

**A study of graduates' experience of unemployment in  
Durban, South Africa.**

**Paballo Moerane**

**214563366**

Submitted in part fulfilment of the academic requirements  
for the degree of Master of Social Science (Industrial  
Organisational Labour Studies) in the School of Social  
Sciences, College of Humanities, University of KwaZulu-  
Natal, Durban.

**Supervisor: Dr Sagie Narsiah**

**2016**

## **Dedication**

*This thesis is dedicated to my late grandfather, Jacob Tsietsi Moerane whose words of encouragement and push for tenacity ring in my ears. The thesis is also dedicated to my parents for their endless love and support.*

## **Acknowledgements**

First and foremost, I would like to thank my parents (Mantume and Molefi Moerane) for allowing me to realise my full potential. All the support they have provided me with over the years was the greatest gift anyone has ever given me, I am forever indebted. I have to acknowledge the love and continuous support that has been my strength in difficult times from my beloved brothers (Thato and Kabelo Moerane). Words fail to explain my gratitude to them all.

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Sagie Narsiah whose expertise, understanding and patience added considerably to my research experience. I appreciate his support, vast knowledge and immense skill in many areas, but most importantly I appreciate allowing me the room to work in my own way.

A very special thank you goes to Prof. Sooryamoorthy whose door was always open for motivation, and encouragement. He always provided me with direction and support without hesitation. His guidance and mentorship helped me in all the time of research and writing this thesis. It would be a mistake not to show utmost gratitude to Inkamva Youth Centres (Chesterville and Umlazi) for generously giving me access to their database. My sincere thanks also go to my mentor (Ms. Wania van Wyk) for her insightful comments, encouragement and for always believing in my abilities.

I am thankful to my good friend Tosin Popoola whose encouragement, guidance and support from the initial to the final level enabled me to develop an understanding of the project. I appreciate the stimulating discussions, the sleepless nights in assisting to make this thesis a success and the motivation when I seemed to have difficulty.

I would like to show gratitude to my family who has tirelessly given me spiritual support and I offer regards and blessings to my wonderful friends: Sharon, Gugulethu, Ntsoaki, Boipelo and Kemisetso whose love and emotional support never cease. Last but not least, this thesis would not have been possible without the participants, my sincere gratitude to you all.

## DECLARATION

I Paballo Moerane declare that

- (i) The research reported in this dissertation/thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.
- (ii) This dissertation/thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- (iii) This dissertation/thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
- (iv) This dissertation/thesis does not contain other persons' writing, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers. Where other written sources have been quoted, then:
  - a) their words have been re-written but the general information attributed to them has been referenced;
  - b) where their exact words have been used, their writing has been placed inside quotation marks, and referenced.
- (v) Where I have reproduced a publication of which I am author, co-author or editor, I have indicated in detail which part of the publication was actually written by myself alone and have fully referenced such publications.
- (vi) This dissertation/thesis does not contain text, graphics or tables copied and pasted from the Internet, unless specifically acknowledged, and the source being detailed in the dissertation/thesis and in the References sections.

Signed: .....

## **ABSTRACT**

Since the statistics on employment constitute one of the yardsticks in determining how well an economy is fairing, it is not surprising that tackling unemployment is a topmost agenda item for most countries, including South Africa. However, despite government's renewed focus in tackling the problem in South Africa, youth unemployment has been on an upward trend and is now much higher than that of adults. While one can appreciate the magnitude of youth unemployment in South Africa due to the publication of various statistics, it is however worrying that most research that has been conducted on this phenomenon has ignored the subjective experience of unemployment. This study explored the subjective experience of graduate youths unemployed and residing in one of the cities that is most affected by youth unemployment in South Africa (Durban).

A qualitative descriptive approach was used in the study design, data collection and data analysis. Multiple purposive sampling was used to select 20 participants who met stringent inclusion criteria. A semi-structured interview guide was used to conduct eight in-depth interviews and two focus group discussions (6 participants in each group). The data was thereafter analysed using qualitative content analysis. The qualitative content analysis yielded four themes: (1) the reality of unemployment; (2) engaging with the reality of unemployment; (3) the impact of unemployment and (4) combating the destructive reality of unemployment. A further 15 sub-themes were also arrived at. An exploration of the experience of unemployed graduates provided insights into the reality of unemployment from the youth's perspectives. The participants discussed a number of strategies that might be used to better their experiences and these were considered as recommendations for practice and policy.

## **List of Abbreviations**

ASGISA.....	Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa
CDE.....	Centre for Development and Enterprise
CEDEFOP.....	Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
COSATU.....	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CV .....	Curriculum Vitae
DAFF .....	Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
DBSA .....	Development Bank of Southern Africa
DUT .....	Durban University of Technology
FET .....	Further Education and Training
FGD.....	Focus Group Discussion
GDP.....	Gross Domestic Product
GDS.....	Growth Development summit
GPA.....	Grade Point Average
HR .....	Human Resource
HRD.....	Human Resource Development
ILO.....	International Labour Organisation
JIPSA.....	Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition
NEET .....	Not in Education Employment and Training
NYP.....	National Youth Policy
PIU .....	Poverty Inequality and Unemployment
SSA .....	Sub-Saharan African

StatsSA.....Statistics South Africa  
UK.....United Kingdom  
UKZN .....University of KwaZulu-Natal  
USA.....United States of America  
UNFPA .....United Nations Population Fund  
UNESCO .....United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural  
Organisation  
QD.....Qualitative Description

## Table of Contents

Dedication.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
DECLARATION.....	iv
ABSTRACT.....	v
List of Abbreviations.....	vi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Problem Statement.....	10
1.3 Research Aim.....	12
Provide alternative strategies to address graduate unemployment in Durban.....	12
1.5 Significance of the study.....	12
1.6 Operational definition of terms.....	13
1.7 Conclusion.....	14
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	14
2.1 Introduction.....	14
2.2 Defining unemployment.....	14
2.3 Youth unemployment.....	16
2.4 Determinants of unemployment amongst youth.....	18
2.4.1 Location mismatch.....	19
2.4.2 Gender and personal attributes.....	20
2.4.3 The role of the educational institution.....	23
2.5 Impact of unemployment.....	26
2.6 Theoretical framework.....	28



2.7 Conclusion .....	31
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	32
3.1 Introduction.....	32
3.2 Research paradigm.....	32
3.3 Research approach .....	34
3.4 Location of the study .....	35
3.5 Sampling .....	36
3.6 Recruitment strategy .....	36
3.7 Data production strategy .....	39
3.8 Description of the data collection instrument .....	41
3.9 Data analysis .....	41
3.10 QUALITY OF THE STUDY .....	43
3.10.1 Trustworthiness.....	43
3.10.2 Credibility .....	43
3.10.3 Dependability.....	43
3.10.4 Transferability.....	44
3.11 Ethical considerations and protection of participants .....	44
3.12 Conclusion .....	45
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS.....	47
4.1 Introduction.....	47
4.2 Description and characteristics of participants .....	47
4.3 Strategy of data analysis and presentation .....	49
4.3.1 Step one: Transcription and data immersion .....	50
4.3.2 Step two: Dividing interview texts into meaning units.....	50
4.3.3 Step three: Condensing and shortening meaning units.....	52
4.4.4 Step four: Merging condensed meanings into subthemes and themes .....	53

4.4 Description of the derived themes and subthemes.....	57
4.5 Theme one: The reality of unemployment.....	58
4.5.1 Perceptions of systemic unfairness .....	58
4.5.2 State of limbo.....	59
4.5.3 Contending with authority .....	60
4.5.4 Nostalgia over career choice.....	61
4.6 Theme two: Engaging with the reality of unemployment .....	63
4.6.1 Job search efforts .....	63
4.6.2 Frustrating encounters with job searches.....	64
4.6.3 Unemployment as a source of vulnerability .....	65
4.7 THEME THREE: THE IMPACT OF UNEMPLOYMENT .....	66
4.7.1 Hopelessness and powerlessness .....	66
4.7.2 Loss of importance placed on education.....	68
4.7.3 Regret over career choice .....	69
4.7.4 Family relationships strain.....	70
4.8 THEME FOUR: COMBATING THE DESTRUCTIVE REALITY OF UNEMPLOYMENT .....	71
4.8.1 The role of personal attributes .....	71
4.8.2 The role of the educational institution .....	72
4.8.3 The role of the government and employers .....	73
4.8.4 The role of career counselling .....	75
4.9 Descriptive summary of the essential themes.....	76
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS .....	77
5.1 Introduction.....	77
5.2 Overview.....	77
5.3 Contribution to knowledge .....	78

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	85
6.1 Introduction.....	85
6.2 Limitations of the study .....	87
6.3 Conclusion .....	87
Appendix A.....	106
Appendix B .....	108
DECLARATION .....	110
Ethical Clearance Certificate .....	112

## **List of Figures**

<b>Figure2.1 Social Capital .....</b>	<b>29</b>
---------------------------------------	-----------

## **List of Tables**

<b>Table 4.1 Sample characteristics of in-depth interview participants.....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Table 4.2 Sample characteristics of focus group participants.....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Table 4.3 Division into meaning units.....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Table 4.4 Condensation of meaning units.....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Table 4.5: Theme one - The reality of unemployment .....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Table 4.7: Theme three – The Impact of unemployment.....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Table 4.8: Theme four – Combating the destructive reality of unemployment..</b>	<b>57</b>

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

South Africa is a country located at the southern tip of Africa. The country faces major challenges, particularly weak economic growth, high unemployment rates and a large proportion of marginalised black South Africans (Ndweni, Omarjee & Mulaudi, 2015). The millennium development goal of halving poverty by 2015 requires that the economy produces approximately 3.7 million new employment prospects during the next nine years, as proposed by Adelzadeh (2007). According to the International labour Organisation, (2010) (ILO), the economy is becoming highly global, yet on the other hand social and political institutions are stagnant locally, regionally and nationally (this is the current economic trajectory facing South Africa).

South Africa continues to struggle with a structurally high unemployment rate of around 25.5% in the second quarter of 2014 (Statistics South Africa, 2014). According to Statistics South Africa [StatsSA] (2015) the already high rate saw an increase of 0.9% and by the end of 2015 the overall unemployment rate of the country stood at 26.4%, which is the highest since 2005. The numbers depicting unemployment in South Africa are staggering. In 2016 International labour organization (ILO) announced that South Africa's unemployment would rise to the 6th highest in the world by the year 2020 from its current 8th position. Without doubt, with the level of the slowdown in economy, the next five years will be critical. As an illustration, nearly 52% -or 1.38 million-South Africans between the ages of 15 and 24 years - are unemployed, based on governments' narrow definition of unemployment. This only includes people who are actively looking for work, or are not receiving any education (Ndweni *et al.*, 2015). The broad definition, which includes those who have given up on searching for work, shows that a massive 65.1% - or 2.14 million people - are not working or receiving any kind of education or training (Statistics South Africa, 2014) add another 3.1 million young people

between the ages of 25 and 34 who are neither employed nor in training (Ndweni *et al.*, 2015).

In common with many developing countries, youth unemployment in South Africa is reaching critical proportions and is clearly a function of the overall level of employment in the economy (Baldry, 2013). However, the issue of youth unemployment in South Africa is both a structural and social phenomenon (Chisholm, 1992) - and also has political undertones and dimensions (Centre for Development and Enterprise [CDE], 2013). According to Cebekhulu (2013) the unemployment problem in South Africa can be attributed to structural weaknesses. Marais (2001) contends that the structural limitations of the apartheid's regime growth strategy intensely and deeply moulded the limits of political evolution. Banerjee, Galliano, Levisohn, McLaren and Woolard (2008) supported his argument by stating that South Africa's unemployment is more structural than transitional due to the demand of skilled workers. This is because of the structural and technological changes in the economy, which Lundall, (2003) confirms that they have led to an increase in the demand for skilled workers, combined with large-scale attrition at the bottom-end of the labour market. McCord (2005: 569) actually contends, "The structural nature of the unemployment problem is particularly serious for the low-skilled among whom unemployment is concentrated and who are increasingly surplus to the requirement of modernizing and liberalizing (the) economy". Du Toit and van Tonders' (2009) idea is that the high rate of unemployment is due to the fact that a large part of the prospective productive group is incapacitated and immobilised. Actually, to a certain degree, structural inflexibilities deny this population employment. The problem is accelerated by the lack of surety or guarantee that even those armed with diplomas and degrees can get themselves employment (Cebekhulu, 2013).

The 'skills crisis' notion experienced in South Africa, in particular the professional categories, is one greatest challenge facing governments' attempts of Human Resource Development in the country. Skills are understood to refer to both qualifications and experience and the 'skills shortage' often interchangeably with

‘scarcity’ is the idea that the demand of certain skills exceeds supply<sup>1</sup> (Presidential committee review). The South African government has attempted to combat the skills development issue and to date it is still struggling. In the late 90s and towards early 2000s, the government has unrelentingly intervened with economic growth, employment generation, income redistribution by adopting socio-economic policies. According to McGrath (2004) in response to the skills impasse, the skills development environment was enabled by: (1) The Congress of South African Trade Unions’ (COSATU) PRP document in 1993; (2) the skills development Act of 1998; (3) the National Skills Development Strategy of 2001; and (4) the Human Resource Development of 2001. In addition, the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA) was also a response which categorised skills shortage as a priority (Mantashe, 2006). Accordingly, skills shortages have long been a contributory factor in the growth stubbornness of the economy as structural unemployment (the possession of non-priority skills by the unemployed) impedes economic productivity. On the other hand, the presidential review committee asserts that the Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA) was too general and rampant as it remained focused on areas identified with ASGISA. It also hoped that once skills had been created in these areas they would be unleashed into the rest of the economy. It seemed that skills clusters that needed urgent attention were:

- High level, world class engineering and management skills for the network industries, communication and energy.
- Town, City and Regional Planning and management skills.
- Artisanal and technical skills, with priority attention to infrastructure development.
- Management and planning skills in education and health.

---

<sup>1</sup> Daniels, R.C. 2009. Skills shortages in South Africa: A literature review. Development Policy Research Unit. Cape Town: University of Cape Town.

- Mathematics, Science, ICT and language competence in public schools (Mantashe, 2006).

Kraak (2003) taught that in international literature, 'high-skills' is considered a necessary condition for the human resources development to expand successfully. But this cannot be the case for a developing country like South Africa with a large proportion of its population unemployed and having very poor levels of skills. Therefore the privileging of high skills is inappropriate as the single focus of human resource development. Many different initiatives and skills development programmes have been launched in the past decade but the lifespan of these programmes is normally very short as they constantly replaced or suspended. In a survey on the challenge of creating a development approach to youth employment in the United States of America (USA), Zuckerman (2003) supports the above view by noting that the duration of training was insufficient for youths to achieve measurable and certifiable competencies. There is a need for proper training so the youth can enable themselves to make any headway in life (Erasmus, More, Mogoera, Ellis and Serokoane, 2004).

The Growth Development Summit (GDS) of 2003 report was correct to emphasise that sustainable employment and long term-term economic impacts depends on job creation with skills development and training. Other factors that are responsible for structural unemployment in South Africa According to Cebekhulu (2013: 52) are:

- Mismatch between skills supplied and demanded;
- Insufficient access to effective education and skills development opportunities;
- Deterioration of skills and motivation of individual jobseekers caused by prolonged periods of unemployment;
- Insufficient opportunities for the unemployed to learn by doing on-the-job training;



- Lack of mobility, exacerbated by high and increasing transport costs as well as lack of infrastructure maintenance and development; and
- Lack of sufficient social support services, resulting in high dependency rates and demand for social security grants.

In South Africa, a youth is defined as any person between the age of 15 and 34 (Statistics South Africa, 2014); however, it is imperative to note that youths are not a homogenous group. Since South African youth unemployment is substantially higher than that of adults and on an upward trend (increased from 32.7% in 2008 to 36.1% in 2014 and 36.9% in the first quarter of 2015 to a decrease of 1.4% in the second quarter which stands at 35.5%). It is imperative that the statistics representing youth unemployment presented above be disaggregated and understood in the light of group peculiarities. This is important because reducing youth unemployment has become one of the South African government's major policy goals in recent times (Cloete, 2009). If any meaningful and significant solutions are to be proffered, then research and policies must be contextualised, not only in terms of the growth and measurement of youth unemployment, but also the perceived social dimensions of those affected.

Completion of a degree or diploma represents the end point of formal education and training, and the assumption is that graduates will proceed immediately upon qualifying to the workplace (Kruss, 2004). This is, however, not always the case, especially in the current global environment of economic instability. Although unemployment is a problem worldwide, (Griep, Rothman, Vluegels and Witte, 2012), South Africa faces an unemployment crisis, with over 23% of its population without any form of job (Griep *et al.*, 2012; ILO, 2013). What is clear - in any survey of literature on the subject of poverty, inequality and unemployment (PIU) in South Africa - is that the legacy of the apartheid era endures in many aspects in terms of economics, education, business, socio-economics, sociology and other aspects. This legacy poses numerous fundamental challenges in any attempt to cut new paths to

development and to specifically tackle PIU problems in the post-apartheid period (Chibba & Luiz, 2011).

The findings of a recent data release by the CDE (2013) note that unemployment among youth increases progressively as one goes down the educational scale. As such, any post-school qualification increases one's job prospects as illustrated by the following statistics: unemployment rate for youths with less than 12 years of schooling is 42%; unemployment rate for matriculants is 29%; for youths with non-degree tertiary education it is 16% and for people with a university degree it is less than 5%. Given the role of education in the attainment and sustenance of job opportunities, it is not surprising that the development of a highly educated workforce is at the top of the agenda for the South African government. However, despite the fact that South Africa's spending on education is one of the highest in the world at 6.2% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Collier, 2013), the graduation rate of 15% has been described as unacceptable and too low when compared with higher education systems elsewhere (Lewin & Mawoyo, 2014; Badat, 2010; Fisher, 2011). Graduate unemployment is an important area of study because research by Pauw, Oosthuizen, and Van der Westhuizen (2006) and Oluwajodu *et al.* (2015) suggest that there are severe skill shortages in the South African economy, and it is unable to generate sufficient job opportunities for graduates. This seems to contradict studies that suggest that the higher an individual's level of education, the higher the chance of finding employment (CDE, 2013).

Usually, post-school qualifications strengthen the chances of finding the first job, but this appears not to be the case in South Africa as a result of South Africa's apartheid history (Kraak, 2013). Both educational attainment and the unemployment of graduates in South Africa are stratified on the basis of race (Kraak, 2010). Irrespective of age, the unemployment rate among the black African and Coloured population groups is the highest in the country (Statistics South Africa, 2014). In 2014, the rate of unemployment among black African youths was 4.1 percentage points higher than that of the youths in the coloured population group, and as much as 23.7 and 29.8 percentage points higher than that of the Indian/Asian and white groups respectively (Statistics South Africa, 2014). Also, academic throughput in South Africa is highly differentiated in terms of race and academic field of study,

with African students bearing the greatest burden of the extremely poor throughput and under-preparedness (Chiba & Luiz, 2011). As an illustration, the Council on Higher Education (CDE, 2013) reports that under 5% of African and Coloured youth are succeeding in any form of higher education in South Africa. Compared to 43% of whites that graduated from a three-year degree programme, only 20% of African and Coloured students graduated (CHE, 2013). Furthermore, higher education participation is also very low for African and Coloured youths; CHE (2013) reports that in 2011, 57% of whites and 47% of Indians participated in higher education while only 14% of Africans and Coloured participated in the same year. Similarly, whereas only 33% of Africans graduated within five years with a business degree, the rate was 72% for whites - the divide is similar for Life and Physical Sciences (31% for Africans versus 63% for whites) as well as for social sciences and languages (Scott, 2008).

Statistics South Africa, 2014 defines a graduate as any person who has obtained an undergraduate or postgraduate degree or has completed secondary school and in addition obtained a certificate or diploma requiring at least six months full time duration. Further, the unemployment of those with a tertiary qualification has increased from 4.4% in 2008 to 6.3% in 2011, an increase of 1.9 percentage points. During the same period, the unemployment rate of those with a matric increased by 1.2% and decreased by 3.3% among those with education lower than matric (StatSA, 2012). Whilst unemployment among graduates might seem lower than those who are not graduates, this data suggests that unemployment among graduates is increasing. CDE (2013) has vehemently argued that unemployment of graduates with a degree is being exaggerated and that there is no need to restrict skilled immigration.

While authors such as Maharasoa and Hay (2001) and Bridgstock (2009) have identified the inability of the higher education institutions to equip learners with requisite skills for the labour environment; individual graduates also have a desire to obtain and maintain work, thus contributing to economic productivity (Harvey, 2001). Bridgstock (2009) acknowledges that labour market and personal

characteristics; disciplinary differences and placing work into context within the individuals' life define employability. Kraak (2013) argued that many of the young people without jobs are unaware of how to present themselves to prospective employers and they do not have sufficient self-confidence to choose correctly from a range of post-school educational and career options.

Moleke (2005) found that factors such as geographic area, choice of institution, choice of course, as well as gender and race were key determining factors in whether graduates found employment or not. These factors will also certainly diversify the individuals' experience of unemployment. Black South Africans are concentrated in fields of study with fewer employment prospects (Bachelors of Arts, Commerce, Management and Public Administration). According to Kraak (2013), these are generalist qualification fields that do not have structured pathways into the labour market and employment often requires social network (family and friends) linkages into employment or self-employment. These generalist degrees are perceived to be easier academic routes (they do not require high grades in mathematics and sciences) and are therefore over-subscribed. The over-subscription of the generalist degrees creates a skills mismatch and the majority of graduates that find themselves in this situation are from impoverished backgrounds. This leaves them without adequate social capital required to secure employment (Kraak, 2010, 2013).

According to Statistics South Africa (2014) the national labour results mask variations at provincial level that can often be quite large. The nine provinces in South Africa differ in population size; land mass, demographic profile and economic structure. As an illustration, the province where the present study will be conducted (Kwazulu-Natal) has the second highest number of discouraged job seekers (6.3%) and the number of youths in long-term unemployment is higher than those in employment. The contemporary literature on the labour market and youth employment in South Africa has provided insights that:

- Young women (aged 15-34) are in a more precarious situation as they have unemployment rates of more than 10% higher than young men of the same age group (Statistics South Africa, 2014) ,

- The youngest age categories are more disadvantaged in employment placement and prospects (Statistics South Africa, 2014);
- Black graduates are somewhat more likely to be unemployed than white graduates (CDE, 2013),
- The number of unemployed rose substantially (from 30 to 34%) between 2008 and 2011 (CDE, 2013) and that
- Younger graduates are more likely to be unemployed than older graduates {11% of 20-29 year olds compared with just 2% of 40 to 65 year olds} (CDE, 2013).

