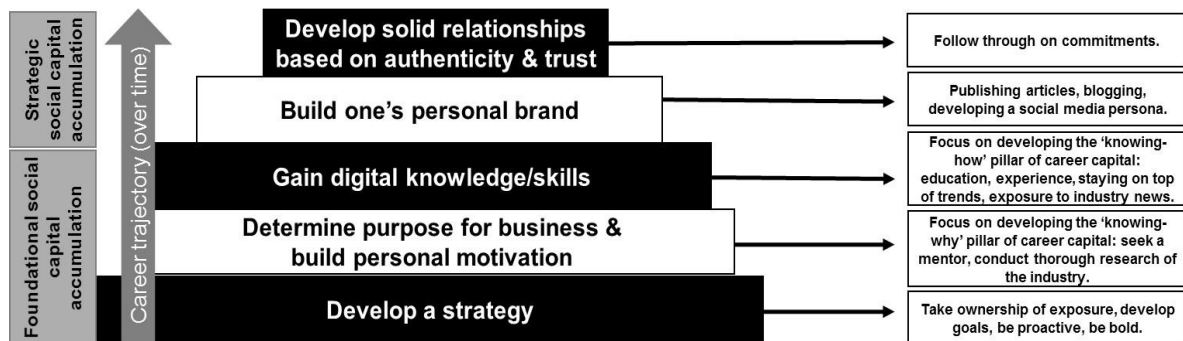


Figure 6 above illustrates areas for focus in social capital accumulation that support the foundational and strategic social capital phases. Individuals can move from the foundational to the strategic phases of social capital accumulation and ultimately optimal career progression through sequentially following these steps.

The first three steps in the development ladder are foundational social capital accumulation steps. The initial step involves individuals developing a solid strategy with clearly outlined goals encompass the following steps of the ladder. The focus thereafter is to develop the ‘knowing-why’ pillar of career capital. This is achieved through comprehension of the purpose of the business and building personal motivation for career success in the industry. Thereafter, the ‘knowing-how’ pillar of career capital must be developed through gaining digital expertise. The strategic social capital accumulation phase involves focus on building

one's personal brand and complementing the preceding steps with the development of solid relationships that have a foundation of authenticity and trust.

#### **6.3.4.4 Conclusive findings for research question 4**

Fundamental tools for accumulating social capital are summarised by four key themes, namely, (i) *developing or nurturing relationships*, (ii) *industry participation*, (iii) *building an online reputation* and (iv) *managing or developing oneself*. Considering the various pillars for social capital development (*knowing how to do one's job more effectively, promotion in one's current organisation and movement across organisations*) it can be noted that there is no change in the rank order of the overall themes. Chief constructs for social capital development included *mentorship, participation in industry groups, events or organisations* and *developing one's LinkedIn profile or engaging on LinkedIn*. Additional tools included building a strategy for social capital accumulation underpinned by trust, boldness and personal branding. A development ladder for social capital accumulation for successful career management in the global digital advertising industry is a model that has been developed to guide individuals through foundational social capital and strategic social capital accumulation.

## **6.4 Summary of Chapter 6**

This chapter examined and discussed the results presented in Chapter 5. The results were analysed according to the four research questions unpacked in Chapter 3. Research Question 1 determined that although social capital contributes to the advancement of one's career in the global digital advertising industry, it is not considered the most significant pillar of career capital with 'knowing-why' and 'knowing-how' pillars ranking higher than the 'knowing-whom' pillar. From this finding the model developed by Zikic and Ezzedeen (2015) was modified to include introduced foundational social capital and strategic social capital concepts for enhancement of career management. The adapted model highlighted the sequential stages of foundational and strategic social capital accumulation for optimal career management in relation to the other two key forms of career capital in the global digital advertising industry.

It was concluded from Research Question 2 that the perceived importance of career capital varies from HR practitioners/recruitment specialists to senior managers and knowledge



workers in the global digital advertising industry. It was determined that HR practitioners/recruitment specialists place less emphasis on the importance of social capital in career development in the global digital advertising industry.

Analysis of Research Question 3 revealed that the respondents consider social capital to carry benefits for both the individual and the organisation with a heavier weighting to individual benefits. The three key themes that emerged for social capital development benefits for individuals included: (i) *career advancement*, (ii) *gathering of resources* and (iii) *personal development*. The three key themes that became evident for social capital development benefits for organisations included: (i) *propels business success forward*, (ii) *supports talent attraction and retention within the business* and (ii) *drives collaboration and communication within the organisation*.

Research Question 4 examined key tools for social capital accumulation in the global digital advertising industry. Four key themes emerged for tools in building social capital: (i) *developing or nurturing relationships*, (ii) *industry participation*, (iii) *building an online reputation* and (iv) *managing or developing oneself*. There is minimal variation in tools required for social capital development across the three focus areas of career management: (i) *knowing how to do one's current job better*, (ii) *promotion in one's current organisation* and (iii) *movement across organisations*. Furthermore, a strategy for social capital accumulation was determined essential in successful social capital development with variations in the foundational social capital and strategic social capital phases. A development ladder model that highlights development milestones and a guideline in social capital accumulation was introduced.



## **CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter serves to highlight the chief findings of this research study, with reference to the outlined purpose of the study, examining the role of social capital in career management in the global digital advertising industry. It unpacks the contributions that the findings make to both academic literature and the implications for individuals and organisations operating in the global digital advertising industry. Limitations of the research are revisited and recommendations for future research are provided.

### **7.2 Principle findings**

This research was an exploratory investigation to determine the role of social capital in career management in the global digital advertising industry. The research examined if social capital is a key form of career capital in the global digital advertising industry and the variations in perceptions of this form of capital amongst the three identified groups in the industry, namely senior managers, knowledge workers and HR practitioners/recruitment specialists. Furthermore, this research determined specific benefits of the accumulation of social capital and ascertained strategic tools that players in this industry can utilise to aid in building their social capital for career advancement. The principle findings of this research study are unpacked in detail in Chapter 6 above and are summarised below.

#### **7.2.1 Social capital is more effective once the ‘knowing-how’ and ‘knowing-why’ forms of capital have been developed**

It was concluded that social capital was considered a highly beneficial form of capital to be accumulated for career advancement in the global digital advertising industry. A noted caveat is that for maximum advantage, social capital should be built on an initial foundation of ‘knowing-how’ and ‘knowing-why’ forms of capital. Haslberger (2013) as well as Zikic and Etzebeen (2015) determined that an investment in one of the pillars of career capital has a positive effect on how the two other ways of knowing are supported through the findings of this study. The conclusions of this research revealed that although an interrelation exists

between the three pillars of career capital, there is evidence that the 'knowing-how' and 'knowing-why' pillars need to attain a significant level of development before individuals can focus strategically on the 'knowing-whom' pillar for optimal career progression results in the global digital advertising industry.

Concepts of foundational social capital and strategic social capital were introduced. Foundational social capital is the social capital that aids in driving the progression of the 'knowing-why' and 'knowing-how' forms of capital. Strategic social capital accumulation comprises of intentional actions steps that have significant impact on career development. A model outlining the stages of foundational and strategic social capital accumulation for successful career management in the global digital advertising industry was developed (see Figure 5 in section 6.3.1.2 above). This model developed from the findings of Zikic and Ezzedeen (2015) and highlights that attempts to accumulate strategic social capital should not be done prematurely in order to yield effective career management results.