Education has always been evaluated in terms of its practical value (Gbadamosi and de Jager, 2009), but when the acquisition of a particular qualification fails to stave off unemployment, then the issue also becomes a social issue. However, research into the phenomenon of unemployment is primarily concerned with quantitative indices of extent and other numerical analyses. This is of concern because research then becomes a matter of statistics when other personal issues, such as the subjective experience of those who are critically affected by this phenomenon, are not thoroughly discussed. Statistics do not, in reality, explain the critical matters of concern such as the experience of the unemployed youth and the disproportionate use of statistics to explain and plan for a phenomenon that cuts across the personal, social and economic aspect of an individuals' life is somewhat hard-hearted.

According to Lewis-Beck, Bryman and Liao (2013), human experience is the main epistemological basis for qualitative research. Experience is thus an event or occurrence, which leaves an impression on someone and individuals give personal meanings to the experience of a phenomenon such as unemployment (Sandelowski, 2010). As such, factors including educational choices, geographic location, gender, race, family background, available resources, educational attainment and individual personal characteristics will all influence the experience of unemployment by each individual (Bridgstock, 2009). While the South African government can be commended for taking the issue of unemployment very seriously, experts observe

that state schemes that are being developed to combat this problem operate at a distance from the daily life experiences of unemployed youths and they are not responsive to local conditions (Chisholm, 1992; Kraak, 2010). The continuing rapidly escalating levels of unemployment amongst the youth are a testimony of the failure of numerous schemes and interventions by government (Kraak, 2013). Chisholm (1992) argued that, to be effective, any intervention in youth unemployment must have the experience and perceptions of those most affected (youths) at the heart of such initiatives.

Since the graduate youth in South Africa now find themselves in an unstructured external labour market that requires individuals to sell their own labour without state or employer support; exploring their perception of unemployment and its various dimensions is important.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

In contemporary literature on labour markets, previous research has found that youths are three times as likely as adults to be unemployed and that youth unemployment rates differ by race, with the highest rates recorded among African youths - 50%-60% - which should be compared with the rate recorded among White youths - 10%-20% (Schoer *et al.*, 2012; Borges-Mendez *et al.*, 2013). According to Cebekhulu (2013) the revival of attention mainly among policy makers, researchers and scholars regarding the threats and opportunities presented by youth economic empowerment in South proves the urgency of the problem confronting the youth. The Business Trust in 2004, cited by Cebekhulu (2013), provided statistics that showed that youth unemployment is a parcel of both historical and contemporary South African phenomena in which KZN is no exception. Thus many economically active young people in rural and urban areas are confronted with extraordinary difficulties arising from employment opportunities, experiences and qualifications.

While the interconnectedness of poverty, inequality and unemployment is easily discernible to the casual observer, a considerable amount of evidence exists to support that unemployment significantly contributes to various social disadvantages (Caddy and Mortimer, 2013; Chibba and Luiz, 2011). This is particularly true in

South Africa because of the past legacies of apartheid that still haunt the country. Unemployment not only affects the youth but also their families, society and the economy, the fear of becoming unemployed in the future and the current status, if unemployed, has been documented to be destructive to a person's subjective wellbeing both in the present and the future (Knabe and Ratzel, 2010). Apart from the scarring effect of youth unemployment, which negatively affects self-esteem and the youth's future earnings as well as contributing to depression among unemployed youths, several studies have also found positive correlations between youths unemployment, crime, violence and drug abuse (Ali, 2014; Görlich, Stepanok and Al-Hussami, 2012; Caruso and Gavrilova, 2012).

The multiplicity of the factors accounting for high rates of unemployment among youths as well as its demographic peculiarities (such as the skills mismatch plaguing South African youth) suggests that unemployment is a contemporary, complex and overarching issue that includes in its sphere economic, psychological, social and personal subjective aspects. However, research studies in the genre of labour studies both in South Africa and abroad have disproportionately neglected the subjective experience of the youth in relation to their job seeking and unemployment experiences. This means that the voice of the unemployed youth has been subsumed by statistics depicting the magnitude of youth unemployment in South Africa. This becomes a problem because neglecting the experience of those affected by this phenomenon can spell doom for policies and recommendations that stakeholders are designing to ameliorate this national issue.

It is therefore necessary to explore the experience of unemployed youths in order to identify their challenges and needs. This study therefore seeks to explore and describe the experiences of the unemployed youths, focusing on unemployed graduates in Durban in particular, by providing a safe space for them to describe and discuss their personal experiences of unemployment. For the purpose of this research, the following research question has been adopted: "What are the experiences of unemployed graduates in Durban, South Africa?"

### **1.3 Research Aim**

The study aims to explore the subjective experience of graduates who are unemployed in Durban, South Africa.

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The objectives of this research are to:

- Describe employed graduates' perception of employability and unemployment in Durban;
- Identify and describe the support networks that are available for unemployed graduates in Durban;
- Identify and describe employment-seeking strategies among the unemployed graduates in Durban;
- Determine and describe the impact of unemployment on graduate youths in Durban;

**Provide alternative strategies to address graduate unemployment in Durban.**

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

The significance of this study can be assessed in four domains - social, theory, policy and practice. Since research into youth unemployment in South Africa has been predominantly approached using statistical methods, the present study will assist youth to come to terms with their social environment when they are given the chance to air their perceptions about their unemployment experiences. Further, the insights provided by this study will be available to be used by practitioners - such as recruiters, human resource personnel and employers - to become more sensitive to the plight of youths who are searching for jobs. In addition, the findings of this study have the potential to offer insights for development of context specific and sensitive policies about interventions that might assist in better absorption of unemployed youths into the labour force. Theoretically, the findings of this study can assist in



understanding the behaviour and attributes of the unemployed youth, thereby assisting in manipulation of variables that can be used to improve their wellbeing and experience.

### **1.6 Operational definition of terms**

- Youth: in this study, a youth is defined as any person between the ages of 20-29 years. The focus on this group became paramount as they are the subset of youth with the highest percentage of unemployment (CDE, 2013);
- Graduate<sup>2</sup>: a graduate in this study is any person who has obtained an undergraduate degree or has completed secondary school and in addition obtained a certificate or diploma of at least six months full time duration;
- Higher Education: is “the platform for the practice of high-level human and intellectual work and the training of future generations of professionals, scientists and technological experts” (Cebekhulu, 2013:239). Clark (1989) simply put is as a postsecondary education from universities and colleges where individuals gain skills preparing them for the workplace;
- Unemployed<sup>3</sup>: unemployed graduate youths in this study are those graduate youths who were then currently unemployed six months before data collection and who were at that time trying to find work.

---

<sup>2</sup> According to Statistics South Africa (2015:2) “a graduate are persons who have obtained an undergraduate or post-graduate degree or have completed secondary school and in addition obtained a certificate or diploma of at least six months full-time duration.”

<sup>3</sup> In order to be considered unemployed one needs to be completely out of work, available for work and taking steps to find work (Statistics South Africa, 2015). Further to this there are discouraged work-seekers who are persons whom wanted work but did not find it or start a business, they believed

## 1.7 Conclusion

**Chapter One:** In summary, this chapter introduces the reader to the background of the study and provides the justification for the study. The issues raised provide reasons for the need for more research into the experience of youth without employment in Durban, South Africa. This derives from the fact that, as research has shown, the youth face significant difficulties in obtaining employment. This chapter also covered the problem statement, the research purpose, research questions, research objectives and the significance of the study. The chapter also outlines the factors that gave rise to the use of qualitative methodology in this study. **Chapter Two:** The literature review presents a review of literature covering key concepts published by those researchers and scholars who have carried out research on the youth unemployment and graduate unemployment phenomena; it is through this chapter that insightful questions about the problem are refined. The focus of this chapter is to engage with the literature and become familiar with what researchers are reporting on the phenomena. **Chapter Three:** This chapter aims to discuss the research methodology approach used in this study. It does this considering the geographical location of the study, and explains the geographical significance of the results. The sampling strategy, data collection process, instruments used and data analysis methods and conducts a data analysis will be thoroughly discussed. **Chapter Four:** This presents the results of the study and includes an analysis of the data obtained. This includes data from the individual interviews and the focus groups that complemented each other and which are thus reported on together. **Chapter Five:** is a discussion of findings and presents a discussion on what the study contributes to the existing literature regarding the phenomenon of youth and graduate unemployment. The chapter is a build up to the conclusions of the study. **Chapter Six:** includes conclusions and recommendations and present the findings of the

---

that there are no jobs available in their area or were unable to find jobs requiring their skills, or they have lost hope of finding any kind work (Statistics South Africa, 2015).

study. Furthermore, the chapter provides recommendations on potential improvements to the study and its limitations.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a review of the literature covering key concepts investigated by researchers who have carried out research on youth unemployment. The literature review establishes what research has been previously conducted, leading to refined, insightful questions about the problem (Soy, 2006). As the focus of this study was on graduate youths, efforts were made to delineate findings that are not only specific to youths in general but also to the graduate youth in particular.

The literature review explores the dominant themes of the research by defining unemployment, outlining youth unemployment, discussing the determinants of unemployment among graduates and the impact of unemployment. Furthermore, the chapter will also discuss the theoretical framework adopted for this study.

### **2.2 Defining unemployment**

In order to understand the issue of unemployment among graduates, it is important to contextualise some terms that are synonymous with the phenomenon of unemployment among graduate youths. Youth, as a concept varies from culture to culture and from country to country. The variation in the definition of the term 'youth' has important implications for research, policy, planning and interventions. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2015) states that 'youth' is best understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to the independence of adulthood. Whilst acknowledging that the stage of 'youth' is more fluid than other fixed age groups, UNESCO (2015) argues that the easiest way to define youth is through the use of age. Although the United Nations defines 'youth' as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, the African Youth Charter defines a youth as an individual between the ages of 15 and 35 years. In South Africa, youths are regarded as persons aged 15-34 (Statistics South Africa, 2014). According to the South African National Youth Policy (NYP, 2015), the reason why the age limit of youth has not changed is that historical imbalances in the country have yet to be fully addressed. Regardless of the age

classification of youth, one thing is certain, youth is a stage where independence ought to be achieved; therefore, anything impacting on the ability of youths to achieve independence is likely to impact on their healthy development. South Africa's population is largely made up of young people; those who are below the age of 35 years constitute about 66% of the total population (United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA], 2014). Since about 42% of young people in South Africa are between the ages of 14 and 35 years, the NYP (2015) states that South African youth presents a powerful resource for the country, provided they are supported in becoming active members of society.

As a result of the link between low educational status and poverty, the continuing strategies of countries, stakeholders and donors to encourage and ensure that Africans achieve post-secondary school education has led to various definitions of the word 'graduate'. As an illustration, the CDE (2013) defines graduates as holders of bachelor's or higher degree from a university. Statistics South Africa 2014 however, defines graduates as individuals who have obtained an undergraduate or post-graduate degree or have completed secondary school and in addition obtained a certificate or diploma of at least six months' full-time duration. According to Letseka, Cosser, Breier and Visser (2010), a graduate is a student who has graduated. Altbeker and Storme (2013) argued that a broad definition of 'graduate' can be misleading because it obscures significant differences in labour market outcomes for people with different kinds of tertiary qualifications. While some of the definitions of 'graduate' seem vague, the lack of conceptual clarity is likely attributable to the political and social dimension of unemployment among youth.

According to Hussmanns (2007), unemployed persons are those who have had no employment during the reference week, were available for work, except for temporary illness, and had made specific efforts to find employment sometime during the four-week period ending with the reference week. In order to be considered unemployed in South Africa, an individual must meet the following three criteria simultaneously: the individual must be without work, currently available to work, and taking active steps to find work (Statistics South Africa, 2015).

### 2.3 Youth unemployment

One of the most pressing problems in Sub-Saharan African (SSA) has been identified as youth unemployment (Hilson and Osei, 2014). Rama (1998) found that there are in essence three causes of unemployment. The first being *age*: the probability of being unemployed is highest amongst the youth, and it deteriorates with age. The second is *education*: various studies indicate that the unemployment rate reduces as education levels get higher. Finally is *benefits received from family support*: the likelihood of being unemployed is higher among persons who live with their parents.

In SSA, less than 50% of the 296.9 million youth between the ages of 10-24 are employed in the formal economy (Population Reference Bureau, 2013). In some countries such as Mozambique and Ghana, youth unemployment is as high as 80% and these rates are similar to some European countries such as Greece and Romania (Oppenheimer and Spicer, 2011; Vasile and Anghel, 2015). Across much of Europe, youth unemployment has become a more pressing social problem than it was a few years ago. Although according to Karl (2012) young people are considered to be those aged 15-24 in Europe and outside (USA, Japan, Australia) the youth unemployment rate is well above average. The financial crises had a dire impact on the youth unemployment rate in Europe as the ILO (2010) argues that youth unemployment dramatically skyrocketed after the global economic crisis that started in 2007-2008 and led to the biggest recession in 2008-2009. Countries around the world suffered consequences of low economic performance, labour productivity and employment. In some countries such as Italy, Belgium-Luxembourg-France, youth unemployment reached unprecedented levels, Sweden and United Kingdom also exhibited greater problems (Karl, 2012).

According to Choudhry, Marelli and Signorelli (2012) in their study of the impact of the financial crises on youth unemployment, the youth unemployment rates in Europe are generally more than twice as high as adult rates, with significant differences across countries and regions. This suggests that the problem of high youth unemployment is a global phenomenon.

Youth unemployment is of specific concern because individuals who become unemployed in the period of their early working years may become discouraged, and

those who struggle or even fail to obtain a job after full-time higher education may see a decline in their human capital and employment prospects, which could result in social exclusion (Gomez-Salvador and Leiner-Killinger, 2008). These studies further argue that youth unemployment can be problematic not only to the affected, but to the economy as a whole. Firstly, youth unemployment means unused labour potential and therefore has a negative effect on prospective economic growth. Secondly, youth unemployment implies that there is lesser labour input from those who, in spite of less - or no - work experience than older workers, are supposed to advance the processes of production with their more recent and innovative expertise (Gomez-Salvador and Leiner-Killinger, 2008).

The continuing interest in the phenomenon of youth unemployment is justifiable when one considers that lack of youth employment is tantamount to severe loss of human potential; especially due to their youthful energy, which can easily be channelled into social unrest and catastrophic outcomes could result if ignored. One can easily point to several examples such as the civil war in Sierra Leone, recent xenophobic attacks in South Africa (2008 and 2015), Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria and the recent ‘fees must fall’ protest that rocked South Africa in 2015 and graduates begging for jobs on the streets. All these examples, widely reported in the media, are a glaring indication that a suboptimal employment rate is a ticking time bomb that can lead to a catastrophic outcome if not promptly addressed.

According to Smith (2011), South Africa ought to be reaping a ‘demographic dividend’ because of the large population of youth in the country, but this is not the case because a sizeable proportion of youths in the country (32.9%) are not involved in education, employment or training [NEET] (Statistics South Africa, 2015). At the provincial level, Statistics South Africa (2015) observed that the NEET rate is highest in Northern Cape and Mpumalanga and lowest in Limpopo and Western Cape. Furthermore, the rate of NEET increased in Northern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng, but fell in the North West (Statistics South Africa, 2015). Kraak (2013) labelled the issue of youth unemployment in South Africa as an old problem, but the scale of the problem is massive. With approximately one out of every four young

people between the ages of 15 and 35 years being employed, unemployment is a fact of life experienced by the majority of South African youths (Booyesen and van Eeden, 2013). According to National Treasury (2011), the ratio of youth to adult unemployment in SA is about 2.5 (that is, the youth unemployment rate is two and half times larger than the adult unemployment rate). This statistics highlight the vulnerability of young job seekers in South Africa.

## **2.4 Determinants of unemployment amongst youth**

### **2.4.1 Skills mismatch**

According to Liu, Salvanes and Sorensen (2015), adverse labour market conditions at the time of labour market entry have large and persistent negative effects on careers. Using a quantitative approach to analyse the Norwegian national statistics on unemployment, Liu *et al.* (2015) found that a mismatch between the skills supplied by college graduates and the skills demanded by hiring companies is an important mechanism behind persistent career loss for graduate youths. Béduwé and Giret (2011) identified two types of skills mismatch (horizontal and vertical). A mismatch between educational level and the job level is referred to as vertical mismatch or over-education, whilst mismatch between an individual's field of study and the field in which one is employed is called horizontal mismatch. Using quantitative methods to analyse a nationally representative sample of young graduates in France, Beduwe and Giret (2011) reported that young graduates found themselves possessing skills that are not valued in the labour market and this consequently led to both vertical and horizontal mismatches. Vertical skills mismatches have a strong negative effect on wages while horizontal mismatches increases job dissatisfaction (Béduwé and Giret, 2011). In Ghana, Alfred, Simon, Ashiagbor and Baku (2008) conducted a mixed study research to explore the causes of graduate unemployment and they found misdirected training of graduates; that is, most courses pursued by graduates are not relevant to the current demands for labour. A major proportion of youth unemployment in South Africa can be seen as structural unemployment as young job seekers who usually do not have the right skills profile (including experience and training), and sometimes job seekers are geographically mismatched (different



locations of job vacancies and job seekers), or are new entrants to the job market and their numbers exceed the number of available entry-level positions in the labour market (Van Aardt, 2012).

As noted by van Aardt (2012), inexperience is a major obstacle to employment prospects among youths and explains the age discrimination in the labour market. Young people find it difficult to gain work experience, which employers see as an important contribution to all but the most elemental job specifications (van Aardt, 2012). Higher education expansion, despite its benefits, has been noted as a subtle cause for sharp increases in unemployment rates among graduates (Li, Whalley & Xing, 2014)). In South Africa, Kraak (2010) noted that despite the fact that new job are being created; the pace at which they are being created is slower than the number of new entrants moving into the labour market.

#### ***2.4.1 Location mismatch***

In China, Li *et al.* (2014) found that the unemployment rate for college graduates increases more in non-coastal regions than in large coastal cities. The study by Li *et al.* (2014) included a nationally representative sample of college students and the quantitative analysis showed that unemployment rates are higher in smaller cities and this fuels migration of young workers to larger cities in search of jobs. This in turn leads to extreme competition for the limited number of vacancies; this is the existing situation in cities such as Durban. As an illustration, Uddin and Osemengbe (2013) found that rural-urban migration of youths in Nigeria results in high unemployment rates in that country's cities. As a result of the rural to urban migration push, the rural areas in Nigeria also suffer the consequences, of being neglect in the allocation of social and economic opportunities.

In South Africa, Kraak (2010) found that the differential between white and black employment rates is strongly influenced by location and lack of industrial experience available at many Black Further Education and Training colleges (FET), which are far from centres of employment. In addition van Aardt (2012) also reported that youths in metropolitan areas are more likely to find jobs than those in other areas (the

highest rate of youth unemployment was found in the rural areas of South Africa). According to Bridgstock (2009), graduates ought to possess the ability to assess the impact of geographical location in relation to high unemployment rate and to construct alternative career scenarios, which involve exploring of different locations, training options, occupational choices or work modes. As noted by Harvey (2001), graduates location and mobility is a determining factor when searching for jobs. According to Harvey (2001), some employers are wary of employing graduates from particular parts of the country for various reasons. As a result of the poor mobility of graduates, especially those from poor backgrounds, their ability to secure employment is therefore contingent on the vibrancy of their local economy, despite their understanding that more opportunities for employment exist in urban areas.

#### ***2.4.2 Gender and personal attributes***

As noted by Moleke (2005), the candidate's field of study, geographic area, choice of institution, gender and race are key determining factors in whether they found employment. Likewise, despite Bridgstock (2009), acknowledging that training institutions, in order to remain competitive in the market environment, ought to begin to comprehensively and actively engage in the employability agenda of their students. He concludes that career management skills are highly personal, need to be applied and depend on reflective processes. This suggests that beyond the role of educational institutions in assisting graduates to be more employable, graduates must also use their own personal resources and agencies well in order to be successful in their job search.

According to Li and Zhang (2010) and Li *et al.* (2014), the rates of unemployment among female graduates in China are smaller when compared to the unemployment rates among males (for example, 28.6% versus 44.2% in the Shanghai region of China). Li *et al.* (2014) however warn that low rates of unemployment among females can be attributable to the fact that more females are more likely to work informally at home. Both studies, which are nationally representative surveys of unemployed graduates in China, also reported that graduates with higher Grade Point Average (GPA) are less likely to be unemployed and are more likely to be working

for foreign firms, whose positions are among the most sought after in the labour market. In contrast, Miles (2002) found that in Jordan, cultural and family-level factors affect not only whether women are in the labour market but also their success in finding a job. The study, which utilised focus group discussions to collect data, found that cultural proscriptions on female mobility are a significant constraint in women's job searches (Miles, 2002). Further, the location of jobs matters more for women than for men, and discrimination against women in the public sector negatively affects the job prospects of Jordanian women.

Similar to Miles' (2002) observations in Jordan, young South African women also have high unemployment rates. According to Statistics South Africa (2015), young women from the black African population group are the most vulnerable in the South African labour market. Their unemployment rate at 42,0–46,0% each year over the period 2008–2015 is substantially higher than that of black African male youth (30,0–37,0%) and much worse than the rate among youth from the white male population group (7,0–12,0%). The high rate of unemployment amongst South African women was also supported by Kyei and Gyekye (2011) using principal components analysis for a data set specific to Limpopo province. According to the authors, the unemployment rate for men was 25.7% while it was 32% for women. However, regardless of gender, Kyei & Gyekye (2011) found that the rate of unemployment for higher education holders is approximately 6% while it was 41% for those with primary education or less.

According to Moleke (2005), graduates in fields with a more professional focus, such as medical sciences and engineering had higher rates of rapid employment than those who studied in fields that were largely of a general nature. This suggests that choice of qualification has a bearing on the prospect of unemployment. Further, it was noted that Black South Africans were concentrated in fields of study with fewer employment prospects (Kraak, 2010). As a result of the poor social networks of Blacks, graduates pursuing qualifications without structured pathways to labour markets often find themselves struggling to enter the labour market.

According to Nudzor (2010) and Kraak, (2013), unemployed youths characteristically lack social and cultural capital as well as a range of psychological

attributes that enables individuals to navigate their way into and through the modern labour market. Social capital - which is an embodiment of one's social networks - has been reported to be lacking in youths from rural and poor regions who are mostly without family connections that can ensure entry into the labour market (Li & Zhang, 2010). According to Kraak (2013), the inability of South African youths to access their first jobs is a result of lack of social capital attributes which is ascribed to poverty and the apartheid legacy. Having identified skills mismatches as the major barrier to unemployment among South African youths, Cramm, Nieboer, Finkenflügel and Lorenzo (2012) and Schoer *et al.* (2014), in their quantitative studies conducted using econometric analysis and various survey instruments, additionally identified lack of job availability and non-random job searching behaviours of youths. Cramm *et al.* (2012) used questionnaires to interview 989 youth in five provinces of South Africa (North West, KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, Western Cape and Free State) to explore the similarities and differences in the barriers to employment amongst youths with and without a disability. Findings from the logistic regression showed that lack of local job availability and lack of skills have a significant association with unemployment for youths both with and without disabilities. Social attitudes and poor health were found to constitute additional barriers for youth with disabilities.

Although the skills mismatch is the main obstacle faced by youths in accessing paid employment in South Africa, Schoer *et al.* (2014) notes that the way in which firms and job seekers find each other usually pose additional hurdles. As an illustration, Standing *et al.* (1996, p. 338) reported that in the early 1990s, close to 42% of South African firms “relied on friends and relatives of existing workers” to recruit new blue collar workers. The findings of Standing *et al.* (1996) is similar to Schoer *et al.* (2014) that found that 64% of African youths found jobs through social networking, 22% through formal channels and 14% through direct channels. Schoer *et al.* (2014), who analysed the South African Persons Survey that drew 1102 youth from Johannesburg, Durban, Polokwane and Dikgale, added that large firms use referrals as well as formal channels for the recruitment of skilled workers whereas small firms prefer the use of referrals. This underscores the importance of social capital when it comes to achieving success with job searches.

### **2.4.3 The role of the educational institution**

There is a long established idea that graduates are expected to have a certain general qualities and attributes as a result of their higher education experience. A report in the United Kingdom (UK) argued that the aim and mission of higher education is ‘to enable persons to grow their competencies to the highest potential levels throughout life, so that they develop intellectually, are well trained for employment/work, can effectively contribute to society and achieve personal accomplishments’. Hence since 1990, there have been numerous reports advising the higher education sector to take important, core, exchangeable and ‘employability’ skills into the heart of their students’ learning experiences (Mason *et al.*, 2001). On the other hand, using a qualitative ethnographic approach, Naong (2011) found that graduates in South Africa struggle to find employment because they have chosen the wrong field of study and also that the promotion and cultivation of entrepreneurship among the youth, especially at school level, is far from enough. Alfred, Simon, Ashiagbor and Baku (2008) also added that graduate unemployment is a result of lack of counselling on job prospects and inadequate practical training during the course of study. On the contrary, The University of Sydney, (1997) notes that graduates should be more employable, more able to deal with transformation and should be more developed as individuals. Graduates of any faculty should possess certain skills, namely knowledge skills, thinking skills, learning skills and practical skills. The common concern all over the world is that the intensifying pressures of global competition requires graduates to give employers more than the academic skills habitually represented by the subject and class of a degree (Mason *et al.*, 2001).

However, Bhorat and Visser (2010) found that the type of institution an individual attended also determines employment prospects in South Africa. Students who graduated from historically white institutions such as Stellenbosch University have much better employment prospects and are much more easily absorbed into the labour market than graduates of historically black institutions such as the University of Limpopo. As stated by Vasile and Anghel (2015), the education and training system is often insensitive, inefficient, unattractive and unadjusted to the structure and developments of the labour market. Florea and Oprean (2010) reveal that

graduate employment is presently being challenged to the core and two of the most frequently invoked underlying reasons are unadjusted curricula to line up with job market demands and the graduates' skills' failure to meet employers' requirements. Using statistics from Romania, Florea and Oprean (2010) illustrated that more than 200,000 graduates entered the job market in the year 2009, half of whom graduated from faculties of Economics, Law, Medicine and Pharmacy, IT and Engineering. However, the national job supply for these majors for the same year was some 4,500, which represents a ratio of over 20 applicants for each job (Florea and Oprean, 2010). Universities are now getting more involved in responding to the labour situation of the country because they determine - or can determine - how many graduates are produced. They – the universities - can over-supply graduates or can create a scarcity of graduates. Universities are also getting more involved in the mobility of graduates through their involvement in employability of graduates.

Not much attention is given to education mismatch. This issue dates back to the 1870's (Gladwell, 2008). According to Betti, Agostino and Neri, (2007) education mismatch refers to the lack of consistency between the offered and the required educational level for a given job. The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop, 2010) identified two types of education mismatch which are, namely, the vertical mismatch and the horizontal mismatch. When the level of education is not suitable for the job, it is called a vertical mismatch. Vertical mismatch occurs in two ways: over-education<sup>4</sup> and under-education. Over-education occurs when a person is recruited for a post which requires a lower level of education than that which the individual possesses. Where the person has a lower level of education than that expected for the job, under-education occurs. In recent years, research shows that there is a tendency towards a large increase in the number of overeducated workers rather than the undereducated workers in the job market (McGuinness, 2006; Mavrolmaras and McGuinness, 2009). Horizontal mismatch

---

<sup>4</sup> For the purpose of this study this will be defined as being academically educated to a higher level than it is necessary for a specified job.

exists when the type of education or skills that an individual possess is not coherent with the specified job. In accordance with horizontal mismatch an individual does a job that does not relate to his or her field of study (Robst, 2007). Often it has been discovered that specific fields of study provide occupationally specific skills for the job market compared to the general fields of study such as Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, etc., (Robst, 2007). Kucel and Byrne (2008) put forward that those from wider educational backgrounds are likely to not be well informed about labour market prospects. On this note, the existence of an education mismatch is called ‘asymmetry of the labour market’ (Cedefop, 2010). Because of the lack of knowledge and information about jobs in the labour market, graduates might not be assigned to jobs that allow them to make full use of their skills (Green and McIntosh, 2002).

Numerous scholarly studies on graduate employability are based on the notion that mismatch of education in the labour force commonly refers to the variation between skills provided by the conservative and predictable education system and the labour market necessities and requirements. Contrary to this assumption, Aggestam and Hallberg (2004) refer to the term ‘mismatch’ as the deficit in the demand for educated labour in comparison to the supply. This not only reflects the ineffectiveness of the prevalent education system but also indicates an incongruity in the economy since the incidence of low-skilled labour is intensified. To put things into perspective, Seers (1971) was the first to put forward the skill mismatch hypothesis, which theorised that the lengthy search for employment by educated youths was the core cause of graduate unemployment. Seers suggested that job searches were lengthy because the education system does not produce properly trained youths, which is what is required in the job market. The system produces youths with high job expectations yet without the appropriate skills to obtain jobs that met those expectations (Gunatilake *et al.*, 2010). In referring to graduate unemployment in Sri Lanka, the International Labour Organisation (1998) announced that the more a young person had been educated, the greater the probability that he or she might be unemployed. This aphorism was momentarily

celebrated by subsequent scholars such as Glewwe (1987), Dickens and Lang (1996) and Lakshman (1997).

## **2.5 Impact of unemployment**

Social results of youth unemployment produce dire social deficits such as increasing dependency on family, low self-esteem, increasing crime rates, poor social adaptation and, to a certain extent, domestic violence (Kabaklarli *et al.*, 2011). Medical research confirms that youth unemployment is also linked to psychological symptoms such as loss of confidence and depression. The National Health Survey (1990) in Australia proved that unemployed young people have poor health conditions and grave chronic sickness more than employed people. In support, the studies held in Norway, UK and Scotland established that there is strong positive correlation between smoking as well as drug possession with being unemployed (Morrel, Tylor & Kerr, 1998).

Using a mixed method approach, Gibbs and Bankhead (2000) found pervasive feelings of hopelessness, anger and alienation among unemployed youths in the United States of America (USA). Likewise, in a study aimed at identifying the social and psychological effects on unemployment on Jordanian youth, Hussainat, Ghnimat and Al-dlaeen (2013) reported that delay in marriage is the prominent social problem among unemployed youths while inferiority complex, anxiety and carelessness were the main psychological impacts of unemployment. Chen (2013) found from the interviews conducted with Taiwanese youths that the negative effects of NEET endures even after youths become employed or are assisted with an unemployment grant. Chen (2013) reported that poor life satisfaction is a lasting negative effect of unemployment. In a longitudinal national household survey spanning four decades, Cooper (2013) explored the effect of unemployment duration on future earnings of Americans in 48 states and found that the experience of past unemployment spells of any length leads to lower wages than those who have never experienced unemployment - an effect that persisted for nearly 20 years after the unemployment episode. Whilst the study by Cooper (2013) was restricted to heads of household, in the current dispensation where youths are increasingly assuming the headship of their households, the effects of unemployment can be assumed to be worse for youths.



Similarly, Knabe and Ratzel (2011) used quantitative methods to explore the psychological impact of past unemployment and future unemployment risk among Germans aged 25-5 years in a national survey. The study, which spanned 22 years, revealed that past episodes of unemployment robs individuals of their life satisfaction because of the fear of future unemployment - even when currently employed.

Using a multifactorial linear regression model, Balan (2014) found that youth unemployment is rife among Romanian youths between the ages of 15 and 25 regardless of their age. Grinevica (2014) supplemented Balan's (2014) study conducted to explore unemployment among Latvian youths using econometric methods. Grinevica (2014) records that, apart from those aged less than 25 years being mostly affected, they are also likely to experience long term unemployment which decreases their effectiveness in the labour market by increasing social costs and limiting the development of society.

In addition, Choudhry, Marelli and Signorelli (2010) investigated the relationship between financial crises and the youth unemployment rate, by employing fixed effects panel estimations of European countries between 1980 and 2005. Chouldhry *et al.* (2010) found that young people are far more affected by employment crises than older persons and that long-term unemployment for young workers results in their being discouraged and suffering social exclusion from the labour market. In addition, the adverse effects of unemployment persist for at least five years. Even after securing employment young female workers are more significantly disadvantaged in the labour markets. Bell and Blanchflower (2010) also report that for the young, a spell of unemployment does not end with that spell; it raises the probability of being unemployed in later years and has a wage penalty.

Having recognised that poverty, inequality and unemployment go together; studies conducted in South Africa have demonstrated that the combination of inequality and unemployment, when compared internationally, is uniquely high with youths having the worst rates. While acknowledging that the rate of unemployment is unusually high for youths, Griep *et al.* (2012) compared the psychological dimensions of unemployment among youths in South Africa and Belgium using cross-sectional survey methods. The study revealed that the majority of South African youths have

no labour market experience and are also not on any social welfare grant, giving them a negative experience of unemployment with poor psychological outcomes.

Using the data obtained from unemployment questionnaires, de Witte, Rothmann and Jackson (2012) investigated the affective experiences, attitudes to work and job application behaviour of 381 unemployed young people in the North West province of South Africa. The results from the descriptive statistics showed that youths experience unemployment as unpleasant; they experience boredom, have difficulty in surviving financially and are uncertain about the future. Furthermore, a relatively large number of the participants were reported to experience feelings of loneliness, emptiness, poor social support, conflicts at home and low self-esteem (de Witte *et al.*, 2012).

## **2.6 Theoretical framework**

This study is interested in different theories and models that can assist in understanding, predicting and explaining the phenomenon of youth unemployment. These theories include:

- Human Capital Theory (Falk, 2000; Olaniyan and Okemakinde, 2008),
- Social Capital theory (Defillippi and Arthur, 1994; Falk, 2000),
- The youth transition model (Locke and Te Lintelo, 2012; Binikos, 2008) and
- The Holocletic model of employment attainment (Santos, 2010).

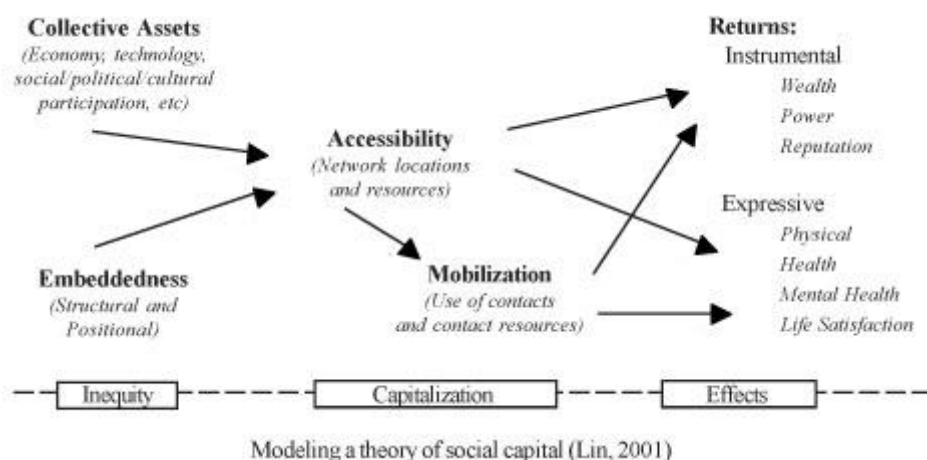
However, as well as applying all the above-mentioned related theories and models this study will also draw upon the social capital theory. The early writers of social capital described the theory as multi-dimensional with each dimension contributing to the meaning of the theory. The dimensions are:

- Trust (Coleman 1988; Collier 1998),
- Rules and norms governing social action (Coleman 1988; Fukuyama 1995),
- Types of social interaction (Collier 1998, Snijders 1999), and
- Network resources (ABS 2002; Kilpatrick 2000).

Bourdieu (1986) in Borges-Mendez, Denhardt, and Collett, 2013 explicitly uses social capital to provide an explanation for social class divisions and power inequalities. Therefore this means that the higher the social class, the higher the social capital and the lower the social class, the lower the social capital.

Black and Hughes (2001) defined social capital as the patterns and qualities of relationships in a community. A definition put forward by Winter (2000) refers to social capital as the social associations of common values categorised by norms of trust and reciprocity. In support of Winter (2000), the World Health Organisation (1998) argued that social capital epitomises the extent of social cohesion present in societies. It refers to progressions between people which create networks, standards and social trust, and enable co-operation and co-ordination for mutual benefit. With his strong connections to sociology and economics, Coleman defines social capital by its function “it is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities having two characteristics are common: they all consist of some aspect of social structures, and they facilitate certain actions of actors whether persons or corporate actors within the structure” (Coleman, 1998: 98). Here, is a picture extracted from Lollo (2013):

Figure 2.1 Social Capital



Source Lollo (2013)

Although there is no universal definition of social capital (every study adopts any definition depending on the discipline and level of investigation [Robison *et al.*, 2002]). Although there is no universal definition of social capital, there seems to be a broad agreement on the vitality of networks, trust, reciprocity and other social norms as being elements of social capital. There also seem to be much attention on formal networks and engagements such as civic associations and informal networks which are equally important, for example interaction with neighbours (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2002).

On the other hand, there has been considerable controversy in literature about the use of the term 'capital' (Inkeles, 2000; Schmid, 2000; Smith & Kulynych, 2002). Social capital is not contrary to other forms of capital because it can, according to Adler and Kwon (1999), be invested with future return expectations, while Coleman (1988) asserts that it is appropriable and is convertible (Bourdieu, 1986) and needs to be maintained (Gant *et al.*, 2002). Some researchers have gone to an extent of arguing that the term 'capital' should be removed from the term 'social' capital and be replaced with 'solidarity' instead, in that the phrase 'social solidarity' connects relations of trust, co-operation and reciprocity just as much as social capital (Adam and Roncevic, 2003). But what makes social capital different from the other forms of capital is that it exists and lives in social relationships (Robison *et al.* 2002).

Social capital reflects the interpersonal aspect of employability (knowing-whom) competencies concerning formal and informal career-related networks (DeFillippi and Arthur, 1994). Interpersonal connections (who one knows) are crucial in shaping individuals self-perceptions and providing access to career-related information and resources (McArdle *et al.*, 2007). The 'social' in social capital stresses that resources are not private possessions; no single persons monopolises them. Social capital resources depend on networks of relationships. Through social capital, we define who we are, what we do and why we do it. It constructs the meaning around the visible picture we present to the world (Falk, 2000). Kraak (2010, 2013) has already

documented that poor social capital is responsible for those youths who are disadvantaged in the South African labour market.

Considering South Africa's history of apartheid, as well as the qualitative approach that was used in this study, a theory such as social capital theory - that acknowledges the social and personal aspects of employability - is needed. Hence, the graduate youth's experience of unemployment that this study is investigating fits into the social capital theory because it emphasises the meaning that individuals derive from interaction with their environment (Falk, 2000).

## **2.7 Conclusion**

This chapter reviewed relevant conceptual and empirical articles deliberating the phenomenon of unemployment amongst youth both worldwide and in South Africa. The focus of this chapter was to engage with the literature and to become acquainted with what researchers are reporting on this phenomenon. That the voice of the unemployed youth is missing from the literature review suggests that most of the research conducted on this phenomenon was approached from quantitative perspectives. However, the review findings provided valuable insights on the phenomenon and reveals that youth unemployment is a global phenomenon.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The adopted methodology for this study was carefully selected as to fit the phenomenon and area of inquiry. The employed methodology used prescribed criteria to solve the research problem and systematically search for answers. This chapter discusses the research methodology including the study setting, sampling strategy, the data collection process and instruments, data analysis, trustworthiness and ethical considerations. Justification is also given for particular strategies and decisions made.

### **3.2 Research paradigm**

According to Polit and Beck (2013), a research endeavour is a systematic investigation into phenomena and sources in order to establish facts and reach new conclusions. Hurt and McLaughlin (2012) stated that research is the primary vehicle for knowledge creation in academia. There are, however two major approaches to research that can be used in the study of social phenomena; Yilmaz (2013) classified them into quantitative and qualitative research. Over the past 30 years, the debate over the relative virtues of quantitative and qualitative methodologies has gained and continues to gain considerable impetus in academia. Mahoney and Goetz (2006) even likened the comparisons of qualitative and quantitative research traditions to religious metaphors or alternative cultures because each tradition has its own values, beliefs and norms. Although researchers - such as Firestone (1987) - have stated that both qualitative and quantitative research traditions are complementary to each other, other authors such as Guba (1978) believe that the two methods are incompatible because they are based on paradigms.

Individual researchers have a matrix of beliefs and perception that guide their action, Creswell (2009) referred to these beliefs as worldview or paradigm. Paradigms are patterns of beliefs and practices that regulate inquiry within a discipline by providing

lenses, frames and processes through which investigation is accomplished (Weaver and Olson, 2006). According to Grix (2010), paradigms assist in the description of broad approaches to research and these approaches can either be positivist or interpretive. According to Yilmaz (2013), research following the tenets of the positivist paradigm utilises quantitative methods and this type of research explains phenomena interpreting numerical data that are analysed utilising mathematically based methods, especially statistics. Traditionally, a quantitative research study begins with a theoretical grounding, takes direction from a hypothesis or explicit study questions, and uses a predetermined (and auditable) set of steps to confirm or refute the hypothesis (Thorne, 2000). By auditability, the quantitative research methods are easily duplicated and add evidence to the development of specific, causal and theoretical explanations of an investigated phenomenon (Elshafie, 2013).

In contrast, research following the tenets of the interpretive paradigm utilises qualitative methods and this type of research produces findings that are not arrived at by statistical procedures, or using any means of quantification (Corbin and Strauss, 1994). Ingham-Broomfield (2015) defined qualitative research as an emergent, inductive and naturalistic approach to the study of people, phenomena, social situations and processes in their natural settings in order to reveal, in descriptive terms, the meanings that people attach to their lived experiences. Qualitative research is underpinned by several theoretical perspectives namely constructivist-interpretive, critical, post-positivist, post-structural/post-modern and feminism or by its research approach - phenomenology, grounded theory, qualitative description, ethnography or case study (Borbasi & Jackson, 2012,

Marshall (1996) argued that the choice of either a quantitative or a qualitative method as an approach to a research inquiry should be based on the research question and not preference. According to Marshall (1996), quantitative studies are more useful for answering more mechanistic ‘what?’ questions because quantitative research deals with the testing of pre-determined hypotheses in order to produce generalisable results. On the other hand, qualitative studies are useful for answering humanistic ‘why?’ and ‘how?’ questions because its aim is to provide illumination and understanding of complex psychosocial issues.

The paradigm chosen for this study is the interpretive paradigm. The choice of a qualitative methodology was theoretically and practically driven because there was a commitment to seek in-depth knowledge of the experiences of the participants being studied (Bryman, 1988). Also, a small number of respondents took part in the study, making the collection of quantitative data impossible. The nature of this research study requires an exploration of the ways that individual participants perceive and interpret unemployment and as Converse (2012) noted, studies of human experiences are not approachable through quantitative methods. The qualitative research approach is being utilised in this study because the subjective aspect of unemployment among South African graduates is conspicuously missing in the literature.

### **3.3 Research approach**

There are many possible approaches that can be applied to data gathering, management and analysis in order to develop a literary representation of human experience. Some of these approaches tend to lean towards quantitative or qualitative research methods while others use a combination of both. Research studies, whether qualitative or quantitative usually involve an explicit, disciplined and systematic approach to finding things out using the strategy most appropriate to the question being asked (Hancock, Ockleford and Windridge, 2009). According to Ingham-Bromfield (2015), qualitative research methods enable researchers to delve into questions of meaning, examine social practices and processes, identify barriers and facilitators to change, and discover the reasons for the success or failures of interventions. Thus, in the broad context of research strategies, qualitative research is identified with a commitment to the natural logic of language as the preferred medium for understanding human affairs (Polkinghorne, 1989).

Several approaches however provide specific directions for procedures in qualitative studies and these are: phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994; Mapp, 2008), grounded theory (Creswell, 2009; Charmaz, 2006); ethnography (Creswell, 2012), case studies (Baxter and Jack, 2008); and Qualitative Description (Sandelowski, 2010; Creswell, 2012). Since the approach of a qualitative inquiry selected by a researcher can shape the design of the study, a judicious choice of methods that fits the aim of the research



is important (Starks and Trinidad, 2007; Yilmaz, 2013). The present study utilised Qualitative Description (QD) because of its emphasis on the description of the informants' perception and experience of the world and its phenomena (Neergaard, Olesen, Andersen, and Sondergaard 2009). QD is a distinct method of naturalistic inquiry that uses low inference interpretation to present the facts, using everyday language (Sandelowski, 2010). According to Sullivan-Bolyai, Bova and Harper (2005), the goal of QD is descriptive and interpretive validity; because researchers seek a precise account of the experiences, events, and processes that most people (researchers and participants) would agree that is accurate.