### **7.2.2 Perceived importance of social capital in the global digital advertising industry varies for senior managers and knowledge workers versus HR practitioners/recruitment specialists**

Senior managers and knowledge workers considered social capital a more valuable attribute for career advancement in the global digital advertising industry than the HR practitioners/recruitment specialists. As Ulrich et al. (2008) highlighted, HR departments should operate as a business with vision and strategy. It is worthwhile considering that these two groups (senior managers and knowledge workers versus HR practitioners and recruitment specialists) have varying perceptions of the value of social capital. There is a risk that individuals with high levels of social capital may be under-valued by the HR practitioners/recruitment specialists in the recruitment process. Businesses need to seriously consider the implication this finding can have on organisational growth in the global digital advertising industry.

### **7.2.3 Individual benefits outweigh organisational benefits**

In line with the literature, it was determined that social capital has benefits for both individuals (Biemann & Braakmann, 2013; Bozionelos, 2014; Dickmann & Harris, 2005; Lin & Huang,

2005; Osman-Gani & Rockstuhl, 2008; Seferiadis, et al., 2015; Sutherland et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2016) and organisations (Bozkurt & Mohr, 2011; Florin et al., 2003; Leana & Van Buren, 1999; Lengnick-Hall & Lengnick-Hall, 2006; Requena, 2003; Rubio, 1997; Seferiadis et al., 2015; Sutherland et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2016) in the global digital advertising industry . The emerging themes were linked to constructs that ultimately drive individual and organisational advancement. Furthermore, it was concluded from the research that the benefits for individuals saw higher ranking than the benefits for organisations. Social capital is highly valuable for individual career advancement in the global digital advertising industry as it drives career advancement, aids in gathering key resources and boosts personal development.

#### **7.2.4 Toolkit development that supports the accumulation of social capital for effective career advancement in the global digital advertising industry**

In an industry that is incredibly high-pressured and deadline driven, a toolkit of the most relevant items for career growth is beneficial for individuals looking to advance in this industry effectively. The research revealed that fundamental tools for accumulation of social capital included (i) *developing or nurturing relationships*, (ii) *industry participation*, (iii) *building an online reputation* and (iv) *managing or developing oneself*. If applied strategically, these tools will result in career advancement. It was further ascertained that social capital development themes are consistent across the following pillars: (i) *knowing how to do one's job more effectively*, (ii) *promotion in one's current organisation* and (iii) *movement across organisations*. Across all pillars, *mentorship relationships* came through as the strongest tool for social capital accumulation and it is recommended as a key focus for growth in this industry.

A development ladder (see Figure 6 in section 6.3.4.3 above) was introduced as a step by step approach for individuals looking to accumulate effective social capital for successful career advancement. This framework outlines that for optimal development, a phased approach to accumulating foundational social capital and strategic social capital must be undertaken. First and foremost a strategy must be developed. Thereafter, a key focus for individuals is building motivation and an understanding of purpose followed by gaining the required hard skills and knowledge. The focus then shifts to building a strong personal brand

and finally one can emphasise developing solid relationships with a firm foundation of authenticity and trust. The trust in one's personal brand will be a natural result if the steps are followed sequentially.

### 7.3 Recommendations for business

It is evident that the impact of digital technology on business, and in particular, the global advertising industry, will continue to grow (PwC, 2015a). It is therefore crucial for all players in the global digital advertising industry to gain deeper comprehension as to how to manage their careers in this dynamic landscape. Recommendations for business based on the findings of this research study are listed below:

- In order to realise increased financial returns, organisations in the global digital advertising industry need to develop environments that enable social capital to flourish. As mentorship relationships were seen to be the most effective tools for employees *knowing how to do their jobs better* and *promotion within their current organisations*, it is recommended that organisations in this industry focus on creating mentorship programmes for employee development. Additionally, the overall theme of *developing or nurturing relationships* came through with strong rankings against the pillars *knowing how to do one's job better* and *promotion within one's current organisation*. For this reason, it is recommended that organisations focus on building programmes and structures that allow for relationship development and growth.
- The model that reflects the *stages of foundational and strategic social capital ('knowing-whom')* accumulation for optimal career management in the global digital advertising industry (see Figure 5 in section 6.3.1.2 above) provides a sequenced approach for businesses to encourage foundational and strategic social capital accumulation. This model can be applied for employee growth and development.
- As reflected in Figure 6 (see section 6.3.4.3 above), individuals must apply strategy to their accumulation of social capital for effective advancement in the global digital advertising industry. Furthermore, HR practitioners can assist individuals through the development of programmes that aid in the building of proactive social capital strategy development.

- Individuals in this industry should be encouraged to develop strategies at all levels of the development ladder for successful accumulation of social capital. They should be encouraged to enhance their digital knowledge and skills consistently. Once a clear foundation of knowledge and skills has been established it is necessary for individuals to have an effective plan for their personal brand. Thereafter, they need to be encouraged to focus explicitly on building solid relationships based on authenticity and trust.
- As many individuals are oblivious to the benefits of social capital when they come in at a junior level, it is recommended that these benefits are made known to employees at all levels within the organisation.

## 7.4 Limitations of the research

Limitations that existed for this research study are listed below:

- The proposed sampling technique was non-probability sampling which does not represent the population statistically (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).
- Considering this research included conducting 18 interviews globally, it was recognised that it was not possible to be representative of each and every nation globally.
- As the interviews were conducted globally, there existed a risk of cultural nuances being misinterpreted.
- Multiple biases impacted the interview process. Noted biases considered for this research were interviewer/response bias and social desirability bias.
- A key disadvantage in qualitative research is that results are heavily dependent on the researcher's interpretation and are therefore highly subjective (Zikmund et al., 2013).
- A number of respondents did not speak English as their first language, which resulted in potentially increasing the risk of misunderstandings during the interview process.
- With the majority of respondents operating in South Africa and America there exists the potential for regional biases in the findings.

- The constructs would have benefited from multiple frequency analysis runs to ensure all statements were captured. However, a time limitation did not allow for multiple data checks of the 18 interviews.

## **7.5 Implications for theory and recommendations for future study**

The purpose of this research was to ascertain (i) a broad understanding of the career development benefits of social capital and (ii) the most effective means of accumulating this form capital in the global digital advertising industry. Implications for theory is that a deeper exploration of the interplay between the three forms of career capital is required. Moreover, the findings of the study have provided opportunities for further research and investigation. Five areas for future research are outlined below:

1. Adapt this qualitative study to a quantitative study in order to provide statistically representative data to confirm claims (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).
2. Determine if the 'knowing-why' and 'knowing-how' pillars of career capital are beneficial to accumulate a foundation ahead of driving the 'knowing-whom' pillar of career capital in other industries globally, or if this is unique to the global digital advertising industry.
3. Understand the different approaches that must be applied in foundational and strategic social capital accumulation.
4. Unpack what classifies as adequate development of 'knowing-why' and 'knowing-how' forms of career capital in order for individuals to shift to a strategic social capital accumulation approach.
5. Explore if one's perceived importance of the accumulation of social capital in the global digital advertising industry is influenced by one's geographic location.
6. Examine if the varying mind-sets of senior managers and knowledge workers versus HR/recruitment specialists in the global digital advertising industry extends beyond views on social capital.
7. Explore if the varying mind-sets of senior managers and knowledge workers versus HR practitioners/recruitment specialists in the global digital advertising industry influences the hiring of candidates with the potential of sub-optimal candidates being selected for pertinent roles.

8. Assess the variation in the most effective tools for accumulation of social capital for entrepreneurs versus employees at organisations in the global digital advertising industry.
9. Develop a model that examines the financial return on investment gained from social capital investments made by firms in the industry. These findings can impact the investments organisations channel into programmes and processes that enhance social capital accumulation both internally and externally.