### **3.4 Location of the study**

The data for this study was collected in Durban, a part of the megacity of eThekweni. Durban is the largest city in the KwaZulu-Natal Province of South Africa, and one of the country's main seaside resort cities, with excellent beaches and a distinctive sub-tropical climate (Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries [DAFF], 2013). Durban is the largest port and city on the east coast of Africa, with a total municipal area of 2,300 square kilometres (Roberts, 2008). According to DAFF (2013), Durban is one of the fastest-growing urban areas in the world, its harbour is the busiest in Southern Africa, and it is rated as one of the 10 largest in the world. The port of Durban handles more than 30 million tons of cargo with a value of more than R100 billion every year (DAFF, 2013). With a population of 3.5 million people and a budget of R39.1 billion, (eThekweni Municipality, 2015), it is one of South Africa's most important urban and economic centres. The local government structure responsible for managing the city is known as eThekweni Municipality, and this municipality has become a leader in the field of local level environmental management (Roberts, 2008). Durban Tourism offers a leading domestic destination in South Africa and the estimated visitor numbers for the financial year 2010/11 was 9.95 million (eThekweni Municipality, 2015).

As regards the economic status of Durban, the eThekweni Municipality (2011) documents that about 1 million people are employed, over 506, 000 people are unemployed and over 820, 000 people are not economically active. Further, the four main economic sectors in Durban are manufacturing, financial and business services,

community services and wholesale and retail (eThekweni Municipality, 2011). Durban was chosen because it is located in a province that has some of the poorest statistics for youth unemployment, such as the second highest level of discouraged youth job seekers, highest level of unemployed youths aged 15-24 years (Development Bank of Southern Africa [DBSA], 2011). The unemployment rate has been persistently high in Durban, at 20.6%, for the past 15 years and 80.3% of the unemployed are youth [age 15-34] (Albert & Tullis, 2013).

### **3.5 Sampling**

The techniques used in qualitative research have a direct effect on the sample size, thus sample size in qualitative research tend to be small but it purposively recruits those who have a good working knowledge of that which is being studied (Johnson and Christensen, 2010). Yilmaz (2013) noted that sample sizes in qualitative studies are not meant to represent the larger population and this meant that qualitative findings are not generalisable. The participants of this study were unemployed graduate youths resident at Durban. The following criteria were used to determine study eligibility: (1) Youth: a youth in this study was defined as a person between the age of 20-29 years. The focus on this group was a result of them being the subset of youth who have the highest percentage of unemployment according to CDE (2013), (2) Graduate: a graduate in this study is any person who has obtained an undergraduate degree or has completed secondary school and in addition obtained a certificate or diploma of at least six months full time duration. This means that graduates of FET colleges, Technikons and universities will be recruited in order to have a broad range of perceptions and experiences; (3) Gender: both males and females from any race were eligible to participate.

### **3.6 Recruitment strategy**

Organizations whose services were devoted to youth empowerment in Durban were approached. Specifically, the IkamvaYouth organization was approached for the purpose of identifying eligible participants and to gain more insights on how best the participants could be recruited. IkamvaYouth is located at Umlazi and Chesterville Townships. The researcher contacted the branch coordinators of both branches of IkamvaYouth and both guided the researcher to the category of youths that they deal

with and gave overview information about the aims and objectives of the organization. As it turned out the broad aim of the IkamvaYouth is to engage unemployed graduates (university graduates in particular) and provide them opportunities to offer tutoring services to grade 10-12 students.

However, the researcher wanted maximum variation using participants with different backgrounds and qualifications in order to assist in arriving at findings with broad insights of graduates' unemployment experience (Neergard *et al.*, 2009). The branch coordinators were, therefore, made to understand that graduates from FETs and Technikons were also sought after. The coordinators agreed to discuss the research in youth forums and with the management of the organisation. The coordinators used their expertise in reaching out to various categories of unemployed graduates (FET, Technikons and universities) and they arranged a platform where the researcher met with them to discuss the aims and the objectives of the research. The platform, which was in the form of a youth gathering, was organised on two consecutive Saturdays and the researcher was present to answer questions that were related to the research. During these meetings and other trips to the organisation's offices, 10 unemployed youths were identified as 'information rich' cases (Borbasi & Jackson, 2012) and were purposively recruited because they met the criteria sought for in the study. The 10 participants served as the link to other participants as a further 10 other participants were recruited through snowballing, bringing the total number of participants in the study to 20. The recruitment stopped at the 20 participants because the data gathering methods were not yielding any new findings and data was becoming redundant, a phenomenon called data saturation (Mason, 2010; Baker, 2012).

Faridah (2002) defines sampling as the act, process, or technique of selecting a suitable sample, or a representative part of a population for the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population. Sampling in qualitative research is not aimed at representativeness because the sampling is based on meaning and one of the limitations of this study, like any other qualitative study is that the findings cannot be generalised since the sampling is not random (Luborsky

& Rubinstein, 1995). Issues surrounding appropriate sampling size in qualitative studies are highly subjective and determined by several factors (Dworkin, 2012). While the principle of saturation has been used as the ultimate criteria to determine sample size in qualitative studies, Charmaz (2006) suggests that the aims of a study are the ultimate driver of the project design, and therefore the sample size. Charmaz (2006) suggests that a small study with "modest claims" (2006: 114) might achieve saturation quicker than a study aiming to describe process.

Regarding the appropriate sample size in QD studies, there exists no 'one size fits all answer'.

As an illustration:

- Mendez-Shannon (2010) recruited only sixteen 16 participants in a doctoral dissertation that was conducted among undocumented immigrants in the USA, using QD design,
- Bencal (2003) only interviewed five (5) participants in a master's dissertation that explored the experiences of isolated students in the USA and
- Stubbs (2008) only used 6 participants in a master's dissertation that explored the lived experiences of cancer patients in New Zealand.

Furthermore, several peer-reviewed articles that have utilised QD designs in South Africa and beyond have used samples ranging from 14-23 participants (Masoudi *et al.*, 2014; Keogh & Lambert, 2014; Munce *et al.*, 2014; Ntinga & Maree, 2015; Gutierrez *et al.*, 2013). In fact, a systematic review of sample size in qualitative descriptive studies revealed that 69% of the studies that met inclusion criteria recruited less than 30 participants (Marshall *et al.*, 2013) and the authors further recommended that 15-30 participants are ideal for a QD study. In this study there were 20 participants.

The aim of the present study is about the description of experiences of unemployed graduates in South Africa and it is not aimed at prescription of causes, effects nor does it aim at generalising findings. Although the pathways to unemployment of the participants might differ, and so also might their experiences, the most common

diversions being due to family financial status, support factors available to the individual and the type of qualification held. However, the participants are homogenous in that they are affected by the same phenomenon of unemployment. This suggests that the saturation of data will likely be reached with about 20 participants.

### **3.7 Data production strategy**

The emphasis of qualitative research is on process and meanings (Sale *et al.*, 2002). In order to get to the heart of the process of the phenomena under study, qualitative researchers employ a number of strategies that facilitate close contact with the participants. Techniques used in qualitative research include in-depth and focus group interviews and participant observations (Sale *et al.*, 2002). Following ethical approval and gatekeeper permission from the above-named organizations, data was produced using the following strategies:

(a) **Focus Group Discussion (FGDs):** An FGD is a good way to gather people together from similar backgrounds or experiences to discuss the meaning of a specific topic of interest that cannot be explained statistically (Krueger & Casey, 2002). The goal of the FGD in this research was to have the participants assembled to discuss and comment on the topic from their personal experience. Unlike individual interviews which aim to obtain individual attitudes, beliefs and feelings, FGD elicit a multiplicity of views and emotional processes within a group context (Freitas, *et al.*, 1998).

Two focus groups (each group containing 6 members with 3 males and 3 females) were conducted by the researcher to explore the meaning of unemployment from the perspective of the graduates. Krueger & Casey (2002) recommended that 6-8 members are preferred in a focus group. The duration of each focus group discussion was about 90 minutes and this was conducted and moderated by the researcher.

(b) **In-depth individual interviews:** Interviews are appropriate method of data collection in qualitative research because they enhance the understanding of the

meaning of what interviewees say (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). While there are different types of interviewing approach (structured, semi-structured and unstructured) according to Gill *et al.* (2008); this study utilised the semi-structured interview approach. The choice of the semi-structured interview was due to the fact that it assists to define areas to be explored while also assisting elaboration and divergence of the interviewer and the interviewee in the pursuit of an idea or response (Gill *et al.*, 2008). The researcher conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with eight participants to complement the response obtained from the FGDs. Each interviews lasted from 45 to 60 minutes and all were conducted by the researcher. It is rather unfortunate that only the African/ Black was recruited for the study as statistics also prove that this very race is mostly hit by unemployment.

The interviews and focus group discussions were held in one of the common rooms located inside the residence (Albert Luthuli Residence) of the researcher. The residence - which is a student residence - provided a non-threatening and conducive environment for the participants. In a way, the choice of the interview venue also assisted the participants in reminiscing old memories and expectations that they had before graduation and to relate this to their actual experiences after graduation. After identifying and making contacts with the 20 eligible participants, they were invited to sign the informed consent. The signing of the informed consent assisted rapport building and was also used to assign participants for FGD or individual interviews. Papers had FGD1, FGD2 or interviews written on them and this was folded to conceal what was inside. The folder paper was placed in a tray and passed around for participants to pick. Those who picked FGD1 were the 'group 1' for the FGD; those who picked FGD2 were assigned to 'group 2' FGD while those who picked interviews were informed that they will be requested to participate in individual interviews. Data collection started with individual interviews and this was done to ensure that emerging themes could be further explored from the diverse perspectives of FGD members. Data was collected over three weeks.

The researcher conducted all interviews without the help of research assistants while also acting as the facilitator of the interviews and FGD sessions. Efforts were made to ensure that all interview questions looked for clarification, illustration and further

exploration where necessary. The researcher's preconceptions, beliefs and knowledge about the phenomenon did not influence the participants' description of their experience of unemployment.

### **3.8 Description of the data collection instrument**

The semi-structured interview guide focused on three main questions (see appendix 1). The first set of questions focused on the context of unemployment. Key questions asked were directed at demography of the participants, impact of location on their unemployment experience, usefulness of the already obtained qualification in job search and the strategies used in job search. The second string of questions focused on the experience of unemployment. Key questions asked relate to the duration of unemployment, impact of unemployment on the individual and family, challenges encountered during the job search and perception of employability and unemployment. The third set of questions focused on the strategies that might be used to address unemployment among youths. Most of the questions asked were open-ended, followed by probing questions, using clarifying questions such as 'what do you mean when you say...?', 'can you explain further...?', 'would you please give me an example...?'. The FGD and individual interviews were conducted in English. In few cases, participants sometimes used isiZulu to clarify points and this was translated into English during transcription.

### **3.9 Data analysis**

It has been advocated that the strength of a qualitative data study be judged on the competence with which the analysis is carried out (Huberman and Miles, 1994). This suggests that data analysis is a critical step in qualitative research, the handling of which can make or mar the entire research study. Qualitative methodology, using inductive content analysis and employing modifiable coding systems that corresponded to the data collected, was used to analyse the transcribed interviews (Elo and Kyngas, 2008). In line with the tenets of qualitative description, both manifest and latent content analysis were employed (Graneheim and Lundman,

2004). In the manifest content analysis, the visible, obvious components of the text were described; while in the latent content analysis, an interpretation of the underlying meaning of the text was performed. The manifest content analysis was first carried out in steps 1 – 4, while the latent content analysis was used to create categories and themes in steps 5 – 6.

1. All of the transcribed interviews were read in their entirety in order to obtain an overall sense of the content;
2. The interview texts were divided into ‘meaning units’; that is, words and statements related to the same central meaning;
3. Each meaning unit was condensed and shortened in length to lessen the numbers of words describing the content, but still preserving the core of the text;
4. The content in each condensed meaning unit was abstracted, interpreted, and labelled with a code. The meaning units with connecting codes were sorted into the relevant content area;
5. Each condensed meaning unit, with its connecting code, was interpreted in more depth, by scrutinizing for its latent content. Subcategories were formed that included codes and meaning units with similar content. The subcategories were then organised and sorted into more comprehensive categories. A category can be described as a group of content that shares a commonality;
6. A theme was formulated as an expression of the latent content of the interview texts. According to Graneheim and Lundman (2004), a theme is the underlying meaning revealed through meaning units, codes, and categories.

In order to distinguish data specific to individual participants and data general to all the participants; a matrix suggested by Miles, Huberman & Saldana (2013) was used to display the data. The matrix is a tabular format that collects and arranges data for easy viewing in one place, permits detailed analysis and sets the stage for later cross-case analysis with other comparable cases or sites (Miles *et al.*, 2013).



### **3.10 QUALITY OF THE STUDY**

#### ***3.10.1 Trustworthiness***

In order to ensure rigor in qualitative research, the concept of trustworthiness has been adopted by researchers. Trustworthiness in qualitative research entails the production of findings that reflect as close as possible the meanings described by the participants (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Issues such as reactivity and biases from either the researcher or participants can threaten the trustworthiness of the study and varieties of strategies have been proposed to manage these threats (Padgett, 2008; Lietz *et al.*, 2006). In qualitative research, the concepts credibility, dependability and transferability have been used to describe various aspect of trustworthiness and this will be discussed in relation to this study (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

#### ***3.10.2 Credibility***

Efforts were made for all participants to be selected based on (i) having experienced the phenomenon under study and (ii) they all had been engaged for as long as possible through in-depth interviews, so that their experiences were adequately captured. The triangulation and corroboration of data sources (FGD and individual interviews) enhanced credibility. The researcher worked with a co-coder (a colleague and PhD candidate) who is experienced in qualitative research, to thoroughly check emerging themes and patterns to make sure nothing was missed (this is the only role the co-coder played in the research process) . The experience of the research participants is the priority of the study and hence all the researcher's personal observations, knowledge and beliefs about the phenomenon were recorded in a reflexive journal. Extensive dialog with the research supervisor through email, phone calls and physical meetings were ensured to ponder on attributes that might hinder the true capturing of the participants' experiences.

#### ***3.10.3 Dependability***

The study utilised a semi-structured interviewing strategy and this assisted in using almost the same wording of open questions from interviewee to interviewee. The

tape-recorded interviews were also transcribed immediately to prevent inconsistencies in the data collection. An audit trail (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) of all the research process, including data analysis and decisions taken were described, justified and recorded (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The above listed strategies assisted the research supervisor to peer debrief the analysed data and to ensure identification of commonalities and differences that warranted further analysis.

#### **3.10.4 Transferability**

In order for readers and other researchers to consider applying the findings of the study to their setting, the context and culture of the research settings, participants' selection and characteristics, data collection and the process of data analysis is exhaustively described (Polit and Beck, 2013). The research findings were also backed up with appropriate quotations from the participants' statements.

### **3.11 Ethical considerations and protection of participants**

**Ethical Approval:** The study was reviewed and granted ethical approval by the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) School of Social Sciences Ethics Review Board. The following ethical issues related to the study were addressed.

**Informed consent:** Since the participants are aged 18 years and above, there was no need to collect additional informed consent from the parents or guardians of the participants. Participants' capacity to consent for study participation in the study was ascertained. Specifically, Palmer *et al.* (2005) protocol was used, where the researcher reviewed the consent form with each participant; then asked her or him to respond to three questions about the study: (1) "What is the purpose of the study?" (2) "What are the risks?" and (3) "What are the benefits?" These questions cover the three most important aspects of consent and were an efficient way to identify people who are likely to have impaired understanding. All the participants responded satisfactorily to the informed consent and signed the informed consent forms.

**Voluntary participation:** After signing the informed consent form, participants were informed that they have the right to withdraw their participation from the study

at any time. All participants participated voluntarily and none withdrew their consent or participation.

**Confidentiality:** Pseudonyms and code numbers were given to each participant and this was also used for the consent forms, transcripts, recordings, during data collection, data analysis, reporting and in the publication of the study's findings. After interviews were transcribed, tape recordings were destroyed. Participants were informed of the above procedures.

**Potential Risks:** There were no foreseen risks in this study except time commitments.

**Potential benefits:** This study can provide opportunity for study participants to discuss issues that affect them and their quest for securing employment. Furthermore, participants have the opportunity of becoming more aware of the socio-economic issues that affect youths in relation to employment and healthy youth development.

**Data Dissemination:** All recordings with documented data either written or captured electronically from interviews will be stored securely on the researchers password protected personal computer in a secure locked cupboard at the researchers' residence. All files will be backed up on iCloud and on a hard drive.

The real names of participants will not appear on the interview transcripts, as participants will only be labelled using their pseudo details and interview dates with back-up copies. No persons will be permitted to access this data other than the researcher and the supervisor. Shredding of written documentation and deletion of electronic documentation will destroy all data five years after completion of the study as well as audio files from the external hard drive, iCloud and the recycle bin.

### **3.12 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the research methodology that was employed in this qualitative study, namely that of a qualitative methodology. The researcher used literature evidence and practical reasons to provide the rationale for the appropriateness of the research design, the data collection process, data quality, data

analysis approach and ethical assurances. The following chapter presents the results for this study, where they will be examined and assessed.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter presented the research methodology. This chapter presents the results of the analysis. This includes data from the individual interviews and the focus group discussions. The results of the interviews and the FGDs were juxtaposed and not treated separately in the analysis. The emerging themes from the interviews and the FGDs complemented each other and were reported together. In addition, the chapter proceeded by first describing how data was obtained, then the essential characteristics of the participants were described, followed by a description of how essential themes were extracted and how they were arrived at. Finally the themes were described in detail.

### **4.2 Description and characteristics of participants**

The present study sought to explore graduates' experience of unemployment and in order to achieve this, multiple purposive sampling was used to recruit 20 participants who were either individually interviewed or placed in focus groups. Table 4.1 summarises the characteristics of the eight participants who were individually interviewed, while table 4.2 summarises the characteristics of the focus group members.

**Table 4.1 Sample characteristics of in-depth interview participants**

Participant code	Gender	Age	Level of education and Field of study	Duration of job search
Participant-1	Female	24	B.Tech. (Marketing)	18 months
Participant-2	Male	25	National Diploma (Information Technology)	22 months
Participant-3	Male	25	B.Tech. (Information Technology)	20 months
Participant-4	Female	25	B.Tech. (Human Resources)	27 months
Participant-5	Male	28	Higher Certificate (Public relations)	20 months
Participant-6	Male	21	Diploma (Information Technology)	15 months
Participant-7	Female	22	Bachelors (Psychology)	24 months
Participant-8	Female	22	Diploma (Management of cooperatives)	10 months

**Table 4.2 Sample characteristics of focus group participants**

Participant code	Gender	Age	Level of education and Field of study	Duration of unemployment
Focus Group Discussion 1 (FGD-1)				
Participant-9	Female	25	Honors (Social work)	36 months
Participant-10	Female	22	National Diploma (Public relations)	24 months
Participant-11	Female	24	Honors (Social work)	8 months
Participant-12	Male	24	Bachelor (Statistics and mathematics)	6 months
Participant-13	Female	23	B.Com. (Supply chain)	18 months
Participant-14	Female	22	B.Tech. (Marketing)	14 months
Focus Group Discussion 2 (FGD-2)				
Participant-15	Female	23	B.Com.(Management information systems)	12 months
Participant-16	Female	21	National Diploma (Transport management)	24 months
Participant-17	Male	24	Honors (Physiology)	36 months
Participant-18	Male	23	Higher Certificate (Marketing)	13 months
Participant-19	Male	24	B.A. (Political science)	24 months
Participant-20	Male	23	B.A. (Policy and development studies)	18 months

### 4.3 Strategy of data analysis and presentation

As stated earlier in the previous chapter, the data for this study was gathered through the use of a prepared semi-structured interview guide. The semi-structured interview guide assisted in asking almost the same questions, the difference being in the sequencing of the questions due to variations in the participants' responses, participants' peculiarities and group dynamics. The following steps of data analysis were used to analyse the transcribed interviews (Elo & Kyngas, 2008; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004).

1. All of the transcribed interviews were read in their entirety to obtain an overall sense of the content;

- 2.The interview texts were divided into meaning units; that is, words and statements related to the same central meaning;
- 3.Each meaning unit was condensed and shortened in length to lessen the numbers of words describing the content, but still preserving the core of the text;
- 4.The content in each condensed meaning unit was abstracted, interpreted, and labelled with a code. The meaning units with connecting codes were sorted into the relevant content area;
- 5.Each condensed meaning unit, with its connecting code, was interpreted in more depth, by scrutinizing for its latent content. Subcategories were formed that included codes and meaning units with similar content. The subcategories were then organised and sorted into more comprehensive categories. A category can be described as a group of content that shares a commonality.
- 6.A theme was formulated as an expression of the latent content of the interview texts. According to Graneheim & Lundman (2004), a theme is the underlying meaning revealed through meaning units, codes, and categories.

#### ***4.3.1 Step one: Transcription and data immersion***

The researcher transcribed all audiotaped interviews, comprehensively read the transcripts and got immersed in the way participants described their experiences of unemployment. The repeated reading of the transcripts assisted in the development of reflections and impressions about the data and its relation to the overall aim of the study. The reflections and impressions were jotted down along the lines of the printed transcripts.

#### ***4.3.2 Step two: Dividing interview texts into meaning units***

In this step of the analysis, significant statements and words relating to the same central meaning were extracted from the transcripts. These statements were written on separate sheets and coded based on transcript code, page and line numbers. Four hundred and twenty significant statements that related to the same central meaning were derived from the 70 page transcripts (individual interviews and FGD



combined). The table below provides an example of how interview texts were divided into meaning units:

**Table 4.3 Division into meaning units**

Meaning unit	Participant/FGD code	Transcript page number	Transcript line number
Career guidance should be broad and intense. Telling me the different types of careers is not sufficient; we need to know which ones are needed in the labour force.	Participant-1	2	Lines 85-87
Employers and their recruiting agents do not respect nor acknowledge receipt of our applications... They do not bother to inform you of the decision to decline an application and this does not help in improving yourself as an applicant	Participant-3	6	Lines 251-254
I have realised that securing employment depends on scarcity of skills. Had I completed a different qualification in courses such as engineering or nursing, I would not be in this situation	Participant-8	29	Lines 1200-1202
Let me give you an example of my field, which is Human Resources. Every year, loads of graduates are released into the labour market but you find that limited or no vacancies exists for people trained for careers in Human Resources.	FGD2	45-46	Lines 1689-1701
Most jobs are advertised for the sake of it... I mean these companies already have their person who the job is created for. But in order to fulfil the recruitment for hiring, they advertise the position and just waste your time	FGD1	33-34	Lines 1335-1338
If you are not connected in this country of ours, it is near impossible to get a job... You have to know people who know people.	FGD2	36	Lines 1430-1432

**4.3.3 Step three: Condensing and shortening meaning units**

At this stage of the analysis, meaning units were condensed and shortened in length to lessen the number of words describing the contents, but still preserving the core of the text. The 420 meaning units were condensed into ‘condensed meaning units’. The condensed meanings were true reflections of the original data collected from the participants and the process of condensation does not distort the original data

collected from the participants. The table below provides illustration of how meaning units were condensed.

**Table 4.4 Condensation of meaning units**

Meaning units	Condensed meaning units
I do not think that my inability to secure employment is due to irrelevancy of my qualification. There are no jobs in the country due to poor economic policies and lack of job creation by the government. So many graduates are churned out every year, but you found that limited vacancies exist for some degrees... Some degrees are just not in demand.	Skills mismatch and over-production of degrees that are already surplus in the labour market
... Also this thing of connections is a challenge because that is how people get jobs nowadays... Getting a job is near impossible if you do not know people in higher places.	Loss of confidence in the recruitment process.
... Unemployment crashes your confidence and self-esteem. It places you at the same level with those who are not educated. You ask yourself, what is the benefit of the sleepless nights and effort devoted to obtaining the degree?	Loss of confidence and self-esteem as a result of inability to secure employment
Applying and not getting contacted is really a challenge and it is frustrating for job seekers. Employers do not come back to you whether they have received your application. It is even worse when you are interviewed but you never get contacted.	Poor communication practices of employers and recruiting agents

#### ***4.4.4 Step four: Merging condensed meanings into subthemes and themes***

During this step, the content in each condensed meaning unit was extracted interpreted, and labelled with a code. The meaning units with connecting codes were sorted into the relevant content area. Thereafter, each condensed meaning unit, with its connecting code, was interpreted in more depth, by scrutinizing for its latent content. Subcategories were formed that included codes and meaning units with similar content. The subcategories were then organised and sorted into more comprehensive categories. A category can be described as a group of content that shares a commonality. A theme was formulated as an expression of the latent content of the interview texts. According to Graneheim & Lundman (2004), a theme is the underlying meaning revealed through meaning units, codes, and categories. The following tables show how the themes were arrived at.

**Table 4.5: Theme one - The reality of unemployment**

Meaning unit	Condensed meaning unit	Subtheme	Theme
The labour market wants me to have experience but where am I supposed to get the experience from when no one wants to give fresh graduates a chance. Experience is more important than qualifications in this part of the world.	Emphasis on experience at the expense of fresh ideas	Perceptions of systemic unfairness	The reality of unemployment
I have heard people saying we the unemployed should study further but seriously, that will even put one at greater risk of being unemployed...Sometimes, the recruiters and employers tell us we are over-qualified with no experience.	Dangers of further study when the labour force only needs experience.	State of limbo	
... I have realised something, if you do not have connections, your chances of getting a job are limited. We are in South Africa, you must know someone to get a job or know someone who knows someone.	Connections as a determinant of job success.	Contending with the powers that be	
... Although I received career guidance while in high school but it was when I got to university that I realised that the career guidance I received was useless. My inability to secure employment after three years of graduation has taught me that pursuing a course because of your personality or love for a particular field will not put food on your table... You must study something that the world is in need of.	Insufficient information on choice of degree that has market value	Regret over career choices and nostalgia	

Table 4.6: Theme two – Engaging with the reality of unemployment

Meaning Units	Condensed meaning	Subtheme	Theme
I talk to people who already have jobs so that they can share information should something come up. Name any job websites where you get alerts for vacancies, I follow them and send my applications. Talk of spending time in internet cafes and buying newspapers for job adverts, you will find me there.	Using both formal and informal strategies to find jobs.	Job search efforts	Engaging with the reality of unemployment
I could say discouragement. I mean, I spend hours at the library near my home applying for jobs. There was a time when I would send about 20 applications to different companies every day, but I did not receive even a single response. That is very painful and very discouraging to seek for a job. At least employers and their recruiting agents should acknowledge our applications and provide information even if it is regret.	Poor communication practices of employers	Frustrating encounter with job search	
There are many people out there waiting to pounce on your vulnerability as a job seeker. For instance, there are many people who know you are job hunting and they give you false information about being connected. Unknowing to you and due to desperation, you pay certain amounts, only to find that you have been conned.	Being at risk for further loss due to desperation and naivety.	Unemployment as a source of vulnerability.	

**Table 4.7: Theme three – The Impact of unemployment**

Meaning unit	Condensed meaning unit	Subtheme	Theme
I have a daughter that I need to provide for and I do not have the means to support her. The issue of unemployment is not about me anymore, it is about my child and my family who suffered for my education.	Unemployment has a ripple effect on all facets of life	Powerlessness and hopelessness	Impact of unemployment
My self-esteem and self-confidence is at the lowest because I thought education is all I need to lead a better life and to be able to do certain things for myself. It feels like I went to school for nothing, as I now find myself at the same level with those who did not go to school	Disappointment in the worth of education	Loss of importance placed on education	
I do not think my qualification is useful at all, hey. That is the sad truth. It is just a lot of us studying and who studied Human Resource. It is not an 'in need' career like teaching or nursing. I regret taking it and maybe if I had career guidance before I would know this and take something way different and something that would guarantee me a job immediately after graduation	Participant wished they knew before hand and would have made a better career choice.	Regret over choice of career	
My family is depressed and frustrated as I am. To a certain extent, they feel like I wasted their resources and I can see the frustrations in the eyes of everyone at home because they had high hopes that things will be better if I make it out of varsity. I get blamed for not researching well before choosing my career and it hurts.	Dashed expectation and blame due to inability to secure employment	Family strain	

**Table 4.8: Theme four – Combating the destructive reality of unemployment**

Meaning unit	Condensed meaning unit	Subtheme	Theme
I know the government is trying to help graduates to find jobs with their skills development programmes but this needs to be reviewed. The current programs and policies are not reaching us. Internships should have clear pathways to employment. The current practices of termination after putting all hard work and having high hopes are exploitative.	The need to review current strategies against unemployment	The role of stakeholders	Combating the menace
High school learners should be educated on the relevancy of degrees and qualifications before enrolment. Career guidance is very important and it should be in-depth and talk about the reality of the labour market.	The need to strengthen career guidance	The role of career counselling	
The education system does not equip us to be successful at job search. It is like if you are set up for failure... The educational system must look at ways of empowering its graduate for employability, incorporate skills development in the curriculum development and become more involved in linking the graduates with employers	The need for educational systems to be more involved in graduates job search	The role of the educational institution	

#### **4.4 Description of the derived themes and subthemes**

At this stage of the analysis, efforts were made to exhaustively describe the themes and subthemes. After merging all the themes and subthemes, the essential structure of the meaning and experience of graduates was arrived at.

#### **4.5 Theme one: The reality of unemployment**

Securing a job immediately after graduation was the expectation of the participants but contrary to their expectation, the ability to secure employment was not as straightforward as anticipated. Participants were shocked and realised that the hurdles needed to secure employment are nested in a wide array of contextualised social, political and personal factors.

##### ***4.5.1 Perceptions of systemic unfairness***

The excitement of throwing graduation caps in the air and throwing graduation parties fizzled out when the participants realised that just having a certificate is not only the requirement for a successful employment search. While acknowledging that possessing appropriate job experiences is also a key for employment, the participants believed that over-reliance on experience at the expense of the fresh ideas and vigour that they are armed with is unfair. Participants described their experience in the following quotes:

“The biggest challenge I face in searching for a job is companies only hire people with certain number of working experience... I do not know who came up with that kind of system, it is just not working for graduates because despite having all the education requirements we fail to get employment because we lack working experience” (Participant-8).

“Previous work experience is a challenge because employers want the graduates to possess some form of experience which cannot be easily met by a new graduate. Sometimes employers think you are over-qualified, you have the certificate, yes, but without the experience you can get nowhere” (FGD-2)

Participants even felt that over-emphasizing experience over creativity and ideas is a deliberate effort by systemic structures to trap them and slow down their progress. Some participants narrated that:

“... job searching is not as easy as once could have thought... the experience trap is really affecting us and we seriously cannot understand how employers expect



graduates to gain work experience when no one is willing to give us a chance.” (FGD-2)

“Ever heard of the saying that everyone wants fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, actually everyone wants everything to be fresh but nobody wants a fresh graduate... the labour market wants me to have experience but where am I supposed to get the experience from? This experience trap is killing graduates.” (Participant-6)

#### *4.5.2 State of limbo*

Having realised that the possession of a certificate, diploma or degree is not sufficient for employment, participants are caught up in a state of confusion as to what should be the next line of action. Participants narrated how they considered whether to pursue further study, pursue another course of study or whether to settle for less while they continue their job search. When participants were asked if having a higher educational status than their current qualification would have bettered their experiences and given them at a better advantage to secure employment, they responded saying:

“Yes and no actually. If you have the necessary experience then a higher qualification will be a bonus but pursuing higher qualification without commensurate work experience is a risk... It does not help to have a Master’s degree when you have never worked before. You are simply inviting further unemployment” (FGD-2).

“No no no!!! Having a degree is enough. Imagine having a Master’s degree without experience? Employers will tag you as overqualified and you would not even get a market related salary” (FGD-1)

While the majority of the participants who already have a degree certificate think they are better off with what they already have, participants with diplomas and national certificates believed that obtaining a higher degree might put them at an advantage.

“Most definitely yes! A diploma is at the lowest of the periphery, so, I think if I had a degree then my experience would be different. The bottom line is, the more and higher you study, the better your chances.” (Participant-6).

“Of course! Certainly! I mean if I elevate my qualification from a Higher Certificate to a degree, it would put me at a better position. For example, if a company is looking for a project management graduate, I would be at a disadvantage if I am competing against another graduate with a degree” (Participant-5).

#### ***4.5.3 Contending with authority***

This theme relates to the social orders or hierarchies that need to be successfully negotiated in order to secure employment in Durban, South Africa. Apart from the demands for job experience by employers and recruiting agents, participants realised that the ability to successfully secure employment also depends on one’s social networks, something that participants termed ‘connections’. A general view and experience of participants is that regardless of how irrelevant your degree might be or how low it may be (diploma or higher certificate), if an individual is able to connect with people in charge of tenders or who are in positions of influence, then job search can be easily attained. Participants described that:

“... And also this thing of connections is a challenge because that is how people get jobs today and we are out here, deserving the job but because we do not have connections we closed out.” (Participant-1)

“My darling, we are in South Africa hey. You must know someone to get a job or know someone who knows someone. If you don’t, your life turns out like mine. Connections are necessary we cannot run away from that nor deny it.” (Participant-4).

The impact of one’s social networks is so powerful that participants acknowledged that irrespective of one’s location, one must have good social network connections for successful job search.

“There are no jobs and because getting a job is keenly contested, you would find that people who get the few available jobs are those with ‘connections’”. (FGD-1)

“I mean networking. That is, talking to the right people. With networking you build great connections and hey that is what gets you in.” (Participant-8).

As a result of the powerful influence of ‘connections’, participants even think that most advertisements for job vacancies have already been filled before adverts are placed. Participants believed that they do not get shortlisted for interviews or assessments because adverts are just for formality and to fulfil the requirements for hiring.

“Well, let me give an example of my field which is HR. Every year, DUT graduate more than 30 students with HR diploma and you would find that probably only two vacancies exist for HR graduates. As a result, these jobs are not even advertised. The insider in the company where the job exists, inform their relatives or friends and that is it.” (FGD-1).

“I have realised something; if you do not have connections your chances of getting a job are limited. I promise you, you need to know someone who has tender shame!” (Participant-6)

#### *4.5.4 Nostalgia over career choice*

As the reality of unemployment dawns on the participants, they began to realise that the choice of career that they pursued also plays a role in their predicament. Participants were full of lamentation and regrets and even wished they had received proper information that would have guided them to choose a career needed in the South African labour market. Participants seem to be filled with regret and anger over what they termed ‘inadequate career guidance which is not sensitive to the current reality of unemployment in South Africa’. Instead of providing information about skills that are in short supply in South Africa, participants lamented that the career guidance that they received was more of an advertisement about particular courses without any knowledge about its value and pathways to viable employment. Participants described that:

“... It is just a lot of us who studied Human Resource. It is not an ‘in need’ career like teaching or nursing. I regret taking it and maybe if I had prior career guidance, I would have known this and take something way different... something that would guarantee me a job immediately after graduation.” (Participant-4)

“... But then, one’s ability to get employed also depends on the type of course you studied. For those of us who studied Supply chain or marketing; getting a job is very difficult but it is different for those who did courses like nursing or teaching... Should we have been properly guided on career choice, maybe we would not have been part of this interview.” (FGD-1)

Other participants shared similar sentiments:

“Just being told the careers out there is not enough... We need to be properly guided that selecting a course or career is not only about one’s love for a particular course or one’s personality, rather it should be about pursuing careers based on the need in the labour market. Had we known this, we would not have found ourselves in this situation. There are very useful qualifications out there especially in the sciences and engineering.” (FGD-2)

“... Being angry at myself, maybe I am not doing enough to search for a job, being angry that I chose Psychology and not teaching. Being angry that I did not do my research of what the labour market needs before delving into the degree that I pursued” (Participant-3).

#### **4.6 Theme two: Engaging with the reality of unemployment**

Having being faced with the reality of unemployment, participants engaged with this reality by using several strategies to ensure that they secure employment. While using several strategies for searching for a job, participants narrated how they encountered several challenges and how unemployment further exposed them to vulnerability.

##### ***4.6.1 Job search efforts***

Participants utilised both formal and informal strategies in the search for jobs. However, discouragement seems to be setting in for some participants. In a bid to get into the labor force, some of the participants are willing to gain employment in fields that are not related to the course that they had pursued. Factors affecting continued job search - despite repeated failure - seems to be connected with family expectations, the quest for independence, self-esteem and responsibilities. Participants describe various strategies used in job search:

“I still use your old ways of seeking employment, which is compiling a CV and a motivational and then posting or faxing it to various companies and various governmental departments. I use social media, Facebook mostly. People usually post

stuff about available vacancies and there are various groups with thousands of job seekers, making it easy to share information about vacancies” (Participant-7).

“I usually just make a formal submission of my CV electronically on the job search websites (Jobville, Careers24, Pnet) and sometimes I use the post office to make such. We also rely on newspapers because some newspapers such as The Star has a dedicated day and column ‘The workplace’ every Thursday where adverts are placed” (FGD-2).

Some participants are visibly desperate to work and are going out of the usual to reach out to potential employers:

“I have reached a point where I have looked beyond my qualification. So I take my CV and hand it in to different stores and business houses in person. I go door to door and ask if they have any open vacancies.” (Participant-3)

“Word of mouth, I talk to people who already have jobs so they can share information should something or anything come up, even if it is something I did not go to school for. Being picky and choosy is over.” (Participant-4)

#### ***4.6.2 Frustrating encounters with job searches***

Although participants demonstrated various strategies in their search for employment, their experiences have been replete with frustrations. The major source of concern - and source of frustration with job searches - concerns, mainly, the poor communication practices of employers and their recruiting agents. Where there is feedback from employers, this feedback has been inconsistent and participants think that lack of communication and inconsistent feedback deprives them of the opportunity for self-growth, reflection and thwarts any attempt to improve their job seeking strategies.

Some of the participants narrated their frustration with the use of job searching strategies:

“I could say discouragement. I mean, I spend hours at the library near my home applying for jobs. There was a time when I would send about 20 CVs out to different

companies every day, but I did not receive even a single response. That is very painful and very discouraging to seek for a job.” (Participant-6)

“Arg! \*irritation\* I do not know who runs those sites but they do not respond, you post your CV online, you submit when there are posts but I never get any response so I gave up on the internet as a way of searching for a job.” (Participant-8).

“You know what? I have actually realised that I seek for jobs in a wrong way or maybe not so effective ways. This whole newspapers thing does not work anymore and though talking to people is advisable, you have to talk to the right people. I have moved from this and will now start contacting employers directly through emails and phone calls.” (FGD-2)

Some of the participants expressed frustration at inconsistent feedback when employers respond to their applications:

“Prospective employers or their recruiting agents do not respect nor acknowledge receipt of our applications. Furthermore they do not bother to inform you of the decision to decline an application so one can improve where there is a shortfall.” (FGD-2)

“The feedback from employers is also frustrating. For one you will be under-qualified and for the other you will be overqualified, I am like: HELLO! What is it that you guys want?” (FGD-1)

#### ***4.6.3 Unemployment as a source of vulnerability***

As a result of their desperation for employment, the job search experience of some of the participants suggests vulnerability. During the focus group discussions, participants raised issues whereby recruiters demand a sexual relationship before jobs can be guaranteed. Some of the participants are also wary of dubious and fraudulent recruitment agencies that take advantage of job seekers. Other participants discussed how some employers take advantage of the desperation of job seekers in order to under-pay them.

“There are many people out there waiting to pounce on your vulnerability as a job seeker. For instance, there are many people who know you are job hunting and they

give you false information about being connected. Unknowing to you and due to desperation, you pay certain amounts, only to find that you have been conned.” (FGD-1)

“A number of times I have found myself in situations where it seems I have to make a choice between the devil and the deep blue sea. This is because sometimes during the job search, you are expected to use what you have to get what you want... Like dating or sleeping with the manager.” (FGD-2)

“I was there for two years. The first year I was under learnership, the second year was internship. Still I was not employed... They first check how many candidates they have and see if they can afford you... I do not think they look at performance. It is easier and cost-effective for them to get another intern who they will pay R2500 rather than paying you R12, 000 per month. The employers are aware that there is thousands of u who are desperate for an opportunity and will not mind the R2500.” (Participant-5).

#### **4.7 THEME THREE: THE IMPACT OF UNEMPLOYMENT**

The impact of unemployment is so immense on the participants and it affects all aspects of their lives. Unemployment has both present and future implications for the affected individuals and exerts severe consequences on the personal, social and mental wellbeing of these individuals. Participants narrated how unemployment is shattering their desire for independence and how lack of a job has led some of them to social vices such as alcohol abuse and an unplanned pregnancy.

##### ***4.7.1 Hopelessness and powerlessness***

As a result of unemployment, participants are daily stripped of their self-esteem and self-confidence, and are constantly under pressure to live up to the expectation of being a graduate. All these effects of joblessness are driving participants towards hopelessness and place them in a powerless situation as they struggle to find jobs. Participants have this to say when asked how unemployment has impacted their lives:



“Yho! Greatly I must say. Mentally it has affected my confidence and self-esteem negatively. I do not believe in myself anymore because it’s really hard for me to even find a retail job. It has also affected me socially. I am one person who likes going out but now I cannot be doing that because I can’t afford it. I also refrain from going out with friends because I hate relying on me, and you never know when people have had enough of you.” (Participant-3)

“It has affected me in so many ways. It has affected me emotionally, there are some days I feel like giving up, some days it is even difficult to face the community, family and friends. Ever had to look at your peers, people you graduated with who are now working and doing fine while you are not? Unemployment deals with your self-esteem and your confidence. It is so frustrating, some days I wake up angry even. I wake up angry with myself and the government for failing the youths.” (Participant-7)

“I have a daughter that I need to provide for and I do not have the means to support her. The issue of unemployment is not about me anymore, it is about my child and my family who suffered for my education.” (Participant-4)

Some of the participants even found themselves binge drinking or falling pregnant due to the frustration and hopelessness:

“Let us just say some days I find myself binge drinking just so I do not think about it too. I am not happy and the only thing that could change this is a job I studied for.” (FGD-2).

“It has affected me in a negative way because at this point in time I was hoping I’ll be working, being successful and having independence but nothing. I mean we went to school to have a better life not this. I have been depressed and I have been going for counselling at church regarding this particular issue. I realised that if I do not seek help I will be easily drawn into alcohol and dagga as coping mechanisms. I am not as energetic and confident as I used to be.” (Participant-2)

“If you are unemployed, you end up staying at home and the result is having children (this is my personal experience). You know boredom leads you into so many things that you don’t want for yourself... Sometimes you just wake up in the middle of the

night and think of ways to make quick money. Unemployment can leads to high level of crime, armed robbery and drugs.” (FGD-1)

#### ***4.7.2 Loss of importance placed on education***

According to the participants, there should be a distinction between those who went to colleges and university and those who do not. The value of their education would have been to be rewarded with a job; having a job would have made them stand out from their peers who did not pursue knowledge. As a result of dashed expectations and the inability of their education to give them employment, participants found themselves questioning the relevancy of education. Participants found themselves sitting at home doing nothing and have this to say about their experience:

“My self-esteem and self-confidence is at the lowest because I thought education is all I need to lead a better life and to be able to do certain things for myself. It feels like I went to school for nothing, as I now find myself at the same level with those who did not go to school.” (Participant-1)

“I went to school so I can be at a better advantage from those with just Grade 12 and those who did not even get to grade 12 but now we are all here, sitting at home and doing nothing. You wake up looking forward to nothing every day.” (Participant-4)

Parents of some of the participants also share the same sentiment that the pursuit of higher degree is a waste of time and resources. Some of the participants described how their parents felt about it:

“... To a certain extent my parents feel like they wasted their money by taking you to school since there is no difference between me and those who did not go to school.” (Participant-7)

“... I really feel like I wasted four year of my time and there is nothing I can do about it. I am a loser! I come from a disadvantaged background where I am that one person the family is looking up to change the situation at home. Now you go to school and you cannot find a job, it becomes a problem to them. It’s like I wasted my

parents time but what is more sad is it's like I wasted their hard earned money.”  
(Participant-3)

Participants in the focus group discussion feel that graduates without jobs are not respected in the community and are seen as lazy jokes:

“Once you gain admission into a higher institution, you are seen as a messiah that is going to deliver your family from poverty and you are highly respected; people want to associate themselves with you, you are seen as a role model for other kids in the community but all this respect is gone when you can't find job.” (FGD-1)

“... At least if you don't go to school, people are already used to you being at home or they see you doing piece jobs. Once time keeps mounting and people see that you are just home, you are seen as a lazy joke... There is also lack of respect for you in you don't work.” (FGD-2)

#### ***4.7.3 Regret over career choice***

Most of the participants are full of regrets about their choice of career. Some of the participants are even contemplating pursuing a different course. The reason for their regret is a result of their inability to know beforehand that there are some degrees that are not in demand in the South African labour market. As participants lamented missed opportunities and wished for a second chance, they also put some of the blame for their wrong choice of career on inadequate career guidance and the limited support they are receiving from their training institutions as regards their job search. Some of the participants think that their career is irrelevant:

“Simply put, we found ourselves pursued qualifications that the world of work does not need, therefore our skills and qualification are irrelevant and we found ourselves sitting at home. We are currently engaged with qualifications that are irrelevant to the market demand and such qualifications are met with high applications and admission in university, which then saturates the profession in the market. On the other hand, other fields which do not meet with such challenges are available in limited numbers of admissions and are usually regulated by external independent professional bodies.” (FGD-2)

“... But then, one’s ability to get employed also depends on the type of course you studied. For those of us who studied Supply chain or Marketing getting a job is very difficult but it is different for those who did courses like nursing or teaching... Should we have been properly guided on career choice, maybe we would not have been part of this interview.” (FGD-1)

#### ***4.7.4 Family relationships strain***

The inability of participants to successfully secure employment is a cause for concern for family members and this sometimes leads to family conflicts and relationship strains. Participants sometimes find themselves in the middle of a storm that is dominated by blame, as significant others feel the participants are not doing enough to secure employment - or that they were unwise not to know the careers that would have fetched them instant job access. Participants have this to say about the impact of unemployment on their respective families:

“Your family takes you to school and when you finish they get relieved because they expect you to be able to stand on your own and change the situation at home. My family is as depressed as I am, they are as frustrated as I am... Unemployment has created conflict at home; I think it comes from the frustrations. I now lack financial support; it is so difficult to ask for money when you are expected to be taking care of yourself. My parents have cut me off and my partner is the one who has been supporting me.” (Participant-1).