## **7.6 Summary of Chapter 7**

This research study achieved the research objectives as set out in Chapter 1 (see section 1.6 above). The research has provided deeper insight into career management in the global digital advertising industry which is expected to experience continued rapid growth (PwC, 2015a) as businesses and consumers globally become more digitally orientated. Social capital was found to be highly beneficial form of career capital for both individuals and organisations in the industry, with a skew towards individuals and particularly when developed in the context of a strong ‘knowing-why’ and ‘knowing-how’ career capital foundation. It was determined that social capital was perceived as more beneficial by senior managers and knowledge workers than it was by HR practitioners and recruitment specialists in the industry. The numerous benefits of social capital for career and business development emphasised the necessity for individuals and organisations to prioritise social capital accumulation for career advancement and financial capital gains.



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## Appendix 1: Interview guideline for knowledge workers in the global digital advertising industry

### Consent Form

The purpose of the research is to conduct research on the role of social capital in career management in the global digital advertising industry. The interview is expected to last about an hour and will help to understand the role that relationships play in career management in the global digital advertising industry. You will be asked to answer questions pertaining to your work experience. **Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time without penalty.**

The contents of this interview may appear in an MBA thesis. Your name and job title may appear in an appendix to the MBA thesis, however, there will be no direct link to your name and comments stated. All data will be kept confidential and will only be presented in aggregated form.

If you have any concerns, please contact me or my supervisor. Our details are provided below.

	<b>Researcher:</b>	<b>Research Supervisor:</b>
<b>Name</b>	Lisa Fraenkel	Professor Margie Sutherland
<b>Telephone</b>	076 168 4777	(011) 771 4000
<b>Email</b>	lisafraenkel@gmail.com	sutherlandm@gibs.co.za

Signature of participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>INTERVIEWER'S GUIDE</b>	
<b>Respondent Number</b>	
<b>Date</b>	
<b>Time</b>	
<b>Location (of interview)</b>	



**Note to interviewer: Thank the interviewee for their time and request permission to record the interview.**

After the completion of the consent form, the interviewees will be asked the below questions:

- (1) Current position: \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) Current organisation (Media owner/Media agency/Client brand management):  
\_\_\_\_\_
- (3) Number of years at current organisation:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- (4) Number of years working in the digital advertising industry:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- (5) Number of organisations you have worked at in the industry:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- (6) Country currently working in:  
\_\_\_\_\_

**[The below fixed sum scale is to be provided to participants to complete in excel format, either sent online if the interview is being done remotely or on the laptop being used by the interviewer]**

**Table 1 Fixed sum scale: career capital importance ranking (Question A)**

Which elements below do you consider the most important in building a successful career in the global digital advertising industry?	
Indicate the importance you attach to each of the below aspects by allotting points for each to total to 100.	
Education	
Relationships and/or networking in the industry	
Experience	
Hard work	
Motivation/Ambition	
Attitude	
Knowledge	
Natural talent	
Winning awards	
Skills	
Other, please specify:	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

**Ahead of the next question, Career Capital will be explained to the interviewee. It is advised that the interviewer take any additional time to ensure that all respondents have a clear understanding of the concept.**

**(1) Career Capital**

All individuals can build capital. There are many forms of capital. The most commonly known form of capital is financial capital (for example personal savings, retirement annuities).

Career capital has been defined as an employee's **non-financial resources** they are able to bring to their work (Arthur, DeFillippi & Jones, 2001). Non-financial resources are those attributes one carries that are not monetary. This is termed career capital and is made up of three pillars: (i) career **motivation and purpose** or 'knowing-why', (ii) **knowledge** or 'knowing-how' and (iii) **relationships/networks** or 'knowing-whom'.

**Question B: In your opinion is ‘what you know’ or ‘who you know’ or ‘why you know’ (i.e. your attitude/motivation) more important for individuals in advancing their careers in the global digital advertising industry?**

**Ahead of the next question, Social Capital will be explained to the interviewee. It is advised that the interviewer take any additional time to ensure that all respondents have a clear understanding of the concept.**

**(2) Social Capital**

Social capital is the ‘knowing-whom’ pillar of career capital defined as relationships, networks and group memberships (Sutherland, Naidu, Seabela, Corsson & Nyembe, 2015) that contribute to the advancement of one’s career. Examples of social capital components include mentorship relationships (in your organisation or outside of your organisation), being a part of an industry body, being a mentor, lecturing, virtual connections, client relationships, supplier relationships and friendship relationships.

**Question C: Do you believe that social capital helps individuals advance their careers in the global digital advertising industry?**

All respondents will be asked to discuss five key tools that individuals can use to build social capital in the global digital advertising industry. These tools will be listed in the first column of Table 2 below by the interviewer. Once listed, the respondents will be asked to select the tools for accumulating social capital that are applicable to (A) knowing-how to do their job, (B) promotion in their current organisation, (C) movement across organisations.

**Table 2: Key tools for accumulating social capital in the global digital advertising industry (Question D)**

TOOLS FOR ACCUMULATING SOCIAL CAPITAL (TO BE LISTED BY RESPONDENTS)	(A) KNOWING HOW TO DO THEIR JOB	(B) PROMOTION IN CURRENT ORGANISATION	(C) MOVEMENT ACROSS ORGANISATIONS

## Appendix 2: Interview guideline for HR practitioners and recruitment specialists

### Consent Form

The purpose of the research is to conduct research on the role of social capital in career management in the global digital advertising industry. The interview is expected to last about an hour and will help to understand the role that relationships play in career management in the global digital advertising industry. You will be asked to answer questions pertaining to your work experience. **Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time without penalty.**

The contents of this interview may appear in an MBA thesis. Your name and job title may appear in an appendix to the MBA thesis, however, there will be no direct link to your name and comments stated. All data will be kept confidential and will only be presented in aggregated form.

If you have any concerns, please contact me or my supervisor. Our details are provided below.

	Researcher:	Research Supervisor:
<b>Name</b>	Lisa Fraenkel	Professor Margie Sutherland
<b>Telephone</b>	076 168 4777	(011) 771 4000
<b>Email</b>	lisafraenkel@gmail.com	sutherlandm@gibs.co.za

Signature of participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

INTERVIEWER'S GUIDE	
<b>Respondent Number</b>	
<b>Date</b>	
<b>Time</b>	
<b>Location (of interview)</b>	

**Note to interviewer: Thank the interviewee for their time and request permission to record the interview.**

After the completion of the consent form, the interviewees will be asked to complete the below:

- (1) Current position: \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) Current organisation (Media owner/Media agency/Client brand management):  
\_\_\_\_\_
- (3) Number of years at current organisation:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- (4) Number of years working in the digital advertising industry:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- (5) Number of organisations you have worked at in the industry:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- (6) Country currently working in:  
\_\_\_\_\_

**[The below fixed sum scale is to be provided to participants to complete in excel format, either sent online if the interview is being done remotely or on the laptop being used by the interviewer]**

**Table 1 Fixed sum scale: career capital importance ranking (Question A)**

Which elements below do you consider the most important in building a successful career in the global digital advertising industry?	
Indicate the importance you attach to each of the below aspects by allotting points for each to total to 100.	
Education	
Relationships and/or networking in the industry	
Experience	
Hard work	
Motivation/Ambition	
Attitude	
Knowledge	
Natural talent	
Winning awards	
Skills	
Other, please specify:	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

**Ahead of the next question, Career Capital will be explained to the interviewee. It is advised that the interviewer take any additional time to ensure that all respondents have a clear understanding of the concept.**

### **(3) Career Capital**

All individuals can build capital. There are many forms of capital. The most commonly known form of capital is financial capital (for example personal savings, retirement annuities).

Career capital has been defined as an employee's **non-financial resources** they are able to bring to their work (Arthur, DeFillippi & Jones, 2001). Non-financial resources are those attributes one carries that are not monetary. This is termed career capital and is made up of three pillars: (i) career **motivation and purpose** or 'knowing-why', (ii) **knowledge** or 'knowing-how' and (iii) **relationships/networks** or 'knowing-whom'.

**Question B: In your opinion is ‘what you know’ or ‘who you know’ or ‘why you know’ (i.e. your attitude/motivation) more important for individuals in advancing their careers in the global digital advertising industry?**

**Ahead of the next question, Social Capital will be explained to the interviewee. It is advised that the interviewer take any additional time to ensure that all respondents have a clear understanding of the concept.**

#### **(4) Social Capital**

Social capital is the ‘knowing-whom’ pillar of career capital defined as relationships, networks and group memberships (Sutherland, Naidu, Seabela, Corsson & Nyembe, 2015) that contribute to the advancement of one’s career. Examples of social capital components include mentorship relationships (in your organisation or outside of your organisation), being a part of an industry body, being a mentor, lecturing, virtual connections, client relationships, supplier relationships and friendship relationships.

**Question C: Do you believe that social capital helps individuals advance their careers in the global digital advertising industry?**

All respondents will be asked to discuss five key tools that individuals can use to build social capital in the global digital advertising industry. These tools will be listed in the first column of Table 2 below by the interviewer. Once listed, the respondents will be asked to select the tools for accumulating social capital that are applicable to (A) knowing-how to do their job, (B) promotion in their current organisation, (C) movement across organisations.



**Table 2: Key tools for accumulating social capital in the global digital advertising industry (Question D)**

TOOLS FOR ACCUMULATING SOCIAL CAPITAL (TO BE LISTED BY RESPONDENTS)	(A) KNOWING HOW TO DO THEIR JOB	(B) PROMOTION IN CURRENT ORGANISATION	(C) MOVEMENT ACROSS ORGANISATIONS

### Appendix 3: Mapping of interview questions to research

RESEARCH QUESTION	INTERVIEW QUESTION/ DATA	OBJECTIVE/DESIRED OUTCOME
<b>Q1: Is social capital ('knowing-whom') a key form of career capital in the global digital advertising industry?</b>	A: Fixed-Sum Scale (Interview Guidelines: Table 1) B: In your opinion is 'what you know' or 'who you know' or 'why you know' (i.e. your attitude/motivation) more important for individuals in advancing their careers in the global digital advertising industry? C: Do you believe that social capital helps individuals advance their careers in the global digital advertising industry?	Ranking to determine perceived importance of social capital
<b>Q2: Does the perceived importance of social capital vary across senior management, non-'senior management' knowledge workers and HR practitioners/recruitment specialists?</b>	Comparison of findings across senior management and knowledge workers in the global digital advertising industry as well as insights from data HR practitioners/recruitment specialists in the global digital advertising industry. A: Fixed-Sum Scale (Interview Guidelines: Table 1) B: In your opinion is 'what you know' or 'who you know' or 'why you know' (i.e. your attitude/motivation) more important for individuals in advancing their careers in the global digital advertising industry? C: Do you believe that social capital helps individuals advance their careers in the global digital advertising industry?	Determine when social capital becomes more relevant in one's career in the global digital advertising industry
<b>Q3: What are the benefits of accumulating social capital in the global digital advertising industry?</b>	Discussion during the interview across all questions.	Determine motivation for accumulating social capital in the global digital advertising industry.
<b>Q4: What are the key tools for accumulating social capital in the global digital advertising industry?</b>	D: Key tools for accumulating social capital in the global digital advertising industry (Interview Guidelines: Table 2)	Explore most effective tools for knowledge in current position, promotion in current organisation and movement across organisations

## **Appendix 4: Ethical clearance approval letter**

Dear Lisa Fraenkel

Protocol Number: Temp2016-00930

Title: The role of social capital in career management in the global digital advertising industry

Please be advised that your application for Ethical Clearance has been APPROVED. You are therefore allowed to continue collecting your data. We wish you everything of the best for the rest of the project.

Kind Regards, Adele Bekker