“... My relationship with my parents mostly has been strained because they thought I will be out of their pocket already. They will never tell you but I can see it. Young as I am, traditionally, I am a man and I should be providing for myself and for the rest of the family.” (Participant-3)

“My parents tried to do what is best for me and to be in a competitive position. But it is frustrating for them because it seems like their efforts are not of any worth. Not that they complain but you know, no parent wants to support to an old man. My dependency on them is straining them... I just know because they have so many other responsibilities and challenges.” (Participant-5)

Some of the participants' relationships with significant others such as friends and partners were also negatively impacted due to unemployment:

“Gosh! I am not even dating, eish! We live in a society where money drives everything. So you do not have a job then you do not have money therefore cannot have a girlfriend because you will not be able to take care of her since you are still also being taken care of.” (Participant-3)

“As I have mentioned before, socially friends run, you basically do not have friends. I cannot even mention the girlfriend part, my relationship with my girlfriend has also been strained in a sense that I have somewhat failed to do certain things for her or even support her financially. Her friends and family are mocking her because of me, advising her to leave me as our future is very bleak.” (Participant-5)

#### **4.8 THEME FOUR: COMBATING THE DESTRUCTIVE REALITY OF UNEMPLOYMENT**

Having discussed their experience of unemployment and its impact on their lives; participants discussed their perspectives of employability and how they can be assisted to become more successful at searching for work. Participants believed that search of jobs is likely to continue to pose a serious threat for graduates and bring unpleasant experiences unless various stakeholders such as the government, educational institutions and career counsellors come to the aid of South African youths. All the participants defined employability as the possession of certain characteristics that can enable one to successfully get a job a defined area of specialty. As a result of their knowledge in what employability entails, all the participants believed they have the minimum requirements to be employed and they offered strategies that can be used by stakeholders in combating the destructive reality of unemployment in South Africa. The youths highlighted key roles that can be played by different stakeholders.

##### ***4.8.1 The role of personal attributes***

Participants did not absolve themselves from the blame of unemployment. They outlined some of their own personal limitations that stand in their way of a successful job search:

“We as the youth and unemployed graduates need to help ourselves before we can call for help from other people. We need to be innovative, we need to find ways that make us unique and stand out from others, we need not only just become students who pass exams but we need to improve our skills while we study and we can do that through volunteering.” (FGD-2)

“I think we graduates also has some blame, we lack that motivation to think out of the box and become creative to start something on own...we are too focused on being employees, but then again that is what our education system molds us to be.” (Participant-8)

“Graduates need to learn to volunteer; it will equip us with skills and experiences needed. Not just any experience but the relevant experience that are related to the qualification studied.” (Participant-5)

“Because the jobs are not there, we as graduates needs to be able to demonstrate desperation and take drastic actions like relocation, travelling and doing any kind of job, even if it is not related to what we studied till one gets the ideal job.” (FGD-1)

#### ***4.8.2 The role of the educational institution***

The participants are less than impressed with what seems like the distant approach of educational institutions in their job search experience and for ignoring the reality of unemployment in South Africa. The participants believed that the university can assist by regulating students' intake in over-saturated professions such as HR, marketing, and that the university can do better by being proactive in the linkage between potential employers and graduates. Participants believe that unemployment should be tackled before completion of educational programmes:

“Graduates do not need support after graduation; support should be before graduation and completion of degree. If that is done, then we would not find ourselves in this situation. The support I am talking about is the skills programmes. We need those skills development programmes to be part of our curriculum.” (Participant-6)

“The education system does not equip us to be successful at job search. It is like if you are set up for failure... The educational system must look at ways of

empowering its graduate for employability, incorporate skills development in the curriculum development and become more involved in linking the graduates with employers.” (FGD-1)

“I think the biggest problem right now in our country is that we do not have any financial literacy in our education system. If maybe schools and varsities were to implement financial literacy, it would enable us to start our businesses at an early age. Because we do not have financial literacy, we do not know the importance of having money. Education should not progress from schooling to graduation and then job. No one is encouraging us to start our own businesses, empowering graduates with financial literacy will curb unemployment since more people would be starting their own business.” (Participant-3)

“The supply is greater than the demand. Too many graduates are being released into the labour market every year but there are no jobs available. The existing vacancies are limited and this makes it a situation of survival of the fittest. Some of these courses such as HR, management must stop admitting students because there are many graduates but no jobs and this will increase unemployment rates.” (FGD-2)

#### ***4.8.3 The role of the government and employers***

Participants believed the government and employers have a very big role to play in the reduction of the rates of unemployment. Participants are of the opinion that hiring should be as transparent as possible: Participants have these to say about the role of government and employers:

“The government should stop with their ‘stuff riding’ tendencies where people get jobs because of their association and affiliation. Because of this unqualified or under-qualified people get the job while those who are truly qualified are sidelined... Financial opportunities should be given to us to start small and medium enterprises.” (FGD-2)

A participant in the individual interview also wants the internship to lead to more viable pathways of employment:

“And also internships should guarantee us employment at its completion. This thing of getting 12 months experience then not be employed after is a waste because 12months is not enough time or rather enough experience for someone to secure employment. Worse you cannot take part in an internship twice, what will I do with 12months experience when the job needs 3-5 years? Nothing!” (Participant-6)

Another participant (Participant-4) also shared the sentiment that unemployed graduates needs to be equipped with some sort of grant:

“There should be an ‘unemployment grant’ of some sort. Just for graduates. A little bit of money to assist us in searching for a job. Like I said, we have expenses of buying newspapers, printing our CVs, faxing and searching the internet. All this is money we do not have which slows and affects job search if you lack. And also it will help take care of our primary needs you know.”

Participants in the focus group discussions also castigated employers and their recruiting agents on the shambolic way of handling recruitment, especially their poor communication practices. Poor communication practices and lack of inconsistent feedback lead participants to say the following:

“I just wished the employers know what it feels like to submit an application or attend interviews in some instances and you don’t hear anything. This raises your hopes for nothing and deprives you of making further moves towards your employment search... In a way you are just clueless, because you just don’t know what is happening... I am sure it does not cost employers to send emails to applicants that their applications were not successful.” (FGD-2)

“It is worrying sometimes because the employers sometimes interpret your reality for you. I once attended an interview and I felt like I did really well. I was told that I will be contacted but months after months, nothing was forthcoming. And then when I made inquiry from the HR, I was told the panel thought I was over-qualified for the post and that they think I will leave their company if I have better offers. Seriously, who does that?... I was crushed because I did not have any employment and I would have taken the job if given the opportunity.” (FGD-1)



#### *4.8.4 The role of career counselling*

The participants of this study believed that the high rates of employment could be averted if South African youths pursue qualifications that are needed in South Africa. In order to study what is needed by the South African labour market, participants are of the opinion that career guidance should be intensified and context-specific. Participants explained the role of proper career guidance:

“Career guidance must be intensified. Can you believe pupils take mathematical literacy with accounting, yet no university accepts mathematical literacy for B.Com. Accounting?” (Participant-7)

“School learners should be educated on the relevancy of degrees and qualifications they want to study in university or college. Learners should be supported to research the market value of intended qualification before dabbling into it... Career guidance is very important but it is often side-lined or taken very lightly in our schools.” (Participant-2)

In order to avoid studying courses that are not in demand, then career guidance and counselling needs to be top notch.

“Yes I have received career guidance before though I feel it was insufficient to help me make my decision in choosing my career path. Different universities and colleges came to our grade 12 class and provided us with information on the different courses they have, how we can apply for them, and what is needed for application. But you could say that their information was not so adequate because it was more of if you doing these subjects, these are the careers/course you could take... I feel like they should have spoken to us individually and guided us. What they told us was that: if you are doing science and mathematics you could do Engineering or Medical science; if you are doing Commerce you could do B.Com. Accounting or Management. That is the information they provided us with which I just feel is not enough for any child finishing grade 12.”

#### **4.9 Descriptive summary of the essential themes**

This chapter presented the findings of the study and displayed how inductive content analysis was applied to the analysis of the data. The qualitative content analysis method provided an active strategy to achieve a description of youths' experience of unemployment in Durban and this process gave rise to four themes and 15 subthemes. The youth in this study came to the realisation that unemployment is plaguing South Africa, and engaged with this reality through the application of various job search efforts – and this sometimes leads to vulnerability and frustration. In addition, the inability to secure employment negatively impacted the life-world of the youth and their families. All of the essential themes offered a small glimpse into the lived experience of unemployment from the perspectives of these youths. To comprehend the nuances of these lived experiences, the themes must be interpreted together. The researcher acknowledges that the whole thematic map might be quite different than the sum total of its parts (Omery, 1983). Whilst there is a chronological flow in the way the researcher presented the essential themes, they are intertwined and dynamic. Each theme can be understood as a moment in the experience of the youths' unemployment, which can be brought back into the whole as a new development or challenge.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter presented the research results while this chapter focused on the findings and conclusions of the study. Furthermore, this chapter presented a discussion on the contribution of the study to the existing literature investigating the phenomenon of youth unemployment and the implications of the findings for research and policies. Recommendations are offered on relevant interventions based on the presented lived experiences of the participants. The chapter concludes with a critical reflection by the researcher on the limitations and the conclusions that can be reasonably drawn.

### **5.2 Overview**

The phenomenon of interest in this study was the subjective experiences of unemployed graduates. The motivation for this study was inspired by the limited literature on studies utilizing qualitative methodology in the investigation of graduates' experience of unemployment. Most studies on the subject have almost single-mindedly approached the phenomenon using econometrics and quantitative methods, thereby ignoring the subjective experiences of those affected by the phenomenon. The study explored and described the experience of unemployed graduate using a qualitative description approach. In this qualitative descriptive study, 20 unemployed graduates who had been unemployed for a minimum of 6 months and who are between the ages of 20-29 years were recruited using multiple purposive sampling and using purposive and snowballing strategies.

The qualitative description approach was used in this study because of its emphasis on the description of the participants' perception and experience of the world and its phenomena using everyday language. The graduates' experience of unemployment was derived by following the steps of qualitative content analysis by Elo and Kyngas (2007) and Graneheim and Lundman (2004). The analytic strategy (qualitative

content analysis) allowed themes to be derived from the data and the use of table matrices allowed for transparency and supplemented the credibility of the research findings. The data collection technique (individual interviews and focus group discussions), which was guided by a semi-structured interview guide, assisted the participants to narrate the contextual experience of unemployment using everyday language. As the literature review was delayed till after data analysis, it can be said that the researcher met the participants' narratives and experiences as an 'empty vessel' that was waiting to be filled by the participants' stories.

### **5.3 Contribution to knowledge**

This study builds on the existing body of knowledge that explores the phenomenon of graduate unemployment. Since the issue of youth unemployment is both a political and social issue, it is unsurprising that the insertion of youths in the labour market had become a matter of concern and interest for the academic community, policy makers and governments.

Participants in the study described how they never expected to struggle with securing employment. Participants had anticipated an uninterrupted transition to the workplace and were shocked when they realised that securing employment is a product of several interrelated factors. One of these factors is the emphasis that employers place on experience rather than just the possession of a qualification. This finding is supported by a whole body of literature (Oluwajodu *et al.*, 2015; Altman, 2007; van Aardt, 2012; Schucher, 2014) which states that young people find it difficult to gain employment owing to their lack of experience and a skills profile which is often different from what is required by employers (van Aardt, 2012). According to the South African National Treasury (2011), the inability of youths to gain employment emanates from employers are looking for experience and skills; employers regard inexperienced and unskilled jobseekers as a risky investment and schooling is not a reliable indicator of the individual's capabilities. As a result of this, van Aardt (2012) concurs that young people can find it difficult to gain work experience; a resource that employers see as an important signal of ability. As such, inexperience is a major obstacle to employment prospects and may explain some of the age discrimination in the labour market.

The situation created by the dynamics shaping the labour market, enabled the participants to realise that some other graduates were easily gaining employment whereas it was difficult for them. As a result, the participants also came to conclusion that the choice of one's degree is fundamental to job search success. Participants specifically mentioned courses like education, nursing and engineering as courses where employment prospects are high for graduates. This finding is consistent with the findings of Naong (2011) who stated that the main reason that graduates struggle to find employment is because they have chosen the wrong field of specialisation. Liu, Salvanes and Sorensen (2015) added that an important mechanism behind persistent career loss for graduates is due to the inability of college graduates to supply the skills demanded by hiring institutions. According to Griesel and Parker (2009), employers seek for basic skills, intellectual ability, workplace skills, applied knowledge and interactive skills from graduates. However, Oluwajodu, Blaauw, Greyling and Kleynhans (2015) state that South African graduates are often unsuccessful in the recruitment phase because they lack some of the skills highlighted by Griesel and Parker (2009). Most of the graduates without these requisite skills are thought to be graduates of historically black institutions in South Africa (Oluwajodu *et al.*, 2015). However, none of the participants of this study felt that the type of institution they graduated from has a role to play in their inability to attain employment.

As the participants mull over the pursuit of postgraduate education or to continue job search, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2013); Carroll and Tani (2013) and Rose and Ordine (2010) found that long spells of unemployment drives youths to pursue higher and postgraduate education, which is leading to over-education and over-skilling. According to the ILO (2013), over-skilling and over education contributes to long term unemployment and makes solutions to youth unemployment difficult to find and more time consuming to implement. Although the participants of this study are also wary of the dangers of over-education, they are at risk of falling into this trap because some of them who possess B.Tech. and Bachelors are already pursuing Honours degrees.

As highlighted by Li and Zhang (2010), increasing unemployment among graduates from previously disadvantaged regions or background, despite working hard in

colleges, may encourage potential students to shun college education and this will deepen the existing inequality in access to higher education and block a traditional channel of social mobility in a highly unequal society. The fears nursed by Li and Zhang (2010) resonate in this study as the participants and their families are beginning to lose the value placed on education and trivialise its importance. Consequently, the loss of value placed on education, especially among previously disadvantaged blacks might likely defeat the concerted efforts of the South African government in increasing access to higher education.

Although the study revealed participants believed that location is not a determinant to secure unemployment, simply because they believe that the jobs are not in other locations. This however contradicts Li, Whalley and Xing's (2014) finding that location is an important determinant in securing employment and that graduates in coastal areas are more likely to easily attain employment than those in non-coastal areas. The finding of Li *et al.* (2014) is interesting when one considers that the participants of this study are all located in Durban (a coastal city with one of the busiest ports in the world). The inability of the study participants to secure employment despite being located in a coastal city suggests that graduate unemployment in South Africa is likely due to skills mismatch and not location mismatch.

Having noted that higher education expansion can itself lead to graduate unemployment (Li *et al.*, 2014; Li & Zhang, 2010), a situation at odds with the South African government's ongoing strategy to increase higher education access to those who have been previously disadvantaged.

Li and Zhang (2010) and Rose and Ordine (2010) found that a personal attribute, such as GPA, that students graduate with what is important for their job search. According to Li and Zhang (2010), irrespective of the reputation of the colleges that students graduate from, graduates with higher GPAs are less likely to be unemployed. Although the study participants attested to their own inability to be innovative, creative and partake in volunteering opportunities, none of the participants discussed the influence of high grades in one's ability to gain employment.

The participants of the study lamented the inability of colleges, universities and training institution to equip them properly for the workplace. According to the participants, the educational institutions are not doing enough to regulate students' intake in courses that are already over-saturated in the labour market and institutions inability to incorporate skills programme and financial literacy into the curriculum. According to Rose and Ordine (2010), 'tightness dominance', a reduction in the selectivity level of the higher education system may induce a rise in the share of graduates, leading to an increase in the share of firms investing such graduate positions and courses. Furthermore, Refrigeri and Aleandri (2013) noted that graduate youth unemployment can only be reduced through the introduction of policies that promote a work related curriculum and they therefore propose the reformation of education systems and professional development. As stated by Eliška and Zuzana (2014) and Refrigeri and Aleandri (2013), youth unemployment does not derive from the macroeconomic conditions of a country, rather from models of transition from education to work. Bearing in mind that the human capital of an individual should increasingly reflect knowledge and skills acquired at school in addition to those acquired from workplace, Numec (2013) argues that the education system for young people must become a pathway to the labour market. From the narratives of the study participants, one could conclude that the South African education system is still focused on the formation of human capital which has little to do with the workplace; thereby making young graduates to be a weak resource. Vasile and Anghel (2015) even reiterated that the education and training system could be blamed for the high rates of unemployment because it is inefficient, unattractive and unadjusted to the structure and developments of the labour market.

While acknowledging that job search methods can have a bearing on the abilities of graduates in securing employment (Oluwajodu *et al.*, 2015), Eliška and Zuzana (2014) found that graduates do not have a clear idea about their future professional aspirations in the labour market and they have an ambivalence about their studied programme. This finding is also true for the participants of this study because they all have uncertainty over the worth of their qualifications in relation to other qualifications such as Nursing and Education. In addition, Oluwajodu *et al.*, (2015) found that graduate unemployment is also linked the unrealistically high expectations

of graduates. As stated by Sirat and Shuib (2012), graduates assume that their qualifications must ensure high salaries and managerial positions immediately, despite having a bad attitude towards work. Although Oluwajodu *et al.* (2015) stated that the expectations of employers differ from those of graduates in that employers see them only as individuals with just the possession of a qualification but lacking in necessary skills and experiences to thrive in the workplace. As a result of the unrealistic high expectations of graduates considering their ideal kind of job, Sirat and Shuib (2012) suggested that graduates select jobs and prefer to remain unemployed until they get their ideal job. However, the participants of this study are ready to settle for any kind of job until they found jobs in their studied field.

Since inclusion of graduates in the labour market has turned into an uncertain process, Juare, Clares and Cuso (2014) stated the most effective job search strategies are based on the use of personal and family-related network contacts, the use of the Internet and self-promotion. This finding came out clearly in this study as participants alluded to the massive influence of social networking, specifically 'connections' as one of the most important determinant of job search success in South Africa. While acknowledging the impact of 'connections' and its role as a barrier to gaining employment, it is unfortunate that the participants of this study are devoid of effective networks that can ensure the securing of employment. The inability of the participants to sustain effective networks for employment success might be due to their poor background and the negative impact of apartheid on the black race. It might also be due to their personality types – some people network more easily than others.

It is expected that a college education should constitute an important investment which should guarantee graduates a substantial economic benefit lasting a lifetime (Antosova, 2010). However, this important investment is a source of powerlessness, hopelessness and family strain for the participants. The inability of the participants to gain employment has greatly hampered their self-esteem, confidence and serves as a source of conflict and stress for them and their families. Griep *et al.* (2012) found that negative and poorer psychological outcomes exist for youths without jobs and



who are also not on any social welfare grant. Furthermore, Knabe and Ratzel (2011) revealed that episodes of unemployment rob individuals of their life satisfaction both in the present and future. De Witte *et al.* (2010) also reported that unemployed youth are faced with uncertainty about their future and experienced feelings of loneliness, emptiness, poor social support, conflict at home and low self-esteem.

This cannot be truer for the participants of this study because lack of jobs robs them of their independence and this cripples their healthy youth development while limiting their capacity to assist their dependents such as parents. Currently, the participants do not receive any benefits but they suggested that an unemployment grant would assist them in their job search. This is because some of the participants have limited finances, and have difficulty paying for printing, faxing and postage for their CVs; the high cost of Internet is also a barrier to consistently and actively pursue job search. Kyyra, Parrotta and Rosholm (2013) have investigated the effect of receiving supplementary benefits on unemployment duration and found that receiving an unemployment grant has a negative effect on unemployed youths because it prolongs their duration of unemployment. However, Mtembu and Govender (2015) reported that employers perceive that the introduction of a youth employment wage subsidy will ease wage burden, increase business sustainability and, importantly, increase employment for youths.

One of the striking findings of this study is the poor communication practice of employers and inconsistent feedback from employers when it is provided. This poor communication practice of leaving job seekers clueless for months without acknowledgement of applications, not notifying applicants of application status even when unsuccessful deprives participants of the opportunity for self-improvement in the job search process. This also leads to frustration for the participants resulting from unending waiting and lack of feedback from employers and recruiters. This is an area where the employers can improve in order to improve the job seeking experience of the graduates. In addition, participants' trust in recruitment practices is fading because of lack of transparency in how the shortlisting of candidates is decided and how appointments are made. The employers need to be more empathetic to the plight of the job seekers.

Although several authors (Marahosa & Hay, 2001; Kraak, 2010; 2013) has been advocating more inclusive career counselling, it is evident from the account of these participants that career guidance for South African students needs to be responsive to the labour market realities. Participants need to be properly guided on career choices and made to understand how they can avoid being trapped in the unemployment predicament. Participants of this study are nostalgic about missed chances pursuing a qualification that is relevant to the demand in the South African labour market.

## **CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1 Introduction**

In conclusion, unemployment is one key contributor to poverty and results in numerous harmful psychological effects such as powerlessness and uselessness, which may manifest to depression and even despair. Therefore any effort to understand the position of youth unemployment needs to consider the role of both the government and private sector. Traditionally - through education and training - it is considered the responsibility of the government to ensure that youths are provided with employment. In today's world the private sector's power should not by any means be underestimated (Cebekhulu, 2013). The international consensus on job creation for the youth argues that government cannot combat the issue alone. "The private sector can be involved by endorsing the human resource development, youth economic empowerment and procurement and enterprise development" (Cebekhulu 2013: 107). Up until now, the private sector has an insignificant role in developing the youth in South Africa. According to the Human Science Research Council (HSRC) (2005), young people are not homogeneous therefore their diversity should be factored into youth policies and practices. In order to find a solution to this problem, within the youth population, the marginalised groups must be recognised and supported. It is further recommended that entrepreneurship training and other inventiveness, such as youth co-operatives, should be reinforced to promote youth participation. It also cannot be denied that sufficient resources should be made obtainable in order to escalate amalgamation between education and training. In support of this suggestion, Erasmus, More, Mogoera, Ellis and Serekoane (2004) argued that the youth needed more practical knowledge to permit them to make any headway in life.

The findings of this study have implications for the practice of labour studies and policy-making. When considering the tenets of the social capital theory utilised in

this study, it is obvious that a significant barrier to the participants securing employment is the lack of social capital. The inability of the participants to select courses that are in relatively low demand and which have structured pathways to employment can also be attributed to the lack of the participants' social capital. This suggests that efforts need to be geared towards assisting South Africans in building social capital, so that they can effectively satisfy the interpersonal aspect of employability (knowing-whom) competencies concerning formal and informal career-related networks (Defillippi and Arthur, 1994). As stated earlier, the Interpersonal connections (who one knows) are crucial in shaping individuals self-perceptions and providing access to career-related information and resources (McArdle *et al.*, 2007).

As pointed out by the research participants, employers and recruiting agents can assist the transitioning of graduates from school/university to the workplace by providing timely and consistent feedback about job applications. Further, the recruitment process needs to be sensitive to the needs and vulnerabilities of applicants; the whole process of job search can be turned into an empowering opportunity if employers and those in the practice of labour studies can become more responsive to the plight of job seekers. The findings of this study can also assist in improving career counselling and guidance provided to youths particularly before leaving high schools. Stakeholders all have a role ensuring that various strategies that are already in place to combat unemployment - such as internships - should have clear pathways to employment. It is a waste of resources to employ graduates for one year in an internship programme only to leave them once again jobless. The educational institutions have an important role in ensuring that their graduates are successfully employed, and should be being more proactive in the job search process. It is important for educational institutions to provide graduates with linkages to employers in their respective fields and also provide them with training opportunities for work exposure. The curricula for training in South Africa should include skills development programmes so that graduates can be more work-ready after graduation.

## **6.2 Limitations of the study**

Acknowledgement of the limitations of a study and the steps taken to reduce the impact of these limitations are important considerations within any research project (Khan, Murray, & Barnes, 2002). A limitation of this study is the homogeneity of the participants. The participants of this study all reside in Durban and shared the same values and views, and are affected by the same phenomena. This means that the findings of this study cannot be generalised. The generalisability of the findings of this study is also limited because of the type of sampling used, which is not random. Although the decision to stop data collection was determined by data saturation, the research aimed to recruit as many participants as possible into the study. It is important to state despite contacting several eligible unemployed youths, it was a daunting task finding youths willing to participate were: (1) Reward expectation for participation, (2) high mobility of youths due to their job searches and (3) frustration from job search experience.

## **6.3 Conclusion**

The use of a qualitative description approach assisted the researcher in delving into the unemployment experience of graduates in Durban, South Africa. Exploring the subjective experiences of the participants in relation to their unemployment experience brought the researcher closer to the everyday experiences of the participants. The experience emphasised the reality of unemployment among South African youths, how they are engaging with this reality, how unemployment is impacting their lives and their perceptions about how the destructive reality of unemployment can be combatted in South Africa. The findings of this study provided another dimension to the research about unemployment among graduates and complemented some of the findings of the earlier studies. This study provided an insight on how employers and policy makers can become more responsive to the needs of unemployed graduates and how they can be assisted to have positive experiences during their job search. Recommendations were made about the practice of labour study and policy making. The study concluded that tackling youth

unemployment is a collaborative effort between the educational institutions, policy makers, graduates, employers and career counsellors.

## REFERENCES

- Adelzadeh, A. 2007. Having poverty and unemployment in South Africa: Choices for the next ten years. Cape Town: ADRS.
- Adam, F. and Rončević, B., 2003. Social capital: recent debates and research trends. *Social Science Information*, 42(2): 155-183.
- Adler, P.S. and Kwon, S.W. 2002. Social capital: Prospects for a new concept. *Academy of Management Review*, 27(1): 17-40.
- Aggestam J. and Hallberg A. 2004. Unemployment in Sri Lanka: *Explanations, Constraints and Prospects for the Future*. Department of Economics, Lund University.
- Albert, W. and Tullis, T., 2013. Measuring the user experience: collecting, analyzing, and presenting usability metrics. Newnes.
- Alfred, K.A, Simon, T, Ashiagbor, I, and Baku, MD 2008, Graduate unemployment in Ghana: possible case of poor response of university programs to the demands of the job market. Education Research Network for West and Central Africa, Bamako.
- Ali, M., 2014. Youth Unemployment A Global Security Challenge. *Harvard International Review*, 36(1): 13.
- Altbeker, A. and Storme, E. 2013. *Graduate unemployment in South Africa: A much exaggerated problem*. The Centre for Development and Enterprise, Johannesburg.
- Altman, M. 2007. Youth labour markets challenges in South Africa. Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Antosova, M., 2010. Human resources management and organizational development as a basis for the knowledge management. *Acta Montanistica Slovaca*, 15, (1): 90-95.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics. National Health Survey: Summary of Results, 1995. Catalogue No. 4364.0.

- Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2002. Social capital measurement. Australian Bureau of Statistics. Canberra.
- Badat, S., 2010. The challenges of transformation in higher education and training institutions in South Africa. Development Bank of Southern Africa. Available at [http://www.dbsa.org/Research/Higher% 20Education% 20and% 20Training/The% 20chal lenges% 20of% 20transformation% 20in% 20higher% 20education% 20and% 20training, 2](http://www.dbsa.org/Research/Higher%20Education%20and%20Training/The%20challenges%20of%20transformation%20in%20higher%20education%20and%20training,2).
- Balan, M. 2014. Analysis of unemployment among young individuals from Romania by econometric methods. *Internal Auditing & Risk Management*, p.90.
- Baldry, K. 2013. Graduate unemployment in South Africa: Prevalence, characteristics and perceived causes. Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand.
- Banerjee, A., Galliano, S., Levisohn, J., McLaren, Z. and Woolard, I. 2008. *Why has unemployment risen in the new South Africa? Economics of Transition*, 16(4): 715-40.
- Barbulescu, A.P. 2012. Youth Unemployment in Romania and measures to Combat it: *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 3(2012): 1196-1201.
- Béduwé, C. and Giret, J.F., 2011. Mismatch of vocational graduates: What penalty on French labour market?. *Journal of vocational behavior*, 78(1): 68-79.
- Bell, D.N. and Blanchflower, D.G., 2010. UK unemployment in the great recession. *National Institute Economic Review*, 214(1): 3-25.
- Bencal, C. R. 2004. *A Qualitative description of the physical education-based lived experiences of non-aggressive socially isolated students* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from <http://drum.lib.umd.edu/handle/1903/183>. [Accessed: 10 May 2015].
- Betti, G., D'Agostino, A. and Neri, L., 2007. *Educational Mismatch of Graduates: a Multidimensional and Fuzzy Approach*. Università di Siena, Dipartimento di metodi quantitativi.
- Bhorat, H. and Lundall, P. 2002. Employment, wages and skills development: Firm specific Effects, Evidence from Two Firm Surveys in South Africa. Cape Town, UCT: Development Policy Research Unit.
- Bhorat, H. and Oosthuizen, M. 2007. Young People and the Labour Market: *Africa insight*, 37(3): 388-403.
- Bhorat, H., Mayet, N., and Visser, M. 2010. Student Graduation, Labour Market Destinations and Employment Earnings. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

- Binikos, E. 2008. Uncovering potential agency: assessing orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC) empowerment via the 'instrumentalisation of disorder' as informed by Bourdieu. *South African Review of Sociology*, 39(1): 98-121.
- Black, A. and Hughes, P., 2001. The identification and analysis of indicators of community strength and outcomes. *FaHCSIA Occasional Paper*, (3).
- Booyesen, D. and Van Eeden, A., 2013. Deprivation among unemployed South African youth: Intergenerational or transitional?. *Town and Regional Planning*, 63(1).
- Borbasi, S. and Jackson, D., 2012. Qualitative research: the whole picture.
- Borges-Mendez, R., Denhardt, L. and Collett, M., 2013. Global and local youth unemployment: dislocation and pathways. *New England Journal of Public Policy*, 25(1): 7. Bourdieu, P. 1986. The forms of capital. In handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education. (Ed. J.G Richardson). New York: Greenwood Press.
- Bridgstock, R. 2009. The graduate attributes we've overlooked: Enhancing graduate employability through career management skills. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 28(1): 31-44.
- Broadbent, R. 2009. Making the connections: Youth unemployment in Australia. *Commonwealth Youth and Development*, 7(2): 11-19.
- Bryman, A. 1988. *Quantity and Quality in Social Research*. London: Unwin Hyman.
- Caddy, I. and Mortimer, D., 2013. Unemployment and social disadvantage: a tale of five cities. *International Employment Relations Review*, 19(2): 4.
- Cardoso, A.R. 2007. Jobs for young university graduates: *Economics Letters*, 94(2007): 271-277.
- Caruso, R., and Gavrilova, E. 2012. Youth unemployment, terrorism and political violence, evidence from the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. *Peace Economics, Peace Science and Public Policy*, 18(2).
- Carroll, D. and Tani, M. 2013. Over-education of recent higher education graduates: New Australian panel evidence: *Economics of Education Review*, 32(2013): 207-218.



- Centre for Development and Enterprise 2013. Retrieved from [http://sun025.sun.ac.za/portal/page/portal/Arts/Departments/political\\_science/docs/Tab/graduate\\_unemployment\\_in\\_south\\_africa\\_a\\_much\\_exaggerate.pdf](http://sun025.sun.ac.za/portal/page/portal/Arts/Departments/political_science/docs/Tab/graduate_unemployment_in_south_africa_a_much_exaggerate.pdf)
- Cedefop (2010a). The skill matching challenge – Analysing skill mismatch and policy implications. Luxembourg: Publications Office.
- Cebekhulu, E. 2013. *Umhlaba Uyahlaba: The world is thorny*. Wandsbeck: Reach Publishers.
- Charmaz, K. 2006. Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative research. *Sage Publications Ltd, London*.
- Chen, M.K. 2013. The effect of language on Economic Behaviour: Evidence from Savings Rates, Health behaviours and Retirement Assets. *American Economic Review*, 103(2): 690-731.
- Chibba, M., and Luiz, J. M. 2011. Poverty, inequality and unemployment in South Africa: Context, issues and the way forward. *Economic Papers: A journal of applied economics and policy*, 30(3): 307-315.
- Chisholm, L. 1992. State policy and youth unemployment in South Africa, 1976-1992. Retrieved from <http://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10539/8527/ISS-80.pdf?sequence=1> [Accessed: 17 February].
- Choudhry, M., Marelli, E and Signorelli, M. 2012. Youth unemployment rate and impact of financial crises. *International Journal of Manpower*, 33(1): 76-95.
- Choudhry, M., Marelli, E. and Signorelli, M., 2010. The impact of financial crises on youth unemployment rate. *Quaderni del Dipartimento di Economia, Finanza e Statistica*, 79, 2010.
- Clark, B.R., 1986. The higher education system: Academic organization in cross-national perspective. University of California Press.
- Cloete, N. 2009. Responding to the educational needs of post-school youth: Determining the scope of the problem and developing a capacity-building model: African Minds.
- Converse, M. 2012. Philosophy of phenomenology: how understanding aids research. *Nurse researcher*, 20(1): 28-32.
- Coleman, J.S. 1988. Social capital in the creation of human capital. *The American Journal of sociology*, 94(1): 95-120.

- Collier, P. 1998. *Social Capital and Poverty*. World Bank.
- Collier, K.G., 2013. *The Social Purposes of Education: Personal and Social Values in Education*. Routledge.
- Cooper, D., 2013. The effect of unemployment duration on future earnings and other outcomes.
- Council of Higher Education annual report. 2013. Retrieved from: [http://www.che.ac.za/media\\_and\\_publications/annual-reports/annual-report-council-higher-education-20122013](http://www.che.ac.za/media_and_publications/annual-reports/annual-report-council-higher-education-20122013). [Accessed on the 25 September 2015].
- Cramm, J. M., Nieboer, A. P., Finkenflügel, H., and Lorenzo, T. 2012. Comparison of barriers to employment among youth with and without disabilities in South Africa. *Work: A Journal of Prevention, Assessment and Rehabilitation*, 46(1): 19-24.
- Creswell, J. W. 2012. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*: Sage publications.
- DeFillippi, R. J., and Arthur, M. B. 1994. The boundaryless career: A competency-based perspective. *Journal of organizational behavior*, 15(4): 307-324.
- De Witte, H., Rothmann, S. and Jackson, L.T., 2012. The psychological consequences of unemployment in South Africa. *South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences*, 15(3): 235-252.
- Dike, V.E. 2010. Review of Youth Unemployment, Underemployment and Poverty in Nigeria: Implications for Policy Makers. *African Journal of Business and Economic Research*, 34(1): 91-112.
- Dickens, W.T. and Lang, K., 1995. An analysis of the nature of unemployment in Sri Lanka. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 31(4): 620-636.
- Du Toit, C and van Tonder, J. 2009. South Africa's economic performance since 1994: Can we do better? In Parsons, R. (ed.). *Zumanomics which way to shared prosperity in South Africa?* Johannesburg: Jacana Media.
- Dworkin, S. L. 2012. Sample size policy for qualitative studies using in-depth interviews. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 41(6): 1319-1320.
- Eliška, S. and Zuzana, D., 2014. Modern Problems of the Integration of Graduates in the Czech Labour Market. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 143 (1) 1048-1054.

- Elo, S. and Kyngäs, H., 2008. The qualitative content analysis process. *Journal of advanced nursing*, 62(1):107-115.
- Erasmus, M., More, S., Mogoera, L., Ellis, W. and Serekoane, J. 2004. Appropriateness of education and training of school leavers and individuals that completed tertiary education. University of the Free State: Centre for Development Support.
- Falk, I. 2000. Human capital and social capital: what's the difference. *Adult Learning Commentary*, 28(8).
- Field, J., Schuller, T. and Baron, S. 2000. Social capital and human capital revisited. In *social capital: Critical Perspectives*. (Ed. T Schuller). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fisher, J. 2011. The therapeutic role of the mental health nurse: implications for the practice of psychological therapies, PhD thesis. Southern Cross University, Lismore, NSW.
- Fukuyama, F. 1995. *Trust: the social virtues and the creation of prosperity*. Hamish Hamilton: London.
- Florea, S. and Oprean, C., 2010. Towards an Integrated Project: Higher Education and Graduate Employment in Romania. *Management of Sustainable Development*, 2(2): 78-85.
- Freitas, H., Oliveira, M., Jenkins, M. and Popjoy, O. 1998. The Focus Group, a qualitative research method. ISRC Merrick School of Business, University of Baltimore, WP ISRC No. 010298.
- Gant, J., Ichniowski, C. and Shaw, K. 2002. Social Capital and organisational change in high involvement and traditional work organisations. *Journal of Economics and Management*, 11(2): 289- 328.
- Gbadamosi, G., and De Jager, J. 2009. 'What you see is what you get': service quality, students' perceptions and satisfaction at South African universities. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 23(5): 877-893.
- Generic Attributes of Graduates of the University of Sydney. 1997. Retrieved from <http://www.policy.rms.usyd.edu.au>. [Accessed on the 12 July 2015].
- Gibbs, J.T. and Bankhead, T. 2000. Joblessness and Hopelessness: *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in social work*, 9(1-2): 1-20.
- Gill, P., Stewart, K., Treasure, E., and Chadwick, B. 2008. Methods of data collection in qualitative research: interviews and focus groups. *British dental journal*, 204(6): 291-295.

- Giuseppe, R. and Ordine, P. 2010. Overeducation and unemployment spells' duration: *Procedia- Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 9(2010): 427-438.
- Gladwell, M., 2008. *Outliers: The story of success*. Hachette UK.
- Glewwe, P., 1987. *The Distribution of Welfare in the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire in 1985*. Development Research Department, World Bank.
- Goetz, G. and Mahoney, J., 2006. A tale of two cultures. *Political Analysis*, 14, 227-249.
- Gomez-Salvador, R. and Leiner-Killinger, N., 2008. *An analysis of youth unemployment in the euro area* (No. 89). European Central Bank.
- Görlich, D., Stepanok, I. and Al-Hussami, F., 2013. *Youth unemployment in Europe and the world: Causes, consequences and solutions* (No. 59). Kiel Policy Brief, IfW.
- Graneheim, U.H. and Lundman, B., 2004. Qualitative content analysis in nursing research: concepts, procedures and measures to achieve trustworthiness. *Nurse education today*, 24(2): 105-112.
- Griep, Y., Rothmann, S., Vleugels, W., and De Witte, H. 2012. Psychological dimensions of unemployment: A gender comparison between Belgian and South African unemployed. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 22(3): 303-313.
- Griesel, H. and Parker, B., 2009. Graduate attributes: A baseline study on South African graduates from the perspective of employers. Higher Education, South Africa.
- Grinevica, L., 2014. Analysis of theoretical and practical aspects of youth long-term unemployment in Latvia. In *Research for Rural Development. International Scientific Conference Proceedings (Latvia)*. Latvia University of Agriculture.
- Grix, J., 2010. *The foundations of research*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Green, F., McIntosh, S. and Vignoles, A., 2002. The utilization of education and skills: evidence from Britain. *The Manchester School*, 70(6): 792-811.
- Growth and development summit. 2003. Progress Report of 2007, Johannesburg: National Economic Development and labour Council.
- Gutierrez, P. M., Brenner, L. A., Rings, J. A., Devore, M. D., Kelly, P. J., Staves, P. J., ... and Kaplan, M. S. 2013. A Qualitative Description of Female Veterans' Deployment-Related Experiences and Potential Suicide Risk Factors. *Journal of clinical psychology*, 69(9): 923-935.

- Hancock, B., Ockleford, E., and Windridge, K. (2009). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. Yorkshire: The NIHR Research Design Service for Yorkshire and the Humber.
- Harvey, L. 2001. Defining and measuring employability. *Quality in Higher Education*, 7(2): 97-109.
- Hinks, T. 2008. Poverty, networks and location: the determinants of job-search in South Africa. *Journal of International Development*, 20(2): 117-131.
- Hilson, G. and Osei, L. 2014. Tackling youth unemployment in sub-Saharan Africa: Is there a role of artisanal and small-scale mining? *Futures*, 62(2014): 83-94.
- Huberman, A. M., and Miles, M. B. 1994. *Data management and analysis methods*.
- Human Sciences Research Council 2005. *Where we're at and where we're going*. Pretoria: HSRC Press.
- Hurt, R.L. and McLaughlin, E.J., 2012. An applied introduction to qualitative research methods in academic advising. *NACADA Journal*, 32(1): 63-71.
- Hussainat, M.M., Ghnimat, Q.M. and Al-dlaeen, M.A.R., 2013. The Impact of Unemployment on Young People in the Jordanian Community: A Case Study from Unemployed Perspective. *Asian Social Science*, 9(1): 155.
- Hussmanns, R., 2007. Measurement of employment, unemployment and underemployment—current international standards and issues in their application. [Retrieved 6 December, 2010].
- Ingham-Broomfield, R., 2015. *A nurses' guide to Qualitative research*.
- International Labour Organisation. 1998. *World of work: The magazine of the ILO*.
- International Labour Organisation. 2002. *Facts on youth unemployment*.
- International Labour Organisation. 2010. *Global Employment Trends for youth. Special issues on the impact of the global economic crisis on youth*. Geneva: International Labour Office.
- International Labour Organisation. 2013. *Global Employment Trends*.
- Inkeles, A. 2000. Measuring social capital and its consequences. *Policy Science*, 33(3-4): 245-268.
- Jenkins, E.K., Johnson, J.L., Bungay, V., Kothari, A., and Saewyc, E.M. 2015. *Divided and disconnected- an examination of youths' experiences with*

emotional distress within the context the context of their everyday lives: *Health and Place*, 35(2015): 105-112.

Johnson, B. and Christensen, L., 2008. *Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches*. Sage.

Juarez, M.M., Clares, P.M. and Cuso, J.P. 2014. Efficient strategies for university graduates accessing their first job: A review of insertion reports. *Procedia-Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 139(2014): 395-402.

Kabaklarli, E.S.R.A., Hazel, P. and Buluş, A.B.D.Ü.L.K.A.D.I.R., 2011, August. Economic Determinants Of Turkish Youth Unemployment Problem: Co Integration Analysis. In *International Conference On Applied Economics–ICOAE* (Vol. 267, p. 272).

Karl, B. 2012. Unemployment in Europe: Young People Affected Much Harder than adults. *DIW Economic Bulletin*, 2(9): 76-95.

Kelly, E. and McGuinness, S. 2015. Impact of the Great Recession on unemployed and NEET individuals' labour market transitions in Ireland: *Economic Systems*, 39(2015): 59-71.

Keogh, D., and Lambert, V. 2014. Collaborative Learning: A Qualitative Descriptive Study of Undergraduate Student Nurses' Experiences of Receiving a Group-Mark for Modular Assessment. *AISHE-J: The All Ireland Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 6(3).

Khan, S., Murray, R.P. and Barnes, G.E., 2002. A structural equation model of the effect of poverty and unemployment on alcohol abuse. *Addictive behaviors*, 27(3): 405-423.

Kilpatrick, S. 2000. How social capital facilitates learning outcomes for small family businesses. University of Tasmania.

Knabe, A. and Rätzl, S., 2011. Scarring or Scaring? The psychological impact of past unemployment and future unemployment risk. *Economica*, 78(310): 283-293.

Knabe, A. and Rätzl, S., 2011. Quantifying the psychological costs of unemployment: the role of permanent income. *Applied Economics*, 43(21): 2751-2763.

Knabe, A. and Rätzl, S., 2010. Better an insecure job than no job at all? Unemployment, job insecurity and subjective wellbeing. *Economics Bulletin*, 30(3): 2486-2494.

Kraak, A. 2003. HRD and the skills crisis: Human Resource Development Review 2003: Education, Employment and skills in South Africa.

- Kraak, A. 2010. The collapse of the graduate labour market in South Africa: evidence from recent studies. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, 15(1): 81-102.
- Kraak, A. 2013. State failure in dealing with the NEET problem in South Africa: which way forward? *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, 18(1-2): 77-97.
- Krueger, R. A., and Casey, M. A. 2002. Designing and conducting focus group interviews. *Social Analysis, Selected Tools and Techniques*", Krueger, RA, MA Casey, J. Donner, S. Kirsch and JN Maack, 4-23.
- Kruss, G. (2004). Employment and employability: Expectations of higher education responsiveness in South Africa. *Journal of Education Policy*, 19(6): 673-689.
- Kwabena, A.K., and Gyekye, K.B. 2011. Determinants of Unemployment in Limpopo Province in South Africa: Exploratory Studies: *Journal of Emerging Trends in Economics and Management Sciences*, 2(1): 54-61.
- Kyei, K.A. and Gyekye, K.B., 2011. Determinants of unemployment in Limpopo province in South Africa: exploratory studies. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Economics and Management Sciences*, 2(1): 54-61.
- Kyyra, T., Parrota, P. and Rosholm, P. 2013. The effect of receiving supplementary UI benefits on unemployment duration: *Labour Economics*, 21(2013): 122-133.
- Lakshman, W.D., 2004. Youth unemployment: An exploratory study. *Economic Policy in Sri Lanka: issues and debates*, pp.273-299.
- Letseka, M., Cosser, M., Breier, M. and Visser, M. 2010. Student Retention and Graduate Destination: *Higher education & labour market access & success. South Africa: Human Sciences Research Council*.
- Lewin, T. and Mawoyo, M., 2014. Student access and success: Issues and interventions in South African universities.
- Lewis-Beck, M. S., Bryman, A., and Liao, T. F. 2013. *Encyclopedia of Social Science Research Methods*: SAGE Publications, Inc. Available: <http://knowledge.sagepub.com/view/socialscience/SAGE.xml>. [Last accessed: 9th July 2015].
- Li, S., Whalley, J., and Xing, C. 2014. China's higher education expansion and unemployment of college graduates: *China Economic Review*, 30(2014): 567-582.

- Li, T. and Zhang, J., 2010. What determines employment opportunity for college graduates in China after higher education reform?. *China Economic Review*, 21(1): 38-50.
- Lima, L. 2015. Who Recruits and How? The Economic Expertise of Youth and Integration Professionals: *Sociologie du travail*, 57(2015): 23-41.
- Liu, K., Salvanes, K.G. and Sørensen, E.Ø., 2015. Good skills in bad times: Cyclical skill mismatch and the long-term effects of graduating in a recession. *European Economic Review*.
- Locke, C., and Lintelo, D. J. 2012. Young Zambians 'waiting' for opportunities and 'working towards' living well: life course and aspiration in youth transitions. *Journal of International Development*, 24(6): 777-794.
- Lollo, E. 2013. Mapping embeddedness: A multidimensional index of social capital using the Indonesia family life survey. *Economic Development and Cultural change*, 10, 241-263.
- Luborsky, M. R., and Rubinstein, R. L. 1995. Sampling in Qualitative Research Rationale, Issues, and Methods. *Research on aging*, 17(1): 89-113.
- Lundall, P. 2003. Sector Education Training Authorities and the Delivery of Training: Preliminary remarks on the New Skills Dispensation in South Africa. Cape Town: Development Policy Research Unit.
- Maharasoa, M., and Hay, D. 2001. Higher education and graduate employment in South Africa. *Quality in Higher Education*, 7(2): 139-147.
- Marais, H. 2001. South Africa: Limits to change. The political economy of transformation. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. London: Zed Books; Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press.
- Marginean, S. 2014. Youth Unemployment in Romania: Post-Crisis Challenges. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 16(2014): 613-620.
- Marshall, M.N., 1996. Sampling for qualitative research. *Family practice*, 13(6): 522-526.
- Marshall, B., Cardon, P., Poddar, A., and Fontenot, R. 2013. Does sample size matter in qualitative research?: A review of qualitative interviews in IS research. *Journal of Computer Information Systems*, 54(1): 11-22.
- Mandiwana, G. 2016. Beware of varsity degrees that will leave you unemployable. News24. Retrieved from <http://m.news24.com/news24/SouthAfrica/News/beware-varsity-degrees->



[that-will-leave-you-unemployable-manana-20160202](#). [Accessed on 03 February 2016].

- Mantashe, G. 2006. **FASTRACKING JIPSA: DELIVER CRITICAL SKILLS**. Johannesburg: Development Bank of South Africa.
- Mason, G., Williams, G. and Cranmer, S., 2009. Employability skills initiatives in higher education: what effects do they have on graduate labour market outcomes?. *Education Economics*, 17(1): 1-30.
- Mason, M., 2010, August. Sample size and saturation in PhD studies using qualitative interviews. In *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 11(3).
- Masoudi, R., Abedi, H. A., Abedi, P., and Mohammadianinejad, S. E. 2014. Iranian family caregivers' challenges and issues in caring of multiple sclerosis patients: A descriptive explorative qualitative study. *Iranian journal of nursing and midwifery research*, 19(4): 416.
- Mavromaras, K., McGuinness, S. and Fok, Y.K., 2009. Assessing the incidence and wage effects of overskilling in the Australian labour market. *Economic Record*, 85(268): 60-72.
- Mavromaras, K., McGuinness, S., O'Leary, N., Sloane, P. and Fok, Y.K., 2009. *Job mismatches and labour market outcomes* (No. 314). ESRI working paper.
- McArdle, S., Waters, L., Briscoe, J.P. and Hall, D.T.T., 2007. Employability during unemployment: Adaptability, career identity and human and social capital. *Journal of vocational behaviour*, 71(2): 247-264.
- McCord, A. 2005. A Critical Evaluation of Training within the South African national Public Works Programme. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, 57(4): 565-588.
- McGuinness, S., 2006. Overeducation in the labour market. *Journal of economic surveys*, 20(3): 387-418.
- McGrath, S. 2004. **Shifting understanding of skills in South Africa: Overcoming the historical imprint of a low skills regime**. Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Melchiorre, J.L. 2015. The time of youth: work, social change, and politics in Africa. *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 49(1): 246-248.
- Mendez-Shannon, E. C. 2010. "We will always be in the shadows"-a qualitative descriptive study of undocumented Latino immigrants surviving in the United States (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Iowa).

- Miles, R., 2002. Employment and unemployment in Jordan: The importance of the gender system. *World Development*, 30(3): 413-427.
- Miller, C. and Porter, K.E. 2007. Barriers to employment among out-of-school youth: *Children and Youth Services Review*, 29(2007): 572-587.
- Moleke, P. 2006. Finding work: Employment experiences of South African graduates: HSRC Press.
- Moleke, P., 2005. *Inequalities in higher education and the structure of the labour market* (Vol. 1). HSRC press.
- Moustakas, C., 1994. *Phenomenological research methods*. Sage Publications.
- Morrell, S.L., Taylor, R.J. and Kerr, C.B., 1998. Jobless. Unemployment and young people's health. *The Medical Journal of Australia*, 168(5): 236-240.
- Mtembu, V.N., and Govender, L.N. 2015. Perceptions of employers and unemployed youth on the proposed youth employment wage subsidy incentive in South Africa: A KwaZulu-Natal study. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, 13(1): 635- 644
- Mullahy, J. and Sindelar, J. 1996. Employment, unemployment, and problem drinking: *Journal of Health Economics*, 15(1996): 409-434.
- Munce, S. E., Webster, F., Fehlings, M. G., Straus, S. E., Jang, E., and Jaglal, S. B. 2014. Perceived facilitators and barriers to self-management in individuals with traumatic spinal cord injury: a qualitative descriptive study. *BMC neurology*, 14(1): 48.
- National Treasury. 2011. Confronting youth unemployment: Policy options for South Africa. *Discussion Paper*.
- National Youth Policy 2020. 2015. We are generation2020: We don't want a hand-out, we want a hand up.
- Naong, M.N., 2011. Promotion of entrepreneurship education-A remedy to graduates and youth unemployment-A Theoretical Perspective. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 28(3): 181-189.
- Natrass, N. 2002. Should youth unemployment be targeted as part of a comprehensive welfare policy in South Africa? *Social Dynamics*, 28(2): 207 - 236.
- Ndweni, B., Omarjee, L., and Mulaudzi, S. 2015. Finweek: Young, black and angry.

- Neergaard, M. A., Olesen, F., Andersen, R. S., and Sondergaard, J. 2009. Qualitative description-the poor cousin of health research? *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 9(1): 52.
- Neil, L. and Murray, L. (2014). New evidence on the subjective well-being and the definition of unemployment in South Africa: *Development Southern Africa*, 31(1): 85-105.
- Ntinga, S. N., and Maree, J. E. 2015. Living with the late effects of cervical cancer treatment: a descriptive qualitative study at an academic hospital in Gauteng: original research. *Southern African Journal of Gynaecological Oncology*, 7(1): 21-26.
- Nudzor, H., 2010. Depicting young people by what they are not: conceptualisation and usage of NEET as a deficit label. *Educational Futures*, 2(2): 12-25.
- Olaniyan, D., and Okemakinde, T. 2008. Human capital theory: Implications for educational development. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(5): 479-483.
- Oluwajodu, F., Blaauw, D., and Kleynhans, E.P.J 2005. Graduate unemployment in South Africa: Perspectives from the banking sector. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, 13(1): 521-537.
- Oluwajodu, F., Blaauw, D., Greyling, L. and Kleynhans, E.P., 2015. Graduate unemployment in South Africa: Perspectives from the banking sector. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, 13(1): 1-9.
- Omery, A., 1983. Moral development: A differential evaluation of dominant models. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 6(1): 1-17.
- Oppenheimer, J. and Spicer, M., 2011. Creating employment in Africa. *Putting Young Africans to Work Addressing Africa's youth unemployment crisis*, p.14.
- Patton, M., and Cochran, M. 2002. A guide to using qualitative research methodology. *Medecins Sans Frontiers*. Retrieved February, 14, 2014.
- Polit, D.F. and Beck, C.T., 2013. *Essentials of nursing research: Appraising evidence for nursing practice*. Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
- Polkinghorne, D.E., 1989. Phenomenological research methods. In *Existential-phenomenological perspectives in psychology* (pp. 41-60). Springer US.
- Population Reference Bureau. 2013. World Population Data Sheet. Retrieved from [http://www.prb.org/pdf13/2013-population-data-sheet\\_eng.pdf](http://www.prb.org/pdf13/2013-population-data-sheet_eng.pdf). [Accessed on 06 August 2015].

- Presidential Review Committee: State Owned Enterprises. Sustainable Human Capital Development and Catalyst of scarce skills: D&TTOR4.
- Rajasekar, S., Philominathan, P., and Chinnathambi, V. 2006. Research methodology. *arXiv preprint physics/0601009*.
- Rama, M., 1998. How bad is unemployment in Tunisia? Assessing labour market efficiency in a developing country. *The World Bank research observer*, 13(1): 59-77.
- Ranchhod, V. 2010. Labour force and participation and unemployment in South Africa: evidence from wave 1 of the national income dynamics study. *J.stud.Econ.Econometrics*, 34(3): 111-125.
- Rankin, N., Schöer, V., Sebastiao, C. and van Walbeek, C., 2012. Predictors of academic performance: National Senior Certificate versus National Benchmark Test. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 26(3).
- Refrigeri, L. and Aleandri, G. 2013. Educational policies and youth unemployment: *Procedia- Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 93(2013): 1263-1268.
- Roberts, D., 2008. Thinking globally, acting locally—institutionalizing climate change at the local government level in Durban, South Africa. *Environment and Urbanization*, 20(2): 521-537.
- Robertson, K. 2015. I urge employers to hire more young workers. *Director*, 68(6): 23-25.
- Robison, L.J., Schmid, A.A. and Siles, M.E. 2002. Is social capital really Capital? *Review of Social Economy*, 60(1): 1-24.
- Robst, J., 2007. Education and job match: The relatedness of college major and work. *Economics of Education Review*, 26(4): 397-407.
- Rose, G. and Ordine, P., 2010. Overeducation and unemployment spells' duration. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 9 (2010): 427-438.
- Sale, J.E., Lohfeld, L.H. and Brazil, K., 2002. Revisiting the quantitative-qualitative debate: Implications for mixed-methods research. *Quality and quantity*, 36(1): 43-53.
- Sandelowski, M. 2010. What's in a name? Qualitative description revisited. *Research in nursing & health*, 33(1): 77-84.
- Santos, M. (2010). From Training to Labour Market. Holocletic Model.
- Schaufeli, W.B. 1997. Youth unemployment and mental health: some Dutch findings. *Journal of Adolescence*, 20(1997): 281-292.

- Schucher, G., 2014. "*A Ticking "Time Bomb"? Youth Employment Problems in China*," *GIGA Working Paper Series 258*, GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies.
- Schmid, A.A. 2000. Affinity as social Capitalists: Its role in development. *The Journal of Socio-economics*, 29(2): 159.
- Schöer, V., Rankin, N., and Roberts, G. 2014. Accessing the first job in a slack labour market: Job matching in South Africa. *Journal of International Development*, 26(1): 1-22.
- Scott, I. 2008. *First year experience as terrain of failure or platform for future development? Critical choices for higher education*. Paper presented at the 1st Southern African Conference on the First-Year Experience, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa.
- Scott, I. 2009. First-year experience as terrain of failure or platform for development? Critical choices for higher education. *Focus on first-year success: Perspectives emerging from South Africa and beyond*, 17-35.
- Seers, D., 1971. Matching Employment Opportunities and Expectations. *International Labour Office, Geneva*.
- Sieversten, H.H. 2015. Local unemployment and the timing of post-secondary schooling: *Economics of Education Review*, 50(2015): 17-28.
- Sirat, M. and Shuib, M., 2012. Employability of graduates in Malaysia. *Graduate Employability in Asia UNESCO*, pp.24-38.
- Smith, J.C., 2011. The Ins and Outs of UK Unemployment\*. *The Economic Journal*, 121(552): 402-444.
- Smith, S.S. and Kulynych, J. 2002. It may be social but why is it capital? The social construction of social capital and the politics of language, *Politics and Society*, 30(1): 149-186.
- Snijders, T.A.B. 1999. Prologue to the measurement of social capital. *The Tocqueville review*, 20 (1999): 27-44.
- South African National Treasury. 2011. Confronting youth unemployment: Policy options for South Africa, *Discussion Paper*.
- Sobotkova, E. and Dohnalova, Z. 2014. Modern Problems of the Integration of Graduates in the Czech Labour Market: Procedia- *Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 143(2014), 1048-1054.

- Standing, G., Sender, J. and Weeks, J., 1996. *Restructuring the labour market: the South African challenge*. International Labour Organization.
- Starks, H., and Trinidad, S. B. 2007. Choose your method: A comparison of phenomenology, discourse analysis, and grounded theory. *Qualitative health research*, 17(10): 1372-1380.
- Statistics South Africa 2013. National and provincial labour market: Youth. Quarter 1, 2008-Quarter 1, 2014, Pretoria, South Africa: StatsSA. Retrieved from <http://beta2.statssa.gov.za/publications/P02114.2/P02114.22014.pdf> [Accessed 20 April 2015]
- Statistics South Africa. 2014. National and Provincial labour market: Youth. Quarter 1: 2008-Quarter 1: 2014, 2014. Statistics South Africa, Pretoria (Statistical release P0211.4.2).
- Statistics South Africa, 2015. National and Provincial Labour Market: Youth. Quarter 1: 2008- 2015. Statistics South Africa, Pretoria (Statistical release P0211.4.2).
- Statistics South Africa. 2015. Quarterly Labour Force Survey. Quarter 2: 2015. Statistics South Africa, Pretoria (Statistical release P0211).
- Strauss, A. and Corbin, J., 1994. Grounded theory methodology. *Handbook of qualitative research*, pp.273-285.
- Stubbs, M. J. 2008. Qualitative description of the adult patient experience of cancer-related cachexia (CRC): a pilot study: a thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Nursing, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.
- Sullivan-Bolyai, S., Bova, C., and Harper, D. 2005. Developing and refining interventions in persons with health disparities: The use of qualitative description. *Nursing outlook*, 53(3): 127-133.
- Theresa, L. and Cramm, J.M., 2012. Access to livelihood assets among youth with and without disabilities in South Africa: Implications for health professional education. *SAMJ: South African Medical Journal*, 102(6): 578-581.
- Thorne, S., 2000. Data analysis in qualitative research. *Evidence based nursing*, 3(3): 68-70.
- Uddin, P.S.O and Osemengbe, O. 2013. Causes, Effects and Solutions to Youth Unemployment Problems in Nigeria. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Economics and Management Sciences*, 4(4): 397-402.

- UNESCO. 2015. Making Education a priority in the Post 2015 Development Agenda: Report of the Global Thematic Consultation on education in the 2015 Development Agenda. Available at: [en.unesco.org/post2015/sites/post2015/files/Making\\_education\\_a\\_Priority\\_in\\_the\\_Post-2015\\_Development\\_Agenda.pdf](http://en.unesco.org/post2015/sites/post2015/files/Making_education_a_Priority_in_the_Post-2015_Development_Agenda.pdf). [Accessed: 28 September 2015].
- United Nations Population Fund. 2014. World population report. Retrieved from <http://eeca.unfpa.org/publications/state-world-population-2014-report>. [Accessed on 19 November 2015].
- Urdal, H. 2008. Population, Resources, and Political Violence A Subnational Study of India, 1956-2002. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 52(4): 590-617.
- Vakalisa, N.C.G. 2005. Unemployment in South Africa on the rise: Are schools and universities to blame? *Africa Education Review*, 2(1): 40-58.
- van Aardt, I. 2012. A review of youth unemployment in South Africa, 2004 to 2011: *South African Journal of Labour Relations*, 36(1): 54-65.
- Vasile, V. 2012. Crisis impact on employment and mobility model of the Romanian university graduates: *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 3(2012): 315-324.
- Vasile, V. and Anghel, I. 2015. The educational level as a risk factor for youth exclusion from the labour market: *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 22(2015): 64-71.
- Yilmaz, K. 2013. Comparison of Quantitative and Qualitative Research Traditions: epistemological, theoretical, and methodological differences. *European Journal of Education*, 48(2): 311-325.
- Weaver, K. and Olson, J.K., 2006. Understanding paradigms used for nursing research. *Journal of advanced nursing*, 53(4): 459-469.
- Weir-Smith, G. 2014. An overview of the geographic data of unemployment in South Africa: *South African Geographical Journal*, 96(2): 134-152.
- Winter, I.C. ed., 2000. *Social capital and public policy in Australia*. Australian Institute of Family Studies.
- Zuckerman, A. 2003. The challenge of creating a development approach to youth unemployment. A paper prepared for the William T. Grant Forum and reforming Publicly UYF Youth systems in New York. On March 2003. Available from [www.aspeninstitute.org/sites/](http://www.aspeninstitute.org/sites/) [accessed: 06 August 2015].

## **Appendix A**

### Interview Guide

What type of higher institution did you attend and what is the name of the institution?

What is the highest level of your Education?

What is the Field of your Study?

Have you received career guidance before?

When did you complete your course and how long have you been unemployed?

What challenges do you face in searching for a job?

How has being unemployed affected you?

What informal strategies do you use to seek employment?

What formal strategies do you use to seek employment?

Do you think your qualification is useful in relation to other qualifications?

Did you have practical work or gain skills during the course of your qualification?

Can you share with me the bearing of unemployment on you, family and your relationship with other significant people?

Do you think your experience would be different if you were in another province?

Do you think your experience would be different if you have another higher qualification?



What is your perspective of employment and employability?

What do think are the causes of unemployment among youth/ graduates?

What are your needs as a young person in South Africa?

What do you think needs to be done to support graduates without jobs in South Africa?

Clarifying questions and probes:

Can you tell me something more about?

What do you mean by?

Would you please give me an example?

Thank You for your participation.

## Appendix B

### Informed Consent Document

Dear Participant,

My name is Paballo Moerane (214563366). I am a Masters candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College Campus. The title of my research is: *The experiences of unemployed graduates in Durban, South Africa.*

The aim of the study is to explore and describe the graduate youth's experience of unemployment. I am interested in interviewing you so as to share your experiences and observations on the subject matter.

Please note that:

- The information that you provide will be used for scholarly research only.
- Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have a choice to participate, not to participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalised for taking such an action.
- Your views in this interview will be presented anonymously. Neither your name nor identity will be disclosed in any form in the study.
- The interview will take about 30-45 minutes but interviews would not be terminated in the interest of time if you still have something to say beyond the estimated time

- The record as well as other items associated with the interview will be held in a password-protected file accessible only to myself and my supervisor. After a period of 5 years, in line with the rules of the university, it will be disposed by shredding and burning.

- If you agree to participate please sign the declaration attached to this statement (a separate sheet will be provided for signatures)

I can be contacted at: School of Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College Campus, Durban. Email: [pabi.moerane@gmail.com](mailto:pabi.moerane@gmail.com)

Cell: 071 917 7271.

My supervisor is Dr. Sagie Narsiah who is located at the School of Social Sciences, Howard College Campus, Durban, of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Contact details: email: [Narsiahi@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:Narsiahi@ukzn.ac.za). Phone: 031 260 2470.

The Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee contact details are as follows: Ms Phumelele Ximba, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Research Office, Email: [ximbap@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:ximbap@ukzn.ac.za), Phone number +27312603587.

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

## DECLARATION

I..... (*full names of participant*) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire. I understand the intention of the research. I hereby agree to participate.

I consent / do not consent to have this interview recorded (if applicable)

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....  
...



# Ethical Clearance Certificate



14 October 2015

Ms Paballo Moerane 214563366  
School of Social Sciences  
Howard College Campus

Dear Ms Moerane

Protocol reference number: HSS/1142/015M  
Project title: A study of graduates' experiences of unemployment in Durban, South Africa.

**Expedited Approval**

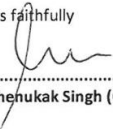
In response to your application dated 07 August 2015, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

  
.....  
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/px

cc Supervisor: Dr Sagie Narsiah  
cc Academic Leader Research: Professor Sabine Marschall  
cc School Administrators: Ms Nancy Mudau, Mr Siphesihle Khanyile

---

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)





Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: [ximbap@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:ximbap@ukzn.ac.za) / [snymanm@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:snymanm@ukzn.ac.za) / [mohunp@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:mohunp@ukzn.ac.za)

Website: [www.ukzn.ac.za](http://www.ukzn.ac.za)

  
1910 - 2010  
100 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville