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Title:

**Employment and social inclusion: Implications for young
adults in Swaziland**

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University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa

DECLARATION

Submitted in fulfilment / partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology, in the Graduate Programme in the School of Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

I, Thandi F. Khumalo, declare that

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Thandi F. Khumalo

Student Name

09 June, 2016

Date

Professor Simon Burton

Name of Supervisor

Signature

Dedication

I dedicate my thesis to my dear parents, my daughter, my partner, and my family.

A special feeling of gratitude goes to my loving parents, the late Mordecai A.S. Khumalo and Florinah B. Khumalo whose words of encouragement and push for tenacity ring in my ears.

My daughter, Nontobeko L. Macia for her encouragement, support and endless supply of energy drinks. I thank God that you were home baby.

My partner, who has never left my side, and is very special and loving. You have been my best cheerleader from registration and throughout the PhD journey.

I also dedicate this dissertation to my siblings and church family who have supported me throughout the process. I will always appreciate all they have done.

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I would like to acknowledge and thank my employer, The University of Swaziland and my colleagues in the Department of Sociology and Social Work for allowing me to take time off to conduct my research and providing any assistance requested.

I would like to particularly acknowledge and thank the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa for awarding me free tuition to study at the university and conduct this three year research.

May I also extend my gratitude to the twenty lovely young people who were participants of this research. You donated your precious time to share your lived experiences in stories about employment. I feel particularly sad to note that one female participant died untimely when she was murdered in cold blood at a leisure centre where she had gone out with friends. I hope that her dear soul will rest in eternal peace. I am most grateful to you all for the quality of this research was richly enhanced by your experiences and the ability to share your stories.

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List of Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AGOA	America Growth Opportunities Act
AfDP	African Development Bank
ASIB	Australian Social Inclusion Board
CSO	Central Statistics Office
COMESA	Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
ECOS	Examinations Council of Swaziland
ECCD	Early Childhood Care Development
ERS	Economic Recovery Strategy
ESRA	Economic Social Reform Agenda
EU	European Union
FANRPAN	Food Agricultural and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network
FAO	Food Agricultural Organisation
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate

HDI	Human Development Index
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IGCSE	International General Certificate of Secondary Education
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ISASA	Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa
JC	Junior Certificate
LED	Local Economic Development
MAP	Millennium Action Programme
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MINDS	Mandela Institute of Development Studies
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
MOLSS	Ministry of Labour and Social Security
MOSCYA	Ministry of Sport Culture and Youth Affairs
NAPs	National Action Plan
NDS	National Development Strategy
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NHDR	National Human Development Report
NORC	National Opinion Research Center
NUPE	Non-formal Upper Primary Education

NQF	National Qualification Framework
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PRSAP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Action Plan
SACU	Southern African Customs Union
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADP	Swaziland Agricultural Development Programme
SDHS	Swaziland Demographic Health Survey
SGCSE	Swaziland General Certificate of Secondary Education
SHIES	Swaziland Household Income and Expenditure Survey
SILFS	Swaziland Integrated Labour Force Survey
SLFS	Swaziland Labour Force Statistics
SIOP	Single Integrated Operational Plan
SNL	Swazi Nation Land
SNPF	Swaziland National Provident Fund
SNYC	Swaziland National Youth Council
SNYP	Swaziland National Youth Policy
SPEED	Smart Programme for Economic Development
SPC	Swaziland Primary Certificate
SWEEP	Swaziland Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Programme

UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
US	United States
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VOCTIM	Vocational and Commercial Training Institute in Manzini
YEF	Youth Enterprise Fund
YEN	Youth Employment Network

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Abstract

This research analysed experiences of young people about their employment. The aims of this thesis were; to explore experiences of young people in the workplace; and to discover truths about the outcomes of employment. The motivation for the research came from seeing young people struggle to get that first job breakthrough to the extent of compromising their qualifications for any available job, including landing in precarious jobs without suitable contracts, susceptible to manipulation. The motivation for my research was interaction with former students and relatives battling to transition from training to work careers whilst dealing with the rising expectations of society in their transition to adulthood.

Methodologically, the study utilised a qualitative approach using in-depth interviews to collect primary data. Theoretically, the study was oriented around Bourdieu's theory of practice and Mills' sociological imagination. The study makes the basic assumption that employment is not only an individual personal experience requiring personal solutions, but it is also a public issue requiring public-political solutions. This research addresses two major issues. Firstly, to record the experiences of young people with employment and provide a voice for young people to share their stories of employment. Secondly, is to contribute to the literature, given the paucity of studies specifically addressing youth employment within the field dominated by unemployment literature.

Research findings indicate that employment has positive outcomes and is also filled with challenges. Findings indicate a close relationship between education attainment and access to employment, education is still an important part of human capital. Employment is a life changing experience for young people, having a liberating effect that ensures independence from parents and partners, guaranteeing affordability of basic needs and luxuries, providing an opportunity to settle down and start a family, and enabling integration and participation in society. Challenges include; entering the job market and placed in jobs matching training, delayed entry into the job market encouraging volunteer work as a stepping stone to better jobs, and skills transfer problems whereby the future workforce' readiness is put to question. Interestingly, preference for employment supersedes entrepreneurial choices, yet the government and other key stakeholders view entrepreneurship as an alternative to a bulging labour market. The study recommends further research in the activity of young people. The scholarship failure to produce literature on young people's activity has caused paucity in this knowledge base.

Keywords: habitus, social fields, capitals, qualitative, employment, young people, youth, young adult, mismatch, skills transfer, volunteerism, youth bulge, labour market, career, entrepreneurship, social inclusion, participation.

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This chapter presents the background of the study, problem and its significance, and the scope and limitations of the study.

1.1 Introduction

Each time I read about employment, unemployment issues take prominence in the discussion (cp USAID, (2005); International Labour Organisation (ILO), (2010); Brixiova et al., (2013); UNDP, (2013); Khumalo and Eita, (2015). My perception is that very limited stories have been told about young people in the workplace (cp Brixiova et. al, 2013). A large percentage of my time while conducting this research was taken up by searching for relevant and timely literature on employed young adults.

This revelation added to my motivation to pursue the research and further unveiled the opportunity to tell the stories of young adults in employment. My perception is that many truths still need to be uncovered about the experiences of employed young adults, ranging from finding appropriate work to career progression and advancement.

Over twenty years of teaching young people at the university and seeing them struggle to get their first break into employment was concerning and this motivated me to philosophise about this matter. Anecdotal evidence and evidence from ILO (2010, 2013) indicate that the first jobs held by most young people signify the desperation of getting that first job no matter what it is and regardless of preferred job location. ILO (2013:12) noted that “Y[y]outh are increasingly employed in non-

standard jobs, including temporary employment and part-time work. Non-standard work may be beneficial to workers if such work reflects preferences to combine work with other activities including study or care work. Demand for nonstandard work can be induced by the need of firms to regulate the size of their workforce in accordance with the business cycle or to deal with peaks in demand during the weekends or after regular working hours. Part-time work [and volunteer work] can also serve as a stepping stone to a full-time position. Similarly, temporary employment may be a preferred option when planning future activities”.

In addition, young people in jobs have had tough first breaks regarding vulnerability to negotiate better contracts with some employers (cp MINDS, 2014). Anecdotal evidence also indicates that some young workers work without contracts and get maltreated in the process. However, these assertions need to be supported by empirical evidence, including the assertions that some spend months without getting the first pay cheque and terms and conditions of service are changed anytime at the will of the employer.

There is a [close relationship] between poor youth employment outcomes and inequality (Morsy, 2012) making employment an important indicator of status and achievement in society (cp Morsy, 2012). Thus young people find it compelling to comply with this societal expectation. As such young people are looking for employment to fit in (Op cit). Nevertheless, employment creation is proving to be regressive in light of the dwindling Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) that is shrinking the labour demand (ILO, 2012). Entrepreneurship training has become an important element of job creation [and is increasingly being encouraged by tertiary training institutions in the country] but it has had negligible effects in increasing job opportunities (ILO, 2013). This is partly due to too much reliance on

formal employment and using it as a measure for success (UNDP, 2012). Entrepreneurship has been viewed as a fall-back position to unemployment and has not been targeted on its own merit as a form of employment, thus the attempt by training institutions to change the perceptions and mind-set of young graduates (Op cit).

It is important to study the situation of young people separately from the general working population because their situations differ. Young people form the majority of the total population and this will significantly affect labour demand in Swaziland (SILFS, 2010).

1.1.1 Why employed young people?

Employment of young people regardless of education is a high priority concern for Swaziland where approximately 55% and 15% without primary education are inactive and unemployed respectively; 54% and 15% with primary education; 47% and 15% with lower secondary; 32% and 20% with higher secondary; and 24% and 6% with tertiary education are inactive and unemployed respectively (CSO, 2007). These figures indicate that those with tertiary education who comprise my sampled study population are not adversely affected by inactivity and unemployment yet. However, even 6% should be an indication of a looming problem that requires strategies and programming. In a study by Mavundla et. al. (2015) on youth and public policy in Swaziland, they found that already in some specialisations there is an over production of graduates that is resulting in graduates queuing for the few jobs available. "Less qualified young people often work in blue collar jobs attracting low pay and poor working conditions. They join the ranks of the working poor early in life and remain there for a long time. Employment issues of young people do not only

affect their welfare but in the long run the health of the economy as a whole” (Swaziland Government, 2010-2014).

1.2 Background and outline of the research problem

As a sociologist I am sometimes swayed by structural functionalist thinking and to a certain extent agree with Bourdieu’s (1986) idea of habitus. I recall growing up as a child in the late 1960s and as a young adult in the 1980s my parents, extended kin, relatives and family friends’ preferences for a “good wife material”. She had to be a teacher or a nurse. The women likewise preferred “bureaucrats” civil servants or teachers as husbands (anecdotal evidence).

Sociologists refer to the idea above as occupational prestige, meaning the consensual nature of rating a job based on the belief of its worthiness. The term prestige itself refers to the admiration and respect that a particular occupation holds in a society (Hauser, 2001). There is evidence from the United States National Opinion Research Centre (NORC, 1989) of a list of occupations by prestige. In a 2007 Harris Poll 1,010 U.S. adults suggested that occupational prestige is linked to perceived impact on welfare to the extent that even some well-paid positions such as actors brokers and bankers were ranked lower because of their professions’ impact on welfare” (Harris, 2007). A similar mentality exists in various countries and Swaziland is no different.

Anecdotal evidence also indicates that teacher, nurse, and civil servant positions were the socially admired positions in those times and adults of middle and higher social status got societal approval for their choice of a partner. Similarly,

family wellbeing and welfare defined these choices. My perception of these preferences is that they were influenced by income and job stability which in turn positions one in social status, providing a sense of belonging and ultimately social inclusion (Bourdieu, 1986). According to Bourdieu (Op cit) “how one chooses to present one’s status and distances oneself from lower groups is hypothesised according to what was internalised at an early age, and this guides the young towards their appropriate social positions, towards the behaviours that are suitable for them, and an aversion towards other lifestyles”. These basic assumptions I make link well with Bourdieu’s theory of practice and habitus as my chosen theoretical framework.

Consequently, I argue that different historical epochs have socially constructed career choices and still in the 21st century the ambiance is not different. One of the questions this research investigates is what really influences young people’s choice of career and employment in the context of Swaziland?

Career development is intimately linked to educational attainment and social inclusion (cp. Bourdieu, 1986). This idea has often left me with the question of what the socially constructed values of employment are, and how much individual agency is influenced by these social meanings?

Having trained graduates at university level for 25 years and observing the challenges young people (including my relatives) face in starting off their careers and sustaining themselves in jobs they are trained for motivated my research. “Young people by necessity are beginning work careers in jobs irrelevant to their training and education, whilst others are spending extended periods waiting to begin a work

career and losing out on acquiring experience, [negatively affecting skills transfer and societal inclusion]” (USAID, 2005).

Pondering over the meaning of employment has rebooted old stories about employment, its significance to the individual and to society as a whole. Questions about whether employment is a source of income, social relationships, identity and individual self-esteem as viewed by Winkelmann (1998), have re-emerged in my thoughts. Is the meaning and significance of employment time specific, corresponding to changing times and circumstances of individuals and society? My point of interest in this discussion is young people rather than older people, as they are adversely impacted in terms of opportunities, capacities and challenges of employment.

1.3 *Statement of the problem*

A significant contribution has been made in documenting youth unemployment including labour force statistics, political commitments, and strategies to increase employment (UNESCO 2005; CSO 2007, 2010; ILO 2010; SLFS 2007, 2010; UNDP, 2012). Yet, limited attempts have been made to understand the lives, agency, capacities, and experiences of young people with employment (UNESCO, 2005). Concerns of stalled careers, struggles to find work and acquire experience have not received prominence in employment research (Op cit). Stories by the youth about challenges of “underemployment” and underutilised skills and qualifications. Serious ambitions of practising careers they trained for and having to settle for low-skilled dead-end jobs that barely contribute to their livelihood have been marginalised in research (UNESCO, 2005; ILO, 2010).

My research seeks to critically analyse the meaning and value of employment against prerogatives that have been socially constructed and instilled in the minds of young people. This in turn influences young people's preferred career choices and their subsequent definitions of social inclusion.

While this research is limited in making generalisations due to its qualitative approach and small sample size, it is anticipated that the findings thereof will generate interest in evidence based studies relevant to informing policy interventions.

1.4 Significance of the study

I intend to contribute to the limited scholarship on employment experiences of young adults. As far as I have been able to ascertain this study is the first scholarly attempt to record the experiences of young adults employed in Swaziland: previous studies have concentrated on unemployment experiences (ILO 2010, 2012, 2013; Brixiova et. al 2013, UNDP 2013). This study will benefit young adults in their quest to progress in employment. Further, the paucity of researched scholarly publications in this area will be addressed, thus, it will benefit scholarship and literature in the area of employment of young adults.

There is paucity of research on how employment has changed the experiences of young people. Deficiency exists in the literature regarding the socially constructed values of employment, making a link between employment and life opportunities. The social discourse should interrogate issues of employment and income inequality, access to opportunity, enhancing the prospects for social

inclusion which are key ingredients for growth and social development (UNESCO, 2005).

In addition, UNESCO (2005) has advocated more inclusion-based approaches in youth employment research, rather than relying on impressionistic tendencies of academic researchers. Hlatshwayo (2013) in a study for the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) Swaziland found that young people's voices in Swaziland's media are only heard in 7 percent of the stories that are told about them in the media. Thus, recording the voices of young people is pertinent in my research.

Further, UNESCO (2005) has pointed out that "young people's voices should dominate research on employment", thus, the approach taken by my research is recording experiences of young people in employment, analysing opportunities, constraints and challenges in their transition from academic training to employment and adulthood.

1.5 Research objectives

The objectives of the study are:

1. To document the experiences of young people with employment.
2. To investigate the outcomes of employment on young people's livelihoods.
3. To critically analyse the socially constructed meanings of employment.
4. To contribute to the literature on youth employment studies.

1.5.1 Research questions: broader issues to be investigated

The main research question for this study is:

What do we know about employment in the lives, agency, livelihoods and capacities of young people in Swaziland?

1.5.2 Critical research questions

1. What are the key challenges in the transition of young people from education and training to employment?
2. How does youth inclusion in employment impact on individual agency to navigate life's opportunities?
3. Is employment the most desired tool for achieving social inclusion?
4. What are the lessons learned from the research to contribute knowledge in theory, practice and methodology?

1.5.3 Definition of terms

For a clearer understanding of terms used in this study, below are their meanings and usage:

1.5.3.1 Youth

According to the Swaziland National Youth policy [2009], youth is defined as any person between the age of 15 and 35. However, different policies provide differing ages for young people to access certain services or to obtain certain rights. For instance the Age of Majority Act [1853] provides that men and women attain their majority at the age of twenty-one years. Whilst for the purposes of marriage, the Marriage Act [47 of 1964] prohibits boys and girls

below the age of eighteen years [for boys and sixteen years for girls] from marrying unless they obtain parental consent. However, under Swazi Law and Custom the marriageable age for girls is not defined and the onset of puberty is used to determine that a girl can be married as a wife. The electoral laws of the country allow all men and women citizens who are eighteen years and older, and those who are resident in Swaziland to be registered as voters and to be able to be voted for Mavundla et al., 2015: 29-30).

Essentially, eighteen is the year that young people transition into adulthood; in as far as the capacity to contract or to do business is concerned Swaziland Government, (2005). However, it is not clear what factors serve as markers for transition to adulthood in Swaziland in other spheres of young peoples' lives. Culturally, there are no known [loosely observed] passage rites for transition from childhood to adulthood. In fact, culturally speaking, one is a minor for as long as the parents are still alive. For instance the [Swaziland] Constitution [2005] provides in section 29 that children have a duty to maintain their parents in case of need. Commentators are of the view that the provision suggests that a degree of independence and responsibility is vested with young people and that by reference being made to "children taking care of their parents" that should not be interpreted to mean explicitly children but young adults Mavundla et al., (Op cit).

Having noted the various contexts in which the definition of youth is given and understood in Swaziland, it is important to highlight that the Swaziland National Youth Policy (SNYP) [2009] definition of youth is aligned to the African Youth Charter. Other international institutions such as the United

Nations [UN] and Commonwealth, both of which Swaziland is a member define youth as those aged 15-24, and 15-29 respectively Mavundla et al., (Op cit).

The UN, for statistical consistency across regions, defines 'youth', as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, without prejudice to other definitions by Member States. All UN statistics on youth are based on this definition, as illustrated by the annual yearbooks of statistics published by the United Nations system on demography, education, employment and health UNESCO, (no date).

For some time Swaziland has been using various definitions of the youth. The Employment Act (1980) defines a child as below 15 years and a young person as between 15 and 17 years, and is silent about the minimum standard age of employment Khumalo, (2013). However, Swaziland adopted the 15-24 UN definition of youth for purposes of labour force participation statistics CSO, (2007; 2010).

1.5.3.2 Young adult and young people

UNESCO does not commit a specific age range for young people. They understand that young people are a heterogeneous group in constant evolution and that the experience of 'being young' varies enormously across regions and within countries UNESCO, (not dated).

Swaziland's Youth Policy extended the definition of youth to 15-35 Swaziland Government, (2004) accommodating young adults within the youth definition.

As such, 15-24 and 25-34 years have been used in the statistical classification of youth and young people in Labour Force statistics CSO, (2007; 2010).

This research adopts the terms young adult to be used interchangeably with young people meaning the 25-34 years age groups, youth is also used to mean young people and young adult. The reason is that the 24-35 year group have more in-depth experiences of employment than the 15-24 years age group.

1.5.3.3 Social inclusion and exclusion

Hayes, Gray and Edwards (2008:4) note that the terms social inclusion and exclusion 'are closely related, and it is difficult to discuss social inclusion without discussing social exclusion.' They viewed social inclusion and exclusion as 'two ends of a single dimension', switching between the two terms in their discussion (cited in Ryan and Sartbayeva, (no date).

The context within which these terms are used is giving a voice to young people and acknowledging the participation or lack of in public policy making, also to add voices of the youth in stories told about them. "Youth voices are missing in policy formulation as a top-down approach is adopted in their issues: older people monopolise the decision making process in the country..." (Mavundla et.al., 2015).

1.5.3.4 Individual agency

"Sociologists understand the relationship between social structure and agency to be an ever-evolving dialectic. In the simplest sense, a dialectic

refers to a relationship between two things, each of which has the ability to influence the other, such that a change in one requires a change in the other. To consider the relationship between structure and agency a dialectical one is to assert that while social structure shapes individuals, individuals (and groups) also shape social structure. After all, society is a social creation--the creation and maintenance of social order requires the cooperation of individuals connected through social relationships. [Therefore], while the lives of individuals are shaped by the existing social structure, they none the less have the ability--*the agency*--to make decisions and express them in behaviour” (sociology.about.com/od/A_/fl/Agency.htm).

1.6 Organisation of the study

My study has seven chapters detailed as follows:

1.6.1 Chapter 2: Review of literature and theoretical framework

Chapter 2 contextualises the research within the relevant body of literature and provides its theoretical underpinning. Chapter two presents Pierre Bourdieu’s (Bourdieu, 1986) conception of forms’ of capital as an overarching theory to understand how employment as a social context and process of development influences and is influenced by the social context (Welshman, 1995 cited in Rowlands, 2005).

1.6.2 Chapter 3: Methodology and Research Design

Chapter 3 presents the research methodology. It outlines and describes the research paradigm within which the study is located, its overall design, the research process, and the techniques employed in data collection and analysis. Issues

relating to validity and reliability are explained and the ethics adopted (for example, informed consent, anonymity and protection of real identities, various rights of participants including voluntary participation and withdrawal of participation).

In-depth interviewing was the predominant mode of data collection in this research. A detailed open-ended interview schedule was used to facilitate the flow of interviews (see Appendix 1), and on the basis of it, conducted in-depth interviews with the participants. Open-ended interviews touched various aspects such as participants' experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge relating to employment; and detailed interview relating to participants' family background and education.

Data from secondary sources were obtained largely through perusing various documents relevant to the study. These include national reports, various journal and on line research reports relating to youth employment and research from other countries. These various documents were used to amass the relevant and required data.

1.6.3 Chapter 4-5: The context of young people's employment in Swaziland, and findings of the research

Chapter 4 presents the historical context of young adults employed in Swaziland. Chapter 5 presents the empirical evidence obtained from the research through findings presented according to themes developed from the findings.

1.6.4 Chapter 6: Discussion of findings

Chapter 6 presents a discussion of findings organised according to the themes developed in chapter five. The discussion follows a narrative analysis of stories of employment occasionally making reference to theoretical suppositions that are central to this inquiry.

1.6.5 Chapter 7: Conclusion, implications and future research

Chapter 7 presents the summary and lessons learned from the research in terms of theory, practice and methodology. The chapter closes with conclusions drawn from the study and possible recommendations for further research.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter has introduced my thesis; its conception, motivation, background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives and research question, and definitions of major terms used in the research. I have also detailed the presentation of chapters that follow. In Chapter 2 I discuss the literature that supports this thesis and the theoretical framework guiding this thesis.

Chapter 2 Literature review and theoretical framework

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the literature and theoretical framework. As mentioned in Chapter 1, there is paucity of literature on youth employment. A number of studies have focused on youth unemployment, and the literature in this chapter is largely from countries other than Swaziland. I begin by discussing the research context, linking it to issues of employment, education, and other socio-economic and political issues influencing the livelihood of young people. I also discuss the theoretical framework which informs the presentation and discussion of the findings of this study.

2.2 Research context

Definition of youth In Swaziland remains controversial. In general, youth has been defined as any person between the ages of 12 and 30 years. Most sources, however, use the UN definition of 15-24 years (USAID, 2005). The Youth Policy of Swaziland defines young people as between the ages of 15-35 (Swaziland Government, 2009:7)

The Swaziland population data shows a youthful population. According to the 2010 Census Report, young people in the country are the largest group, with 38.4 percent of the population under the age of 15, and 58.2 percent was between 15 and 65 years of age. The total population in the age group 25-29 years was 9.06 % and 30-34 was 7.49% (CSO, 2010). The statistics shows a significant population under the age of 15. This situation is likely to contribute in a population imbalance that has potentially negative consequences in the access to scarce resources in society.

The majority of Swaziland's population (about 78 percent) lives in rural homesteads, under a traditional structure in which the socio-economic infrastructure is based on the subsistence farming of crops and the rearing of livestock. Supplementary income for many families is generated from migrant and seasonal labour, while at least one family member is employed in the formal sector (CSO, 2010). The other 22 percent of the population live in cities, towns and villages, which are governed by relatively modern and formal local authorities (CSO, 2007).

Poverty and unemployment in rural areas leads to increased migration in search of work, to the sugar and forestry plantations within Swaziland as well as to South Africa and further afield. People from rural areas migrate to the cities in search of work and return to their families if they fall sick or lose their jobs (USAID, 2005).

2.2.1 Young people's employment as a social issue

Youth research is a relatively new academic discipline and is on its way to being established around the world, although the United States, Europe, and Australasia have a majority of resources in this field. Some refer to the golden triangle of policy, practice, and research, which underlines decision-making based on empirical evidence within a given area (USAID, 2005).

From the literature reviewed it is evident that employment and unemployment are intertwined. Literature on labour force patterns and markets, migration, and unemployment dominate studies on employment in Swaziland (Crush, 2007, Mkhwanazi, 1993). A sizable amount of the literature focuses on labour market characteristics (Mavundla et al. 2015; AfDB, 2013; Brenthurst Foundation 2011; Swaziland Labour Force Surveys 2007, 2010). pointing at rising labour market

tension with deteriorating youth employment rising to 52% of 15-24 years age group and 30% of 25-34 age group (SLFS, 2010).

In a capitalist world, youth inactivity could be better understood in relation to the expectations and demands of the production process. For contemporary youth, their life trajectories seem to follow an economic script that charts their relative difficulties in securing a decent means of livelihood. This directs our attention to the demands of successful youth transition in which employment is considered a fundamental pre-requisite. In most societies, the expectation is for young people to become financially independent, which is perhaps the most important qualifier of adulthood (Oinonen, 2003: 125).

For instance, the International Labour Organization's (ILO) (2006) report draws attention to the possible consequences of youth labour market vulnerability. In this report, the ILO identifies how youth inactivity is situated as a distinct source of vulnerability from the issues of unemployment and employment. It indicates that one of the consequences of labour market vulnerability is youth inactivity, which is not only a waste of potential but also a risk to societies (ILO, 2006: 34), especially in poor countries. In addition, this ILO report recognises the need to gather more information on the causes of inactivity so that sound analysis of relevant data may inform the design of youth programmes and policies (Op cit).

The historical literature reviewed shows that achieving higher levels of employment for young people is a global problem, and Swaziland is no different as a growing trend of rising youth unemployment is reported (UNDP, 2012, 2013). Young people have always had a tough time finding work. What is perhaps less well known is that young people can suffer from a long-run 'scarring effect' if they do not

participate in a smooth transition to the labour market (Scarpetta et al., 2010). Several studies have shown that those who experience unemployment early in their life are more likely to suffer subsequent spells of unemployment (Khumalo, 2011). This finding has dominated all studies of employment even in the developed countries like Canada, Australia, and the United States.

A school of thought that partly explains the challenges of population imbalance comes from Gunnar Heinsohn who concludes that the youth bulge causes oversupply of labour (Beehner, 2007). With around 84 per cent of the global youth population living in the developing world, today's youth group is the largest ever recorded in history. They argue that whether this 'youth bulge' represents an opportunity for sustainable growth and poverty reduction, or whether it threatens to introduce high rates of unemployment, economic and social exclusion, differs dramatically across countries and regions.

Further, a country incurs a youth bulge when the population group under 24 is larger than all other age groups. "In 2010, young people amounted to 43 percent of Swaziland working age population. The share of youth in the population aged 15 years or above was higher not only than the average in Southern Africa, but also than in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and among the least developed countries world-wide" (SLFS, 2010). This skewed demographic distribution is generally attributed to an increased birth rate, declining infant mortality and overall improvements in health that have occurred over the last few decades (Beehner, 2007).

The occurrence of youth bulge can produce either positive or negative results. The dividend from a youth bulge may be realised through increased

productivity (the ratio of output to labour input) and the beneficial effects of a more prolonged labour force participation of a youthful population. “Young people aged 24 and below account for 60 percent of Swaziland’s population. Youth in Swaziland account for 25 percent of the labour force (28 percent among males and 33 percent among females). The youthful nature of Swaziland means that the labour force will continue to increase for some years to come” (USAID, 2005).

If adequately utilised this situation could lead to higher savings and investment rates, both prerequisites for sustained economic growth and development. Increased employment also offers a greater number of opportunities for on-the-job training and the transfer of skills, which directly leads to a greater accumulation of human capital. And with a greater stock of skills and expertise, a young labour force productively employed could positively shape a country’s overall investment climate and its long term growth trajectory.

Finally, a youthful population gainfully employed could directly contribute to a lessening of inequality in incomes and access to opportunity, thereby enhancing the prospects for social coherence and stability – key ingredients for growth and development (Beehner, 2007). Thus, when a large youth group is both educated and provided with sufficient opportunities for work, the bulge becomes a boon for development (Op cit).

The political discourse literature reviewed explores the costs of neglecting youth employment. ILO studies dominate this group of literature as reported by the Brenthurst Foundation (2011) “there is a demonstrated link between youth unemployment, social exclusion and civil unrest”. The International Labour Organization has included youth employment in the political agenda of member

nations. The world leaders in response established the Youth Employment Network (YEN) within the framework of the Millennium Summit, the largest meeting of Heads of State and Government in history, held at the United Nations in September 2000 (Freedman, 2005/1).

The YEN seeks to share best practice on youth employment between countries and to link political commitments to technical results through encouraging countries, with the support of the partner institutions and other specialized agencies to take stock of past national policies, prepare National Action Plans (NAPs) on youth employment and compare progress with that of their peers (Freedman, 2005/1). Even though ILO has a long history of involvement in youth employment and recognises that lack of employment opportunities for young people can easily become a major source of political and social unrest as ... developments in the Middle East and North Africa, and the Eurozone, have demonstrated (ILO, 2012). Still any assessment of more general measures should include their potential for helping young people to obtain jobs and build careers within the fields they have trained for. More than a decade from the year 2000 the political commitments made and the status of youth employment remains unchanged: instead the hardships have magnified in Swaziland.

Seemingly, the YEN was established for purposes of compliance without much tangible results in Swaziland. Swaziland like many countries signed and ratified important human rights conventions including, the right to employment which is one of the economic, social and cultural rights recognised by the International Bill of Human Rights. Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (1948) provides that:

1. Everyone has a right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
2. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
3. Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
4. Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests (www.un.org/overview/rights.html)

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Article 7 affirms the rights indicated above in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In addition, however, Article 7 (c) also includes the right to “Equal opportunity for everyone to be promoted in his employment to an appropriate higher level, subject to no considerations other than those of seniority and competence.” In addition to “equal pay for equal work,” Article 7 (a) (i) of the covenant speaks to “Fair wages and equal remuneration for work of equal value without distinction of any kind, in particular women being guaranteed conditions of work not inferior to those enjoyed by men, with equal pay for equal work.” Article 6 of the covenant also provides some affirmative duties that states must discharge, in relationship to employment:

1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right to work, which includes the right of everyone to the opportunity to gain his living by work which he freely chooses or accepts, and will take appropriate steps to safeguard this right.

2. The steps to be taken by a State Party to the present Covenant to achieve the full realization of this right shall include technical and vocational guidance and training programmes, policies and techniques to achieve steady economic, social and cultural development and full and productive employment under conditions safeguarding fundamental political and economic freedoms to the individual (www.ohchr.org/EN.../Pages/CESCR.aspx).

These rights are further enshrined in the 2005 Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland and legislated in the Swaziland Industrial Relations Act 2000 and the Swaziland Employment Act of 1980 as Amended. This signals commitment at policy level, although, programming and implementation is lagging behind.

Solutions for youth employment have been proposed in the literature including; targeting structural transformation as key, private sector expansion, improving access to entrepreneurship (Darzi, 2004; Kerr and Nanda, 2009; Baumol, 2010), and removing barriers to trade and investment (World Bank, 2006; World Economic Forum, 2010; 2011 and 2012). The changes these strategies have realised remain elusive and under researched.

Of note is that there is a dearth of literature on how employment has changed the experiences of young people. Deficiency exists in the literature regarding the socially constructed values of employment, making a link between employment and life opportunities. The social discourse should interrogate issues of employment and income inequality, access to opportunity, enhancing the prospects for social inclusion which are key ingredients for growth and social development.

UNESCO (2005) has advocated more inclusion based approaches in youth employment research, rather than relying on impressionistic tendencies of academic

researchers. Thus, recording the voices of youth is pertinent in this research. Young people's voices should dominate research on youth employment, thus, the approach taken by this research is recording experiences of young people in employment, analysing opportunities, constraints and challenges in their transition from youth to adulthood. In this regard, this research envisions contributing to this growing discourse on experiences of young people in the workplace.

2.2.2 Study setting: Swaziland

In order to grasp the socio-historical forces that might have influenced and shaped the Swaziland phenomenon, this section offers the following: (a) a general background about Swaziland; (b) its socio-political history; and (c) a description of Swaziland's education and employment situation.

2.2.2.1. Background on Swaziland

Swaziland attained independence on September 6, 1968 and is a monarchy, under King Mswati III (Swaziland Government, 2005). Geographically, Swaziland is located in Southern Africa, bordered by South Africa on the north, west and south; and Mozambique on the east (See Figure 1). The Kingdom of Swaziland is located in Southern Africa along latitude 26° 30"S and longitude 31° 30"E (Google Maps). The landlocked, mountainous country spreads over an area of approximately 17, 365km² making it one of the smallest countries in Africa (Thompson, 2008). For administrative purposes the country is divided into four regions (Hhohho, Lubombo, Manzini and Shiselweni), 55 local constituencies (*Tinkhundla*) and 12 urban local authorities. The research sample draws participants from one major town in each region (Government of Swaziland, 2005).

Figure 1: Map of Swaziland with study areas



Source: Goggle Maps (2014)

Demographically, The Kingdom of Swaziland has a total *de jure* population of 1,018,449 (CSO, 2007), implying an annual growth rate of 0.9% since the previous census in 1997. It is a predominantly rural population, as close to 78% of the population lives in rural areas, but the population is slowly urbanizing due to rural-urban migration. Emigration from Swaziland increased during the period 1997 to 2007, from 51,004 to 106,220 persons, 94.8% of who moved to South Africa in 1997(CSO, 2007). The country's population is relatively young with 39.6% under 15 years of age and 52% younger than 20 years, while the share of the population in age group 65+ is only 3.7%, a reflection of the generally low life expectancy estimated at 43.1 years for females and 42.2 years for males (CSO, 2007). The urban population is heavily concentrated in two major metropolitan areas namely

Mbabane (the capital city), and Manzini City (the hub and major commercial city) and its industrial outlying town Matsapha (CSO, 2007).

Economically, Swaziland's Vision for development is that by the Year 2022, the Kingdom will be in the top 10% of the medium human development group of countries founded on sustainable economic development, social justice and political stability (NDS, 1999) This vision was re-endorsed by the King and presented to the nation in 2010 and rolled out by the government in a Programme of Action 2013-2018 under the slogan Vision "2022" defining eight focus areas; economic prosperity, agriculture and environmental sustainability, education, health, government service delivery, infrastructure, governance, and corruption (Swaziland Government, 2013; The World Bank, 2015). This vision is very limited in its focus on youth and young people in general. The major development target for the youth in the vision of interest to my research is; development of an entrepreneurial culture at a young age whilst still at school through Junior Achievers and Enactus programmes, and Youth Enterprise Development Fund for out of school youth. There is no strategy for formal employment creation and skills transfer in the vision, creating deficiencies in human resource planning, elaborated in chapter six.

Swaziland is currently classified as a middle income country with a human development index (HDI) of about 0.498 (SHIES, 2010). In contrast to Africa's strong economic performance, Swaziland's growth during 2001-10 was subdued, averaging only about 2.3 percent per year (Op cit) slightly up in 2013 3.0%; and 2014 fell to 2.5% (African Economic Outlook, 2015). With low job creation and stagnant agriculture, income inequality and poverty have remained high (Op cit). The Doing Business Report 2015 ranked Swaziland 110 out of 189 countries in 2010, in the

overall ease of doing business showing progress between 2006 and 2015 in several indicators over time (The World Bank, 2015). The 2010/11 fiscal crisis jeopardized growth further and signs have already appeared that it has exacerbated unemployment and/or reduced household income. The country also launched an Economic Recovery Strategy (ERS) in 2011 to revive the economy and put Swaziland back on a healthy economic growth path. As such, this strategy is complimented by the Investor Roadmap which seeks to stimulate foreign direct investment into the economy (Swaziland Government, 2011). However, much of the recovery from 2011 has not materialised impacting negatively on employment creation (Op cit).

The country's progress to reach the 10% target group of countries has been undermined by the impact of poverty estimated at [63% SHIES, 2010] living below the poverty line. Poverty is strongly correlated with unemployment which is about 28.5% overall and 53.4% among the youth (SLFS, 2010). HIV and AIDS prevalence is around 26.5% of people aged 15-49 reducing life expectancy to about 49 years in the population (SDHS, 2012).

Swaziland operates an open and free market economy which is export oriented. The major drivers and contributors to the Swazi economy are the service industry, followed by the manufacturing (33%) and agriculture industry (10%) (Thompson, 2008). The economy of Swaziland is predominantly agricultural; about 78% of the population lives in rural areas and derives their livelihood from agriculture, and about 30% of the population does not have enough to eat (CSO, SHIES 2010). Swaziland is a member of the United Nations, African Union and

Southern African Development Community (SADC), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and Southern African Customs Union (SACU) (ILO, 2010).

2.2.2.2. Socio-economic and political history

Swaziland is a member of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), from which it derives a substantial amount of its revenue. SACU receipts have on average constituted over 60 % of the total government revenue over the years, subjecting the country to fiscal difficulties. The real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Swaziland declined from 0.3% (2011) to -1.5% in 2012 to 0% in 2013 (Central Statistics Office, 2014). The downward spiral was initially triggered mainly by low foreign direct investment (UNICEF, 2015).

Despite strengths such as favourable physical location and climate, good infrastructure, diversified production base and skilled labour force; since the mid 1990s Swaziland has experienced minimum growth compared to other countries in Africa (Brixiova et.al, 2013). Specifically, at 2.3% average annual growth rate during 2001-2011, Swaziland's economic growth was well below the average of the sub-Saharan Africa (5.7% a year). The slow growth was accompanied by low job creation. The 2007 and 2010 Swaziland labour force surveys revealed unemployment rate of almost 30% of the labour force (UNDP, 2012).

The history of Swaziland is a narrative of roller-coaster socio-economic incidences since its independence 45 years ago with the 1980s economic boom to the 1990s slump and 2000s onset of sluggish growth (Brixiova et. al, 2013). Unfortunately, the current generation of Swazi young people are not cushioned from the effects of these struggles. Swaziland is a society in transition which is still

experimenting with the rationalities of modern bureaucracies, rule of law and governance as it navigates its way to becoming a modern democracy and aspiring to reach first world status by the year 2022 (Op cit).

The economy of Swaziland is primarily agrarian with the majority of the people engaged in subsistence agriculture (FARNPAN, 2013). Employment in the formal sector grew at approximately 1.3 % between 1995 and 2002 (ILO, 2010). The South African economy has not been able to absorb migrant workers to the same extent as in the past due to the mixed fortunes of the mining sector. Numbers of Swazi nationals working in South Africa dropped significantly (Op cit). The remittances which were as high as 15% of GDP in the late 1980s are now negligible as many South African companies have restructured and downsized (Op cit). The Swaziland textile sector initially created in excess of 20,000 jobs, however due to end of the Multi-Fibre Agreement and a strong Rand, as many as 10,000 jobs, mostly occupied by women, were lost in 2005 due to company closures in the textile sector (Op cit). The Pulp industry has been hit by retrenchments running into thousands of jobs and the burning of the 40% of the forest in August, 2008 resulted in the company eventually closing down (ILO, 2010).

Formal employment in Swaziland accounts for a small percentage of the eligible working population. The number of people in Swaziland aged 15 years and above in 2007 was 599 528 (SLFS, 2007). The preliminary results of the Swaziland Integrated Labour Force Survey (SILFS) 2007/08 estimates that about 310,450 persons were economically active in Swaziland resulting in a labour force participation rate of 51.8%; whilst 87,679 of the economically active population, were unemployed. The official unemployment rate for youth aged 15 – 24 was 53.3 percent, almost twice as high as the next highest age group of between 25-34 years.

Labour absorption rates are sharply different by gender, among working age men, at 43.9% had jobs, whereas 31.9% among working age women were employed (ILO, 2010).

There is high unemployment particularly amongst women and youth (25.7% men, 31.2% women and, 71% youth) (ILO, 2010), seasonality of work, unpaid work, unsafe work in different sectors of the economy, job losses due to impact of economic crises and declining FDI. Increasing competition in the global market and declining prices of Swaziland's export products have resulted in the closure of companies. There is a shortage of key skills compounded by a mismatched education for the world of work (ILO, 2010). Undoubtedly, a large part of the solution is to address skills development and to create employment.

Politically, Swaziland was briefly a protected state until Britain granted it full independence in 1968. Swaziland requested and was granted the status of a British protectorate since 1903, until it gained full political independence in 1968. Because of this political status the Swazi people were able to resist Afrikaner demands for incorporation into South Africa. Swaziland's relations with South Africa were shaped by the kingdom's complete dependence on its powerful neighbour for its economic and political well-being. Presently Swaziland receives about nine-tenths of its imports and sends nearly three-quarters of its exports to South Africa (CIA Factbook, 2006).

Swaziland has a dual system of governance based on a customary law system on one hand, and on a Western legal system on the other, and the King is at the apex of both systems (Swaziland Government, 2005). The 2005 Constitution guides all actions and plans on participation, as it is the supreme law of the land. The

rights related to citizens' participation are contained in sections 84-89 of the Constitution (Op cit).

An AfriMAP commissioned study by Dlamini (2013) aptly contributes to the developments in the Swaziland political landscape. For purposes of this study only a brief overview relevant to the study of young people will be captured. She argues that "a number of noteworthy political anniversaries occur[ed] in Swaziland's historical calendar during 2013. This year mark[ed] 45 years of Swazi independence, 40 years since the 1973 Proclamation that repealed the 1968 Constitution and 27 years since King Mswati III's ascension to the throne. The second national election under the 2005 Constitution [was] ... also...[held in 2013]" (Dlamini, 2013).

She continues that to speak particularly about the national constitution of 2005 which has not been entirely embraced by a section of the population, but cannot be determined by size since there has been no national referendum on this issue. However, the status she observes in her discussion obtains in the country and factions have been created; some supporting the constitution and some against it for various reasons not elaborated in this study. Dlamini (2013) elaborates that "T[t]he process of strengthening democracy and political participation will necessitate reform and review of the Constitution to ensure it meets international standards. Agreement will have to be reached on whether the existing Constitution is to be repealed in its entirety and whether the constitution-making process will have to start afresh, or whether the current Constitution can be used as a working document and as a base for revision and amendment. The provisions for amendment of the current Constitution are extremely rigid and this may affect the length of time it could take to effect changes. In the interim, however, it is submitted that opportunities exist in the

current Constitution to help open up the limited space of political participation” (Dlamini, 2013).

Further, she mentions that Section 79 of the Constitution of Swaziland says: system of government “The system of government for Swaziland is a democratic, participatory, *tinkhundla* based system which emphasises devolution of state power from central government to *tinkhundla* areas and individual merit as a basis for election or appointment to public office (Dlamini, 2013). Furthermore, she critiques the rationale of this section in that, Section 79 of the Constitution prevents political parties entering the election contest as groups representing their constituencies. It is as if the right to form political parties is given with one hand and taken away by the other. What is the point of political parties existing when they cannot by supreme law fulfil the very reason for which they are formed? Accepted contemporary wisdom on political parties is that they are: organised group[s] ... formed with the sole purpose of articulating and aggregating the interests of the group, contesting control over state power and government, and directing a country’s development process in line with [their] ideological orientations and policy frameworks, as defined in party manifesto[es] (Op cit).

The Commonwealth made a similar observation in its 2013 elections observer mission report noting that “W[h]ile cognisant of the respect due to the institution of the monarchy, which in itself should be safeguarded and accommodated, we recommend that the Constitution be revisited. This should ideally be carried out through a fully inclusive, consultative process with all Swazi political organisations and civil society (if needed, with the help of constitutional experts), to harmonise conflicting provisions. It is vital, and in Swaziland’s long-term national interest,

that these contradictions are resolved and that enabling legislation be put in place to allow for political parties. This would give full effect to the letter and spirit of Section 25 of the Constitution, and in accordance with Swaziland's commitment to its regional and international commitments. The aim is to ensure that Swaziland's commitment to political pluralism is unequivocal (Commonwealth, 2013:5).

The Commonwealth also feels "the presence of the monarch in the structure of everyday political life inevitably associates the institution of the monarchy with politics, a situation that runs counter to the development that the re-establishment of the Parliament and the devolution of executive authority into the hands of elected officials [stands for]" (Op cit).

The political relevance of discussing the structure of *Tinkhundla* is to show its impact on dissenting youth who belong to proscribed political parties and therefore feel they have no access to the mother body coordinating youth issues; the Swaziland National Youth Council (SNYC); which is the same organisation coordinating the distribution of loans for youth enterprises scheme – the Youth Enterprise Fund (YEF).

Searching for a solution or what I believe to be the ideal position, Dlamini recommends that "C[c]ontinued civic education on human rights, democracy and good governance will contribute to the empowerment of the populace in terms of understanding what these rights mean. It will also mobilise them into action to seek redress for human rights violations and to hold authorities accountable for their actions, both individually and collectively. Continued advocacy through strategic litigation will also be important to test the Constitution and to position the courts to

determine and clarify key issues affecting democracy and participation” (Dlamini, 2013).

Pertaining to my research on young people the Swaziland National Youth Policy (2009) clearly highlights that the current urban and rural structures do not allow for significant participation of the youth in the economic, social and political arena. As a result, ‘youth participation is minimal in decision-making processes at national and local levels’ (ILO, 2010). As stipulated in the 2005 Constitution, youth participation in the political sphere is more of a privilege that can be bestowed and revoked, than a right (Dlamini, 2013). This discussion is explored further in chapter seven.

Access to education has had a positive progression and the Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) was 130.9% and Net Enrollment Rate (NER) 92% in 2010 (MoET, 2010). Completion rates are compromised by the number of repeaters and dropouts, particularly at high school. The 2007 census has established that overall 91% of Swazi women aged 15-49 are literate, with 92% male literacy for same age group. Literacy levels were estimated slightly higher (92%) among young people who are aged 15 – 24 years compared to older generations of the population (CSO, 2007). The rate of youth literacy in Swaziland is relatively high compared to some of its Southern African neighbours such as Malawi (72%), Lesotho (83%) and Angola (91%) (World Bank, 2011). Swaziland has made significant strides in adult education, including non-formal upper primary education (NUPE), thus the proportion of the population that has never attended school has declined substantially over the years (World Bank, 2010). Some of the key socio-economic challenges that Swaziland is grappling with include widespread poverty, HIV and AIDS, a radically

slowing economic growth, food insecurity and inadequate social safety nets (ILO, 2010).

The main barriers to education are the prohibitive fees paid by households leading to the low participation, especially at high school. Gender equity differences become more pronounced at the higher levels of education, with more than half female students either dropping out of high school or not progressing beyond grades 6 and 7 at primary school (World Bank, 2010).

The survival rate is particularly worrying as it continues to drop in both primary and secondary/high school. The main contributors to the survival rate are high repetition rate usually about 15 percent annually, for example, a child may repeat a class more than two times eventually increasing the drop-out rate (UNICEF, 2015).

The quality of education has been a growing cause for concern. Education quality has been affected by the lack of standards and clear operational definitions of key outputs and competencies as well as skills required, such that, even if Swazi learners perform well in examinations and international score tests, the lack of a National Qualification Framework (NQF) results in this education not being transformed into lifelong learning that could see the country rising to greater heights (World Bank, 2010).

2.2.2.3. Current state of education

The education and training sector still remains vital in supporting the accelerated and shared economic growth strategy of Swaziland. Since independence in 1968, the education sector has enjoyed the largest share of the national budget (Khumalo, 2013) around 18 percent of the total national budget in 2014/2015.

The main categories of education institutions include pre-primary education with the focus on Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD), primary education starting with Grade 1 to Grade 7, secondary and high school education from Form 1 to Form 5. In addition there is non-formal education, pre-vocational education and tertiary education (Khumalo, 2013).

Each stage of the education cycle ends with an examination that is administered by the Examinations Council of Swaziland (ECOS). The examinations include; at primary level, the Swaziland Primary Certificate (SPC) which might be phased out in the near future, the Junior Certificate (JC) at secondary school and the Swaziland General Certificate of Secondary Education (SGCSE) and the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) which is still accredited by the Cambridge International Examination. There are private schools affiliated to the Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa (ISASA) who write a different examination (Khumalo, 2013).

While enrollment rates increased with free primary school education, completion rates were reduced to 76.4 percent in grade 7 (2012) due to the high repetition rates explained partly by the high teacher-pupil ratio more pronounced in urban schools. The low performing economy impacted the education budget contributing to scarcity of resources in schools as government was remitting less than the schools required per learner, resulting in schools adding a “top up” fee per learner and further disadvantaging vulnerable learners. Shortage of qualified primary school teachers (25% not qualified in 2010) has further compromised and added to the declining quality of education (UNICEF, 2015).

In terms of educational trajectories in the tertiary level, the distinction is more between the college and university versus technical and vocational schools. Colleges and universities are largely delivered by the public sector. That is, of the 4 universities, 3 are private and the oldest is public and are degree granting institutions; 3 colleges are public teacher training and 2 post secondary technical vocational schools (Khumalo, 2013). The Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) oversees the function of these degree granting institutions and the technical schools (Khumalo, 2013). Until the mid-1970s Swaziland shared a common examinations board and university with the other two former British Protectorates in the region, Lesotho and Botswana.

The 2005 Swaziland Constitution stipulates a compulsory seven year free primary education, which was incrementally effected in 2010 and reached its full complement in 2015. However, it does not guarantee a five-year high school education for all Swazi children. Consequently, the Swaziland educational system has been marred by low educational survival rates – the rate of staying in school (Khumalo, 2013). This is locally known as the out-of-school youth phenomenon, which forces some youth to either search for employment or stay at home to assist in household tasks (United Nations Population Fund, 1997). Drop-out rates among Swazi youth are attributed to both school and non-school related factors. Among school-related factors are; a high failure rate inducing drop-out rates, lack of school fees, and teenage pregnancy among girls. Non-school related factors have to do with poverty and the negative attitude of parents to education which is luckily on the decline. The remoteness of schools and the high costs of education highlight the problem of access.

These problematic educational factors force some Swazi youth to delay, temporarily stop, or permanently abandon schooling. I argue that it is in the relative interplay of these factors in the lives of these young people that societal exclusionary factors are first experienced.

2.2.2.4. Swaziland's employment situation

One's educational levels are closely linked with access to employment and earning opportunities in Swaziland. There is a particularly high pay-off to those with tertiary education in terms of employment as 70 percent of the population with tertiary education is employed, and make up about 15 percent of the employed Swazi population, with nearly 60 percent opportunities available in the public sector and 38 percent in the private sector (CSO, 2007). The level of education among small informal business operators is low with over 50 percent males and over 60 percent females having primary or less than primary education. Tertiary education also offers access to immigrant employment as less than 20 percent holding tertiary education had immigrated by the year 2000 (World Bank, 2012).

Economically active persons are those that are either employed or searching for employment. Therefore, any job creation strategy should make a distinction between profiles of the employed and unemployed in the labour force. However, policies promoting the creation of jobs for the youth, for women and for Swazi citizens are likely to have the greatest impact on unemployment and poverty. The global crisis is however a hindrance to the aspirations of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 1 and Swaziland's Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Programme (PRSAP, 2007). The crisis entails a contraction in global economies, as a result, "a major slowing down effect" (occasioned by reduced FDI due to declining

global demand for goods and services, and remittances), on the momentum that is needed in the remaining years for the achievement of the MDGs by 2015 (ILO, 2010). Inevitably, the progress of MDGs was affected. Consequently, the problem of lack of adequate productive employment opportunities in general, and youth employment in particular, is directly linked to the problems of growth and development (USAID, 2005).

On 25th September, 2015, countries and world leaders adopted a set of goals to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all as part of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), promoting a sustainable development agenda (United Nations, 2015). However, it is still early to make an effective evaluation in the impact of these new goals. Notwithstanding, the agenda and aims of SDG 8: promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth through decent work, is not entirely new since decent work has been promoted by ILO since 2010 (ILO, 2010). The new twist comes in promoting decent work as a global project and inviting everyone to do their part: government, the private sector, civil society and the people for the goal to be reached (UN, 2015).

Effective social dialogue is important as a response to mitigate the impact of the economic crisis, highlighting the needs to be a driving force and a means to finding a common strategy behind each such initiative. A specific study on the crisis' impact on the labour market in Swaziland has been conducted to ascertain the situation in order to mitigate a downscaling effect as much as possible. This is to be fed back to the country's general labour market policies and employment promotion strategies to address the attendant gaps (ILO, 2010).

The gender dimension of labour shows that the majority of women and men worked as paid employees (65.8% and 79.2% respectively), whereas 29.6 % of women were self-employed compared to 16% of men. Less than 4% of workers had their own farm and about 1% of the employed worked as unpaid family members. In general, professional, technical, managerial jobs attract women with the highest education and in the highest wealth quintile and women in sales and services attracts younger women and women with lower than tertiary education. While women's work tends to be concentrated in selected types of occupations, men's choice of work is more varied. Men are almost evenly employed in sales and services, and as manual labourers. 17% of men work in Agriculture and 13% are in professional, technical and managerial jobs. As with women, professional, technical and managerial jobs tend to attract men in urban areas, with the highest education and in the highest wealth quintile (ILO, 2010).

The informal sector accounted for about 17.7 percent of employed workers. It is expected to grow, as households shift from farming to non-farming small and medium enterprises (ILO, 2010). Employment is more available in or around the major cities and towns (USAID, 2005). There is little or no information on the sectors in which young people work in the formal sector, especially the private sector. This is an area that requires more investment to collect and compile segregated statistics for informing programme planning and policy interventions.

Southern African economies have historically evolved as 'enclave' economic structures. In such economies, the main engine of economic growth has been the formal sector which employs a minority of the labour force while the majority, or a large proportion of the labour force, has been relegated to marginal low-productivity activities in non-formal sectors. Thus, the economies are trimodal, with a small

proportion of the labour force in the formal sector, while the majority of the labour force is engaged in various forms of livelihoods in the urban informal and rural non-formal (or subsistence) sectors (USAID, 2005).

The enclave nature of the economies implies that they have structural market failures or discontinuities. These failures constrain the rate at which those in non-formal activities or those that are unemployed can be absorbed into activities that are more productive and more dynamic (USAID, 2005). While the enclave nature of the economies is largely a legacy of colonialism, it has been reinforced by various policies of omission and commission, resulting in the current crisis of unemployment and underemployment (USAID, 2005).

2.2.2.5. Employment situation of young people

This section provides an overview of the labour situation of Swazi young adults. Over the years, both the education and employment conditions in the country have been marred by problems, which contributed to the precarious state of inactivity of a sizeable portion of Swazi young people.

As stated in the demographic section the country's population is relatively young with 39.6% under 15 years of age and 52% younger than 20 years (CSO, 2007). The youthful structure of the population results in a high dependency ratio of 76.2%, while the overall age dependency ratio is 79.1%, implying that more than half of the population depend on someone else, either because they are too young or too old. Unemployment among the youth is about 50% (SLFS, 2010). The share of the population in age group 65+ is only 3.7%, a reflection of the generally high, but declining, level of mortality in the population (CSO, 2007). Unfortunately Swaziland is not benefiting from the trend of demographic dividends taking off in some developing

countries where the young people are employed and having less dependents to take care of, thus resulting in savings that go to health and education (Ashford, 2007). “Swaziland will reap this dividend only if its workers, including youth, have productive jobs. So far a large portion of the country’s working age population, and especially youth, has been underutilized” (Brixiova et al. 2013).

Ashford (2007) says, “M[ost] countries in Africa are projected to have more working-age adults per child in 2030 than they did in 2006. Many countries in Asia and Latin America are also seeing similar growth in the share of the working-age population. A large workforce with fewer children to support creates a window of opportunity to save money on health care and other social services; improve the quality of education; increase economic output because of more people working; invest more in technology and skills to strengthen the economy; and create the wealth needed to cope with the future aging of the population. Some economists call this window of opportunity the “demographic dividend” (or “bonus”)” (Ashford 2007:1).

Youth in Swaziland account for 25 percent of the labour force (28 percent among males and 33 percent among females) (SLFS, 2010). The youthful nature of Swaziland means that the labour force will continue to increase for some years to come (USAID, 2005). Economic participation rate among youth varies according to age and gender. Among younger youth (aged between 15-19 years), economic activity stood at 45 percent among males and 31 percent among females, this rose among young people in the age group 20-24 years (87 percent among males and 53 percent among females (Op cit).

Parts of the country where employment is more available include Mbabane and Manzini corridor. Mbabane and Manzini are more developed and urbanised and they constitute the country's leading industrial areas. The factors that determine the availability and accessibility of employment opportunities in these areas are mainly the presence of industries and commercial centres in or around the cities.

Available statistics on workers in the private and public sectors are not disaggregated by age. For this reason, it is difficult to determine the percentage of youth in the private or public sector. It is also not clear whether there are any incentives for the private sector to employ youth. However, it is commonly understood that the private sector is the major source of employment in Swaziland (USAID, 2005).

In 2006 TechnoServe began working in Swaziland to increase opportunities for indigenous entrepreneurs. TechnoServe is a leader in harnessing the power of the private sector to help people lift themselves out of poverty. A nonprofit organization operating in 29 countries, works with enterprising men and women in the developing world to build competitive farms, businesses and industries (TechnoServe, 2016). They started the Swaziland Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Programme (SWEEP), which aimed to revitalise the Swazi economy by fostering the growth of Swazi-owned small and medium sized enterprises in order to expand employment and income opportunities. TechnoServe continued to build on this platform through new programmes in food security and value chains, and by linking health outcomes to income generation to address the many challenges that the country faces (TechnoServe, no date).

Through a grant from the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO), Swaziland Agricultural Development Program (SADP), TechnoServe continues the expansion of the honey (beekeeping) programme through the development of a lead beekeeper initiative. Training is provided to potential beneficiaries (Op cit). Through a European Union-funded programme, TechnoServe is aiming to improve the livelihoods of Swazi youth. Using a proven "train the trainer" methodology, TechnoServe trains non-state actor partners in an economic training curriculum, which will create the potential to train others (Op cit).

2.3 Labour Market Issues

2.3.1 The Main Employment Sectors and the Main Employers

In Swaziland, the 1980s were characterised by rapid economic growth and a healthy balance of payments. In the 1990s, this growth slowed down due to poor climatic conditions, poor inflow of foreign investment, and the poor performance of the South African economy, among other factors. SkillShare Africa (1999) [a global learning community for creators] notes that "the political changes which have occurred in the region in recent years, especially the end of Apartheid and the creation of a democratic society in South Africa, the end of war and establishment of a multi-party parliamentary system in Mozambique, have attracted investment and businesses to those countries" (USAID, 2005). Consequently, investment in Swaziland has decreased which has caused a downturn of its economic growth. The country is also facing an increase in its labour force and social unrest. This has resulted in increasing strain on public services, more unemployment as the labour force increases and more poverty. These problems are becoming acute as the AIDS pandemic matures (World Bank, 2012).

At the macro-level, GDP growth was fairly consistent up to 2002. At present, the outlook is poor. There are real issues around both the structure of the economy and the types of jobs that are being created. Available evidence shows that there has been a decline in the total number of people employed in the formal sector. Total formal employment in 2007 was 222,771 (SILFS, 2007).

The Central Bank of Swaziland notes that the majority of jobs have been created in the textile sector meaning low-paid female workers. The services sector accounts for the major portion of Swaziland's GDP (47 percent) followed by industry (43 percent), and agriculture (10 percent). An estimated 80 percent of the population is involved in subsistence agriculture. The major economic sector by paid employment is services (32.6 percent) followed by agriculture and forestry (21.4 percent) (USAID, 2005).

Sectors in which young people work in the private sector accounts for 70 percent of Swaziland's total labour force, with commercial agriculture alone accounting for 18.8 percent of the total labour force. But with foreign investment in the country at a standstill, and GDP growth reaching only 1.2 percent in 2012, an increasing number of Swazis are forced to make a living in the informal sector, through agriculture or by moving to South Africa (ILO, 2013). Therefore, the demand for employment among youth is highest in the informal sector, which is also the largest source of employment for young people.

2.3.2 The Skills and Competencies of Youth Looking for Jobs

Swaziland lacks the necessary skills and training for jobs that are available. There are inadequate training centres for youth like technical schools. Lack of skills

among youth constitutes a major barrier to the employment of young people (USAID, 2005).

The existing barriers and opportunities for creating jobs for youth in Swaziland need to be discussed for both the formal and informal sectors. In the formal sector barriers to the creation of jobs for young people can be attributed to, among others, the following:

- Political uncertainty
- High HIV prevalence rate
- Lack of entrepreneurship skills
- Reduction in foreign investment (USAID, 2005).

In the Informal Sector a number of studies indicate that despite the contribution of the informal sector to employment creation in Swaziland, this sector has continued to operate under considerable constraints in an environment that does not encourage small, income generating activities. Youth working in the informal sector face licensing and tax disincentives. They face harassment from the state and council police for not having proper licenses or for operating from 'illegal' spaces (Op cit).

Institutional access to credit for informal enterprises is limited in most African countries. Significantly, most young people working in the urban informal sector lack entrepreneurial and technical skills. All of these factors serve as disincentives for the urban self-employed, especially young people who show remarkable staying power through their own self-reliant efforts. These problems tend to affect female youth more than male youth (UNDP, 2012).

The Youth Enterprise Fund was formulated with the aim to encourage young people to venture into entrepreneurship to create jobs and reduce the unemployment rate.

Eswatini Kitchen was created by Manzini Youth Initiatives, a non-government organization serving the undervalued youth in Swaziland, Africa. Eswatini Kitchen also provides employment to disadvantaged women and provides a market to local farmers and rural families (Khumalo, 2013). “Eswatini Kitchen was established in 1991 in Swaziland by Manzini Youth Care (MYC), a Salesian Non-governmental-organisation (NGO) supporting marginalised youth in the country. The main objective was to create employment for disadvantaged women, provide a market for small local farmers and rural families who harvested wild fruit (especially guava and marula). Eswatini Kitchen has grown from a small cottage industry to a thriving business that is enhancing the lives of underprivileged communities by providing a fair and sustainable income for over 300 people in Swaziland, and devoting all its proceeds to the Manzini Youth Care initiatives, which support more than 2000 marginalised children and young people in the country” (Swazi Observer, 2014).

In March 2010, Swaziland Beverages launched their own KickStart Youth Entrepreneurial Programme as one of its key corporate social investment initiatives aimed at Swazi youths aged between 18 and 35 years. KickStart has now become one of the most prominent entrepreneurship development projects undertaken by a private sector company in the Kingdom. The programme also focuses on recruiting entrepreneurs whose businesses could become potential commercial equity suppliers to Swaziland Beverages and is aimed at giving attention to entrepreneurs at a more advanced level. Often these individuals have inventions or good ideas, but not the specific know-how to commercialise them (Khumalo, 2013).

Most of these initiatives in the country are happening in the absence of a national plan or strategy to operationalise the National Youth Policy or even to develop and empower the youth from a multi-stakeholder perspective. The Swaziland National Youth Council is there to coordinate initiatives, especially in the public sector, but that does not constitute a national strategy or plan for youth empowerment and development (Times of Swaziland, 10/04/2014).

The country needs an integrated plan or strategy that will harness the synergies arising from government, private sector and civil society initiatives for youth empowerment and development. In addition to the plan, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms (including impact assessments) to track progress at the national level are also required.

This will assist the country to not only ascertain progress it is making through all the initiatives pertaining to the youth, but also identify gaps that need to be filled at the national level. With an integrated plan and monitoring and evaluation mechanism, the country will also avoid duplication of efforts.

A plan or strategy with clearly established mechanisms for ascertaining impact will not only yield the desired results, but will also assist the country in its resource mobilisation for youth programmes, allowing the country's budget to address other equally pressing needs.

The government adopted a national economic strategy called the National Development Strategy – Vision 2022 in 1997 which articulates development priorities for all economic sectors including education. The vision of this strategy is that by 2022 Swaziland will be in the top 10% of the medium human development group of

countries founded on sustainable economic development, social justice, and political stability. The strategy's vision statement also states that the focus is on quality of life, of which the critical dimensions are poverty eradication, employment creation, gender equity, social integration, and environmental protection, which are in turn linked to education, health, and other aspects of human resource development (Swaziland Government, 2010).

Important elements in this strategy are appropriate education and training (including a move away from the present academic orientation and towards a technical and vocational orientation); adequate incentives extended to businesses and households to encourage the full development of human capital; appropriate youth programmes; special attention to members of society with disabilities; and all other areas that have an impact on the quality of human capital (health, water, sanitation, shelter, etc). Most of the strategies in this vision 2022 have remained on paper and very little has been actioned (Op cit).

The literature reviewed has captured fundamental issues relating to the socio-economic and political landscape of Swaziland. It has interrogated issues of employment, education, participation or lack of by major sectors of society in the struggles of young people to become economically active. The section below discusses the theoretical framework informing this study, drawing particularly from Mills and Bourdieu, two theorists relevant for my study.

2.4 Theoretical framework

This section is made of two interrelated parts. The first part discusses the theoretical considerations in studying the employment of young adults in Swaziland.

It opens with a discussion of selected social theories and their relation to understanding young adult activity in the employment sector. Then, Mills' notion of sociological imagination in combination with Bourdieu's theory of practice centring on the concepts field, capitals and habitus are explored. This discussion contextualises the present study as an attempt to demonstrate the personal-public nature of the employment phenomenon in Swaziland: the brief discussion of Bourdieu's theory of practice provides the theoretical base and the conceptual mechanisms I use in exploring the lives of young adults in the work place.

The second part recounts young people's activity studies relative to issues of marginalisation and exclusion, transitions, and employment. Based on youth studies worldwide, this section discusses the various factors that were found salient in the study of young people's activity. This part directs attention to the limited youth literature that considers the combined impact of family and culture in understanding the lives of active Swazi young adults.

2.4.1 Theoretical Considerations

Like in most developing countries, in Swaziland there is paucity of studies or researches on theoretical approaches to employment and industrial relations, in particular studies on youth employment. This theoretical discussion begins from that limitation.

Theory could be viewed as a coherent group of assumptions or propositions put forth to explain a phenomenon. A theory is an abstraction of reality and is synonymous with perception, viewpoint, assumption, frame of reference or a perspective. The relevance of theory in any field of endeavour cannot be over emphasised. Theory attempts to observe, understand, explain, predict and control

events or phenomena. “It helps in our understanding of events and problems in the practical world” (Fajana, 2000:21 cited in Chidi & Okpala, n.d.).

Without theory, there is no practice, thus, according to Luthans “it has often been said (usually by theoreticians) that there is nothing as practical as a good theory” (Luthans, 1998:13 cited in Chidi & Okpala op cit). Hyman (1975:12 cited in Chidi and Okpala op cit) argues that the whole point of an explicit theoretical perspective is to provide a framework within which the complex detail of the real world can be organised. Hyman (1975:2) cited in Chidi and Okpala (Op cit) further asserts that “those who glory in their pragmatism and insist that they are immune from theory are simply unaware of their own preconceptions and presuppositions”. Without theory men cannot act, for a theory is a way of seeing, of understanding and of planning. Phoenix (1964) as cited in Asika (1995:53) opines that “a theory or model provides an abstract pattern whose structure in relevant respects is congruent with the structure of the physical (and social) world, as demonstrated by agreement between observations and predictions made from the theory or model” (cited in Chidi & Okpala, n.d.).

I begin by outlining various theoretical frameworks that have been used in the analysis of employment and industrial relations discussed extensively by Chidi & Okpala (op cit) , for noting, but not necessarily fitting in my theoretical framework.

The unitary frame of reference is credited to Alan Fox (1966). The unitary perspective views the organisation as pointing towards a single or unified authority and loyalty structure. Emphasis under the unitary perspective is placed on common values, interest and objectives. Those subscribing to this view see all organisational

participants as a team or family thereby implicitly emphasising shared values, shared goals and common destiny (Cited in Chidi & OKpala. Op cit).

Unitarism in essence implies the absence of factionalism within the enterprise (Fajana, 2000). Conflict is viewed as irrational and the sacking of striking workers is preferred to consultation or negotiation. Conflict is regarded as pathological or evil or bad. Trade unionism is outlawed and suppressed as it is viewed as an illegitimate intrusion or encroachment on management's right to manage. According to Rose (2008), under the unitary perspective, trade unions are regarded as an intrusion into the organisation from outside, competing with management for the loyalty of employees. The unitary theory tends towards authoritarianism and paternalism. It is pro- management biased and emphasises consensus and industrial peace. The underlying assumption of this view is that the organisation exists in perfect harmony and all conflict is unnecessary (Rose, 2008).

Conflict theory is synonymous with the pluralist or the pluralistic frame of reference which is also credited to Alan Fox (1966). Conflict theory views the organisation as coalescence of sectional groups with different values, interests and objectives. Thus, employees have different values and aspirations from those of management, and these values and aspirations are always in conflict with those of management. Conflict theorists argue that conflict is inevitable, rational, functional and normal situation in organisations, which is resolved through compromise and agreement or collective bargaining. Conflict theorists view trade unions as legitimate challenges to managerial rule or prerogatives and emphasise competition and collaboration. This view recognises trade unions as legitimate representative organisations which enable groups of employees to influence management decisions (Rose, 2008). Rose further states that the pluralist perspective would seem to be

much more relevant than the unitary perspective in the analysis of industrial relations in many large unionised organisations and congruent with developments in contemporary society.

The concept of system derives from the structural/functionalist perspectives of social system (society). This also connotes the macro-sociological, order or social system view of society. The systems approach to industrial relations is configurational. Thus, Dunlop developed his theoretical approach of industrial relations on the basis of a systems concept and was heavily influenced by the prior work of Parsons (Fajana, 2000). According to Ogunbameru (2004), the American system approaches to the study of industrial relations were strongly influenced by structural/functionalist sociology. Dunlop based his model explicitly on Parsons social system, which assumed an inherent bias towards order and stability. Otobo (2000:9) cited in Chidi & Okpala (Op cit), citing Dunlop (1958) argues that “An industrial-relations system at any one time in its development is regarded as comprised of certain actors, certain contexts, an ideology which binds the industrial-relations system together and a body of rules created to govern actors at the workplace and work community”. According to Dunlop, systems theory provides the analytical tools and the theoretical basis to make industrial relations an academic discipline in its own right.

According to Green (1994:4), “the social action theory views industrial relations from the individual’s viewpoint and motivation”. According to Rose (2008), the social action approach considers the organisation from the position of the individual members or actors who will each have their own goals. This perspective regards conflicts of interests as normal behaviour and part of organisational life (Rose, 2008). It is credited to the German sociologist, Max Weber (1864-1920).

Social action theory represents a contribution from sociologists to the study of organisations. It attempts to view the organisation from the standpoint of individual members or actors of industrial relations (Op cit).

The theory seeks to analyse why the actors take certain lines of action. This contrasts with the systems approach which states that behaviour is a result of the structure and processes of the system. Social action arises out of the expectations, norms, attitudes, values, experiences, situation and goals of the individuals working in the system. Thus, according to Green while the system approach is up-down, the social action theory is a bottom-up approach. Salamon (2000) opines that the importance of the social action theory of industrial relations is that it weakens the fatalism of structural determinism and stresses that the individual retains at least some freedom of action and ability to influence events in the direction that he/she believes to be right or desirable. Social action theorists emphasise the use of interview, survey and participant observation in determining the reality of both society and of organisations. This interpretation is closer to my thesis postulation of participants not being passive but actors in their employment pathways.

Having considered the limitations of these theoretical disposition in analysing youth employment, I have selected Bourdieu's theory of practice forms of capital and the idea fields (arenas) for my main theoretical framework, complimented by Mill's (1959) notion of Sociological imagination particularly following the idea of using the private-public approach in analysing career paths of young people.

Notwithstanding certain divergences in the empirical dispositions of Bourdieu and Mills which will not be elaborated in this study, both shared convergent views on the relations between sociologists and their public sphere (Anonymous, n.d.). They

were both reflexive sociologists. Bourdieu centred on field, habitus and capital in his empirical project while Mills' critical evaluation of social structures and his sociological imagination have dominated research (Op cit). "C. Wright Mills, an eminent sociologist, argued quite simply that neither the life of the individual nor the history of society can be understood without understanding both" (Morris, 2015).

At its core, sociology is about looking at the relationship between structures (rules, institutions, etc) and agency (individuals, choice, etc) and how these two aspects of society influence what we do. Competing social theories have often exclusively favoured either structure or agency over the other. Bourdieu's social theory attempts to combine structure and agency. Through applying concepts - what Bourdieu referred to as his 'thinking tools' - Bourdieu provides a structural and agentic account for why we do that we do (Morris, 2015).

Morris (Op cit) continues to say, "while Bourdieu has been criticised for giving too much favour to structure, I would argue that this is a pragmatic portrayal of the social construction of our society. It is within this portrayal that we can find Bourdieu's key message: in the age of increased individualism, structures still play a role." (op cit). The arguments I make in this thesis resonate with the views expressed by Mills and Bourdieu in so far as building the argument of actions and decisions of individuals as partially influenced by the structures and institutions of society; family, school and the work place. The discussion of data in Chapter 6 centres on the concepts of private and public, referring to the relationship that these two concepts have in analysing individual actions or agency. I, therefore, concur with Morris (Op cit) in linking the arguments of Bourdieu and Mills which I have adopted for my study.

Although this thesis is not comparing participants according to age groups, age is an important factor in transitioning between childhood to adulthood, including access to opportunities and resources that are important for livelihoods. I acknowledge that social analyses of age, age groups, age stratification, and the social spaces in which they occur have fascinated sociologists from various theoretical orientations. Many theories continue to raise significant questions on age as a variable. For instance, Eisenstadt (1956: 21) explains that age and differences in age are among the most basic and crucial aspects of human life and determinants of human destiny. His structural-functional assertion of age relations reveals an understanding of the conditions of stability and continuity of social systems (Eisenstadt, 1956).

However, contrary to Parsons' (1973) theoretical emphasis, the relationships between age groups, be it across generations or within a specific category called youth, do not necessarily evoke social integration. Rather, other theoretical paradigms like neo-Marxian theory extend socio-psychological interest to the notion of identity crisis and adolescence (Erikson, 1968; Gerth & Mills, 1953) and to issues of youth alienation (Allen, 1973; Feuer, 1969; Marcuse, 1964; Ollman, 1976). Similarly, there are other youth studies that have used the frameworks of feminism (McRobbie, 1997, 2000/1991) and agency-structure integration theory (Furlong & Cartmel, 1997; Jones & Wallace, 1992; Wyn & White, 1997) to address the interaction between age and gender on the one hand, and the intersections of identity, individualisation and modern society, on the other.

Among the many theoretical perspectives, I have selected three theoretical approaches namely; structural-functionalism, neo-Marxian theory, and agency-structure integration theory to highlight the variation of understanding for the context

of youth employment. This theoretical exercise is necessary to better situate the approaches of Mills and Bourdieu to empirical research. Similarly, these approaches will situate Swazi young adults in the discourse of larger social issues affecting them in Swaziland (marginalisation, exclusion, transitions and employment), which will be discussed in the latter part of this chapter.

2.4.2 Generation and Youth: From the Classics to Contemporary Theories

Mannheim (1952) is one of the few classical theorists who articulated the phenomenon of generation. His essay entitled, *The Problem of Generations* (1952) is a classic sociological essay that has been cited in various works (Allen, 1973; Chisholm, 2002; Kohli, 1996; Marshall, 1983; Marsland, 1987; Oakley, 2001). He is perhaps best seen as a non-Marxist version of Lukacs who is best known for his development of the sociology of knowledge – the theory that all knowledge depends upon the social and existential position of the thinker (Craib, 1997: 275). His approach, as explained by Kecskemeti (in Mannheim, 1952: 9), is mainly structural.

Eisenstadt (1956) and Parsons (1973) also address the question of age relations using structural-functionalist approach in their works, which are regarded as influential in their analyses on age relations. Eisenstadt, for instance, shows how age groups tend to occur and explains the allocation of various social roles based on age and describes the social conditions within which age plays a decisive part in role allocation and the determination of group boundaries. Parsons (1973), on the other hand, situates youth with respect to integrative models of society. Other important works that strengthened the foundation of the sociology of youth are Erikson's empirical research on identity (1968), Ariès' *Centuries of Childhood* (1962) and Gerth

and Mills' (1953) *Character and Social Structure: The Psychology of Social Institution*.

In the 1950s, Marxist theory presented the most significant challenge to conventionally established analyses of youth (Marsland, 1987: 7). For example, Allen (1973) criticised the functionalist view of youth and argued for a new approach to the study of youth that considered conflict and dialectical structural change. Also, the growth of student movements in the 1960s heralded an array of studies on youth alienation and the so-called lost generation. Some of the critical neo-Marxists whose works served as inspiration to these young social movements were Marcuse (1964), Goodman (1960), Ollman (1976), Fromm (1975), Feuer (1969b), and Keniston (1965).

In the 1970s and 1980s, works on youth resistance and subculture were taken up by a new breed of neo-Marxists (Brake, 1985; Hall & Jefferson, 1976; Willis, 1977). In addition, during this period, McRobbie's *Feminism and Youth Culture* (2000/1991) generated particular theoretical interest among researchers as she combined Marxism with feminism. During this time, studies on youth education and schooling were also examined through rational choice (Coleman, 1988; Collins, 1979), and Marxist social reproduction perspectives (Berg, 1970; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990/1977; MacLeod, 1987).

During the 1980s and 1990s, the works of Giddens (1990, 1991), Bourdieu et al, (1984; 1990/1977; 1992) and Beck (1992) ushered in a new strand of youth discourse framed within the agency-structure integration perspective (Furlong & Cartmel, 1997, Jones & Wallace, 1992, Wyn & White, 1997). However, there are still recent works like Côté and Allahaar (1994, 1998, 2007) that used the Marxian frame.

The foregoing desktop survey illustrates how various theoretical positions influence the conceptual understanding of generation and youth. The next section discusses specifically how these selected theories are able to account for an understanding of generation relative to the issues of intergenerational relations, age inequality and social reproduction.

2.4.3. *Transition to adulthood*

Three institutions – workplace, educational system, and family have affected the experiences and life chances of young people in the twentieth century (Côté & Allahaar, 1998: 129). In essence, these three institutions serve as social spaces for the analysis of youth across different theoretical perspectives.

The structural-functionalist perspective sees the proper integration of youth first in the family, and then in the school as managed by the state. However, as Eisenstadt (1956: 29) points out among these, the individual's attitude towards authority and his cooperation are the most crucial for the proper functioning of the personality within the social system.

Critical of the changing circumstances of youth as they come-of-age in the advanced industrial societies, neo-Marxists' class analyses of youth culture highlight resistance and social reproduction. For instance, Willis (1977) examines the cultural sphere of working-class white male youth in Britain and explains how structural forces act through the cultural milieu. His examination of the school to work transitional experience illustrates the development of youth subcultures both in schools and in initial work sites. Willis discusses how resistance and subculture are formed and negotiated within the traditional social structures of institutions, labour, and class. This neo-Marxist analysis of youth subculture suggests that transitions

from school to work are critical in the reproduction of the labour force, and highlights the strength of labour as an important pivot of class identity.

The neo-Marxist perspective, as shown in this work of Willis (1977), illustrates the coming of age process of youth as incorporating conflict, influence and negotiation within social structures such as class. McRobbie (2000), being critical of Willis' work for lack of gender dimension, centres her analysis on the terrain of girls' culture and the construction of ideologies of girlhood in Great Britain. Thus, this coming of age as a social process shifts perspective to include gender as another significant variable in youth analysis.

On the other hand, Bourdieu's work with Passeron (1990/1977) illustrates the crucial importance of education, as a mechanism through which the values and relations that make up the social space are passed on from one generation to the next (Webb, et al, 2002: 105). He reaffirms this analysis through his concepts of cultural capital and habitus. This theoretical frame suggests a coming of age process that seeks to illuminate the duality and dialectical interplay of agency and structure (Bernstein, 1989: 23), which differentiates it from the other theoretical approaches.

2.4.4 Theories and young people in the work place

In the previous section, the conceptual variance of generations and youth directs our attention to how they are related to the larger issues of age-inequality, generational conflict, social reproduction, and gender inequity. Thus, I find it worthwhile to articulate how these three selected theories shed light on my understanding of the Swazi young people.

In Chapter 6 I explore the views presented by Côté & Allahaar's, (1998: 129) a bit further. They came up with the notion of the three institutions; workplace, educational system, and family which they believe are critical in understanding the macro aspects of human behaviour. I explore their view of the three institutions in analysing institutions that have affected the experiences and life chances of young people in Swaziland. For example, from the structural-functionalist point of view, employment among youth may be seen as part of their integration process into the social system. Thus, work is viewed as only part of the growing-up process gaining independence from parents, where young people are learning to assume a different role as workers and income earners.

Elwell (2013) ably describes the intentions of Robert Merton in introducing the concept of dysfunction. He says, "...the concept of dysfunction allows functional theory to focus on change, it is based on tension, strain, or contradictions within component elements of sociocultural systems [thus] creating pressures for change within the system". I therefore, argue that dysfunction occurs when there is prolonged inactivity in cases of unemployment. But in general, this theory assumes that as long as norms of society are taught and learned in institutions such as the family and the school, tensions brought about by inactivity should be seen as due to the young person's intention to fit in rather than perceiving them as experiencing a sense of alienation.

Similarly, Anthony Giddens (2012) argues that "...concept of structuration holds that 'structure' and 'action' are necessarily related to each other: societies have 'structure' insofar as people behave in regular ways, and 'action' is only possible because each individual possesses socially structured knowledge". As such, the agency-structure approach frames its analysis on the interplay between the

actor and the structure. In this context, employment may be seen as a form of positive manifestation of societal expectations impinging on both the self and society. It implies that human action shapes and is shaped by the broader structural and cultural bounds of particular contexts. In other words, Bourdieu sees human action resulting largely from deeply inscribed dispositions informing a practical sense. The interest is to demonstrate the dialectical relationship between the self and the society in the context of work experience. This framework has the capacity to highlight the complex processes of personal-public troubles (Mills, 1959), and social reproduction (Bourdieu, 1977, 1984; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990/1977). Among these three theoretical frameworks, the agency-structure approach will arise throughout the following chapters as most enlightening in explaining the relationship between self and society, which is further explored in the next section.

2.4.4.1. Considering Mills and Bourdieu

In Mills (1959), Sociological Imagination may be defined as the capacity to see how sociological situations play out due to how people differ in terms of their places in given social or historical circumstances. It is a way of thinking about things in society that have led to some sort of outcome, and understanding what causes led to that outcome. Things that shape these outcomes include (but are not limited to), social norms, what people want to gain out of something (their motives for doing something), the social context in country, time period, people they associate themselves with). Basically, what we do, who we are and who we become are shaped by all these factors that result in some sort of outcome. Worley, (2003) explains that, for Mills, one of the key ways people can understand society and social change is to apply this sociological imagination. This involves something

called **making the familiar strange**, or questioning and critiquing the world around us. It is similar to putting on a new pair of glasses - in this case with sociological lenses - and seeing our society and the everyday behaviours and interactions we usually take for granted in a different way.

Worley (Op cit) asks the question - what does it mean to use our sociological imagination? The first step is to recogni[s]e the connection between our individual experiences and the larger society. In other words, to apply the sociological imagination, we are first aware of the social context in which our individual options and decisions occur. For example, many adults are deciding to earn their college degrees because of our society's increasing emphasis on having a degree for obtaining a well-paying job and for advancing in one's career. This shift in society, where employers are demanding that advanced education level plays a key role in hiring and promotions, is influencing individuals' educational and career decisions (Worley, 2003).

Mills provides a classic example of how to have a sociological imagination. An individual needs to be able to pull him/herself away from the situation and to be able to think outside the box (from an alternative point of view). To look beyond common sense explanations of social phenomenon excavating individual issues with a potential of escalating into social problems. He encourages the sociologist to learn the technique of drawing-out connections between private and public troubles that one feels as a series of traps, in order to grasp sociologically, what is going on in the world. There is something inviting about this premise that encouraged me to think about the ability to see things interactively, between the personal and the societal, rather than from the narrow lens of personal experience. Employment of young

people is among the many social issues that would require the use of a sociological imagination to connect "personal troubles to public issues" in Swaziland.

Mills' approach allows me to situate employment in both the private and public spheres. That is, employment is not just a personal issue but also a public issue, requiring adequate attention from academics and policy makers. This idea is a good start to generating questions about the character of employment in public and private institutions. However, the general idea of Mills should be accompanied by a working theory that would allow empirical articulation. It is here that I find Bourdieu's theory of practice (Bourdieu, 1977) the most relevant to examine social issues.

Firstly, the concept of habitus is employed to explain how objective structure and subjective perception impact upon human action, for example how family, school and society influences the choices young people make. The concept can be explained as a set of regulatory schemes of thought and action, which are to some extents, a product of prior experience. In Bourdieu's (1977: 72) own words, "habitus constitutes — a set of durable, transposable dispositions — which regulates mental activity to the point where individuals are often unconsciously aware of their influence". In similar point of view, habitus concept is an avenue of explaining how social and cultural messages shape individual's thoughts and actions. The habitus, basically, is thus not wholly structured, though it still remains strongly influenced by historical, social and cultural contexts.

The second important theme in illuminating Bourdieu's theory is capitals. For Bourdieu, the term of capital simultaneously represented both a power relationship and a power resource. People's lived experiences (habitus) derive from relative

endowments of different forms of capitals, which in turn, define their historically evolving positions within social settings. Actors exchange and accumulate capital in the course of everyday social interaction. Bourdieu (1986) described forms of capitals in four categories: economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capitals.

Bourdieu's (1986) perspective on the forms of capitals offers two observations that inform analysis of everyday politics. First, given unequal distribution of capital in any given context, social interactions tend to reproduce existing power relationships even as incremental change occurs. Second, the forms of capital are convertible such that cultural capital might produce increased income (Wilshusen, 2012). In other words, Bourdieu considered social capital as a means of access to other types of capitals.

Relating to economic capital, Bourdieu (1986) defined it as income and other financial resources and assets. It is the most liquid capital in that it may be more readily converted into other capitals (Rudd, 2003).

Meanwhile, in Bourdieu's (1986) view, social capital is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 119). Social capital exists as a set of lasting social relations, networks and contacts. Investing in social capital acts as a kind of strategy which further serves as a mechanism to exchange other capitals. In other words, for group members social capital facilitates ownership of collective capital. Social capital is manifested in relations and networks which are useful resources in determining and reproduction of social positions.

Bourdieu, working with various colleagues, developed the concept of cultural capital in the early 1960s in order to help address a particular empirical problem—namely, the fact that —economic obstacles are not sufficient to explain|| disparities in the educational attainment of children from different social classes (Bourdieu & Passeron 1979:8). Bourdieu argued that, above and beyond economic factors, —cultural habits and...dispositions inherited from|| the family are fundamentally important to school success (Bourdieu & Passeron 1979: 14).

Bourdieu maintained that culture shares many of the properties that are characteristic of economic capital. In particular, he asserted that cultural —habits and dispositions comprise a resource capable of generating —profits; they are potentially subject to monopolization by individuals and groups; and, under appropriate conditions, they can be transmitted from one generation to the next (Lareau and Weininger 2003).

Cultural capital has three subtypes: embodied, objectified and institutionalised (see Bourdieu, 1986: 47). Embodied cultural capital consists of both the consciously acquired and the passively "inherited" properties of one's self (with "inherit[ance]" here used not in the genetic sense but in the sense of receipt over time, usually from the family through socialization, of culture and traditions). Cultural capital is not transmissible instantaneously like a gift or bequest; rather, it is acquired over time as it impresses itself upon one's habitus (character and way of thinking), which in turn becomes more attentive to or primed to receive similar influences.

Objectified cultural capital consists of physical objects that are owned, such as scientific instruments or works of art. These cultural goods can be transmitted both for economic profit (as by buying and selling them with regard only to others' willingness to pay) and for the purpose of "symbolically" conveying the cultural capital whose acquisition they facilitate. However, while one can possess objectified cultural capital by owning a painting, one can "consume" the painting (understand its cultural meaning) only if one has the proper foundation of conceptually and/or historically prior cultural capital, whose transmission does not accompany the sale of the painting (except coincidentally and through independent causation, such as when a vendor or broker chooses to explain the painting's significance to the prospective buyer).

Institutionalised cultural capital consists of institutional recognition, most often in the form of academic credentials or qualifications, of the cultural capital held by an individual. This concept plays its most prominent role in the labour market, in which it allows a wide array of cultural capital to be expressed in a single qualitative and quantitative measurement (and compared against others' cultural capital similarly measured). The institutional recognition process thereby eases the conversion of cultural capital to economic capital by serving as a heuristic that sellers can use to describe their capital and buyers can use to describe their needs for that capital.

I find that Bourdieu's emphasis on giving equal importance to theory and research makes it possible to give serious consideration to the local cultural contexts of studying employment experiences of young people. He writes research without theory is blind and theory without research is empty (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). The present study may attest to the universality of Bourdieu's concepts as well as

illustrate its power in capturing the nuances and peculiarities of the Swazi culture. Theoretically, my main argument will demonstrate that Bourdieu's theory of practice helps in showing how the varying strategies of earning and independence provided to the young people are oriented around societal expectation dynamics rooted in the practice of the culture of care and an ethics of sharing. Let me now present this argument using Bourdieu's conceptual tools.

2.4.4.2. Fields (arenas)

A third concept that is important in Bourdieu's theory is the idea of 'fields', which are the various social and institutional arenas in which people express and reproduce their dispositions, and where they compete for the distribution of different kinds of capital (Gaventa 2003: 6). A field is a network, structure or set of relationships which may be intellectual, religious, educational, cultural, etc. (Navarro 2006: 18). People often experience power differently depending on which field they are in at a given moment (Gaventa 2003: 6), so context and environment are key influences on habitus:

Bourdieu (1987: 2) explains that, agents are both classified and classifiers, but they classify according to (or depending upon) their position within classifications. This recognises that the social world is a multidimensional space of power and capital with which agents continuously shape and negotiate. According to him, this multidimensional space is comprised of intersecting fields governed by a set of objective relations (Andres, 1994: 127). Examples of these are economic, political and educational fields. These fields are seats of power and resources, thus, they may be considered as fields of forces as well as fields of struggles.

The young people reside in a multidimensional space where I find the intersecting fields of family, school and work as the most salient. These fields are where they learn about the world, its dynamics and classifications, of what could be considered the structural roots of their worldviews. These fields have the potential to powerfully shape their lives as well as restrict their development. By examining how these young people navigate such fields, it is possible to understand what structural forces led them to employment and the benefits they enjoy or suffering they endure.

However, I argue that in the Swaziland context, another field that has significant impact on the lives of Swazis is the culture field. Thus, inclusion of the cultural field in the analysis of the lives of the young people is critical and crucial to this study.

2.4.4.3. Forms of Capital

Capital can present itself in three fundamental guises: as *economic capital*, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalised in the forms of property rights; as *cultural capital*, which is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalised in the forms of educational qualifications; and as *social capital*, made up of social obligations ('connections'), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of a title of nobility (Bourdieu 1986).

While capital is always accumulated labour, there are different types. Embodied capital's exchanges are more hidden than economic capital's, it is likely to operate as symbolic capital (indeed, it cannot be transmitted from one to another), not recognised as true capital at all, but "legitimate competence" (p. 49). There is a hereditary component to cultural capital; the attainment of a certain level of

education mandates a previous cultural capital investment by a family. The link between economic and cultural capital is the time necessary to acquire each; the time necessary to attain the latter depends on one family's ability to sponsor such endeavours. By contrast, the objectified state of cultural capital is very transmissible. The institutionalised state conveys value in the labour market, though it is not an absolute value (Bourdieu, 1986).

Bourdieu then asks: How can we concretely grasp these objective relations which are irreducible to the interactions by which they manifest themselves? (Bourdieu, 1990: 127). He explains that objective relations are relations between positions occupied within the distribution of resources (which may become active or effective) in the competition for the appropriation of scarce goods of which social universe is the site (Bourdieu, 1990: 127). This is where Bourdieu uses his idea of the forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986). What most researchers find interesting in this theoretical formulation is how he shows the convertibility of capital (e.g. how these forms change into one another) and how this process forms the basis of the strategies adopted by individuals and social groups to ensure the reproduction of capital. He explains:

Thus agents are distributed in the overall social space, in the first dimension, according to the overall volume of capital they possess and in the second dimension, according to the structure of their capital, that is, the relative weight of the different species of capital, economic and cultural, in the total volume of their assets (Bourdieu, 1986).

Among these, the notion of cultural capital has captured the most attention (Andres, 1994), which Bourdieu clarifies as manifested in three states – embodied,

objectified, and institutionalised. Recent studies on cultural capital (e.g., Contenta, 1993; DiMaggio, 1982; Symeou, 2007) point to how this concept could be applied in many ways across cultures. These studies illustrate how Bourdieu's notion of capital explicates social inequality, particularly the process of its reproduction (Stehr, 2001: 499).

Considering Swazi social life, I see the relationships among family members, communal networks with neighbours, cultural participation and organizations such as the church, as significant resources that matter most in the lives of young people. This is closely related to accessing other forms of capital.

2.4.4.4. *Habitus*

While Foucault (1998) sees power as 'ubiquitous' and beyond agency or structure, Bourdieu (1986) sees power as culturally and symbolically created, and constantly re-legitimised through an interplay of agency and structure. The main way this happens is through what he calls 'habitus' or socialised norms or tendencies that guide behaviour and thinking. Habitus is 'the way society becomes deposited in persons in the form of lasting dispositions, or trained capacities and structured propensities to think, feel and act in determinant ways, which then guide them' (Wacquant 2005: 316, cited in Navarro 2006: 16).

Habitus is created through a social, rather than an individual process leading to patterns that are enduring and transferrable from one context to another, but that also shift in relation to specific contexts and over time. Habitus "is not fixed or permanent, and can be changed under unexpected situations or over a long historical period" (Navarro 2006: 16):

Habitus is neither a result of free will, nor determined by structures, but created by a kind of interplay between the two over time: dispositions that are both shaped by past events and structures, and that shape current practices and structures and also, importantly, that condition our very perceptions of these (Bourdieu 1984: 170). In this sense habitus is created and reproduced unconsciously, “without any deliberate pursuit of coherence... without any conscious concentration” (ibid: 170).

Habitus is another powerful concept introduced by Bourdieu in his theory of practice. This is where he positions the self and explicates its development, constitution and negotiations with society. There have been a number of ways in which habitus has been used (Connolly & Healy, 2004; Dumais, 2002; Lau, 2004) but similar to the notion of capital, the attempt to arrive at a standard measurement remains inadequate. However, despite the fluidity of this concept, the relative agreement points to the word disposition. As Richard Nice, the English translator of Bourdieu’s *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Bourdieu, 1977) notes:

The word disposition seems particularly suited to express what is covered by the concept of habitus (defined as the system of dispositions). It expresses first the result of an organising action, with a meaning close to that of words such as structure; it also designates a way of being, a habitual state (especially of the body) and, in particular, a predisposition, tendency, propensity, or inclination (Cited in Navarro, 2006).

In this thesis, I assume that the state of earning generates a set of dispositions that correlates with the preliminary expectations of the world where young people live. These contradictions, I suspect, demonstrate ways of being that

predisposed these young people to have a distinct worldview. I believe that making habitus part of the analysis allows a more coherent and deeper understanding of the social self of the young people.

While much of this may sound abstract, Bourdieu's theories are firmly grounded in a wide body of sociological research, and across a range of social issues. Part of his appeal, in fact, is that his research is so prolific and empirically documented. Another appeal of Bourdieu for politically committed researchers is that he sees sociological method as part of the process of change. Careful analysis can help to reveal the power relations that have been rendered invisible by habitus and misrecognition (Navarro 2006: 19).

Bourdieu proposed a 'reflexive sociology'— in which one recognises one's biases, beliefs and assumptions in the act of sense-making – long before reflexivity became fashionable. Self-critical knowledge that discloses the 'sources of power' and reveals 'the reasons that explain social asymmetries and hierarchies' can itself become 'a powerful tool to enhance social emancipation' (Navarro 2006: 15-16).

This theoretical articulation brings into focus my position as a non-Western researcher relative to my strong preference to practice sociology grounded in Swazi social realities. I see this section as a dialogue between these social theories and the possible ways in which young people may be understood and my attempt to include local contexts in the process.

2.5 Conclusion

From the limited literature available on Swaziland this chapter has discussed the state of education in Swaziland and how it transcends to employment

opportunities for young people in the country. The theoretical framework and its application in this research have further been discussed. Hopefully this study will contribute to the body of literature that is available on the subject.

2.5.1 Potential Use of Research Findings

I envision that this exploratory narrative on employment experiences of young people in Swaziland will contribute toward the further development of a sociology of the Swazi youth, youth employment, and youth marginalisation and social exclusion. In my view, the findings of this research are relevant to government agencies in Swaziland such as the Swaziland National Youth Council (SNYC), Ministry of Education and Training (MoET), Ministry of Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs (MOSCYA), and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MoLSS), as well as to schools, colleges and universities, non-governmental organizations, youth agencies, and local communities, especially in the sampled areas. It is particularly important to raise awareness on employment of young people as a legitimate public issue that urgently needs research and policy attention. By opening up a public discourse on the life contexts and vulnerable states of young people in Swaziland, I hope that in the future, better strategies and social programmes will be developed to facilitate their smooth transitions into becoming successful individuals and socially responsible Swazi adults. In addition, the findings of this research could also serve as a comparative basis to further explore the varying types and dimensions of youth activity across regions.

Chapter 3 Methodology and research design

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 presented a discussion of literature on youth employment linking it to the major theoretical framework of this study. This chapter presents a detailed description of the research methodology adopted in this study. The chapter is organised into several sections that provide a framework within which to describe the research process. A statement on the purpose of the study is provided, followed by the particular research questions that guided data collection and analysis procedures. My role as the researcher is also articulated before a comprehensive research plan is outlined. The chapter ends with a summary to illustrate the linkages among the main sections presented as part of the research design methodology for this study.

I begin with a discussion of methodology from which the research is centred and method of generating data and the reasons for selecting the method used in the research. A description follows of how data was gathered and analysed.

3.2 Research design and methodology

My research adopted a qualitative interpretive approach, which “is strongly rooted in the assumption that the social and natural worlds are distinct and different... the ultimate goal of interpretive research is to understand the complexity of human experience... and interpretive researchers explore the meanings of situations...their own values and biases influence their research” (Loseke, 2013:24). ‘The underlying justification for interpretive research is that people live and perceive their lives and make and interpret meaning in their lives in terms of ‘stories’ or narratives (Murray & Beglar, 2009). I analysed stories from the interviews – lived

experiences of employed young people as precepts for my interpretive analysis. 'Interpretive analysis is one of the best ways to obtain a well-rounded, in-depth understanding of persons and events' (Murray & Beglar, 2009). The qualitative nature of the study allowed for the discussion of employment experiences to be analysed according to the themes and patterns that emerged from the interviews. The intention was not to provide generalisable patterns of employment amongst young people but to build a story of some of their experiences with employment. These experiences have shaped choices, decision making and perceptions of young people about the future.

3.2.1 Research design

For this research I was the sole investigator who interacted with all participants. This experience gave me a holistic impression of the information gathered including the background and personalities of the participants.

Mason (2002) says the most common qualitative data collection method is the interview. For the purpose of my research, I utilised in-depth individual interviews as the primary method of qualitative data collection. I conducted qualitative interviews with twenty (n=20) young people; including ten young men (n=10) and ten young women (n=10) aged between 25-34 years old. Qualitative research emphasises on quality of data and not the quantity of participants. "... the objective is not to maximise numbers but to become "saturated" with information on the topic" (Pagdett, 1988:52). In each research site 5 interviews were conducted, and by the time I reached the third interview very little new information was gathered. The choice of age group was influenced by the national youth policy and national population census youth age definition as 15-34, and the average age of entry into employment

after obtaining tertiary qualifications including the number of years obtaining work experience. Age therefore, becomes an important demographic classification and indicator of years spent in employment, raising the probability of obtaining rich in-depth interviews.

3.2.2 Methods of data collection

3.2.2.1 In-depth interviews

I have solely based my study on in-depth interviews adopting what Mason (2002:62) describes as the interactional exchange of dialogue in a relatively informal style of topic centred conversation.

The planned Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were abandoned when the in-depth interviews were seemingly generating enough and detailed data. Secondly, the practicality of getting participants together in one venue proved futile due to clashing period of availability.

3.2.3 Participant selection

Recruiting participants was generally unproblematic. Participants had a variety of employment statuses; ranging from employed, under-employed and self-employed, although most were moving in between the various sectors still trying to find their niche. A Purposive convenience sampling infused with a snowballing technique was adopted for this study. The first participant from each research site was drawn from my social contacts. Subsequent participants were referrals (snowballing) from interviews. This method also proved very useful as a cost reducing measure.

3.2.4 Establishing contact

The establishment of contact is imperative for the interview process. To ensure that the interviews proceeded properly, I made sure to have secured and verified with the participant the meeting place and set the interview date. Participants were sourced by first making initial contacts with young people in my church and at the university where I work. The purpose of the interview was discussed and the criteria for participants outlined. Contacts then referred me to possible participants who were either called or texted on their mobile telephones. The initial telephone contact usually led to a fixed appointment for an interview. Participants were requested to refer me to potential participants who consented.

It should be noted that no-one who was invited to participate refused. Nor did anyone object to the conversations being recorded or refuse to discuss a particular topic that I suggested. Any anxiety that the conversations might have been intrusive or probed beyond what the young person was at ease to discuss was frequently eased by the participants' reactions and willingness to talk.

3.2.5 Rationale for participant selection and sampling strategy

It was not intended that the study should accommodate direct comparisons between participants in light of their gender, age or other personal characteristics or to work towards generalisable statements of cause and effect and so there were no criteria for selection other than being a willing participant fitting the description.

Participants were selected from all the four regions of the country in the main town or city of each region to obtain a variety of responses. The towns served as central points of recruiting participants because most jobs are located in the towns

and cities and young people gather in these places. The criteria for choosing the age group of between 25-34 years, was influenced by the country's youth policy definition and the official statistical categorisation of young people. The age group also positively contributed to the depth and quality of experiences of young people with employment as, on average, by the age of 25 years after tertiary education employment has begun. Choosing young people with tertiary qualifications ranging from certificates, diplomas, and degrees made for varied experiences with successes and struggles coming through. Limiting recruitment of participants to tertiary qualification holders was purely for convenience in handling the data analysis task. Gender was balanced in the total number of interviews and was not decided by regional sampling. My own gender sensitivity biased the gender sampling to a parity representation of 50/50 male and female participants.

3.2.6 The interview

The face to face unstructured interviews were conducted in various locations in the four regions of the country. Each interview was recorded over a period lasting between 30 to 55 minutes. I again introduced myself, orally reviewed the purpose of the study, and read the consent form to the participant in order to verify willing participation.

Initially 20 in-depth interviews together with 4 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were planned. Practically, the interviews proved sufficient as data saturation was apparent in each region upon hitting the third of the five interviews per region. Continuing with FGDs seemed not worthwhile as the in-depths provided a complete and adequate form (Banche, et al. eds, 2012: 288). This research was basically

exploring what issues are important in youth employment that could lead to further studies and investigation by interested researchers.

The interviews with some young people were quite challenging. During some interviews, it became apparent that many of the young people were facing personal struggles with employment and under-employment. They became more relaxed as the interview proceeded and were generally forthcoming with their views. To draw out relevant themes, participants were asked to talk about their particular experiences of employment including their family background, education and training, previous work experience, current experiences in finding work and experiences with work. Most young people enjoyed the interview and were forthcoming with telling their stories while others needed a bit of encouragement to open up.

3.2.7 Transcribing

The interviews were fully transcribed and analysed manually through thematic coding. Due to a self-imposed ethic requirement - allowing participants a further two weeks after the interview to opt out, interviews were not transcribed immediately and the opportunity to summarise each interview as soon as it was finished was lost.

After the interviews were transcribed hard copies were printed and adequate time was devoted to reading and understanding the content of each interview and making notes in the margins. Most of the notes were just short phrases that captured what the participant was discussing like, for example, achievements, struggles, and so on. Codes were allocated for each interview and data was categorised into themes and sub themes guided by responses to interview questions. Each theme was sorted using Microsoft Word and a summary of ideas coming through each

theme and sub theme were written to enable analysis. Particular care was exercised to save all the data copies from transcribed interviews to sorted thematic data to enable reference where necessary. The process was frankly quite exhausting but it was necessary to capture every detail that the raw data presented and analysis would not happen without going through data sorting and categorising.

3.3 The research context

The country is classified into four regions which formed the sampling frame for this research; namely, Hhohho where Mbabane-the capital city was sampled, Manzini where Manzini city was sampled, Lubombo where Siteki town was sampled and Shiselweni where Nhlanguano town was sampled. The proportion of youth to the total population by region shows that Manzini has the highest proportion (39.7%) followed by Hhohho (38.0%) Shiselweni and Lubombo have 35.7% and 35.5% of youth respectively (CSO, 2007). This provides an indication of the competition levels for employment opportunities and other resources available to young people.

The 2014 World Bank - Swaziland Fact Sheet suggested that the youth might be in a worse situation compared to the total population. Hhohho and Manzini have younger populations of youth compared to Shiselweni and Lubombo. The urban population age groups 20-24, 25-29 and 30-34 are higher compared to rural counterparts. The urban youth population seem to peak around ages 20-29 when they may be seeking opportunities for tertiary training and employment, resulting in the drop of similar age groups in rural areas where limited tertiary and job opportunities exist (World Bank, 2014).

Swaziland has experienced a slow growing economy of below 2 percent from 2011 to 2013, characterised by low direct foreign investment, and high unemployment (UNDP, 2013). Employment opportunities in 2010 were better for the age group of 25-34 (68% employed) while the 15-24 age group experiences unemployment twice the national average (only 28% employed) (ILO, 2014). Generally, 63 percent of the population lives in poverty with less than USD 1.24 per day (UNDP, 2013), an indication of a high dependency ratio and the responsibilities carried by employed persons in the family. In the discussion that follows I will elaborate on stories of young people concerning family and responsibility.

This research focuses on employed young people between 25-34 years of age, to yield an in-depth account of their experiences with employment. Attitudes towards work are often transmitted through the family or community, and these perceptions gained during formative years are firmly entrenched (Green and White 2006:51-52). The human capital of the parents and friends equally affects young people's choices of employment. The preceding analysis, therefore, engages with the meaning and value of employment against social entitlements constructed and entrenched in the minds of young people. This has shaped perceptions of young people about preferred career choices and meanings attached to social inclusion.

Verbatim transcripts were analysed to answer the research questions:

1. What are the key challenges in the transition of young people from education and training to employment?
2. How does youth inclusion in employment impact on individual agency to navigate life's opportunities?
3. Is employment the most desired tool for achieving social inclusion?

4. What are the lessons learned from the research to contribute knowledge in theory, practice and methodology?

3.4 Access, ethics and informed consent

Ethical clearance was first sought from the University of KwaZulu Natal School of Research and Higher Degrees Committee. The second phase of ethical practices was adopted during data collection and analysis detailed as follows:

3.4.1 Informed Consent Process

Participation in interviews was strictly voluntary. All interviewed participants signed a consent form. The consent form outlined the purpose of the project, study design, what participants were requested to do, possible risks and benefits, the voluntary nature of participation, issues surrounding confidentiality, the storage and use of data, and follow-up information.

3.4.2 Confidentiality

I explained to the participants that any information gathered in this study would be kept confidential. All participants gave signed consent to use and release research information. In this study, I chose to assign codes to participants in reporting their respective data.

During the field research in the regions, all electronic data (e.g., interview transcripts) were stored in a personal audio recorder used by me and transcripts were stored in a password protected laptop. Data have remained confidential to anyone but me and my supervisor. The policy of the University of KwaZulu Natal is that notes and transcripts of interviews should be retained for five years, post publication.

3.4.3 Participation in the research

Permission was sought from individual participants and a majority preferred to do the interview after working hours outside the workplace, therefore, no further permission was required from the employer. I avoided using gatekeepers like employers to seek participants as problems of association with gatekeeper's interests were possible. The date and time of interviews depended on the availability of participants, thus it lengthened the data collection period to approximately three months in total.

3.4.4 Treatment of Data

With the consent of participants, qualitative data from interviews were recorded with audio voice equipment. Interviews took place at leisure places in the field sites or at participant's offices as per their comfort. Interview data was transcribed after two weeks from the date of the interview to allow participants extended withdrawal of consent to use data.

3.4.5 Reciprocity

The principle of reciprocity guided this study. In a majority of formal interviews, food and a soft drink were provided. This research technique was based on my previous field research experience, where refreshments were culturally accepted as the most preferred way of showing gratitude to participants.

3.4.6 Potential Risks Posed to the participants

The issue of employment is a part of public discourse. Thus, given the general nature of the research topic, I did not anticipate any potential risks. Indeed participants did not suffer any risks as none were reported for the duration of data gathering. Telephone and email addresses of me and my supervisor were printed at the bottom of the consent form to ensure participants exercised their freedom to communicate.

3.5 The participants

Participants were very articulate young people with views to express, stories to tell and aspirations to meet and they appeared to appreciate being listened to without expecting anything from me in return. I certainly felt privileged to have had the opportunity to hear their stories.

Holliday (2007:47-48) emphasises time-keeping and planning and always looking ahead as important tools in data collection. These basic principles guided this research in the entire data collection period. Arriving 10 minutes earlier, always earlier than the participant's arrival, organising all the papers, making sure the audio recorder was working and batteries in good condition, and keeping to the promised time of the interview. This strategy worked very well that participants had no hesitation in referring me to potential participants. One participant phoned a potential participant to set up an appointment for me and he described the interview as a worthwhile and very interesting experience to his colleague.

Unexpected situations do arise, Holliday (2007:47-48) says diversions do emerge and no matter how well prepared, events do not necessarily develop according to plan.... Indeed, in one of the furthest research sites where it became

necessary to plan a sleep over due to the interviews scheduled for the early evening and it was not convenient to make another trip without incurring extra costs. The contact person arrived with only female participants, thus, disturbing the planned gender mix. The interviews continued and the gender mix was compensated in other sites to balance gender in the total sample.

Speaking and listening to young people's lived realities enhanced my passion in their stories and encouraged me to speak about them with empathy and compassion as I seek a deeper understanding of their experiences, actions and behaviours.

3.6 Anticipated problems

Changing or postponing appointments by participants was anticipated and this problem was averted by confirming the availability of participants up to the time of departure to honour an appointment. This strategy worked as participants who were somehow feeling obligated to honour an appointment yet it was not working out were able to re-adjust. While this might sound like renegeing on the part of participants it averted rushed interviews, assuring full attentiveness of participant not rushing to another appointment, and me returning several times to one participant escalating the cost of travel.

I went in prepared to avoid unnecessarily lengthy interviews, the power dynamics between researcher and participant, and intrusive topics. Conducting the interviews was an enjoyable, enlightening and emotional experience somewhat removed from what I had expected in that I had been anxious that the young people might not be willing to participate or that we might be unable to engage in conversation. In fact, the interviews were extremely successful in producing rich,

exciting and often emotional accounts of the young people's lived experiences - there was no irritation, discomfort or time pressure.

On reflection, I wondered whether this suggested that these young people actually appreciated, perhaps even enjoyed, the opportunity to speak freely and openly with someone who wanted to listen, without judgment, to what they had to say? I believe it does. And in believing thus, in the analysis that follows, more questions are raised about who is listening to these young people? Do they have a voice and is that voice being heard? These are interesting questions that cannot be ignored and will be raised in the section on implication of this study.

3.7 Data analysis

A generic data analysis approach was adopted using inductive and iterative methods. Creswell (2009) has stated that, "Often we see qualitative data analysis reported in journal articles or books that is a generic form of analysis. In this approach, the researcher collects qualitative data, analyses it for themes or perspectives, and reports 4–5 themes" (p. 184). Thorne (2000) has also reminded us that "qualitative data analysis is the most complex and mysterious of all of the phases of a qualitative project, and the one that receives the least thoughtful discussion in the literature" (p. 68). There is a lack of standardisation and few universal rules.

Basit (2003) commented that qualitative data analysis is the most difficult and most crucial aspect of qualitative research (p. 143). Indeed, it is very easy to get overwhelmed by the data and lose yourself in the analysis. I first started with data coding and a thematic analysis of the data that subsequently developed into a narrative analysis to develop meaning from the stories. I was further drawn into the

Kaufmann (2011) post-structural analytic approach in which new meaning is created by looking for differences rather than similarities, by looking for absence rather than presence, and by looking at local rather than universal. This was an attempt to improve on the originality of the study in the country.

3.7.1 Approaches to data analysis:

3.7.1.1 Transcribing

The transcribing process was labour intensive and time consuming, lasting three (3) hours on average, with one interview of 55 minutes taking five (5) hours to transcribe. Bailey (2008) argued that because transcribing is not just a straightforward and simple task, but involves judgment questions about the level of detail to include, the researcher should do the work. Surprisingly, this was the most enjoyable transcribing exercise I have ever done.

Usually, transcribing becomes a hectic exercise with the necessity to translate from vernacular to English. All participants in this research had post high school qualifications a categorisation necessary to facilitate easier data analysis, which explains their preference for the English language often using a few siSwati words and adages for emphasis. Transcripts presented in this thesis were in verbatim. I made sure that each transcript was the original version presented by the participant, to the point of capturing gestures made by the participant in the interview. Printed copies of the transcripts were made for reading and familiarising myself with each interview entirely.

3.7.1.2 Analytical Procedures

The analysis of all textual data was explored, organised, and managed, using manual techniques of reading and writing emerging themes and common view points

along the margins which were eventually grouped to arrive at themes and sub-themes. Codes and themes were generated from chunks and segments of the data. There were 74 single-spaced pages of transcribed interviews which were coded by combining the gender, first two initials of the interview site, and number of interview between 1- 5 like, (FMb1) for Female, Mbabane, interview number 1.

To focus the analysis and identify consistencies and differences I used Microsoft Word to open a separate file, copied and pasted individual responses on each topic merging them while retaining the participant code to facilitate easy retrieval of overlapping and linked quotations. The same process was repeated for all the topics discussed in the interviews. Responses to each topic from the 20 interviews were read across noting emerging themes. This facilitated exploring relationships and interconnections between topics, noting emerging themes and common positions and divergent opinions. At the end a summary in one or two paragraphs was written on the interviews which allowed for a more focused analysis of transcripts.

Once data has been transcribed and read through, coding is the next step (Creswell, 2003). I began the process of categorising the data identifying the issues that emerged and recurred in the data, essentially coding involved breaking down the data into small chewable bites isolating certain words, phrases, lines, and coding them into themes and sub-themes.

The predominant themes emanating from the data served as signals of what were important issues in each topic discussed, and formed the basis for writing up the analysis. From the themes I began to interpret the data by developing a list of

key points. First, the research question was stated followed by theme and sub-themes that speak to the research question.

3.7.1.3 Approaches to analysing textual data

The basic techniques used in analysing the qualitative data are thematic analysis combined with narratives and dialogic reporting. Theme identification is central to the analysis of textual data. Thematic analysis is a process for encoding qualitative information (Boyatzis, 1998: vi), which was the mode of data treatment I employed.

Qualitative writing becomes very much an unfolding story in which the writer gradually makes sense, not only of her data, but of the total experience of which it is an artefact. This is an interactive process in which she tries to untangle and make reflexive sense of her own presence and role in the research (Holliday 2007).

The written study thus becomes a complex train of thought within which her voice and her image of others are interwoven. Therefore, 'unlike quantitative work that can carry its meaning in its tables and summaries, qualitative work carries its meaning in its entire text... its meaning is in the reading' (Richardson and St Pierre 2005: 959-60). As such verbatim excerpts from interviews were captured in the data analysis process.

The voice and person of the researcher as writer not only become a major ingredient of the written study, but have to be evident for the meaning to become clear (Holliday 2007: 122). There seems to be no straightforward or objective way of confronting these writing dilemmas as Denzin and Lincoln (2000:19) tell us '[...] there is no clear window into the inner life of an individual. Any gaze is always filtered through the lens of language, gender, social class, race and ethnicity'. The

experience of engaging with young people has made me realise that my gaze is indeed filtered through social, economic, cultural and gender lenses. As I struggled with how to infuse my telling so as to portray the young people with the dignity and respect they deserve, the alternative approach of remaining conscious to my gaze was attempted. In the same manner, conscious of my power as a researcher, particularly in interviewing youth (Eder & Fingerson, 2002), I chose to show selected portions of actual transcripts to illustrate the research dialogue between myself and the participants.

3.8 Justifying claims in qualitative research

This study prioritised qualitative data because they offered more research information that was useful in developing the arguments in this study.

I chose to show selected portions of actual transcripts to illustrate the research dialogue between myself and the participants. In a self-reflexive manner (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), this allowed the presentation of multiple voices from participants. In so doing, data interpretation was not centred on my relatively powerful views as a researcher but rather, through research dialogue, I was able to diffuse the power of interpretation by allowing the data to speak as they were gathered, thereby preserving the naturalness of conversation. I considered this type of research reporting as enabling better discourse of research insights reflecting my intention to let the voices of my participants be heard and felt in the text of this thesis.

I acknowledge the issue of speaking for others insofar as it relates to issues of voice. For Alcoff (1991), there is a strong overlap between the practice of speaking about others and the practice of speaking for others such that it may be difficult to

distinguish between the two. For her, and for many other writers on the subject of voice, the products of such practices are necessarily subjected to interpretations that re-iterate the claim that the speaker's location has 'epistemic salience'. It is precisely because I recognise that, in speaking about others, I am, as Alcoff suggests, engaging in the act of representing the other's needs, goals, situation and in fact, who they are. I am representing them as such and such, or in post-structural terms, I am participating in the construction of their subject-positions (Alcoff, 1991:9).

Voice is a term used in qualitative research as a way of knowing: a way of collecting and creating knowledge about life experiences that cannot be achieved and communicated through conventional means (LeCompte, 1993 cited in Shacklock et al., 1998). Voice, Shacklock et al. tell us, functions to remind the reader that the research deals with the lives of real people and that the most interesting voices belong to individuals and groups that are in some way disadvantaged, deficient of power or located at the margins of society (Shacklock et al., 1998).

An important qualitative analytical technique utilised in this research was the dialogic style of data reporting. Key to this technique was the use of research dialogue between me and the participant in data presentation and analysis. This technique was extensively used by Bourdieu and colleagues', (2000) qualitative work, *The Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society*. In this work, interview transcripts were reported illustrating how research information was shaped and influenced by both the researcher and participants.

3.9 Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented the research methodology comprised of a qualitative analysis to address the experiences of young people in employment. A

detailed research plan and process was presented, including descriptions of the qualitative approach and the plan used to guide these methods to produce a comprehensive investigation into experiences of young people with employment.

Throughout this chapter I have engaged with relevant literature to inform a discussion around issues arising from the interview process; issues that contextualised the interviews as lived experiences and more than just a means of data collection.

In the following chapter I present the findings and begin my analysis of data. I use Bourdieu's (1984) 'habitus' or socialised norms or tendencies that guide behaviour and thinking, to understand the thinking and behaviour of young people that is largely shaped by the society around them. I also use Bourdieu's forms of capital which he extends beyond the notion of material assets to capital that may be social, cultural or symbolic (Bourdieu 1986: cited in Navarro 2006: 16). As discussed in the review of literature in Chapter 2, these forms of capital may be equally important, and can be accumulated and transferred from one arena to another (Navarro 2006: 17). Cultural capital – and the means by which it is created or transferred from other forms of capital – plays a central role in societal power relations, as this 'provides the means for a non-economic form of domination and hierarchy, as classes distinguish themselves through taste' (Gaventa 2003: 6). The shift from material to cultural and symbolic forms of capital is to a large extent what hides the causes of inequality. It is within this context that the interview data is analysed and discussed in the chapters that follow.

Chapter 4 The context of young people's employment in Swaziland

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter the methodology for the study was discussed. In this chapter the contextual issues around the employment of young people in Swaziland will be discussed. The aim of this discussion is not to present a situation analysis of youth issues in general, but to provide a microscopic lens into specific issues of young people's employment in the country. As a researcher I had my own perceptions about the employment of young people not only in my country, but globally. These perceptions were formulated from researches done in the country and elsewhere, as well as, anecdotal information gathered from exchanges with young people. The contextual evidence presented in this chapter emanates from secondary data from Swaziland and elsewhere.

Employment is certainly one of the most important dimensions of life. Not only does it represent the main source of income for most people in the world, but a large part of our lifetime is spent working. Besides, employment can give a sense of fulfilment and dignity (Sen and International Labour Organisation (ILO), 1975 cited in Casser, 2010).

For young people who are employed, many find themselves in low-paying temporary jobs with few protections (Op cit). Current trends in job creation offer little hope that growth on this scale can be achieved. The situation is particularly grave for young people, as demographic trends suggest a huge imbalance between the supply of young workers and the demand for their labour. For growing numbers of young people, employment is precarious and may not provide an income sufficient to cover basic necessities. A rising number of young people work in the lower tier services

like the fast food industry, restaurants, and the informal sector; characterised by poor working conditions, long hours, poor pay, and a lack of job security (ibid).

Young workers are less likely to object to sub-standard working conditions in the service industry for several reasons. First, many of them think of their jobs as temporary, and only remain in them while they are continuing their formal education. In such circumstances, dissatisfaction is more likely to lead to a job change than to attempts to improve conditions through industrial action. Second, as a more vulnerable group of workers, young people are less likely to band together to demand better wages and working conditions. Third, many young workers have temporary or other precarious employment arrangements, which gives them little or no leverage in pushing for improvements (United Nations (UN), 2003).

At the top end of the labour market in many countries there has been an increase in the supply of professional and high-level technical jobs, but as a result of the growth in educational participation, especially at the tertiary level, competition for these jobs is intense, as such, many qualified young people are now forced to “trade down” and accept inferior forms of employment (UN, 2003). This trend is beginning in Swaziland, and as more senior employees are brought back for shorter renewable contracts after retirement, the situation is escalating.

4.2 Background of 25 to 34 years age group

This study focuses on the 25-34 years age group. The Swazi population is skewed towards young people, as it is confirmed by not only the labour force survey but also other surveys and censuses that the country had so far conducted (Swaziland Labour Force Survey (SLFS), 2010:29).

As mentioned earlier, the youth in Swaziland is defined by the National Youth Policy as 'young men and women aged from 15 to 35 years of age, and is 37.6% of the total population. The literacy rate of young people is quite impressive with the 25 to 29 years at 94% and the 30 to 34 years at 92% (SLFS, 2010:33). This is a positive sign of growth if accompanied by investment in life-long learning that is lacking in government strategies for the youth.

The trend in Swaziland is for young people staying longer in the dependency category due to either low paying jobs or no employment prospects. A study conducted by the United Nations in sampled developing countries describes a situation similar to Swaziland. They argue that the length of time young people take to look for desirable employment often depends on the financial circumstances of their families and their willingness to support their children during the period of their job search (UN, 2003).

Also true is that many new businesses have been started by young people as opportunities in the state sector have declined. The incentive to become self-employed has been linked to a shortage of alternative ways of making a living, with a significant proportion being characterised as "forced entrepreneurs". However, the rate of business failure is high and young entrepreneurs frequently work long hours for few rewards (UN, 2003).

As will be discussed in the next section education clearly enhances opportunities in the labour market, as those with the best qualifications enjoy better job prospects. Another factor is the overall lack of jobs in the formal economy resulting in highly educated workers migrating to [South Africa] and other industrialised countries to improve their job prospects (Op cit).

For young people self-employment is often the only option for survival. Youth entrepreneurship can be encouraged through a variety of means, including special programmes that facilitate access to credit. Owing to their lack of collateral and business experience, youth are considered a very high risk by lenders, making it difficult for them to gain access to credit. The government of Swaziland has developed a fund to provide small business loans to young entrepreneurs. However, the fund is minimal and many young people still rely on savings or turn to family and friends for start-up funding. Those without such alternatives have little chance of starting their own businesses unless special credit programmes are set up for them (UN, 2003; United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2012).

Entrepreneurship requires some business acumen and an entrepreneurial spirit, which many young people do not have and cannot acquire, even after training. Furthermore, micro and small enterprises tend to experience very high rates of failure, so they have a limited capacity to create sustainable employment. Self-employment can therefore be considered part of an integrated youth employment strategy, but not a solution in itself (UNDP, 2012).

4.3 Education

Swaziland has made good progress in making the population literate compared to other countries in the region. Almost nine in ten adults are literate, and the gap between rural and urban areas is relatively small (Central Statistical Office (CSO), 2010). As earlier mentioned, youth literacy rates exceed 90 percent and are far above those of regional comparators like Mozambique, Tanzania, or Zambia. Beyond such basic functionalities, however, education opportunities are limited: in

2007, over half of the adult population had not completed basic education; only nine percent had completed tertiary education (CSO, 2007).

Table 4.1 Swaziland Education Indicators (2008-2012)

Social category	Literacy Rate (in percentages)	Pre-primary School Participation (in percentages)	Primary School Participation	Secondary School Participation
Male Youth (15-24)	92.2	25.9	121.3	32.3
Female Youth (15-24)	95.3	26.5	109.9	37.7

Source: UNICEF, 2014

Table 4.1 reveals very high literacy for both sexes, but also high primary school participation for both sexes. Secondary school participation and attendance ratios are lower than primary school ratios, but the female ratios are actually higher than the male ratios at the secondary level. Studies conducted in the country have confirmed that girls drop out more in high school due to pregnancy and usually never return to complete their education (Khumalo, 2013).

Education levels are strongly linked to access to employment and earnings opportunities in Swaziland. There is a particularly high pay-off to tertiary education for employment –70 percent of the population with tertiary education is employed; they make up 15 percent of all employment in Swaziland, only 3 to 4 percent are inactive or unemployed. Those with primary education or less – i.e. half of the

population - are the least active in the labour market and face the highest risks of unemployment (CSO, 2007).

Tertiary education in particular is an important condition for entering the public sector especially for women. The level of education among small informal business operators is low, in contrast, with some 55 percent of males and 65 percent of females having completed no more than primary education or less. Overall, the pay-off to education does not kick in before secondary and higher education. From another perspective, nearly 60 percent of those with tertiary education are in the public sector, while only 38 percent – some 11,000 in 2007 – were in the formal private sector (Op cit).

Since access to quality education is highly inequitable at the outset, many talented children and youth are likely to be excluded early on. Social inequality influences the way in which parents can support their children's educational careers. It is widely held that higher qualifications provide protection against unemployment while low or a lack of qualifications make individuals vulnerable to social exclusion (Op cit).

As my theoretical framework outlines, educational achievement is strongly related to social factors among which the socio-economic status of the family of origin is seen as crucial. Socio-economic status influences the resources that families have to support their children in coping with the demands of education but also over the extent to which they can subsidise their children and whether they see education as an intrinsic and/or extrinsic value (cp. Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

Education and training are the most important elements to better employment and better remuneration, thus key to individual's development to

escape the poverty trap. Unskilled workers find it hard to adapt to the changing demands of the world of work, and excluded from labour markets. Alternatively, investments in skills training including entrepreneurship and vocational skills enable people to begin working out of poverty (SLFS, 2010:320). Unfortunately, labour market relevant training to youth outside the formal education system is limited, as is opportunities for school-leavers to re-enter the education system. Overall, the vocational training system suffers from lack of access, low quality of training, and a low connection between the training system and the private sector (Marope, 2010).

4.4 Policy context and institutional framework

4.4.1 Policy context

Swaziland is yet to develop a comprehensive youth employment and entrepreneurship policy that would integrate its young people into the labour market and help reach inclusive growth. In that regard, international experiences with initiatives targeting youth entrepreneurship, and what has worked, can inform policy design in Swaziland: (Brixiova, & Kangoye, 2013).

- The study of high potential young entrepreneurs in Europe emphasised: (i) the importance of selectivity so that youth with best projects are supported; (ii) preference for more intense support per entrepreneur rather than spreading resources thinly; and (iii) integrated support packages rather than a single instrument (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2012).
- Designing and implementing the integrated service packages rather than isolated measures is also a key lesson from

entrepreneurship programmes in Sub-Saharan Africa that targeted vulnerable youth (Puerto, 2007).

- Another lesson is that in cases where the government provides start-up subsidies, it should have a credible exit strategy. Training schemes tend to be more effective when administered by the private sector which understands entrepreneurs' needs, while the government incentives are important for the uptake of these programmes (Bixiova & Kangoye, 2013).
- From a general policy perspective, a first criterion for improving the dire labour market situation in Swaziland is obviously to increase earnings opportunities to reduce poverty. At the same time, however, it is important to seek to mitigate all the risks associated with the labour market-- both poor working conditions and lack of access to different insurance or safety net mechanism to manage risks. Potential risks include exclusion from the labour market, dismissal, work injury or disability, or a drop in demand for one's skills, goods or services (Cho, et al., 2012).

In the context of broadening employment opportunities for the population exporting labour cannot be the only element of skills and jobs policies. Beyond remittances, the nationwide benefits of migrants abroad and prospects for business networks and "brain circulation" through return migration also depend on the national investment climate, labour market opportunities, and the prevailing institutional context (UN, 2014). Notwithstanding, complementary policies are needed including

skills development and provision of job opportunities for those without entrepreneurial interest (Op cit).

Other measures to promote jobs for young people include policies that grant private sector employers various incentives for hiring youth. These incentives can take the form of tax rebates, wage subsidies or youth wage rates, or provisions for loosening employment regulations. Youth wage rates for example, are intended to encourage employers to hire young people rather than adults by providing a substantial wage differential, thus making young workers an attractive economic proposition. This assumes, however, that young people and adults are competing for the same jobs, whereas in reality the youth and adult labour markets are often distinct (particularly with respect to skilled workers) (UN, 2013).

The government's pro-active support for entrepreneurial training and start-up capital is also needed. A private sector organization has performed this role effectively as part of community social responsibility. At school and tertiary levels, government has partnered with the non-governmental sector to implement entrepreneurial training. Regarding funding, Swaziland's experience underscored the importance of careful selection of projects for funding, and of monitoring the use of funds after disbursement. International good practices suggest that government interventions should target the most viable projects, extend greater financial support to a fewer high-potential entrepreneurs rather than spread resources thinly, and provide complementary packages of services instead of a single measure (Brixiova & Kangoye, 2013).

4.4.2. The National Youth Policy

Swaziland has its youth programme housed under the Ministry of Sport, Culture and Youth Affairs (MOSCYA). The vision of the youth affairs department is, “creating an enabling environment for young people to actively participate and contribute to the transformation and socio-economic development and good governance processes that shape the present and future destiny of communities in which they live” (Swaziland Government, 2009).

An initial Youth policy was adopted in 2002 after which a review was conducted in 2007 which led to a revised policy being adopted in 2009. This policy seeks to create and ensure an enabling environment for developing youth to their full potential, socially, mentally, physically, culturally and spiritually by providing training and economic empowerment to further the aims of sustainable human development (Op cit).

Priority areas dealing with; Education, Training and skills development; Participation, partnership and leadership; and Poverty and Unemployment, are important for this discussion (Op cit). The implementation of the youth policy has been mandated to the Swaziland National Youth Council (SNYC) which is the umbrella body for youth associations and the voice of young people in Swaziland through a Memorandum of Understanding. The SNYC is expected to:

- Coordinate at national and community level;
- Engage in advocacy on youth issues and inform the Government of Swaziland on youth issues;
- Implement the youth programmes through delegation to member associations and implementing partners;

- Build the capacity of partner institutions; and
- Monitor and evaluate (Food Agricultural and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN), 2012).

4.4.3. Analysis of the youth policy

There is minimal participation of the youth in the policy formulation processes in Swaziland. This is partly attributed to the youth not being sensitised on their role in the policy formulation process. For this reason, they do not prioritise their participation in the processes. The youth do not attend forums especially at community level where the policy issues are discussed during data collection and verification exercises. Swaziland does not have a policy formulation guideline which could in part have contributed to the policy formulators not considering the youth as part of the key stakeholders during the policy formulation processes yet the policy also borders on youth as well (FANRPAN, 2012).

Swazi citizens should be able to influence policymaking and results, and young Swazis should be able to look forward to greater economic opportunities and political accountability. Exclusion from this process limits people's ability to communicate their concerns and needs and can perpetuate inequalities (DraftUN, 2014).

As education levels rise and access to information and communication technologies spreads, people around the world are demanding more participation in political processes, challenging decision-makers to be more accountable and expand opportunities for open public discourse. Restricted opportunities for political participation, at a time when unemployment is rising and the economic environment

is deteriorating, can fuel civil unrest. Expanded opportunities for political participation, along with greater government accountability in ensuring that basic human needs are met, can foster human freedoms and sustain human development. Strong political participation by the poor provides an important source of support for pro-human development policy change (Marope, 2010).

4.4.4. Youth focused funding support

4.4.4.1 Youth Enterprise Fund (YEF)

A Youth Enterprise Fund was established by government in 2009 to support business initiatives for youth covering a wide scope including agricultural activities. The funding commenced in 2010 and all youth qualify to borrow funds from this source for viable business enterprises (FANRPAN, 2012). The fund was a response to lack of access to credit that was an obstacle for young entrepreneurs in Swaziland who often lack collateral experience and are thus considered 'high risk' by the commercial banks (UN Swaziland, 2013).

In 2010, young people between 18-34 years benefitted from loans under this umbrella, distributing approximately 580,000 euros to about 800 young entrepreneurs. In 2011, the Fund distributed another 200,000 euros to 200 entrepreneurs (Brixiova, & Kangoye, 2013).

However, there is no information available as to their target groups or long term success, and evaluation is needed to investigate the effectiveness of this approach in comparison with other potential public programmes, such as education and skills development or direct income generation through public works (Draft UN, 2014).

The fund has been characterised by low repayment rates underscoring the importance of strengthened proposal evaluations and better monitoring of the use of disbursed funds. The lack of skills and experience of young entrepreneurs pointed also to the need to combine funds with training. While the YEF has been a step in the right direction, it would need to be markedly scaled up and restructured to make a dent in youth employment (Brixiova, 2013).

Key policy messages for fostering dynamic youth entrepreneurship – in Swaziland and other middle income countries in Southern Africa -- are that an enabling business environment is only one, even though necessary, aspect.

4.5 Institutional framework

The Ministry of Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs (MOSCYA) is the central government agency with overall responsibility for youth affairs in Swaziland and as such is responsible for national policies and strategies for dealing with all youth affairs and activities, formal or informal. In addition, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS) is generally responsible for providing employment, setting of labour laws and administration of employment issues in general.

Due to the lapse of time, increasing poverty with the underlying drivers of HIV and AIDS, drought and famine and unemployment, and in order to operationalise the implementation of the National Development Strategy (NDS) the Government initiated a home-grown Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Plan (PRSAP). This instrument now forms the central tool for national development planning (Swaziland Government, 2006).

The PRSAP's overarching objective is to reduce the incidence of poverty in Swaziland from its current level of 66 per cent to 30 per cent by 2015, in

line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and eliminate it by 2022. Although ambitious, this goal can be achieved with political commitment, and a willingness to harness resources from all stakeholders to implement the time-bound Action Programme (Op cit). Subsequently, in 2015 the same objectives have been echoed in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the next 15 years will measure the effectiveness of strategies put in place to eliminate poverty (UN, 2016).

The main pillars of the strategy include rapid acceleration of economic growth based on broad participation; empowering the poor with focus on youth and women to generate their own income; and, an equitable distribution of the benefits of growth through public spending. The PRSAP also contains concrete projects and programmes, which are designed to generate income and create employment, combat the HIV and AIDS pandemic which has been declared as a national crisis and minimise vulnerability, and enhance agricultural production and food security (Op cit).

The major shortcoming is that the National Development Strategy (NDS) was launched without an implementation framework. As such, certain aspects of the National Development Strategy were implemented through the Economic Social Reform Agenda (ESRA), the Millennium Action Programme (MAP), and the Smart Programme for Economic Development (SPEED) and more recently the Government's Programme of Action 2008-2013 (Government of Swaziland, 2013).

Other national policies and programmes include Small and Medium Enterprises Policy (2005), Privatization Policy (2004), and the Decentralization Policy (2006). The (2005 – 09) Country Strategy Paper (CSP) for Swaziland

based on Government's development agenda, used the participatory approach that involves all stakeholders. The government of Swaziland has stated its broad priority areas to which the UN and other development partners must respond to in aligning their support, under six pillars of the PRSAP which are hereby compared with the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda below Macro-economic stability and accelerated economic growth based on broad participation. (ILO, 2010-2014)

Commitments made by Swaziland, namely Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol; the Ouagadougou Declaration Plan of Action and Follow-up Mechanism, (2004); and the Decent Work Agenda in Africa, (2007-2015); 11th African Regional Meeting, Addis Ababa (2007); linked to the Millennium Development Goals and the wider global Decent Work Development Agenda will be mainstreamed within the policy formulation process. Key in this process is the involvement of the social partners in the review and implementation of the national employment policy and related programmes of action. The gender and disabilities dimensions of the policy and gender-sensitive programmes and legislation, as well as gender mainstreamed action plans and related strategies will be prioritised, thus necessitating strengthening the linkages between the gender audit and Social Welfare Department under the Deputy Prime Minister (Op cit).

The umbrella employment policy framework will outline the elements of sectoral and labour market policies, including skills development and employability, small and medium enterprise development and productivity, the informal sector, rural employment, local economic development (LED), the employment intensity of the public investments, youth and women's entrepreneurship, promoting sustainable enterprises, business support, advocacy

and career guidance. This will help to ensure greater access to employment and self-employment opportunities targeted at vulnerable groups (young women and men, people with disabilities and HIV and AIDS), and the need for their integration into the labour market (Op cit).

The revised employment policy framework will support the establishment of a functional Labour Information System to update, collect, analyse and disseminate labour market information in a timely manner for users of labour market indicators. This includes monitoring and evaluating the trends in the informal economy and supporting policy action to facilitate the transition to formality. Capacity building of the staff and advisory services will be used to strengthen the existing competencies in the area of information-gathering, analysis and dissemination as well as in policy and programmes design and implementation (ILO, 2010-2014).

Studies in the Southern Africa region and beyond have shown that infrastructure has the highest potential in creating employment and business opportunities to the target groups thus leading to stimulating local economic activity. Through the decent work country programme, the ILO will support the government's strategy of creating increased decent and productive employment and business opportunities through infrastructure investments, which has already commenced in Swaziland (Op cit).

4.6 Employment

Employment is one of the three categories of the labour force framework; others are unemployment and economic inactivity. It is measured with respect to short term reference period (usually one week or one day) on the

basis of the concept of the economic activity as per the system of the national accounts. Employment looks at the number of people employed and the associated concept of hours worked and payment received out of performing an economic activity (SLFS, 2010:58).

Employment is the way out of poverty. It is said to be part of individual's livelihood, for many people meet their livelihoods through employment. It is at the core of economic development challenges not only in Swaziland but in most developing and transition economies. There can be no sustainable economic development unless people have productive jobs, and only freely chosen and productive employment will create socially secure, stable and equitable societies. It is therefore essential to create new jobs through employment-intensive growth; address decent work deficits in the informal economy and in rural areas; improve the productivity of the working poor; and pay greater attention to equity issues (Op cit).

Table 4.2 Employed people by gender and sector

Currently employed Number	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
Public sector	21442	11.1	20558	10.6	42000	21.7
Private sector	50026	25.8	30415	15.7	80441	41.6
Informal sector	25951	13.4	36947	19.1	62898	32.5
Other sector not specified	4313	2.2	3902	2.0	8215	4.2
Total	101732	100	91822	100	193554	100

Source: Figures adapted from SLFS, 2010:59

The table above shows gender segregated figures of employed people by sector, the leading employer is the private sector followed by the informal sector and the public sector trailing behind. Noteworthy is that the private sector employs mostly male workers although it is not apparent from the figures which sector's the males dominate. While the public sector employs a relatively similar numbers of male and female workers. Also apparent is the dominating presence of females in the informal sector. The informal sector has been described by some writers as the dead end sector due to the long hours worked for a small profit (ILO, 2010).

Swaziland is facing significant challenges in terms of creating jobs and sustaining welfare. Based mostly on the analysis of the 2007 and 2010 labour force surveys (CSO, 2007 and 2010), dependency burdens are increasing, unemployment is soaring, informal and poorly paid occupations are common, and some groups, especially women and youth, face particularly strong barriers to accessing jobs, especially those with higher earnings. The HIV and AIDS and tuberculosis pandemics permeate labour market conditions at all levels (ILO, 2010).

The economic crisis has further lowered the earnings potential of available jobs. Overall, the population is concentrated in subsistence agriculture, although the importance of agricultural employment is not reflected in the labour force survey. Data from 2007 suggest that the non-agricultural sector was dominated by public sector employment and low productivity, impacting low earning sectors such as petty trade (CSO, 2007). At the time, about 20 percent of non-agricultural employment was in manufacturing, but the share [has fallen] since the wake of the global and domestic economic crisis. The non-agricultural population has thus increasingly shifted into lower value added services, providing fewer prospects for wage or salary increases (UN, 2003).

Slow growth and job losses have also resulted in a progressive “informalisation” of the job market, with an estimated increase in informal sector employment by more than 20,000 workers between 2007 and 2010. In particular, an increasing number of women have entered informal employment between 2007 and 2010 (SLFS, 2010). The informalisation and (likely) shift into self-employment implies a shift into less well paid and more vulnerable occupations. In 2007, monthly gross income was significantly lower for informal sector workers (a majority of whom were self-employed) than for other categories, especially public sector. Beyond earnings,

high informality also means higher income vulnerability, and lack of access to different forms of insurance against short term and long term risks (ILO, 2010).

A majority of the youth that are active in the labour market are unemployed, i.e., unemployed but actively seeking employment (CSO, 2007). Unemployment is linked to low education levels, which is related to low income levels and poor opportunities from the outset. In 2007, a majority of the young unemployed (two in three males, and one in two females) had not advanced beyond primary levels of education (Op cit). A majority lived on Swazi Nation Land (SNL), and two-thirds in rural areas, with very limited prospects for gainful employment (CSO, 2007). Limited job opportunities, lack of robust safety nets, and weakened financial situation of families are likely to hamper access to education and compel more youth to enter the labour market at lower ages and levels of training – and, in effect, creating a vicious cycle of deprivation (World Bank (WB), 2010).

Youth are also more likely to enter the labour market through lower paid occupations and are less likely to access jobs in the public sector. A lower entry wage reflecting lack of experience would not necessarily be unusual or even problematic if there were upward mobility in status and earnings over the working life. However, slow economic growth as well as an on-going fiscal crisis, preventing further public sector hiring, suggests that the current generations will continue to face more exclusion than previous generations. They face the risk of prolonged unemployment/poverty traps, where capacity, human capital and morale are eroded thereby reducing future opportunities (UNDP, 2014).

Like most developing economies, the private formal sector was the main employer in Swaziland (SLFS, 2010:59) except for the private informal sector,

where females dominated their male counterpart; otherwise the male population was more than female population in almost all the sectors of employment (op cit). The majority of the labour force in Swaziland falls under paid employees with 76% of total employment. This is followed by self-employment without employees by 16%, also known as do it yourself kind of economic activities (SLFS, 2010:62).

Gender parity in employment of qualified personnel is generally not a problem as there is almost parity of males and females employed with university degree represented by 5619 males and 5480 females (SLFS, 2010:64). This is a reflection of better employment opportunities with advanced technical education.

4.7 Employment Security

For a great majority of African young people, the youth unemployment problem is more about the quality of the job than the absence of a job (Page, 2013).

The 2010 Swaziland labour force survey asked a number of questions to capture the issues of security at work place: that is, are you covered with any social security scheme [for example Swaziland National Provident Fund (SNPF)], What is your work contract? And, also if the work is reliable in terms of its availability and the often-ness work is conducted in a week (SLFS, 2010:67). These are pertinent questions that often get very little attention and analysis. These and other questions will be explored by this study in subsequent chapters.

Effective labour market analysis is forward-looking – what will the labour market look like in the future. Government analysis should not only understand what types of skills are in demand (in Swaziland and neighbouring countries), but also what skills may be in high demand in the future. As suggested by Swaziland's

private sector development strategy prepared by the Swazi employer associations, quantitative skills surveys relating to existing skills, skills in demand, and potential gaps, would be important to understand better where the gaps are. Providing labour market information to students regarding pay-off to different types of degrees has also been shown to increase the relevance of education. More significant, however, is to build the base for equitable entry to higher education from lower levels, and to increase the incentives for students and tertiary institutions to focus on existing job markets (UNDP, 2014).

For young people, jobs provide a source not only of income, but also of dignity and self-respect. Young people who enter the workforce with limited job prospects, underdeveloped skills and inadequate education face the highest risk in the long-term. Employability is personal adaptability: the willingness and ability to change personal factors (e.g., knowledge, skills, abilities, dispositions and behaviour) to meet the demands of the situation (Fugate et al., 2004) psychological capital, which concerns the mental and personal resources a person has, including hopefulness, optimism, and confidence (Chen & Lim, 2012). Young adults often report a rather high satisfaction with their lives and a great optimism towards the future, even in the face of a poor income at the moment (Bradley & Devadason, 2008). Yet, looking for work is inherently a stressful process, in which applicants may often never hear back from the companies to which they apply, and every day without a job contributes to their financial stress and impatience.

In terms of work contract, the 2010 Swaziland Labour Force Survey revealed that permanent contracts are common in the private formal sector and public sector as 80 percent of the people working in the public sector have

permanent contract against 54 percent in the private sector. The informal sector is dominating with the highest of workers without contracts as 72 percent of those working in that sector are without contracts (SLFS, 2010:67).

4.8 The employment situation

Like all countries in the region, Swaziland is currently facing serious socio-economic challenges characterised by a sluggish economic performance, high levels of poverty and inequality (SILFS, 2007 – 2008).

There is high unemployment particularly amongst women and youth, seasonality of work, unpaid work, unsafe work in different sectors of the economy, job losses due to impact of economic crises and declining Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Increasing competition in the global market coupled with the country's loss of AGOA direct access to markets in the United States of America (USA), and declining prices of Swaziland's major export products like sugar, have resulted in the low per capita income closure of textile companies. There is a shortage of key skills in industry compounded by a mismatched education for the world of work (Op cit).

The situation is even more serious than it might sound. Discussing the issue, incoming ILO Director-General Guy Ryder said, "All of the evidence shows that if a young person is out of work for a year or more at the beginning of their career, that affects them throughout their working life. There's no way back for most of them. So we have to act urgently, we have to act now and we have to target young people." (BC Centre, 2012).

With foreign investment in the country [slowing down] and GDP growth reaching only 2.7 percent in 2015, an increasing number of Swazis are forced to make a living in the informal sector through agriculture or by moving to South Africa. Therefore, the demand for employment among youth is highest in the informal sector, which is also the largest source of employment for young people (USAID, 2005).

Unfortunately, downsizing and job losses have reduced the numbers of Swazi nationals working in South Africa. The remittances which were as high as 15% of GDP in the late 1980s are now negligible as many South African companies have restructured and downsized (World Bank, 2010). The Swaziland textile sector initially created in excess of 20,000 jobs, however due to end of the Multi-Fibre Agreement and a strong Rand, as many as 10,000 jobs, mostly occupied by women, were lost in 2005 due to company closures in the textile sector. The Pulp industry has been hit by retrenchments running into thousands of jobs affected and the burning of the 40% of the forest in August, 2008 resulted in the company closing down (USAID, 2005).

Young people in Swaziland lack the necessary skills and training for jobs that are available. There are not adequate training centres for youth. Lack of skills among youth constitutes a major barrier to the employment of young people (Op cit).

4.9 Labour Force breakdown

The labour force breakdown considers the population aged 15 years and above, but for purposes of this research the 25-34 years population is tabled as follows:

Table 4.3 Numbers of labour force by age group

Age group	2010	2007
25 to 29	65222	60076
30 to 34	46262	46140

Source: Figures adapted from SLFS, 2010:38

Table 4.3 shows numbers of young people in the labour force in the year 2010; 65222 and 46262 between the ages 25 to 29 and between 30 to 34 years of age respectively. These age categories also had the highest number of young people who were reported as either employed or unemployed (SLFS, 2010:38).

In terms of unemployment (40.6%), the Population and Housing Survey indicate a higher unemployment rate for females than males with 47.4% for females and 33.6% for males. Furthermore the unemployment rate is lower in the urban areas compared to the rural areas, with Manzini region (35%) with a lower percentage while Shiselweni region has a 51% unemployment rate (CSO, 2007).

Further analysis highlights that the unemployment rate is high amongst the youth (69%) under the age group 15-19 years (op cit). This indicates a high dependency burden on the workforce as a majority of the youth are unemployed and depend on those in employment to survive and have an active life. The rural youth indicate higher unemployment rates than those in the urban for both males and females (Op cit).

This situation poses a threat to the nation as the unemployed youth also has needs that may not be fully met by their parents/guardians and as survival strategies the youth might turn to crime rendering the country unsafe and unstable. Those also unemployed are tempted to engage in other vocations including being sex workers leading to increased early pregnancies, higher HIV incidences and increased drug abuse amongst others.

The labour force participation rate is a measure of the proportion of a country's working-age population that engages actively in the labour market, either by working or looking for work; it provides an indication of the relative size of the supply of labour available to engage in the production of goods and services. From the 2010/2011 results, the participation rate stands at 56.7% for all groups (SLFS, 2010:40).

There is a relationship between participation rate and unemployment rate. The higher the participation rate for a particular category or group, the lower is the unemployment rate and vice versa. Across regions, the Manzini region has got the highest employment to population ratio, followed by the Lubombo region, Hhohho and lastly the Shiselweni region (SLFS, 2010:43). More people are in employment in the urban settlement compared to the rural settings. Almost half of the population living in the urban settings is contributing in the labour market either as paid employees or self-employed against close to a third of those living in the rural areas. This indicates directly that there are more people who are unemployed in the rural areas than there are in the urban areas (op cit).

The labour market in Swaziland favours the male population than the female counterpart. This is apparent from the labour force survey as almost 40% of the male

population is absorbed in the labour market against thirty percent of the female population (SLFS, 2010:44). Just like the unemployment rate, the younger and inexperienced you are in Swaziland, the more difficult it is for you to compete in the labour market. As the figures above depict, the youngest population is less likely to be absorbed in the labour market as opposed to the old and experienced population. The ages from 30 to 49 years have the highest number of people employed in Swaziland when compared to the other working age population. The employment to population ratio for these age bracket is above 50% (SLFS, 2010:45).

Table 4.4 Numbers of discouraged workers

Discouraged workers	Male	Female	Total
Thought no work available	11130	18371	29501
Awaiting reply from earlier enquiries	1084	2026	3110
Waiting to start arranged job, business or agriculture	607	1183	1790
Off season in agriculture	29	179	208
Occupied with home duties	1945	9993	1468
Temporary illness	430	1038	1468
Full time students	0	231	231

Source: Figure adapted from SLFS, 2010:56

The table shows a significant number of workers discouraged because they thought there was no work available. This is an indication of lack of information and social capital at the disposal of individuals to navigate their economic viability. A discouraged worker is a person who is eligible for employment, and is able to work,

but is currently unemployed and has not attempted to find employment in the past 4 weeks. Discouraged workers have usually given up on searching for a job because they found no suitable employment options and/or were met with lack of success when applying (SILFS, 2010).

Table 4.5 Population desiring work by gender

	Male	Female	Total
Paid employment	442259	61391	105650
Self-employment (business)	5581	15565	21146
Self-employment (Agriculture)	1785	1995	3780

Source: Figures adapted from SLFS, 2010:57

Subsequently, Table 4.5 shows the majority of job seekers are seeking paid employment (105650), while only 21146 and 3780 people desire self-employment in business and agriculture respectively.

4.10 Labour force by sector

The preliminary results of the Swaziland Integrated Labour Force Survey (SILFS) 2007/08 estimates that about 310,450 persons were economically active in Swaziland, resulting in a labour force participation rate of 51.8%, whilst 87,679 of the economically active population, were unemployed. The official unemployment rate for youth aged 15 – 24 was 53.3 percent, almost twice as high as the next highest age group of between 25-34 years. Labour absorption rates are sharply

different by gender, among working age men, at 43.9% had jobs, whereas 31.9% among working age women were employed (SLFS, 2010).

4.10.1 The Formal Sector

Formal employment in Swaziland accounts for a small percentage of the eligible working population. The number of people in Swaziland aged 15 years and above in 2007 was 599 528. There is little or no information on the sectors in which young people work in the formal sector, especially the private sector (United States Agency for International Development (USAID), 2005).

4.10.1.1. Formal Private Sector

Persons employed in the formal private sector are those who work for a labour movement, registered partnership, nongovernmental organization, religious organization, registered co-op, international/ regional organization, or private sector enterprise.

Unregistered co-ops or partnerships and private own account workers may be considered formal private sector enterprises if they have more than 10 employees. If the enterprise has less than 10 employees, then it must keep formal written business accounts in order to be considered a formal enterprise (SLFS, 2010).

4.10.2 Informal Private Sector

Persons employed in the informal private sector work for unregistered co-ops or partnerships, or as private own account workers, in enterprises with less than 10 employees which also do not keep formal written business accounts (SLFS, 2010).

4.10.3 Informal Sector Employment

According to the 2010 labour force survey, Swaziland's private informal sector stands at 34 percent. This indicator when compared with the previous survey in 2007 shows that the private informal sector in Swaziland is increasing, as it was less than 20 percent in 2007. Among other reasons for people to engage in this sector is income generation as an addition to the formal employment, employment as a result of failure of the formal sector to absorb everyone, the increase in the sub-contractual arrangements in the economy, especially the private formal sector, sub-contracting informal operating enterprises.

The informal private sector absorbs more women when compared with the men and mostly engaged in petty trades, handicrafts and so on. The private informal sector varies across the regions of Swaziland as it is high in the Manzini region, followed by the Hhohho region and is least in the Lubombo region. Unlike in other countries, where most people doing informal economy is found in the urban settlements, in Swaziland, it is high in the rural areas as most people practice subsistence agriculture for their living and is very common in the rural areas (SLFS, 2010:70).

Informal work is almost a reserve for people with no training 77%; 95% are self-employed with no helper; 92% unpaid family helper; and 66% self-employed business (SLFS, 2010:73). Informal sector businesses were conducted within own home or partners home 35.8% or were mobile and conducted in no fixed location 20.7% (op cit).

The 2010 labour force survey revealed that 52 percent of the people employed in the informal private sector is due to the fact that they cannot find other

work, meaning that the formal sector does not have enough jobs to accommodate all of them. Whereas three percent said they are in this sector because they want to generate an additional income for their families (SLFS, 2010:74). Prominent reasons for informal employment included; not finding work 51.20%, and family needs extra income 31.20% (op cit). Although, informal sector businesses were found to be less reliable as a source of income in that there was no guarantee they would operate all year round due to lack of customers 31.70% and teething problems of a new business 27.10% (SLFS, 2010:75).

As in Zambia, a number of studies show that despite the contribution of the informal sector to employment creation in Swaziland, this sector has continued to operate under considerable constraints in an environment that does not encourage small, income generating activities. Youth working in the informal sector face licensing and tax disincentives. They face harassment from the state and council police for not having proper licenses or for operating from 'illegal' spaces (Equip, 2005). Seemingly, there is a general reluctance by informal sector operators to be regulated by local authorities to accommodate informal sector activities in towns and cities.

Institutional access to credit for informal enterprises is virtually non-existent in most African countries. Significantly, most youth working in the urban informal sector lack entrepreneurial and technical skills. All of these factors serve as disincentives for the urban self-employed, especially young people who show remarkable staying power through their own self-reliant efforts. These problems tend to affect female youth more than male youth (USAID, 2005).

4.11 Migration

Employment is more available in or around the major cities and towns.

Most youth employment is found in the informal sector, although migration to urban areas and to South Africa and further afield is a significant factor in countries like Swaziland and Lesotho. But there is a decline in South African demand for workers from neighbouring countries.

Internal migration in Swaziland is mostly by young people between the ages 24-34 years and has continued to be positive for Hhohho and Manzini regions (due to urbanisation status) with negative net migration for Shiselweni and Lubombo (CSO, 2010).

Studies indicate that females make higher proportions (52.7%) than males (47.3%) regarding migration where most of the migrants are those with secondary and high school education. Furthermore, a majority of those who migrate are unmarried. The higher proportion of females migrating into urban areas may result in the rising incidence of poverty, crime, prostitution, violence and exploitation (FANRPAN, 2012).

4.12 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a springboard for the analyses of research findings in the subsequent chapters. I have introduced the contextual issues in young people's employment.

Like World Bank and ILO advice particular attention needs to be paid to: employability (investing in education and vocational training for young people and enhancing the impact of those investments); equal opportunities (providing young women and young men with the same opportunities); entrepreneurship (making it

easier to start and run enterprises in order to provide more and better jobs for young people); and employment creation (placing job creation at the centre of macroeconomic policy). The active participation of young people in programme design and implementation is key to achieving these goals (UN, 2013).

In the end, any youth strategy needs to create interventions that are viable, sustainable, and focused on outcomes that can be measured. Such strategies could go a long way to moving youth out of their parents' home and onto their chosen career paths.

Chapter 5 Presentation of findings

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 4 the contextual setting of young people's employment was described. This chapter presents the findings of the qualitative study of young men and women's experiences with employment. My approach in this reporting relied extensively on verbatim quotations as a matter of inquiry, to empower participants by giving them a voice, to illustrate points made, to deepen understanding from participants' view, and to enhance reading. Participants were asked to reflect on their education and work experiences, to tell stories of their achievements and challenges in transitioning to the work place, and their aspirations of work and life as young people.

Frequently, long excerpts from interviews were used to bring the data to life by telling stories of participants and unpacking themes of the research. Presenting spoken word for explanation was useful to show how participants constructed their own realities and positioned themselves within societal processes. Spoken word also allowed participants to express their own views, feelings and beliefs and to acknowledge value in what they said. However, enormous responsibility was placed on me in relation to decisions made about which excerpts to choose. This required a lot of consciousness in the selection, like showing similar views and minority views or using compelling viewpoints to show consistencies and differences. As much as selection connotes power and control of the researcher, the power of words and views remained with participants. Particular sensitivity was awarded to inclusiveness in selecting quotations from all twenty participants and not focusing on articulate participants. Very limited editing of transcripts was made avoiding changing context

and nuances made in the communication. Editing was confined only to confidentiality and ethical practice where identifying material was concerned and for readability where repetition and long pauses surfaced.

I organised this chapter by presenting research questions and findings relevant to answer each research question. The findings are presented in themes formulated from research findings using personal intuitive interpretation of the data. I have used themes as the organising principle for presenting extracts from the data. I have used square brackets to indicate my own words, round brackets for translation, dashes to indicate pauses made by participant during the interview, and dots to show that text has been omitted. Each quotation has a descriptor of the participant code including; gender, age, site, and interview sequence number; for example, (F25St1) is (Female25yearsSitekInterviewNumber1). Preceding the findings is a brief profile of participants.

Table 5.1 Profiles of participants

Code	Gender	Age	Qualification	Employment
F25St1	Female	25	Bachelor Business Studies	Entrepreneur
F32St2	Female	32	Bachelor Social Science & Post Graduate Certificate Education	Teacher
M29St3	Male	29	Bachelor Science in Agriculture	Teacher & Entrepreneur
F29Nh4	Female	29	Diploma Primary Teaching	Teacher
F27Mb5	Female	27	Bachelor Commerce & Business Management	Banker
M33Mb6	Male	33	Bachelor	Finance Director

			Commerce/Accounting	
M32Mb7	Male	32	Diploma Technical Studies	Senior Technician
M31Mz8	Male	31	Certificate AAT	Unionist/ Organiser & Educator
M25Mz9	Male	25	Bachelor Science	Teacher
M26Mz10	Male	26	Bachelor Social Science	Development/Welfare Officer
F27Mz11	Female	27	Certificate AAT	Accountant
M32Mz12	Male	32	Bachelor Business Studies	Business Counsellor
F26Nh13	Female	26	Certificates Computer & Business Studies	Forestry Supervisor
F24Nh14	Female	24	Diploma Mechanical Engineering	Mechanic
F29Nh15	Female	29	Certificate AAT	Assistant Accountant
F29Nh16	Female	29	Various Courses in Gender & HIV counselling	Entrepreneur
M34St17	Male	34	Diploma Law	Court Clerk/Interpreter
F31St18	Female	31	Diploma Law	Court Clerk
M32Mb19	Male	32	Bachelor Humanities	Entrepreneur
M32Mb20	Male	32	Bachelor Social Science	Human Resource Planning

Site and gender code keys: Mb-Mbabane; Mz-Manzini; St-Siteki; Nh-Nhlangano;

M-Male; F-Female

5.1.1. Profile of participants

Twenty participants with an equal number of female and male participants were selected. Qualifications of participants included: degree, diploma, certificate, and ad hoc training courses.

The areas of specialisation for degree holders included social science, humanities, law, science, agriculture, commerce and business studies. For the diploma holders specialisations included accounting (AAT), computer and business studies. Certificate holders specialised in teaching, technical studies and mechanical engineering; while one participant had ad hoc training in HIV counselling and gender courses.

The diversity of employment situation included: 3 entrepreneurs, 4 teachers, 2 court clerks/interpreters; a banker, finance manager, senior technician, human resource planner, development officer, accountant, motor mechanic and unionist.

5.1.2. Additional profile of participants

This study established how participants used family background to place themselves in the context of the discussion. For example, family meant father, mother, siblings, extended family, maternal family, paternal family, grandparents and deceased parents. Participants mentioned family in the context of how and with whom they grew up. Interestingly, about half of the participants had both parents raising them while six of twenty were raised by a single mother and four by a single father. Very few were raised by a step parent, grandparents and extended family because of divorced parents, deceased parents or never married parents.

Family to all participants was associated with identity related issues and defined their background. Family became a reflection of participants' growth,

successes, struggles, responsibilities, values and aspirations for future lifestyles. All but one participant described their families as middle class, which meant that they were able to provide them with basic necessities while growing up and paid for their education in what they referred to as “good” schools. Only one participant defined his family as poor in that the mother had to struggle to provide for the family which eventually saw him leaving school to assist in family upkeep and the schooling of siblings. Gratifying was that the participant was able to complete his education later in life and continued with tertiary studies, and is employed and still passionate about education.

5.2 Reporting findings

5.2.1. Question one

In this question key challenges in the transition of young people from education and training to employment were sought.

For presentation, the findings relating to Question One were divided into four thematic areas encompassing education attainment, entering the labour market, awareness of skills possessed, and finding employment relevant to career and training.

5.2.1.1 Theme one: Education attainment

This study discovered no evidence to suggest that the type of school attended by participants necessarily affected tertiary entrance and progression. Participants largely attended public schools [government owned or supported] with only two out of twenty having attended elite private schools in the country. University and college study depended largely on the high school performance results, thus the tertiary

qualifications of participants ranged from certificates, diplomas and degrees obtained from local and South African universities and colleges.

While some participants had no financial impediments disturbing and frequently delaying their schooling, a few participants did suffer such hurdles which were overcome by perseverance.

*“I did my primary at Maloma then secondary I went to Big Bend High School, then I was staying with another family as I had left home. **Me:** in your family have all of you managed to go through schooling? **Participant:** yes we have all managed to complete school, although there were difficulties, because, immediately when I was in standard 5 [grade 7], our father started to abdicate, and did not return from the mines. He was in Carltonville or something like that. [Chuckles] That is what I used to hear. Then it called for my mother to start supporting us single handed, selling cattle and other stuff and we managed to finish high school. However, the last born is still at school doing Form 3. Yes, so I can say I’m the first born and after finishing my high school in 2001 and my father having abdicated I was left with the challenge of educating my siblings and I had to look for a job. I got employed at Maloma Colliery a company by the name of Swazi Vanadium that was in 2002. Whilst working at Swazi Vanadium I was trying to study in Manzini and I had to travel to Manzini on weekends. I ended up having only AAT Level 1 coz it was far to travel from Maloma to Manzini Workers College... I am also doing my first degree in Theology at Zulwini Bible College (**M31Mz8**).*

One participant was delayed by behaviour problems that affected his schooling as he only discovered his talent and potential upon changing schools from

a public school to a mission (Christian) school. While another had to drop out of high school to support his siblings.

“...as a teenager I was suspended at the start of the second term, I stayed at home for the rest of the year. The next year I was still at home. After two years we negotiated that I write Form 3 at [name] from there I went to [name] boarding school where I got my breakthrough coz it’s a mission school at Nazarene. Everything was like organised, I was no more staying at home nothing distracting me, I had all the time to study, that’s when I understood most of the education and discovered my strengths that I was good in science and maths. That was my breakthrough I did form 4 to 5 and after that I had to stay for a year as I applied to the university but didn’t get my acceptance letter and one neighbour who worked there investigated why I didn’t get a response and found I had been accepted. So that is when I joined the university ... enrolled for a BSc in Level Water Management ...and got my degree...”

(M29St3)

Some participants were of the view that successful transition from school to career was driven by a person’s passion and interest. For some participants transition from schooling to career was often or subtly influenced by family legacy and career choices of siblings and parents. Some participants acknowledged to following their own intuition, although some perceived career choosing as a mental struggle as there was lack of appropriate career guidance both in schools and tertiary institutions. A participant explained the value of education and training.

“I actually tell people that if you go to school for some reason I think education - always when you’re educated you start seeing things differently.” (M33Mb6).

“...training is unending. In siSwati they say ufundza uze ufe (education has no limits) you can never learn enough and the more you spend time in an education set up the more you tend to forget about other things. Training jogs your memory about other things you need to do and how you can do things differently. And you can pass that knowledge to other employees. (M33Mb6).

“Eeh, I think my first disappointment was when I completed high school, firstly was that I had 5 credits but the disappointment was that I didn’t credit English and thus was unable to enroll at the university, but then my other subjects were passed well and the problem was the English that had to be upgraded. But then you can check how long it has taken me to restart. So I can say that really disappointed me that I had no recourse with all my 5 credits, coz I qualified to go to colleges like Swaziland College of Technology (SCOT) but there was no scholarship. I have not really failed in anything until the setback I had with English. Even now where I’m studying bible my lecturer is telling me that I’m a good writer and if I still do more, dig deeper, my materials could be used as future reference materials. So looking back I can say my family background with an absent father contributed to my late start to pursue higher education. My father abdicated but he is my father and we still love him. But most of us have done well and entered tertiary level except for one sibling” (M31Mz8).

The last participant had a rough transition to tertiary education but he was resilient and persevered. Even though this participant lacked economic capital, his cultural and social capital was strong enough to motivate his perseverance.

5.2.1.2 Theme two: Struggling to get employed - entering the labour market

Participants had similar and strong views about entering the labour market. Generally they had no smooth entry into the labour market there were tensions in the demand of young workers. Among the prominent causes of these tensions was the prospective employer's desire to hire experienced personnel, a predicament that confounded young people who were fresh from tertiary institutions.

Another cause of tension was the apparent lack of jobs that saw some participants opting for volunteer work. One participant described volunteer work as "*a start for permanent jobs*" she described it as challenging due to no pay attached, yet the same requirements as paid employees were tied to it. For example, reporting for work and the dress code - smart casual or formal attire which was costly to a non-salaried worker. However, on the positive side she mentioned the wealth of experience gained, and a sense of worth as she had purpose to wake up each morning, thus, the sacrifice was worth it and patience was essential to succeed.

"I just worked to gain experience, I was told point blank that I will only be given the opportunity to see how the job is done, what is expected of you, but I will not be getting anything from [employer], and if I felt it was getting too much for me I can leave".(F31St18)

Some participants decided to go into business when access to jobs became a challenge. One participant recalled how he perceived business as a noble idea until he hit an impasse. He described business as a risky or precarious venture as it relied entirely on the market situation where at times no clients came through

resulting in losses of income yet still incurring overhead costs. He reckoned that what sustained him was having faith as he was a religious person, and advised young people to ignore pressure – have faith – do not give up but move with a focus. He observed young people going into business for the wrong reasons – *“rushing to satisfy their needs, attracted by the flashiness of business and a different life and lifestyle”*. The participant told his story:

“ME: What skills do you have? PARTICIPANT: *I started my own business from 2010 till 2013 that’s when I decided yah it’s not working out there’s no money in the business – you’ve got to wait 2, 3 months to get 1000, creating debts and what not. ME: what kind of business was that? PARTICIPANT:* *it was a construction business. So I just felt that let me do what I learned from school, so I joined (name of organisation) in May 2013. I run the business for about 2.5 years no 3 years 2010-2013. ME: I like the experience you have in business and employment, can you tell me more? PARTICIPANT:* *yah the tricky part is your clients and if there is a cash flow problem in the country itself – you know how much people are spending – you can have the idea but now I can go to buy or not with my money. You can do the marketing, spend a lot of money on it – but then you get 1 client or 2 that would pay you half of what you spent, but then you are running your business at a loss. People always say be patient – but then again we all want to have something. For me it wasn’t working out, it wasn’t working out because as a young person to start your own business and own it - you know – experience it’s very hard coz there are people who have been there, and are older than you – and they side step you in other things. It’s a learning curve, I’ve learned a lot in business, and life in general kungifundzise tintfo letiningi (it taught me many things)*

about life in general - people are not what they seem at times, but you just need to ignore, ukubeke eceleni (put it aside), you know I'm a praying man – I just tell myself that you know what it's not me who should deal with these people, then I looked at my priorities in life – like what is it that I really want to do". (M32Mz12)

His story continued:

"I may suffer right now, but maybe in ten years' time I'll have money – so I just told myself that maybe the business is not a good idea right now but if it was meant to happen maybe it will later – but right now I have a child to take care of and I cannot push that aside – if business happens in the near future I will go back, but for now it is what I need to do. But for most of us young people it's the flashiness that comes with business that we are hungry for – like you said government would give money to the young people – it's the wrong reasons that attract young people to business, the women, and not the progress of life. Coz to me life and lifestyle are two different things, there's reality in life and fame or pleasure in lifestyle, that's my understanding of the conception of giving young people money to start business". (M32Mz12)

While another participant acknowledged a shaky start due to lack of business experience and young age, but was now enjoying the benefits.

"ME: what kind of motivation do you get in being self-employed versus being employed by someone else? PARTICIPANT: yah let me start by not the negative but something that will have kind of take you away from making that decision of leaving the comfort of employment - coz you've got no idea of

what would happen, like when you have a big company with huge revenue at the end of the month there you're guaranteed that you'll be able to pay bills and do this and that, moving from that to a private company that you have to make everything tick okay with other people – without that you won't be able to get anything at the end of the month. Actually you've seen 2.5 months which can be very difficult when people do not really have money to spend on different services – so those sorts of things, yah, but I think it's all in the patience kubeketela nje and see what's the bigger picture - coz at the end of the day this is what you want to achieve. So that comes to your question that what makes you wake up in the morning – like when you get a kid, I don't have one of my own but I'm just saying, you see something grow and knowing that you're the one whose nurturing that baby – that sort of thing that motivates me. And what has made it work well for me and my partner is that we're sort of on the same page coz you get people who quit very easily and I think that's something that happens a lot to young people babona kutsi uyati lentfo ayisebenti nyalo (they see that it's not working) and they move on coz the grass is greener on the other side – that type of thing, and that kills a lot of dreams, kills a lot of hhm start and finish”. (M32Mb19).

“...it's just that at times you have these big, big, big dreams – I remember we had financials like by this time we would be here – in general we have expectations in life about how things should be with time, and they're not fulfilled and I think that's what makes people quit coz if I don't meet this target it means I've failed, eish let me do something else you know. There are parts where things don't work out but you try it – and if you've given it enough fight and it doesn't work then you move on. I remember when actually I worked this

[name] – actually this is a good point to mention. This [name] that I worked for-we recently signed an agreement with them in December 2014 and when I came back this is one of the things me and my partner wanted to do – to bring in bulk [messaging] recording using the call centre – so after 3 years of persevering these guys finally saw us, and it was all by chance, we met somewhere and they said you guys are a young company but we like what you’re doing can you be an agent for us. That was actually a huge milestone in our work. We partner with [name] and also [name] to do the bulk messaging” (M32Mb19)

5.2.1.3 Theme three: Awareness of skills possessed

The question on skills really challenged young people to think more explicitly about their skills and some were not sure whether skills also included academic qualifications. After much thought participants mentioned their professional skills and experience acquired at the workplace but only a few were conscious of the ‘soft skills’ desired or required by employers, like ability to communicate, solve problems, behavioural qualities. When I asked participants to define their skills, abilities, and experiences, their responses defined mainly the following:

Table 5.2 Skills of participants

Code	Response
F26Nh13	"I've been groomed in dealing with people"
F24Nh14	"I can do anything that applies to mechanical Engineering"
M32Mz12	"I've learned a lot in business and life in general"
M32Mb20	"I think what I've seriously worked on are my Managerial skills and negotiation skills"
F27Mb5	"I have learned a lot about money and material things"
F27Mz11	"I have acquired report writing skills"
M34St17	" I have interpreting skills"
M26Mz10	" I am good in public speaking"
F29Nh16	" I have leadership skills"
F29Nh4	" I have sharp skills in computer and technology"

The skills audit was wide ranging also including; patience, debating, music, hard-working and dedication. Participants were further asked about their strengths and weaknesses to establish hidden skills and to raise consciousness on taken for granted attributes. Participants mentioned various strengths but were often showing signs of uneasiness to talk about their weaknesses. Strengths included religious/spirituality (faith in God), focused, believer, opinionated, attentive, networking, patience, honest, outspoken, happy, committed, independent worker, fighter, humble, team worker, perseverance, and versatile. Weaknesses mentioned

included; too emotional, vulnerable to con artists, lazy, can't say no, intimidating voice, perfectionist, too kind, hate negativity, no connections/networks, not motivated, punctuality, defensive, stubborn, procrastination, easily bored, temperamental, frank, workaholic and modest. **“Me: what are your plans then? Participant: Ehm business, the problem is you have to have connections” (M25Mz9).**

Some participants recognised that some of their strengths could also be perceived as weaknesses and vice versa. This was particularly true when it came to patience which was viewed by most participants as a key to their success and was nurtured by faith that taught them trust and believing in themselves and their dreams, positive thinking and humility.

Participants were of the view that knowing one's strengths helped in extenuating them and minimising and eventually eradicating weaknesses. For some participants talking about strengths and weaknesses touched on buried emotions of betrayal.

“Me: What are your strengths and weaknesses in life? Participant:: God, although sometimes I feel like I'm angry at him – but I think I'm working at that – but I still have that thought that – why did you have to allow me to go stay with this man coz you knew that I'll be ruining my life, and my life was ruined. But maybe God wanted to show me what would happen when I defied my father's advice” (F31St18).

Contradictions were observed in some personalities where getting up in the morning was a hustle but when at work commitment and productivity was apparent. Lack of networks was viewed as a weakness as it usually resulted in no breakthroughs.

5.2.1.4 Theme four: Employment matching career training

I observed that the topic of employment relevant to career and training brought out serious emotions on participants. Although employment was found to be appealing and provided a sense of belonging for most participants they struggled with career suitability and acquiring jobs matching their training. For some participants in entrepreneurship, if they had to make a choice between business and employment they would choose employment – the reasons given were that employment was salary guaranteed, growth was by merit, and there were less underhanded tactics and bribes.

A young women entrepreneur had this to say:

“Yah I’ll start with the struggles - the more weaker part, as I say I really need a job so that is a struggle coz ever since I’ve been searching nothing has come through. My achievements - I have a degree and I have started my MBA but I still can’t carry on. I feel like the achievements I have are not working. I don’t know whether they are working against me or for me coz you keep applying and get regrets so I can say they are not working” (F25St1).

Participants also presented mixed views about the meaning of employment and career. Employment meant routine - doing the same thing every day, working for pay or getting paid for work. Employment provided motivation, security, empowerment, freedom, a platform for improving a lifestyle, and stability. At another level employment was viewed as a starter that propelled a person to doing something on their own, providing business potential. Some participants saw

employment as a lack of motivation in self-fulfilment by pursuing other people's dreams and agenda's, showing a lack of innovation.

“ME: What does employment mean to you? PARTICIPANT: Employment [pause] is like you are a person who has started off without pursuing your own dream but chasing other people's agendas, where you haven't contributed to the objectives and goals it lacks your own innovation. I want to do something I have started from scratch with my own goals in it” (M29St3).

This idea differed from some who likened employment to a stepping stone towards their own achievement, thus it became a dream maker and life changer.

“Ok like given my own background, I don't wish my daughter to experience the same, like if I wasn't employed my wishes would not have been achieved. Even if I can't achieve everything but I want to give my daughter what I didn't have. Now I manage to take her to a private school of which I didn't have that opportunity and I think it will make her a better person than I am. Then again I think even life generally, you know, growing up there is nowhere to get things you like. I tell my students that I used to have only one pair of shoes my school shoes that I wore everywhere. Buying a pair of shoes when I started working was quite an achievement so having a job, you know, maybe to those from well off families it doesn't mean much but to those from poor backgrounds it means a lot and makes you to look at life differently and start appreciating life all over again”. (F32St2)

Some participants presented feelings of ambiguity as they had mixed feelings about employment:

*“Ehhm what employment says to me is every day I wake up to make someone rich. That’s the gist of the story. **Me:** has employment empowered you? **Participant:** nothing, ok it has empowered me in how I see things and how I think. Ok it does something in that, you see, you then begin to know different aspects of life. But then at the same time employment is not alright it then becomes an individual thing in all that is happening around you and the decision you make. But again employment does not define one’s life; I do have church, my friends, family. I have my future aspirations and all of those things define you as a person, employment is just a part, a small one for that matter”. (F27Mb5)*

“...my job is not the only thing. In actual fact it just pays, it’s a sense of freedom for the rest of the other things because it pays for my visitation at home, my going to church, to the camp, but it’s not like it’s everything”.(F27Mb5)

“And then employment it is something that I feel like I’m doing right now – I feel like I’m supposed to go back to school but how am I going to do it – so right now every time I wake up in the morning I feel like eish I’m just going to do the very same thing that I’m doing – as much as I feel like my chances to progress are very slim as I can’t go back to school. So doing one and the same thing I feel like I’m employed right now”. (F31St18)

At another level participants perceived career in much more optimistic terms as a passion; what one loves doing, interesting, enjoyable, enlightening, elevating; a moral boost, uplifting and bringing happiness.

“Simplistically put career is when you do what you want and you love it, and you’ve got passion about and by God’s Grace it pays”. (M32Mb20)

“To me a career is a passion, it is something that you grew up wanting to do whereas employment is a job in any field whether hospitality or agriculture just in order to have a source of income. For example I can be employed as a waitress at a hotel whereas my career is in Mechanical Engineering”. (F29Nh15)

For most, a career came out of choice, brought innovation, and may or may not be relevant to educational training but may be accompanied by work related experience.

“(Laughs) I guess a career it is something that is supposed to somehow give me that boost even in my personal life, to enlighten me, something that is supposed to elevate me from where I am now and love doing it”. Career wise I think that it’s something that you should like and enjoy, be passionate about it, something that’s going to lift you from this level to the next”. (F31St18)

Some participants were of the view that career was connected to skills developed from work experience which may be gained formally or informally, and something that improved the worker’s long term gratification.

“So the career will be developed on the job training, not that the career will be learned at school or university - you learn most of the skills while you’re working”.(M26Mz10)

While other participants indicated that career and employment were used interchangeably by most people and they also did at times.

*“Yoh that’s tricky, most people use the two interchangeably. So I think for me employment is just an opportunity to wake up every morning to go to work and just get paid for it. Yes, but the career is something you choose yourself and is more kind of long term as opposed to employment. **Me:** which of the two is important to you as a person? **Participant:** you see employment, I think career is much more important because you can be employed and not happy because you’re employed and it might be in something you don’t like but career is something you choose you’re happy and you’re able to find better ways to make your job or career most interesting”. (M33Mb6)*

For participants the passion for the job done defined the separation of a job from a career, as such participants viewed employment as an opportunity to move to greater heights in establishing themselves in business.

“...employment is something like starter that pushes you forward...It pushes you to go and do something for yourself...It’s a start to go into business for me”. (F29Nh15)

Employment was hailed for its stability and security effects in providing a guaranteed monthly income to sustain a livelihood, compared with the volatility of business where the business environment decided the flow of income.

5.2.1.5 Theme five: Further education and training

This topic evoked feelings of hope for most participants. Furthering education defined the plans of nine of twenty participants, even those with a degree aspired to further their studies. Furthering studies was viewed as widening opportunities for career progression of participants. One participant recalled that his parents taught

him that learning is unending and he also believed that “you can never learn enough”.

“...if it was according to my wishes I would further my studies on the geography side coz with social science I can do the planning aspect on the geography side, maybe join the town council.”(F32St2)

Other participants wanted to develop entrepreneurial skills to gain financial stability, one even stated that the country is very small and a lot of competition existed for employment. One participant already engaging in a computer business and training customers in corporate industry desired to acquire certified paper qualification to gain more recognition and respect from professional clients.

“We also do web designing and my partner does that actually – I haven’t actually – in-fact I know very little about it – it’s not that difficult but the thing is that it’s very technical and it’s not just something that you can just grasp on the job. Another thing covers corporate training for advanced training – I actually take those courses but I don’t have certification for it – it’s just that I do it, I’ve learned, I have the skill and researched on it you know – so I need to get certification for it so that people don’t have to ask why you’re teaching them and yet you have no certificate to show for it. (M32Mb19)

*“I see myself overseas doing something better. **Me:** how do you plan to get yourself overseas? **Participant:** well look I have a brother there and aunt’s uncles almost like a family, so but I’m not I don’t want to depend on them, I want to work hard what I’m doing now is a start and if all goes well and I make enough then I can save up for a ticket and go and then maybe they can help*

me when I'm there. When I'm that side, I'm a person that has never wanted to work under a person I've always wanted to be my own boss, so maybe for the first time I'd work for someone, or get to study first, it depends. I would study business, yes and carry on with business.” (F26Nh13)

Some participants wanted to periodically engage with colleagues in workshops to continuously broaden their knowledge in their chosen fields and to sharpen their skills. Engaging with other professionals was viewed as exposure to innovative ideas that may not be present in one's work environment and resulted in maturing career wise.

“Eehm ei ok maybe I can say I can't identify exactly but as you work you realise that you're lacking in this and that. For example, when I started marking I realised that I've been teaching for years but never realised it was supposed to be like this, so all these years I had been denying the students certain knowledge but there was no way of knowing that without the exposure. So in the nature of the job in maths you can only see through continuous interaction with other teachers. In service department does its work of orienting teachers but refresher courses are essential. So marking really opened my horizons and unfortunately most teachers avoid the marking job.” (F32St2)

“I need to participate in workshops aligning with my field of work, extra work associated with my work such as marking the external examination for more prospects and sharpening in the field.” (F29Nh4)

Some participants had different ideas like wanting to change the field of study entirely which could be a typical case of lack of career guidance. One participant wanted to specialise in less over-subscribed fields of study to improve his marketability. Another participant wanted to develop “people’s skills” which she described as learning to respect other people’s thoughts and understanding them. Similarly, another participant wanted to learn psychology as she had developed a hobby of writing about people and their thoughts. While another participant wanted to learn to be vocal and interactive.

5.3 Question two

This question elicited data on how youth inclusion in employment impacted on individual agency as they navigated life’s opportunities.

This section is presented in three thematic areas aimed at establishing how employment has traversed life opportunities for young people. The section is presented in three themes aiming at establishing what young people desire to make their work life a productive one.

5.3.1 Theme six: *Employment, self-fulfilment, security and freedom*

Excitement was written in the faces of participants when talking about the outcomes of employment. There was a clear sense of fulfilment and confidence in their voices and body expression. According to participants employment brought happiness and was described as a life changing experience a few times. It also changed participants’ lifestyles, affordability, and provided a sense of worth and fulfilment.

Me: what is your understanding of outcomes of employment/career?

Participant: “Ok when we were still growing up we didn’t come from a rich background and like I have 3 older siblings and so for me to actually see them living in the same situation we were in and seeing them going from primary, high school, university and finding a job bringing in money to feed the family, buying a car, buying a house. You see this person is happy and is chilling with everyone, for me it was like this is also possible for me you know, despite that we were from a middle income family it was possible for me also. **So for me it was a motivation for me that I can actually make my life good and be whatever I want to be, it doesn’t matter where you come from and who your friends are and stuff like that. I think for me that was the main thing, when I went to varsity I just told myself that this is my main goal, I want to finish varsity, I want to get a good job, I want to buy a car, I want to buy a house, to get married, I wanna have kids.** You just have that 5 - 10 year kind of plan. You know finishing and achieving that 5 - 10 year plan you had might be different but still to have it somewhere at the back of your mind, ok fine maybe I finish varsity get a job maybe it’s not that salary I want but still somehow you just have that 15 year plan in the back of your head you know so it’s not lost it may rather be pushed a bit further but it’s still there.
(M33Mb6)

“My understanding of the expectations and **outcomes of employment is that one through employment should be able to live life accessibly.** That is to say afford stuff including being able to afford to provide for yourself and as well as for your family. Also my expectations would include that from the remuneration one should be able to even afford proper entertainment such as

a holiday during the festive season and or even during the course of the year after a long day's work, embarking on projects that may improve one's life such as building a home for yourself and still afford to put food on the table for yourself and your family". (F29Nh4)

Employment was seen as appealing for the security it provided in a guaranteed pay cheque and it was therefore, seen as a starter to propel one forward to a better lifestyle.

*"I think **one thing which force us to go into employment is poverty and financial instability coz the moment I go somewhere for work I'm expecting to be paid.** So if, let's say you're from a well off family, I don't think you can go somewhere and be employed coz you can provide for yourself. Basically, when you're talking about employment you're expecting one thing to be paid, yes, coz then it's a problem if you give me something and say go and wash it, so when I bring it back I'm expecting something. So the first expectation from employment is getting paid-after getting paid then you can better yourself- then that will help you become someone or something in life". (M25Mz9)*

Emancipation from dependency on parents and intimate partners was reported by a few participants. They said employment created a feeling of independence, being in control and making decisions, responsibility for siblings and family welfare and personal growth. The following is a story of a young woman participant who got pregnant at final year of high school and married an older man. She suffered physical and emotional abuse from the partner who was the sole

provider until she left the man and went back to studying. She is now employed and continuing with tertiary education. The participant told her story in a low tone symbolising her changing emotions. The conversation went this way:

“Me: What are your expectations of employment and have yours been fulfilled? Participant: *I wanted so much to be independent coz I was unfortunate that when I was 18 and still at school I met this guy [chuckles]. I was doing Form 5 and I met this guy and you know I felt like I was so much in love, and he was much way older than me, and so I felt like this is it – you know that kind of stuff. Next thing I got pregnant, when I wrote the exams at Form 5 I was already pregnant, next thing when I finished the exams I ran away from home coz of fearing the discovery of my pregnancy, and then, I don't want to disappoint my dad – I've been his baby ever since and what is he going to say – I've disappointed him, and so I should just run. And this man was also like I love you, let's just get married, you know that stuff. He went to my home and my dad refused to give his blessing, when he went to the Registrar's office he was told I'm still under age I can't consent, she still needs the assistance of the parent. So he married me the traditional way (Kuteka) at 18 I found myself a married woman, and when I got to his home I discovered he's got 3 children and then now it's me I'm 19 and a mother to 4 kids – 3 girls and then there's my boy – so it was tough coz you know I was just lounging at home being a housewife. In the second year of me living with him he started abusing me physically, and emotionally, yah it was quite tough, but then the very same thing that led me to be here today – coz I just told myself I need to go back to school. I had not even collected my Form 5 results from my school, I didn't even think they would serve me any purpose back then - I was in love*

and had everything. But then the experience after about 4 years of living together – then I decided I need to get my results and go to school. Luckily, the results were not bad so I talked to him and he told me he doesn't want me to go to school, that I had to choose between him and school coz when I go to school I will have affairs with other men. He was not like a partner to me but a father – and a terrible father. **So in short I'm trying to say when I looked for employment I dreamt one day of having my home, joy being the – how can I put it – making my own decisions coz I didn't even know how to make decisions for myself, everything was decided for me and I couldn't say anything – so employment was really a liberator for me – coz I saw that now my life is gonna change, I'm not going to be asking for anything from anyone, what to do or not to do - I'm just going to be this person I want to be. I understood that, yes, I started the wrong way but, I can still persevere.” (F31St18)**

Highlighting the response in the story shows how the story context illuminates the feelings of participants' to its entirety than limiting it to short direct excerpts.

“Me: So in other words your expectations have been fulfilled or they are still being fulfilled? Participant: They are still being fulfilled because getting a job was step number 1, no step number 1 was getting the education coz the education managed to open my eyes and I saw that this man is beating me up not because there's something wrong with me, but there's something wrong with him. I don't really have to do anything coz at first I used to feel like maybe I have done something or said something bad to annoy him, that is why he had to beat me up. Eish, now when I look back and think honestly, how does

*one allow such to happen to oneself – maybe the education really opens one's eyes, coz at that time I really didn't have friends – I also didn't want to talk about this abuse with my family coz they didn't want this marriage to happen in the first place – and I proceeded forcefully – and when you meet up with such problems it's difficult to go back to report. So it is the education that taught me a lot, I also met other people – I lived an isolated life before coz my husband was that person who would get everything you wanted even toiletries – even sanitary pads, he didn't mind to go to a supermarket and buy pads, as long as you remain in the house – you don't go anywhere. What you need, you write a list and then he will go and buy it and bring it back. Sometimes other items like cutex – he would just scratch off the list – asking you what it is for. So I liked cutex and I always thought someday ... **so the education and getting employed come first in achieving my expectations, and some day maybe furthering my education will be added on the expectations.**"*

(F31St18)

Participants had a feeling of security to plan for the future and seeing those plans through. The interactions made with colleagues in the work place oriented participants to the world in general and the country in particular. One participant noted that young people are complacent and have no drive because they are not desperate like in other countries.

*"If one is employed eeh it's expected to develop yourself educational wise and obviously you will also develop the society and environment and look back to my family where I come from to develop it and develop the whole family. **Me:** have your expectations been fulfilled so far? **Participant:** 60% of the expectations I'm doing it right now coz I'm - my 4 siblings are at school*

*because of me and the completions of my family home is done by me coz my dad got pensioned when I was doing my first year in college and I had to complete school using my own funds coz I didn't get a scholarship from government when I was doing my diploma. So I had to work on Saturdays in order to pay my school. Then when I started working I had to educate my brother who was doing IT – the one who is 27 years now. Then I had to educate my younger sister, and now I'm building a family home which I have almost completed. Last year my work environment couldn't pay our salaries every month and that's when I stopped building. **Me:** what were you living on when you were not paid a salary? **Participant:** Survival being the thing of course from then I started having clients who hired my expertise and they were paying me very well so that's how I survived. **Me:** so tell me about the remaining 40% of your expectations? **Participant:** "Hmmm I need to complete my further schooling and then start my business then I would be done" (M32Mb7).*

Another young woman participant in a small town owned a fast foods place. She has a degree in Business Studies and a Certificate in International Business but is not content with the business as she had not stopped looking for employment. The participant told her story as follows:

“Me: So if you were to choose between the business side and employment what would you pick? Participant: *Employment... coz as I said the business can close any time and what's gonna happen to your life. So I really need to get employed so that I know when I die my children are gonna have something. Coz now when I die my children are just gonna loiter and have nothing. Me: So for you what does employment mean?*

Participant: It means job security coz as I said in business you do not know when it goes wrong and when it goes right so it's got its ups and downs. **Me:** **If there was an opportunity for you to expand in terms of the business would you take that opportunity versus employment?** **Participant:** It's a difficult ones [pause] I'll still go for employment coz as I said the job security is really what matters to me. **Me:** **And if you find a job that would give you a contract of 3 years?** **Participant:** I'd keep my business on the side as a fall-back position. **Me:** **So for you your career path would actually be getting employed?** **Participant:** [nodding] Coz what matters to me is that I'll end up forgetting what I studied. Coz when you're in a small business your mind sticks to that, you don't think out of the box. Around a small town like [name] there's also limited information you can use". (F25St1)

Even for participants who were not in business, employment was perceived as fulfilling and providing them with income security.

*"Employment to me means a lot. The times we're living in if you want to be employed you need to be educated. The 21st century is a modern world and it's closing down people who are not qualified. So to me **employment and career has opened up my mind to see things differently. If you're an adult a grandpa you're no longer employed and you're dependent on children to give you something you're no longer required in this 21st world coz there's nothing more you're bringing to the society than receiving. So if you're not educated or employed you're simply out in this world. So employment to me means a lot in terms of living coz even the government to be successful it needs people to be employed so that the government can benefit from taxes and survive"** (F31St18).*

“Through employment should be able to live life accessibly. That is to say afford stuff including being able to afford to provide for yourself and as well as for your family. Also my expectations would include that from the remuneration one should be able to even afford proper entertainment such as a holiday during the festive season and or even during the course of the year after a long day’s work, embarking on projects that may improve one’s life such as building a home for yourself and still afford to put food on the table for yourself and your family. These expectations to my knowledge are still far from being fulfilled. The question would be why and I think the response would be that the pay received is by far way less than the expected cost of living. All that I’ve mentioned above for one to archive all that would have to ‘robe Peter to pay Paul’ that is take loan after loan in order to try and fulfil one of the many expectations, thus making life even more harder earning a low income as most of the money would be servicing loans” (F29Nh4).

Some participants desired to go into business to pursue their own desires and dreams while some saw employment as a life changer and dream maker.

Employment was also seen as appealing by those who saw business as marred by underhanded tactics and potentially led to corruption, whereas in employment growth was basically by merit and it provided a sense of belonging.

To one participant employment whilst offering positive outcomes was still marred with its own challenges including the low commitment by employers to workers satisfaction and well-being.

“Hmnn. for me I think if you’re in employment, a worker, you’re just selling your labour because the moment the employer feels you’re no longer productive they will fire you. So employment is that we sell our labour to the employer and the employer also needs us as much as we need them, although [chuckles] they are cheating us [repeats for emphasis] although they are cheating us, more especially in Swaziland. Because if I speak about Swaziland if you follow the wages gazette the salaries are too low compared e.g. textiles are paying workers about E800 (R800) and that is not a salary that can sustain peoples livelihoods, but the truth is that the salaries are low and employers in most instances are still using the traditional approach of labour relations in that to the Director, a good manager is the one who manages to keep a low wage bill, yet as workers we want money. Although we also want the company to prosper but we also want money that is why we work”. (M31Mz8)

To uncover their desires and dreams participants were asked about their goals in the next five to ten years. This question was found to be particularly challenging by most participants who exhibited signs of deep thought [frowns, hesitation, throat clearing], some openly saying that they had never thought that far into the future. All participants wanted an improved elevated status to reach top jobs or business success, while some wanted to further their studies. Furthering studies seemed to dominate participants’ views and ultimately improve work status from junior to senior levels.

“ I’m a hard working person; I think that, my expectation is that I can become Manager, Executive, and Managing Director you see. I do expect

*that, but at the same time it's not my primary focus because I have business aspirations. I appreciate my aspirations but I know that I'm employed and those aspirations are not yet into fruition. You see even now [laughs] I should have been promoted, but the fact that I'm small I have a smaller voice [laughs] they wonder, my God what is she gonna do this one. Ok that I'm now in foreign exchange is a promotion and I appreciate coz every day you learn new things everyday something new comes in about what is happening with regulations and bilateral agreements between countries. And it makes you realise that life is not just about getting up in the morning, but things are happening around you that can change your world completely and someone is there determining your life. And it takes one decision right or wrong to change everything. So foreign exchange has taught me a lot about currencies and economy and the falling of the currency can be so bad for business. How now it becomes so expensive even for government to send people to meetings abroad that it takes so much from our resources and that also affects individual's budgets. All these things I have mastered through my job experience and not in class. I speak a lot neh. **Me:** yah and I'm glad you do coz I want to hear your story". (F27Mb5)*

This participant had mixed feelings about employment but still appreciated all the experience and knowledge it has brought in her life.

5.3.2. Theme seven: Career options, desired jobs and accomplishments

The findings of this study revealed that participants were optimistic about their future and furthering their studies dominated their future plans. The few that were pessimistic suggested setbacks caused by wrong career choices.

As pointed out earlier participants' views of career and employment presented points of convergence and divergence. They converged as both relied on training either on the job or in qualifications. They depart as motivation in career was self-driven based on passion while in employment it was reward-driven based on the salary received.

“[Laughs] I guess a career it is something that is supposed to somehow give me that boost even in my personal life, to enlighten me, something that is supposed to elevate me from where I am now and love doing it. And then employment it is something that I feel like I’m doing right now – I feel like I’m supposed to go back to school but how am I going to do it – so right now every time I wake up in the morning I feel like eish I’m just going to do the very same thing that I’m doing – as much as I feel like my chances to progress are very slim as I can’t go back to school. So doing one and the same thing I feel like I’m employed right now. Yet, career-wise I think that it’s something that you should like and enjoy, be passionate about it, something that’s going to lift you from this level to the next” (F31St18).

Another participant shared similar views:

“Yes career is something that you’re determined to do, something that you love, passion. But with employment it’s something that will put food on the

table. Coz when you talk about employment I will say, yes, I'm employed coz I cannot stay at home and be starved. You are trying to move from this poverty situation to another situation, but let's say you're employed in that career or profession and it's something you love, therefore, I cannot call it employment but passion – coz you're doing something that you love, something you can die for, but with employment you're just doing that thing coz you're forced to" (M25Mz9).

Me: have those expectations been fulfilled for you? **Participant:** "Yes, but then we will go back to career, if I was doing something in my career, I would say I was enhancing myself, to enhance and improve my understanding in that field. But a case whereby you're employed and you have these constraints then that's a different case-you're expecting to be paid then after being paid you can do other things -improve your lifestyle and background. **So career is something you're passionate about-doing something you love, that is where you get the fulfilment, and you don't have a problem getting up-instead of thinking aahh its work again.** So if you're doing something that you love you can find that you're at work at six and do the things with love". (M25Mz9)

"Career on the other hand is something that will improve the worker in their different sectors, and what happens mostly is that workers are maintained in the same position for many years without any development and that doesn't bother the employers. Trade unions are also partly to blame by not challenging this status. As a person I believe very strongly in improving

worker's education coz this is not only an improvement to the worker but it becomes an asset for the company as well. So I also believe unions also have a role to play here because they are always pushing for salary increments which might just be 10 per cent that will be temporary gratification but has no long term benefit. The agenda of trade unions should also include education of workers. Employers will not initiate this when unions are silent about it. These are things we take lightly yet we should be serious about it". (M31Mz8)

Career change came up in some interviews where there was either a mismatch in the job and qualifications attained, or there was dissatisfaction with the type of job done.

"I've actually thought of probably a career change to probably, not so far from the NGO settings like to development kind of thing just to align myself with the voluntary work which is extremely close to my heart helping people and stuff like that. Those are my aspirations, as much as I have like my degree probably these are options I can look at coz I think there's always need for finance to work in the field. So it wouldn't be really a total diversification it probably would be an add on, something like that a side menu" (M33Mb6).

*"for me I would say one thing that I've noted is that even though in most cases you study one area, like **for me my majors is statistics but then when you get the employment you will be employed for something that is not relevant to what you had studied initially**, so that why for me I think, even if you go and study but, there are high chances that when you complete you will not be employed for exactly what you studied but in something else-and then you will acquire the skills as you continue to work in*

*that position. So the **career will be developed on the job training, not that the career will be learned at school or university**-you learn most of the skills while you're working". (M26Mz10)*

There were instances of previous lack of career guidance and 'wrong decisions' made in career choice which affected the happiness and progression of the participants in later life.

Not getting the right jobs in the initial stages of the career was viewed as an impediment to success which disturbed progress prompting thoughts of career change sometimes necessitating going back to tertiary training.

*"I was expecting to be hired as a lawyer so I guess I'm still expecting that to happen someday, and also at private practice. Of course money is the initial expectation. But money is still very much on the low side so my expectations have not been met so far. I was expecting a good life but it is not happening now, ever since 2010 the salaries have not been increasing and that meant a lot of things cannot be done, and secondly you start to accumulate a number of debts trying to survive – like now I had to suspend my study plans due to lack of money. So all the things I was dreaming about are not being achieved and I have to borrow money to patch up here and there. **ME:** How is the work life for you as a young person? **Participant:** Especially in the judiciary there is a freeze when it comes to promotions, and the criterion is not so clear. The post of senior interpreter has been abolished and now it is senior registrar – the system is not very enabling" (M34St17).*

Another participant had this to say:

“... eish... people like us the youth should be working in jobs that are not dead end jobs, but in most cases ‘siyafucuta nje lapho sifucuta khona’ (we are hustling wherever we are), so that’s why I’m saying my expectations have not been fulfilled, but it’s on the way coz it’s never too late to see that things have not gone according to plan. Although, the background one comes from- from a poor family and you didn’t get the education you wanted is a fact. If you don’t even have a first degree which company can take you? You know there are few places where you can get assistance. So I have this idea that personally I still have to see my expectations being fulfilled, I still hope that maybe when I reach 35-36 years there will be some light by then. I really believe that one has to be educated to the highest level maybe to PhD level, you know when you hear some people acquired their PhD at 34 years and you are still struggling to get your first degree at that age it’s not good. So my prayers are that one day I will also get to the PhD level. [laughs] serious”.(M31Mz8)

Business was viewed as a solution for upward mobility by the majority of participants, although, those in business while seeing the positive aspects, were mindful of the challenges in the volatile business environment that disturbed income flows and resulted in negative growth and security of the business.

5.3.3. Theme eight: Career challenges

Although participants were employed and grateful for the opportunity, they appeared to experience disappointments in their career paths.

*“Production must be commensurate to the pay. [Laughs], Eeei no I cannot say so. **Me:** Why, what were you expecting? **Participant:** Ok for me this is not what I planned to be from the beginning. I wanted to build a society of different people, people who will be successful in the future, just doing my own part to contribute to society’s expectations from students. Before I went to class that was what I thought, but when you get to class, working equipment is not there, no chemicals to conduct experiments and thus the experiments are not successful shortage of working materials and then abort science practicals so how do you create a knowledge society with that. Also the bosses don’t want to listen to reason, and the fact that we are different in professions they are not supportive. Also the age as we are younger than the bosses, they expect us to respect all the way, and to keep quiet even if things are not ok” (M29St3).*

“The saddest thing of what I have come to notice in Swaziland is that when you get to the work space, colleagues envy and even become spiteful to you because you got the position in which probably they had told a relative or friend to apply for, there is little workmanship and mentoring, opportunities are left to the senior staff who are reluctant to mentor juniors” (F29Nh16).

Participants expressed disappointment concerning training institutions’ over-producing for an already flooded labour market, with one participant describing this as disturbing. This opinion was accompanied by expressions of dissuasion in attracting employment not matching career training due to a glut in the labour market.

“ME: what have been your biggest disappointments in your career?

Participant: *Yes, I have a lot and a lot of disappointments, coz, you finish school – you have good marks, even us we tell the school children, study hard and get good marks so that you can get to university. But when you get to university you always have this problem, you choose majors telling yourself that ooh after this I’ll go and do something, but I think the world out there is not the same as the world that you’re being taught at school. So you finish your degree and stuff, then when you get out there you find yourself doing the job which you’re not supposed to be doing coz you cannot sit and expect manna to come from heaven. So you find yourself doing something you’re not supposed to do. So I think that one is the greatest disappointment coz that one it’s demotivation on its own, even if you are still at university and you see people who are ahead of you and have been getting good marks and good results, but they end up doing things they are not supposed to be doing, and you find that a few of us are able to further and do the things appropriate to our careers. So I think the lack of jobs is a major let down – lelesifundziswa kona ema university kute langephandle - (what we are taught at university is not provided for in the outside) – so you find that sihlanyela umbila (we plant maize) - but you know you have a tank that can accommodate only a certain volume - but I have cultivated excessively (sengilime imihhalu) - so where will you put the rest of the maize? This is just a big disappointment.” (M25Mz9)*

Some participants were not satisfied with their employment agreements particularly when these were not honoured and respected by the employer. Some employers were described as discouraging studying something that was viewed as a setback by some participants.

“It’s not being able to further my studies. That has been my biggest career disappointment. The fact that my employer is not willing to release me to further my studies is really a disappointment. The [name] should view my education progress as progress to the work of [name].” (F31St18)

Some participants noted issues of unfairness and nepotism in hiring and promotions, which they perceived as influenced by lack of connections and was viewed as an impediment in their career advancement.

“Biggest disappointment was when I started others were hired as [trainee] and others as [substantive] but all with a similar qualification but the levels at which you enter the job you are not equal thus making you a subordinate of your colleague with same qualification. This is a common thing in [name] as they pay according to the post and not the qualification, thus it means you stagnate for three years instead of climbing the ladder. And after 3 years you start in notch 1 of the post. This makes progress very slow but I persevered and continued till now.” (M34St17)

*“I quickly dismiss as a coping strategy [laughs] but what I hate most is when I apply for a job and I’m the best suited and someone else who has not made much effort gets it – that stays with me for some time. **Me:** Is that due to lack of connections? **Participant:** it’s both connections on their part and lack on my part. Sometimes I realise that it’s not always best that there’s someone who knows you in the office – some will not give you the job because you are related and it will look like nepotism and others have problems with working with relatives. The country is too small and many people are acquainted. I was selected once for Fulbright Scholarship and I went to the last interview*

and then I was denied the scholarship because I had no family and child to come back to in the country.” (M32Mb20)

Some participants recalled how they almost joined the statistics of discouraged workers when continuously applying for employment without getting any feedback from prospective employers.

“Yah the fact that when I was busy applying for employment many companies don’t even respond just a simple regret you know to show that at least they have looked at your application. It was very disappointing coz at least that reject makes you to accept and move on. Coz I remember that there was a time when I got so discouraged and stopped applying and started doing a business of transporting school kids using my mother’s car. At least my time got occupied with that and my studies and I had no time to think much about getting a job. So my time was slotted to taking the kids to school going to class fetching kids from school doing my assignments and studying then sleeping in readiness for the next day.” (F29Nh15)

“Participant: applying for jobs and not being called for interview – but that did not discourage me I just had to put my pride aside and continue searching. God is in control and it’s my time now.” (F27Mz11)

Some participants’ stories of disappointment concerned employers who lacked confidence in young people and situations that denied them the opportunity of exploring their full potential in the workplace.

“Eeeh unable to do my own project at work. I would have loved to design and carry out a project to full execution on the site but I’m trying to go around that

coz I have to anticipate these characters and the way they do their thing. **Me:** What is it exactly, does your boss not give you space to do that or there is simply no opportunity? **Participant:** he does not give me the space or the opportunity to run with the project the main reason being that we're dealing with big monies here so if anything goes wrong the whole company will be affected. **Me:** So he still doesn't trust you? **Participant:** [laughs] yah I can say that." (M32Mb7)

"[big sigh] I think disappointments when you're working for a small organisation probably like this is when funding is a problem, not so available. For me I've worked for an audit firm for 3 years I've gained so much experience and for me when I was still doing my audit I've always wanted to use that experience to improve the organisation I work for, but with lack of funding you lack the time to use that experience coz you're doing management by crisis. So for me it's always been that not finding a window to use your experience. So you just find yourself swamped in crisis management." (M33Mb6)

"Eeh the greatest disappointment at work is that you know the resources are there and what you're looking for is not that much if you can price it but there is a person who feels like at this particular time he is not interested in making them available and personalises issues when you persevere, yet a teacher cannot do the job effectively without the resources. But when he says no he means no." (F32St2)

A female mechanic found herself discouraged by male colleagues in her male dominated field of motor mechanic. This story brought in the element of gender discrimination and specialisation in the workplace that was not obvious in this data.

“I was discouraged by my male colleagues because I am young and female especially since Mechanical is known as a male dominated area. I dealt with it by persevering because I knew what it is that I wanted to do with my life.”

(F24Nh14)

Participants in entrepreneurship were discouraged by slow returns in their business, while others provided a service and payment was not forthcoming or extremely delayed to the detriment of business viability. In turn income patterns were affected and their livelihoods were highly uncertain.

*“The payments take a long time to come. **Me:** And how have you dealt with that? My mum ends up paying the rent. But a business must grow you can't rely on someone and probably if I didn't have parents that are able the business would have died a long time ago. Yeah when they don't buy the food you have to go home with food and that is a big loss as you can't reheat. [town] is a very very small town and as you can see today its quiet.”* **(F25St1)**

“People not wanting to pay, I have mostly let it go and they pay whenever they want to. Sometimes the agreement is that you get paid forth-nightly only to get paid monthly.” **(F26Nh13)**

5.4 Question three

This question elicited data on whether employment was the most desired mechanism for achieving social inclusion.

This question produced substantial data presented in three thematic areas of this section namely; establishing own identity – self-discovery, sense of achievement - participation in society, and knowledge of policy making and implementation.

5.4.1 Theme nine: Establishing own identity – self discovery

There was a general feeling of control and relief in the responses of participants on the topic of benefits of employment. Not surprisingly, all participants had a sense of pride and joy that they were capable of achieving economic independence and stand on their own away from parents and family shadows. This applied across all family economic groupings from low, middle to upper middle class levels. To them, economic independence represented growth, success, social inclusion and acceptance, responsibility and freedom from economic hardships.

Participants came from varying family forms; from both parent families to single parent families, to grandparent families, and extended families. Some were raised by the paternal side of the family, while others were raised by their maternal family; where parents were never married, separated, divorced, deceased or in migrant labour. The majority of participants were from economically able families which explained their educational attainment. About two participants out of twenty came from a deprived family background and were able to succeed through sacrifices of their parents' who worked the informal sector and the participants' own devotion to persevere with education when the opportunity presented itself.

“Me: can you tell me about your family background? **Participant:** I grew up at a home that had a father and mother. My father was a miner in South Africa and my mother was eh you know a house wife. I have five siblings, three boys and two girls, I’m the first born. My family was highly dependent on my father as he was the breadwinner. The family home is at [rural area] next to [mine]. I did my primary there then secondary I went to [name of high School], then I was staying with another family as I had left home. “So looking back I can say my family background with an absent father contributed to my late start to pursue higher education. My father abdicated but he is my father and we still love him. But most of us have done well and entered tertiary level except for one sibling.” (M31Mz8)

For some participants family identity when growing up was not the key to opening doors including education and entering the job market. However, they managed to establish their own identity and became successful.

Some participants acknowledged that the interview was an eye opener to them in making them think seriously about the skills they possess. Participants were often caught off-guard in that they did not seriously consider having other skills except for professional skills acquired through training. Some acknowledged that this was their first attempt at making an audit of their skills. Participants reported skills, abilities and achievements in their personal growth which were attributed to self-discovery, insights, and new knowledge acquired in interactions made at the workplace.

“...in your NGO kind of settings it’s different coz you tend to rely on donors. So although it gives you a kind of wide view on what is happening around coz you work with all different kinds of organisations like I will compare in my case I have worked with seven 7 different donors so you kind of know that this donor want’s his/her reports like this, so you get something when you meet these people, not only are you focusing on your work but you’re developing yourselves coz they tell you about experiences they’ve had with other NGOs and some of the partners they’ve worked with” (M33Mb6).

Several statements with similar content suggested that some participants discovered new visions into their own personality; like new interests and talents, and appreciation for new undertakings that were never apparent.

Moreover, some participants appreciated the opportunity to be interviewed as it provided them with a general sense of opening up and thinking about future opportunities for personal development.

A number of participants mentioned social contacts, meeting people with similar interests, role models and social integration in their participation in the labour market. In some cases social integration meant sharing similar situations and participating in the same labour market and social circles.

5.4.2 Theme ten: Sense of achievement - Participation in society

To most participants talking about themselves brought a sense of achievement and feelings of empowerment that often brought a smile to their faces. Education and employment were rated highly in the achievements of participants. All participants were of the view that education had contributed immensely in their

successes including acquiring material possessions like owning a car and/or a house. As such furthering their studies came top in the list of future prospects. To one participant education also meant he was a pioneer in his family where he was the first and only graduate.

Some participants reported a sense of achievement in various contexts; for example in their personal growth, as evidence that young people have potential, and as proof that they could be responsible adults. Some had broken difficult ground to start and sustain viable business ventures.

“Like at work we have bosses, we come to work and are expected to work like above board. We expect the bosses to be people to guide us but instead they become bosses which takes off all the excitement in work and turns it into a frustration. But really you expected in life to be better than before and be uplifted from struggles of life. In terms of status you also want to be a better person and that socially because when you are unemployed you have that sense of not belonging. But somehow everybody should have a sense of belonging in the society you are in at a particular point in time e.g. when we were at varsity our backgrounds were very different and therefore you tended to associate with those of a similar background. There are people who you can’t associate with due to your status, and you feel you can’t cope. There are many things you feel capable of doing which you couldn’t do before” (F32St2).

All this excitement was immediately dampened by a reflection on their monthly salary packages that were described as very low by participants, hindering their capacity to satisfy basic needs which was a set back to their personal growth.

As a result they were still anticipating improving their prospects by furthering studies to get a job that would match their capabilities. Some participants had plans of starting their own businesses, while others aspired to settle down and start a family now that they were employed.

All participants were of the view that employment was a life changing experience for them, it changed lifestyles, and they could afford basic needs and luxuries. They gained skills that opened a lot of opportunities, they were groomed by experts in various fields, and they were in a position to pass on the knowledge, and they gained confidence in work.

Employment brought progress in their lives, emancipated them from dependency, and presented them with a sense of belonging and responsibility in their community. Some participants said they felt driven by desire and not only by expectations to participate in the community. However, they pointed out that community expectations often exceeded their low salary packages and some young people ended up living a credit lifestyle trying to live up to community expectations. It was found that often young people were unable to cope with the demands and they borrowed from loan sharks entangling themselves in perpetual debt. Some participants were of the view that some young people have a misguided concept of achievement in that they wanted too much too soon picturing a flashy lifestyle as a major goal.

Participants who were entrepreneurs were happy with their achievements although they recognised that business was not predictable and often viewed employment as providing income security. Their view was that customers were in short supply and they were strapped in their spending. The positive aspect they saw

was patience in nurturing the business, never quite as expectations did not always breed desired results.

5.4.3 Theme eleven: Interest and knowledge in politics, policy making, and implementation

The topic of how the country was responding to the employment of young people prompted mixed emotions from participants. This topic allowed participants to express what they wanted and wished to happen regarding employment. All participants were concerned about the lack and/or low response of the country in providing employment to young people. This was observed in their serious and emotive responses when discussing this topic. In this section I have subjectively chosen to let their voices heard in their entirety due to the emphasis they made as they responded to this question. The participants were asked to comment about the response of the country in employing young people.

“Those we graduated together with were mostly employed in the government sector and the government has done well in employing young people and getting rid of old people. Previously it was easy to be employed since educational level was not the only criteria even bosses were not degree holders but now professionals are required which is why education is important. Decades back workers were sought than them looking for employment but now it is different” (M29St3).

Although a number of participants did not share a similar view:

“I think the country is not responding very well, I think we’re not responding very well, government does not really believe in these young people, old

people are re-called from home and their contract are being renewed every day for old people that are supposed to be at home playing with their children, but, it's just one and the same people and the change is not effected as the very same people are still feeding the system with their mind set that is not changing, contrary to the evolving modern times. And so a lot of young people are still at home with no jobs – there's no change, they're not given due respect even to try them on the job” (F31St18).

This position was affirmed by another participant:

“For me [pause] I think as a country I don't think somehow we are better placed in terms of employment of young people coz even if you look at most of the organisations you'd find that most of the positions are taken by people who've been employed for 40 years in the company, they don't have your rotation like when a new person comes in and rotating the staff around to give everyone a chance. Not to say that (laughs) they should chase all the old people, but the status is that in companies you just know that you'll have like 3 young people. I always think of the situation where my mum used to work in Manzini [name of organisation], ever since I was in primary up to now 10 years into my employment, all the staff there are still there and if you look at the number of young people who work there it's a small portion then you ask yourself that such a huge organisation is not contributing enough to employing young adults. Secondly, if you look at issues of scholarships and all that where you find that individuals are working like here we have an employee who works and studies at the same time, but such is not allowed by scholarship board. Flexi hours are only organised with individual employers if

they allow it's not mandatory. It would be good to have a policy that would define mandatory rules and quota about employment of young adults in organisations" (M33Mb6).

Another participant also affirmed this view and continued to argue that even businesses are owned by foreign nationals.

"aahh the country hasn't really responded coz you find so many young people our age got children, ok it's not that I'm judging, but they drinking smoking coz they've got nothing to do. Yes you find, so they haven't responded. The country should create more jobs, education wise we've got too many foreigners, and the Swazis tagging behind and foreigners taking the centre stage, like now we've got so many Indians in businesses, the Chinese and hardly any Swazis with these businesses. Employment in Swaziland is very scarce. I feel that young people are not given the chance to explore and as such their creativity is not fully explored their potential is suppressed. They believe you're too young" (F26Nh13).

They were of the view that the country was not responding well in employing young people, they said that government did not appear to be confident in young people as retired personnel were frequently recalled to serve government recycling old people in jobs that could be secured by young people without jobs.

"I think the number one thing is just follow what you want to do. A lot of the time especially parents though they know better than you actually, not just parent even friends – they'll tell you what sort of career path you should follow – but if you feel that no that not what I want to do – don't do it – just do

what you want to do and you feel is right. I know it sounds cliché, but it's what you feel is right. God gave you an intuition and if you feel like it's not pleasing – then it's not for you. Also I think for the younger ones don't let what you studied at tertiary define you – I remember someone just recently, I was telling him about this bulk sms thing that we've done – and he says so you worked in Johannesburg - but how do you go from humanities to doing something so different. And I remember my brother was there. So I said it's all about thinking outside the box – you can't confine yourself to something – and say coz this is the only thing I know – I wasn't gonna agree to do that but I believe in constantly learning new things. You won't be able to do more than you really can, as you don't explore your capabilities. So even then I think university opens up your mind not only to think about what you only learn in class but holistically – this is not what university is about – it teaches you to be a critical thinker. Coz my brother actually has a degree in theatre arts so he is into drama he's basically an actor – how many people you know will go and study that – but he's very good at what he does, he's also a musician – he's more into arts” (M32Mb19).

One participant felt that as long as job creation was still viewed in the traditional sense of office jobs and not in the modern technological sense, letting young people explore their potential in being technology savvy, jobs will continuously shrink.

“eeh I think that one is political, yes I think it is political. I think and I believe our country is trying to do something, and we appreciate that. We do appreciate that, but if it wasn't for the selfishness and being naïve on the part

of adults we could be somewhere. Coz I have noticed that us, the youth have these new innovations that we can come up with, but whenever you try to present these things – the thing is you have to present it to the elders – and those elders will tell you eish we don't work like this. I think nje if they can open this platform ye youth parliament – it is a good idea, whereby the youth will have to go to parliament in different portfolios and this is where it would be possible to coordinate the ideas of young people and know what their views are. We have to consider the times we live in, coz you can look at those legislators – those people don't seem like they live in the 21st century and they don't know the challenges that we face as young people. If you consider the age range of the legislators I don't think there is anyone younger than 35 years – so then this is a problem coz this person is thinking above this age group and will not put themselves in a situation of thinking for the one thousand plus students graduating from the university – like where will they be employed. Even our university, they are the people who should play a major role in thinking about the issue of employment of their graduates' coz they should know what will happen to the graduates after university – but seemingly, they are just concerned with the production of graduates and sending them out of the system. The university should be the institution that worries itself about these young people –asingatsi nasiphuma la nyuvesi siyofuna, asiphume la siyosebenta (le's not leave the university and go job hunting, let's go to jobs). The thing is there are a lot of positions in Swaziland but those positions are given to people with connections. What is also currently happening is that positions are given to people with lower qualifications like a diploma instead of a degree, not because they qualify

better but for purposes of saving as the diploma holder is paid less for the job and not because they can do the job better than a degree holder. A person with a diploma will think at that scale and some senior position holders don't want to hire someone who is more qualified than them for purposes of controlling them. They feel challenged if you hold a higher qualification than them. I also think government has to change and avail a number of opportunities and avail resources for people to fit in according to their talent and passion. That is why I say this is political. We have all the resources but they have not been fully exploited – we have a lot of resource in education.

“Additionally, when it comes to salaries -that is a big challenge in a way that salaries are not satisfying, we are just paid and accept it because we are just desperate. If it wasn't for the low salaries we would stay longer in teaching, so I think government needs to also create more jobs that will accommodate the professionals trained in various sectors. So I think government has to change”
(M25Mz9).

Another participant's perception was that the country had no strategy for the employment of young adults.

“Hhmn eish ehh ok, our country has no strategy for the employment of young adults as a result we have all tended to focus on teaching coz we know schools are built all the time and if I become a teacher or a nurse I will be employed somewhere and will not be walking the streets every day. But, somewhere somehow we have been channelled by the local job market and ended up doing the same thing with no option for innovation. And the way the country is paying people is not that which encourages them to further their

education coz even if you have an MA as long as you're a teacher you will be paid for the degree qualification and nothing is motivating you to be more than what you are in the field and yet you are still young ready to explore more things but there isn't enough avenues to diversify even the job market to challenge young adults to also diversify their skills" (F32St2).

Some participants were positive that the country was responding by encouraging entrepreneurship schemes and micro projects to improve young people, however, the sluggish economy was a setback. Some participants acknowledged that the problem of such schemes was abused by the custodians who run them and that the beneficiary selection process further polarised the economic differences of young people.

*"The country is trying, it's trying like having this entrepreneurship and introducing many things like Micro projects is trying to help young people improve themselves. The country is trying but it is not having a good economy. If it wasn't for the nepotism and the like people would be employed. **Me:** Nepotism can you say more on that? **Participant:** yes yes [laughs]. I was in another interview last week and I was hoping I had done my best, only to be beaten by someone who is just fresh from school and I know that that is nepotism when someone has not worked and I have been achieving deadlines and things only to be beaten by someone who has not worked before. It's discouraging, that is when you really want to have your own firm coz being employed is out" (M32Mb7).*

"Well I think government is doing something but maybe not enough, they are trying but the demand is not met there are not enough resources. We need

more businesses mushrooming and to empower entrepreneur's coz a lot of them are scarred to take the risk in business and want security in employment. It's a serious problem" (F27Mb5).

"In Swaziland there aren't a lot of jobs for young people because it is thought of that we don't have much knowledge particularly in my field of study but that is incorrect. We as young adults will develop the country and we are the ones that will take the 2022 vision and make it a reality. Young adults need more release of scholarships from government in order to further their education so I strongly would advise that the government should be more open to providing that for the young people" (F29Nh15).

Some participants perceived nepotism as presenting a big challenge in that jobs were acquired through favouritism and not by merit. Another participant was of the view that labour brokers were taking workers benefits, and employers were reluctant to employ full time workers particularly in the private commercial sector like the retail, service and hospitality industries. This participant made an example of degree holders who were working in call centres as an example of professionals wasting away and getting frustrated.

"eh I don't want to say I'm pro Tinkhundla or pro government or what, but young people are very complacent, I believe make use of what is there coz if like government is raising taxes and salaries stay low, but be grateful you're working. But at the same time government can do something about it. I'm going to mention a few names or maybe not names but companies, like the Ministry of Labour allows companied like [name] to take over [as labour brokers]. [Name] provides work which needs vendors and therefore, are not

paying provident fund for these vendors and these companies are big but they have limited staff of maybe 20 and they have maybe about 200 service providers. So the revenue that is lost on taxing these companies does not end up in the coffers of government. If every company was doing this in Swaziland then that would mean there would be loss of taxes that would be creating other forms of employment for the youth. Also the fact that vacant posts are not filled is creating a shortage of jobs. Corruption exists also as people in the workplace have an option to do their work but choose not to do it coz they're benefitting. [Name] is exploiting a lot of young talented people who are working call centres and have degrees, yes they are desperate, they need the job, but at the same time I'm just looking for something else, I need this money to do that. That's what is just happening and it's very very frustrating to see professionals just wasting away. (M32Mz12)

Some participants had divergent views and one even wondered what response the interviewer was talking about. The participant pointed out that everyone was on their own when it came to finding employment and nepotism was not ruled out. They had this to say:

"[Laughs] what response? Everyone is on their own. It's sad for the old and it's sad for the young. I need there needs to be a policy of sorts that will channel people to opportunities. We need an agency that will help with employment channels – otherwise we're inviting crime from educated individuals which is very dangerous. Some of my colleagues that graduated in 2006 still don't have a job in 2015. The guy I share an office with has a friend who has not been employed for the past 20 years. Even the youth

empowerment programme turns out to be marred with a lot of controversy, it turns out to be a lunch of some individuals – even when people are caught embezzling the funds there is delayed justice. The private sector is even worse now with responding to youth employment as even their entrepreneurship programmes are dwindling” (MMb5).

“There are too many young people who are unemployed, I don’t think Swaziland at the moment is doing anything about it coz at some point they said there is a fund where you’ll be able to take a loan and they would start a business and pay back when the business is stable, but when I went and researched about it they said there was no money at Siteki coz some people didn’t pay back the money. And another thing people in the top positions in the Tinkhundla system give to their family members, relatives, friends, and people close to them. They don’t really care whether they really need the money or not. So the system doesn’t care” (F25St1).

*“[Laughs] I think a lot has to be done by government coz there are a lot of young people unemployed out there. **Me:** can you give examples? **Participant:** like getting a job in Swaziland is hard if you don’t know anyone – so what if you don’t know anyone? **Me:** so is it true that you get a job coz you know someone? **Participant:** it’s true. **Me:** was that the case with you as well? **Participant:** No [laughs] **Me:** so you’re referring to other cases? **Participant:** yes. **Me:** so what does this mean for young people? **Participant:** yah only a few young people will find jobs – and I think it’s not only in Swaziland, it’s like a general problem – we have people in Canada also*

saying the same thing – they got this job coz they know someone. I think jobs should be acquired on merit” (F27Mz11).

“ok from my own opinion I feel like there isn’t much that is being done in terms of providing employment for young people, especially those that have just graduated, and those that graduated maybe say 3 or 4 years ago – coz I’m one person who reads the paper every day, and every time I see an advert in the paper they will say they want a qualification in a particular area, and as you go down you see that they also require 10 years and above work experience – and you see that that’s a definite cut off point for new graduates. So I think there isn’t much, although there are new initiatives by government that is trying to make sure that young people are getting employed investing in the Tinkhundla System, as you’re probably aware that they are injecting small start-up capital to make sure that young people start their own businesses. But, I still feel that there’s a huge gap between opportunities that can be unveiled for young people and what exists. It is not enough” (M32Mz12).

One participant even mentioned the low quality of the employment that was available for young people which does not improve the quality of life for young people.

“The response of government to the employment of young workers is young workers have a challenge. I was saying to the federation [name of federation] that they must have a youth wing to deal with employment issues touching young workers coz really if you go outside you’ll find that young workers ‘akulemisebenti lengatsi shu’ (are in dead-end jobs) you will find them in jobs like shops, having signed contracts that are not even legal, also at hotels

where they are paid by labour brokers who don't even care for their rights. So I think even government has not done any anything in terms of that, coz really the government should be playing a role here. Even the Swaziland National Youth Council (SNYC) which is there for the youth chooses whether you are part of the system or not, and then they can come in and assist, so that is a blow to us coz really if you're in a union they view you as political, yet it is not like that, and they cannot fund that individual. Thus whatever is there to benefit the youth in SNYC will not be accessed by such youth. I would say also that the SNYC should also rise up and build these cooperatives, skills development, and if you look out there in workplaces any kind of issue you can think of is happening to young workers coz the truth is issues of sexual harassment are there with young workers. For them to get the job they have to sell their body and those things, no one is saying anything you know. The synergy that is not there between the federation of workers, employers and government yet they are supposed to work hand in hand affects us, because they don't meet to discuss these issues – each one pulling to a different direction. Luckily I had an opportunity to go with one labour official to Zimbabwe last year so this person when you ask what programmes they have on labour, they are silent. So we do have a serious challenge. But I'm saying if we could have these coops and labour unions and organize the youth to join them we can go far coz trade unions know how to represent their issues, and have funds to assist the youth to further their education” (M26Mz10).

This position was reaffirmed by another participant.

“On the employment of young adults I'd say it's at its lowest. This I say because even though it is made available but the expectations aren't met. The

quality is not up to standard even those qualified aren't so many hence the employment does not curb the level of poor living" (F29Nh4).

While one participant was of the view that government is promoting employment in the armed forces and neglecting other sectors.

"I think government is not doing its part, they are recruiting people to go to the armed forces and they desert the sectors they have trained for due to the financial attractiveness in the armed forces. This created a void in the other sectors. Also government is not doing enough to attract direct foreign investment as we see investors pulling out one by one and jobs are lost" (M34St17).

Other participants viewed the country as not responding well to tertiary graduates who are viewed by other workers with negativity.

*"hmmmn the country is not responding adequately to employing young adults especially the educated ones coz at times you find they are now running to the neighbouring countries to look for employment. You find that a person has a degree and applies for a job without success in fact our country discourages young adults coz even in the jobs they get they find adults who have no degrees and they have many years of job experience and don't want to listen to fresh ideas coming in with young adults from college. The adults develop a negative attitude against the young adults from college to the point of insubordination if the young adult is in a senior position. Education is the key coz it helps in sharpening the mind. **Me:** What can be done? **Participant:** eyi I don't know really coz it's just a general attitude against people more educated*

than oneself. So young people get discouraged as it becomes difficult to break through this cycle” (F26Nh13).

While another participant had this to say:

“It is pathetic that the country does not see the situation as an emergency, not once has government got into research about the employment status as well as analysis of the tertiary qualifications acquired and how they are needed in Swaziland, I would comment the bringing in of new universities and new qualifications but the ill provision of saving skills for parents of children in Grade one for tertiary and a proper plan” (F29Nh16).

This study also discovered that young people still made up a very small proportion of employees in organisations and some participants observed that there was a need for a mandatory quota for young people’s employment in organisations. They further stated that a policy to channel young people to opportunities was essential. Ideas of an established employment agency were suggested to prevent what they described as “educated criminals” roaming the streets for extended periods spanning from nine to ten years, perceived to be the most dangerous by participants.

5.4.4 Theme twelve: Motivation for young people

Again this topic prompted feelings of empowerment in participants as they often searched deeply in their minds to find appropriate messages and how to communicate them explicitly.

“[sighs]. I’d say people must study, concentrate in your studies as soon as your complete high school. Have the determination to be what you want to be

at that time. As much as other things are there, but, just listen. If I had listened – I would have completed my education – but I couldn't do that coz of the man I was living with who didn't want me to do anything – if it wasn't for that I think I would now be talking about going to do my Master's degree – so that delayed me a lot. So I just want to say people must take education very seriously, and when the time is right just do it. When I was still at primary school each time I was asked what I want to do when I grow up, I would be like I want to be a lawyer. So I think due to the experience I had with my life it propelled me more to my desired career path. I kept on asking myself – what am I doing here – but eventually I made a breakthrough. So have the dream so that it can guide you, it will disturb your conscience” (F31St18).

“My advice would be people should take very serious education. Education wise this coming world this growing world of technology you need to be very educated. And policies government policies understanding the way the country is run, everything that is being introduced take it seriously because that is where things are getting closed up, and don't stop dreaming-believe in your dream, if you have a dream at night wake up write that dream and you can analyse it in the morning because that is where you start” (M32Mb7).

Participants viewed studying and continuously improving oneself as the keys to success. One participant said “*education sustains livelihood more than money does*” which could be interpreted to mean the more years invested in education paid more dividends. Young people were also advised to follow their dreams and desires and to shy away from peer and parent pressure's in determining their career.

Another participant also advised young people to seek employment in what they love doing most because that would make their growth and career path easy to attain.

“My advice would be that employment though scarce is everywhere hence we as young adults should seek employment in what we love the most. This way one’s growth in the career comes easy and just as opposed to seek employment with the prospect of just earning money. That may become dreadful in one’s years of serving” (F29Nh4).

“I think the number 1 thing is just follow what you want to do. A lot of the time especially parents though they know better than you actually, not just parent even friends – they’ll tell you what sort of career path you should follow – but if you feel that no that not what I want to do – don’t do it – just do what you want to do and you feel is right. I know it sounds cliché, but what you feel is right. God gave you an intuition and if you feel like it’s not pleasing – then it’s not for you. Also I think for the younger ones don’t let what you studied at tertiary define you – I remember someone just recently, I was telling him about this bulk sms thing that we’ve done – and he says so you worked in Johannesburg - but how do you go from humanities to doing something so different. And I remember my brother was there. So I said it’s all about thinking outside the box – you can’t confine yourself to something – and say coz this is the only thing I know – I wasn’t gonna agree to do that but I believe in constantly learning new things. You won’t be able to do more than you really can, as you don’t explore your capabilities. So even then I think university opens up your mind not only to think about what you only learn in class but holistically – this is not what university is about – it teaches you to be a critical thinker. Coz

my brother actually has a degree in theatre arts so he is into drama he's basically an actor – how many people you know will go and study that – but he's very good at what he does, he's also a musician – he's more into arts” (M32Mb19).

Young people need to be patient *“patience is a virtue that needs to be exercised by young people”*. This participant felt young people were giving up easily and thus ended up discarding their dreams. They were advised to set goals annually and review their attainment each year to persevere.

“I would say they should be patient, have a mentor-someone to look up to-someone you will maintain contact with-someone who is far ahead of you academically if your target is academic. So that you will be able to weigh yourself against that person – ask the person how they got there and then setting your own goals-what is it that you like and want to do – excluding what your friends are doing – that's what got me to where I am today” (M26Mz10).

“In my own advice this thing about career is good but God has plans about our lives. Myself I wanted to be in HR, I applied all over and I remember I got two jobs both in banks and had to choose the bank I liked. So I realised that as much as I wanted to be in HR God did not destine me there, but wanted me to work in a bank. I don't know why, but if you have made God the centre, no matter what, God has a plan for you. [quotes a bible story of David when he wanted to build a Temple for God but God had destined his son to build him a temple. If only young people will listen to God and what plans he has for us.] [goes into another story of a movie she watched about a lunatic who was living in the streets and used placards to send messages to people. The man

had lost all his family in a car accident but had all the wealth with no one to enjoy it with” (F27Mb5).

“You need to be patient in the workplace and keep on looking for employment and don’t give up even if you’re rejected” (M34St17).

Some participants cautioned against myths of overnight success. One said that will not happen, thus young people needed to take one day at a time as quick rich schemes have destroyed young people who end up with debt burdens. A participant said *“consumerism has engulfed our behaviour”* resulting in living beyond our means. A poor background should not be a deterrent to success find means to arrive at success.

“Ok, they must persevere and not be content by having found a job, continue to develop themselves academically and also do business on the side and not rely completely on the salary because in actual fact there is no salary, it’s not enough. More than anything they should continue with education coz education opens your mind to other things” (F29Nh15).

Caution was sounded to procrastinators. One participant was emphatic about not procrastinating about one’s future thinking you’re still young as opportunities were not in abundance.

“My advice would be that the young people shouldn’t be determined by where they come from. What has destroyed us young people is to pursue nice time and forget about studying, yet what is important is to develop ourselves in life while the opportunity is still available. We do what I will call procrastinating and keep on postponing saying that we will do it we are still young. I will

advise that the youth takes up the opportunities while they are still available, more especially if they still have people to provide for their education. I have always said even if you cannot give me money but give me education, you have given me something to sustain my livelihood. So young people should seize the opportunity, coz really we're always going to be lamenting, lamenting about our situations coz everyone has their own background but you can rise above that and be able to succeed. So let them not rush for youthful pleasures coz at the end they don't pay and they will always be there. Having worked for unions and seeing young people employed in low paying textile firms has been an eye opener, and most of these young people are the ones that didn't take education seriously. So young people must persevere and take education seriously" (M31Mz8).

Seek knowledge everywhere particularly in books as they still command a lot of wisdom, was the response of one participant. In addition, role models were still considered important in guiding and measuring the aspirations and future goals of young people.

"Go for what you are passionate about from the beginning and do not let anyone hold you back. Read and do not get fooled by technology, the wisdom is still in the books..." (M32Mz12).

"Hmm I can say if someone has to sustain a job they should not just sit and be complacent they should seek for knowledge from others and those senior to them even those in other schools. Don't judge the schools by their rating because the teachers may be good even though the students they teach do not perform well in their subject, as some students tend to hate other subjects.

Some people judge teachers according to the student performance yet results of each student cohort will differ. Teachers also grow each and every day they are teaching and thus their performance will be different from when they started teaching” (F32St2).

Youthful pleasures were seen as derailing many young people, thus they needed to delay pleasure because it would always be there and be determined and focus on studying. Participants also advised young people to place God at the centre of everything they do and be *“the captain of your own ship”*.

“Yes, the advice would be not to give up, that’s the best thing – even if you walk you can be derailed, but never give up. Us young people we tend to give up and once we give up we relax bangakhibiki [don’t relax] and find a comfort zone, we end up being in one place, for instance, some did their Form 5 and didn’t do well, now they end up being admitted to one of the Forces. But you can still pursue your education from that platform; actually, you’re a step ahead. Maybe you’re not from a well off family and your parents couldn’t take you to South Africa for education and you went to the University of Swaziland, but now you’ve graduated and you can pay for yourself to get high up the society ladder. Another thing that has destroyed us as the youth and young people is to look at other people and turn our focus on others – like if I grew up with these people I will say eish coz now I’m a teacher and they went to VOCTIM and stuff, I think I’m better. Young people should have role models and stuff I want to be like you- I want to have my own PhD one day – I want to be a Doctor, even if I’m a Doctor, yes, you are a Doctor, but me I want to even become a Doctor at an earlier age and achieve more and be a Professor if it

calls for me to be one. Yes, you need these role models but they should challenge you to achieve better. I always tell people that my role model is my father- that is one role model – why, because I don't want to do the things that he did. I learn from him. So your parents should be your role models, fine you want parents to groom their kids with love, but you should go beyond to the extent that I can just one day say hey daddy this month I decided to buy you this car-you've been buying me shoes, sneakers, but I'm buying you this car. One thing that kill's the youth is if you have a circle of friends in your environment or community you tend to measure yourself with them. The problem we have as young people is that we end up dreaming and never work to see the reality of our dreams. But we need to dream to be able to act, and philosophers say aim high so that when you fall you will now lie flat. So the goal should be set very high. I have a friend who encourages us to set our goals for the year – write them down like this year I want to do such an such...then at the end of the year go back to those things and see ok this one has been achieved, then you will be able to see what you have managed to achieve. Then you decide what you still need to do – but if you don't have them written you will fumble and do things that are not even in the plans for the period and you will end up taking a wife even though it was not in the plans for the next 5 years. But then as young people we tend to go with the flow sentiwa simo- and we lack people that will motivate us-so we need those people that are motivational in life - fine the role models can also disappoint you –but that doesn't mean that we should do everything they do – for instance our Pastors in church these days might not be perfect, but, we need to go on with life. The captain of a Ship will never leave the boat because it

has had an accident- he is the last one to leave. So young people should be the captain of their ship, they should be the one's controlling their ship – let them not reverse coz they have seen bad weather approaching let them face it head on. If you persevere one of two things might happen, it's either you will come back or not, but at least you will have that experience that you did that and overcome, and if not next time you will have plan B of how you will come back. So young people should be motivated, determined and focused, and set goals coz the best thing, when you have goals you write them down”
(M25Mz9).

Young people were also advised to work hard and diligently particularly in business, to make a mark of their successes and enjoy what they do in order to improve.

*“If its business wise If you have good capital from the beginning I think it means stability. Understand also the principles of the business joys and all that. You really have to understand. **Me:** Do you think the banks are attracted to you as clientele in terms of giving you loans? **Participant:** No, I once tried but the problem is that I don't do banking all the time and they need bank statements for the past three months. So I don't have a bank statement due to low profits and rent expenses. So there is not much to bank. But if you do have enough capital you would be able to sustain your business”*
(F25St1).

“They need to continue with education so that they climb the professional ladder. Don't depend on the salary but use it to make more money as such it may eventually lead to employing others” **(M29St3).**

5.5 Question four

The aim of this question was to reflect on lessons learned from the research to contribute knowledge in theory, practice and methodology.

This research fell short of any discoveries of theory and methodological practices. However, additional comments of participants were recorded providing useful suggestions for future research (cp Chapter 7 section 7.6.1 Participants' observations on page 268).

5.6 Conclusion

In this chapter stories of participants' experiences with employment were presented and interpreted. A detailed analysis and discussion will follow in Chapter 6. Some of the major findings were the following:

Participants were largely from middle income families and this positively impacted their high educational attainment and inspiration to continue with education. Similarly, the minority who came from low income families and generally struggled through education also gained motivation to succeed by reflecting on the sacrifices of their parents to see them through schooling. Successful transition from school to career was driven by passion and interest.

A participant's family was a reflection of participants' growth, successes, struggles, responsibilities, values and aspirations for the future. Family background influenced their lifestyles and career choices as either parents or siblings acted as role models incentivising them to achieve in education and employment.

Participants reported no smooth entry into the labour market as there were tensions in the demand for young workers. Among the prominent causes of these tensions was the prospective employer's desire to hire experienced personnel, a predicament that confounded young people who were fresh from tertiary institutions. Another cause of tension was the lack of jobs that prompted volunteer work and entrepreneurship.

Participants' future plans included furthering education in the same field or changing specialisation in some cases where passion did not define career choice. Some participants wanted to venture into business as entrepreneurs.

Employment was a life changing experience for participants. It changed participants' lifestyles, affordability, and provided a sense of worth and fulfilment. Employment emancipated them from dependency on parents and intimate partners creating a feeling of independence, control, responsibility and progress.

Participants viewed career and employment as two different but overlapping concepts that were frequently used interchangeably. Career meant engaging in something of passion and was enjoyable whilst employment was a means to earning money to sustain a livelihood. The responses of participants described career as; a boost, enlightening, enjoyable, passionate, uplifting, interesting experience; while employment was working for pay, a job, job security, sense of freedom, platform for improving life, and selling labour.

Although participants were employed and grateful for the opportunity, they appeared to experience disappointments in their career paths. They were disappointed with training institutions' over-producing for an over flooded labour

market, coupled with expressions of dissuasion in attracting employment not matching their career training due to a glut in the labour market. Practices of unfairness in hiring and promotion, deception and dishonoured contracts, slow returns in business ventures, all compromised their happiness with employment.

Participants were proud of achieving economic independence away from parents and family shadows. This applied across all family economic groupings from low, middle to upper middle class levels. Economic independence represented growth, success, social inclusion and acceptance, responsibility and freedom from economic hardships. Education and employment were rated highly in the achievements of participants.

Employment brought feelings of excitement, inclusion and participation in community life. However, these feelings were dampened by low salary packages that hindered their capacity to satisfy basic needs and effective participation in community life.

Participants were concerned about the response of the country in providing employment to young people. They showed serious and emotive faces when discussing this topic. They suggested that the country was not responding well in employing young people, and the government did not appear confident in young people as retired personnel were frequently recalled to serve government, recycling old people in jobs that could be secured by young people without jobs.

Young people still comprised a very small proportion of employees in organisations and some participants observed that there was need for a mandatory

quota for young people's employment in organisations, and a policy channelling young people to opportunities was essential.

Participants encouraged young people to study as education is the key to success, to be patient, persevere, stop procrastinating, beware of youthful pleasures and consumerism, and work hard and diligently.

In Chapter 6 that follows participants' stories and experiences with employment will be analysed and discussed.

Chapter 6 Discussion of findings - narrating stories of young people

6.1 Introduction

The major aims of this thesis are to explore: experiences of young people in the workplace; to discover truths about the experiences of employed young adults, from finding appropriate work to advancing their careers. The motivation came from seeing young people struggle to get that first job breakthrough to the extent of compromising qualifications for any job available, including the vulnerability to negotiate suitable contract, thus making them susceptible to mistreatment.

Chapter 5 presented the findings of this study by means of twelve themes to answer four questions. The major findings are recapped in this introduction as a means of enhancing connectivity and flow. The major finding of this study is that employment is a life changing experience for participants, changing lifestyles, affordability, and providing a sense of worth and fulfilment. Employment emancipates participants from dependency on parents and intimate partners creating feelings of independence, control, responsibility and progress.

Participants are largely from middle income families which positively impacted their high educational attainment and inspiration to continue with education. Similarly, the minority who come from low income families and struggled to attain education gained motivation to succeed through the sacrifices of their parents to see them through schooling. Successful transition from school to career was driven by passion and interest. Participant's future plans include furthering education in the same field or changing specialisation, particularly, in cases where passion did not define career choice. Some participants want to venture into business as

entrepreneurs. As such they encourage young people to study as education is the key to success, to be patient, persevere, stop procrastinating, beware of youthful pleasures and consumerism, and work hard and diligently.

Family status enabled participants' growth, successes, struggles, responsibilities, values and aspirations for the future. Family background influenced their lifestyles and career choices through role modelling. This finding is supported by Bourdieu's three capitals defining the successes and struggles of young people. Navigating career opportunities requires not only education for participants', but family and societal expectations played a critical role.

Labour market entry was not a smooth process as there were tensions in the supply and demand of young workers, such as the lack of jobs which increases volunteer work and entrepreneurship and prospective employer's desire to hire experienced personnel.

Participants' perceived career and employment differently but as overlapping concepts frequently used interchangeably by participants. They define career as a boost, enlightening, enjoyable, passionate, uplifting, and interesting experience; while employment is working for pay, a job, job security, sense of freedom, platform for improving life, and selling labour.

Disappointment in career paths has been experienced by participants, partly resulting from training institutions' over-producing for a limited labour market. Further, reinforcing this disappointment is the dissuasions of attracting employment not matching their career training due to a glut in the labour market. Also, practices of unfairness in hiring and promotion practices, deception and dishonoured

contracts, slow returns in business ventures, and employers' lack of trust in the potential young people have, all compromise their happiness with employment.

Employment brings economic independence presenting opportunities of growth, success, social inclusion and acceptance, responsibility and freedom from economic hardships. Further, employment brings feelings of excitement, inclusion and participation in community life. However, low salary packages hinder the capacity to satisfy basic needs and effective participation in community life.

Concerns about the response of the country in employing young people were expressed. Serious emotions accompanied discussion of this topic, participants suggest the country is not responding well in employing young people, and the government lacks confidence in young people as retired personnel are frequently recalled to serve government, recycling old people in jobs that could be secured by young people without jobs. As such, young people still comprise a very small proportion of employees in organisations, and they suggest the need for a policy and mandatory quota for employing young people in organisations.

This chapter reflects the main findings presenting a narrative discussion of young people's stories about their present work and its relationship to their future aspirations. According to Terre Blanche et. al. (2012) "a narrative is a way of providing an account that communicates what happens in a context, and even explains why things happen as they do, without resorting to general, theoretical, or etic terms" (p364). I follow this definition with innovation, as occasional contextualising within literature, theory and practice is adopted. The discussion begins with the findings, conscious that the findings rather than theory drive the

discussion. I begin by re-stating the research question and discuss each question using several themes.

6.2 Question one:

In this question key challenges in the transition of young people from education and training to employment were sought.

6.2.1 Theme one: Stories of family background and education

The themes of family background and education attainment presented separately in chapter 5 are combined here to explore the connection and relationship that exist between the two. I explore the theme with Bourdieu's theory of practice centring on fields, capitals and habitus (1986). In this regard I argue that the economic wealth of parents and education, and access to available resources influencing life chances, is an indicator of social class (Op cit). I am conscious of the contested definitions and measurements of social class by Marx, Weber, Erikson, Goldthorpe, Schulze and others that Class is distinct from income, yet includes it implicitly within its criteria (Forster, 2012). I employ the three class model used by previous studies of social capital in Britain (Marshall 1997, Li, Savage and Pickles 2003, Li and Marsh 2008 cited in Forster, 2012), and divides people into professional-managerial, intermediate and manual strata. This scheme offers numerous benefits. The simplicity of assigning somebody to one of the three groups prevents analysis being overcomplicated by a proliferation of strata, the boundaries between which are perhaps unclear (Op cit).

This analysis resonates with my main theory - Bourdieu's *social capital*, made up of social obligations ('connections'), which is convertible, in certain conditions,

into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of a title of nobility (Bourdieu 1986) and economic capital, referring to wealth and financial assets, and cultural capital consisting of embodied, body/mind dispositions and goods as well as education (op cit). In Chapter 2 I mentioned my intention to introduce two specific forms of social capital – familial and cultural however, cultural capital was not very apparent from the data thus limiting my discussion of cultural capital other than in reference to education.

Findings indicate that participants are largely from the common stratum of middle income families with the exception of two participants who come from low income' families and this status had positively impacted their high education attainment and inspiration to continue with education (Parsons, 1973). Contrary to literature and studies conducted on family status and education attainment that the education of parents is linked to the educational attainment of their children (Op cit). In the case of two participants from low income families where the parents also had low educational attainment, the participants succeeded motivated by the sacrifices of their parents to see them through schooling. Notwithstanding that a person belonging to a deprived community (in terms of family background and/or social group) is less likely to have the means to pursue higher studies and to secure a stable job. I found that based on socio-economic position, individual's experience differences in exposure to opportunities and vulnerability to marginalisation (cp Bourdieu, 1986). Education policies particularly those targeting access to education need to ensure that all children as defined by EFA goals, MGs, NDS, and implemented in education policies of Free Primary Education (FPE), subsidised secondary and high school as well as tertiary scholarship funds are accomplished (Khumalo, 2013).

I observed passion and interest in participants' stories of successful transitioning from training to career. One participant now in the teaching profession, recalls how change of attitude towards school led to the discovery of his excellent capabilities in mathematics and science subjects, this was after going through expulsion from one school and re-starting at another he describes as "*more discipline oriented*".

Except for two participants who attended private schools, almost all were privileged to attend public and mission schools characterised by exceptionally good standards of education. Consequently, their life chances were enhanced by their middle income family status seeing them through the education system. This provided enabling mechanisms to transition from institutions of higher learning to the workplace with minimal hardships. Reasonably then, family is a reflection of growth, successes, struggles, responsibilities, values and aspirations for the future. Family background influences lifestyles and career choices as both parents and siblings become role models for young people.

While acknowledging the relevance of my central theory - Bourdieu's forms of capital and cultural capital in education being of particular relevance here, "Bourdieu's work with Passeron (1990/1977) illustrates the crucial importance of education, as a mechanism through which the values and relations that make up the social space are passed on from one generation to the next (Webb, et al., 2002: 105)". I examine the strengths and weaknesses of Bourdieu in my study, recognising that Bourdieu's analysis consists of several types of capital, which are closely interconnected. I suggest that their interconnectedness makes the theory potentially useful, since the social and cultural capital which young people have access to is

surrounded by (if not converted into) certain material conditions, such as, economic capital. Social capital refers to resources based on connections and group membership [and did not significantly come through in my study] ; symbolic capital is the form that the different types of capital take, once they are perceived and recognised as legitimate [and this came out strongly in the decisions accompanying the career choice of participants] (Skeggs, 1997: 8; Bourdieu, 1997/1986).

I will present this discussion later, first, I want to link my analysis to Côté & Allahaar's, (1998: 129) notion of three institutions; workplace, educational system, and family which have affected the experiences and life chances of young people in the twentieth century. They suggest that, these three institutions serve as social spaces for the analysis of youth across different theoretical perspectives. As a sociologist, I still find relevance in the traditional view of family or household rather than the individual as the unit of analysis or class composition in youth research (Giddens, 1991).

Therefore, I view the three institutions in relation to the structural-functionalist perspective which sees the proper integration of youth first in the family, and then in the school as managed by the state. "I believe a synergy needs to exist in the institutions and the personality of the individual" (Eisenstadt 1956). Thus, in this study two young people from poor economic backgrounds achieved similar results as middle income status participants. Thus, he continues that the individual's attitude towards authority and his cooperation is the most crucial for the proper functioning of the personality within the social system (Eisenstadt 1956: 29).

Previous studies from Swaziland found that school drop-out rates among the youth were attributed to both school and non-school related factors (Marope, 2010;

Khumalo, 2013). Among school-related factors are; a high failure rate inducing drop-out rates, lack of school fees, and teenage pregnancy among girls (Marope, 2010; Khumalo, 2013). Although primary education is free since 2010, however, not relevant for participants of this study; households still contribute as much as 22 percent (UNICEF, 2013) of the household income to school uniforms and top-up fees required by schools. Secondary and high school fees are prohibitive as government and other sectors provide limited sponsorship (World Bank, 2010).

Non-school related factors have to do with poverty and the negative attitude of parents to education [which is declining] (Marope, 2010). The remoteness of schools and the high costs of education highlight problems of access. All of these factors applied to varying degrees in the education access of participants. Problematic educational factors force some Swazi youth to delay, temporarily stop, or permanently abandon schooling contributing to career struggles (Khumalo, 2013).

This study attempts to contextualise the personal-public nature of education and employment access, linking the three institutions to Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital. I argue that it is in the relative interplay of these factors in the lives of young people that societal exclusionary factors are first experienced, whether society will afford them the spaces to negotiate access to scarce resources and available opportunities in life. Bourdieu (1990) rightly puts it in his use of the forms of capital. He explains that objective relations are relations between positions occupied within the distribution of resources (which may become active or effective) in the competition for the appropriation of scarce goods of which social universe is the site (Bourdieu, 1990: 127).

Although most participants did not suffer negative education access, many talented children and youth are likely to be excluded early on when FPE is not linked to secondary and high school education. However, for two participants, in particular, economic social inequality experienced by their families influenced the way their parents supported their educational careers. One participant had to leave school to work and support his siblings' education, delaying to complete his own education. Another appreciates her education for lifting her from poverty as she is gainfully employed and able to provide the best for her child, which she was excluded from. Bourdieu & Passeron rightly argue that socio-economic status influences the resources that families have to support their children in coping with the demands of education but also over the extent to which they can subsidise their children and whether they see education as an intrinsic and/or extrinsic value (cf. Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Arguably so, education and training are the most important elements to better employment and better remuneration, thus key to individual's development to escape the poverty trap (ILO, 2010).

At another level, the findings also indicate that the majority of participants have sustained their parents' middle class status except for two (mentioned above) who were elevated from low income to middle income status through education. This finding is in line with studies conducted in Europe and elsewhere on class determining education attainment and employment. Therefore, this notion could also be applied in the context of Swaziland. These researchers (Blau and Duncan, 1967; Li and Marsh, 2008) argue that class background is measured by the occupational class of parents at age 14, which is a well-established indicator. Proponents of class analysis such as Goldthorpe (1996) contend that class remains a significant topic for academic enquiry as it persists in determining the distribution of life chances. The

upbringing one has is crucial here, and this is determined by the position of the breadwinner in the labour market (Scott 1996:216-7), so parental occupation is a reliable representation for a young person's class.

Goldthorpe and Marshall (1992:390) also argue that privileged classes use their resources to ensure their children do well in school, through private schooling and investment in extra-curricular tutoring, for example. This leads to favourable labour market outcomes. As such, Goldthorpe contends that educational ambitions are influenced by class origin (1996:491), and that controlling for ability, pupils from affluent families have a better chance of progressing to higher education.

Bourdieu's (1986) cultural theory enjoys currency in multi-disciplinary research, although, criticised by a number of theorists, "Bourdieu's theory has been criticized as reductionist for privileging economic capital as the ultimate source and eventual exchange form of all other capitals (Alexander, 1996; Jenkins, 1992). Bourdieu is also faulted for attributing, like human capital and rational action theorists (Goldthorpe, 1996), an interest-bound, utility-orientation in all human action (Swartz, 1997: 78)."

All participants of this research have tertiary qualifications ranging from certificates, diplomas and degrees. There is a particularly high pay-off for tertiary education to employment as 70 percent (ILO, 2010) of the population with tertiary education is employed, and make up about 15 percent of the employed Swazi population, with nearly 60 percent opportunities available in the public sector and 38 percent in the private sector (CSO, 2007). Also more applicable to the Swaziland situation is what Gorard et al. (2007) found in Britain, that while entry to higher education in Britain discriminates on prior educational attainment rather than social

class origins, background factors such as this determine educational attainment. In other words the transition to higher education is determined by good high school results which are likely to be influenced by the type of school attended that is in turn influenced by the affordability of fees.

Significantly though, the findings also demonstrate that some participants view their successful transition from school to career as driven by their own intuition, passion and interest, while for some it is subtly influenced by family legacy and career choices of siblings and parents. Thus, the topic of furthering education evokes feelings of hope in participants. Furthering education is in the master plans of nine of twenty participants, even degree holders aspire to further their studies. Furthering studies is viewed as widening opportunities for career advancement. One participant believes *“you can never learn enough”*. To another participant education means he is a pioneer in his family where he is the first and only graduate. All participants value education for contributing immensely to their successes including acquiring material possessions like owning a car and/or house. As such, widening their prospect by furthering studies comes top in the list of future prospects.

As young people come of age they become their own person, developing their own personalities dictating choices. Willis (1977) suggests transitions from school to work are critical in the reproduction of the labour force, and highlights the strength of labour as an important axis of class identity. Frequently participants struggle with career choices and describe this as a mental struggle which they attribute to the lack of appropriate career guidance in schools and tertiary institutions resulting in mismatch between training and labour demand. Career mismatch is increasingly

occupying academic research space and will be elaborated in sections below (ILO, 2010).

6.2.2 Theme two: Stories of transitioning from training to the labour market

Prominent issues in the findings to be discussed in this section are:

- Oversupply of graduates by training institutions creating an imbalance with the number of available jobs; and
- The mismatch of qualifications workers hold and those required to get a job, coupled with the experience required by employers - that is not readily available from training institutions.

6.2.2.1 *Imbalance between graduates and jobs available*

Findings indicate that there is no smooth entry into the labour market as there is tension in the supply and demand for young workers. The apparent lack of jobs has seen some participants resorting to volunteer work as a means of entering the labour market. One participant describes volunteer work as *“a start for permanent jobs”* she describes it as challenging due to no remuneration awarded, yet the same requirements as paid employees are tied to it. For example, reporting for work without fail, and adhering to the dress code usually smart casual or formal attire which is costly for a non-salaried worker. However, on the positive side she is grateful for the wealth of experience gained in volunteer work and a sense of worth as she had purpose to wake up each morning. She attributes her success to sacrifice and patience.

Another prominent cause of the imbalance is the prospective employers' desire to hire experienced personnel, thus lowering the hiring rate of qualified young

workers fresh from training, and in the process hampering skill succession. This predicament has confounded young people who are fresh from tertiary institutions. Certainly, there is great reluctance to stay unemployed as this produces negative social acceptance, a situation that is encouraging an incline in volunteer work particularly among qualified job seekers (USAID, 2005).

Lack of research limits further interrogation of this issue, except to mention that anecdotal evidence indicates volunteering and gaining work experience is undertaken to boost labour market prospects. Volunteer work is perceived by participants as aiding employment opportunities and enabling necessary work experience required by employers. I argue that volunteer work is an interesting research area which is outside the scope of this research and remains obscured in the realm of academic research and policy development, thus, this area is recommended for future studies. In a recent study on Swaziland State of Youth (2014) the draft report mentions volunteerism only in the context of United Nations Volunteer programme and their participation in HIV and AIDS, and United Nations Information Technology Service, with no reference to voluntarism in the workplace.

As I said earlier in Chapter 2 adolescents and youth constitute 38% of the resident population of Swaziland (793,156) in 2007; they are an integral part of the country's labour force (age 15-64 years). According to CSO 2010 projections, this segment of the population is poised to grow more rapidly than the overall national population growth in the coming decades. In the past, the population aged 15-64 years increased from 48.8% in 1986 to 51.9% in 1997 and further to 56.7% in 2007 (ICDP, 2014).

In addition, with economic growth being insufficient to support the absorption of new labour force entrants, there is a danger that informal work will become the only option for large numbers of young people, thereby making the objective of decent employment for all increasingly unattainable (ILO, 2010). However, there could be a positive side to the emergence of a growing working age population in a country as this opens a “demographic window” of opportunity, otherwise known as the ‘Demographic Dividend’ (Ashford, 2007).

For the demographic dividend to materialize, there must be in place a conducive policy environment, including; sufficient flexibility in the labor market to allow its expansion through creation of adequate employment opportunities for the growing number of new entrants into the labour force; macroeconomic policies that permit and encourage investment; access to adequate saving mechanisms plus confidence in domestic financial markets; access to reproductive health services and facilities and; an environment where high-quality health and education provision is possible (Bloom, et al. 2002, Lee and Mason, 2006).

If requisite policies to: safeguard the [welfare] of young people; give them opportunities to access quality education with skills development; and create more jobs are adopted to seize upon the “dividends” of a changed age distribution, the country will reap the dividend of demographic change; otherwise, it may have to struggle with the negative fall-out emanating from a large mass of unemployed young people (Cited in ICDP, 2014). The forward looking strategies for youth in Swaziland have put so much effort on entrepreneurial participation leaving a gap in formal employment creation necessitated by the dividend demographic change.

The findings also indicate that participants' skills are underutilised as the majority are in jobs they are not trained for, or diverted their skills to teaching and entrepreneurship. This is one of the basic assumptions motivating my study. Felstead and Green (2013) define underutilised skills as employment which underuses workers' skills. They continue to argue that wasted skills resources can have negative consequences for the individual both in terms of [financial] and non-[financial] benefits (such as job satisfaction and well-being), for the employers, business and the economy. A win-win situation will occur where the balance exists, thus, there is need to investigate this issue closely in Swaziland as participants voiced clear dissatisfaction with executing jobs they are not trained for.

Studies conducted in Southern Africa and elsewhere indicate that there is a general dissatisfaction with the education system's general lack of capacity to equip young people with skills to compete in the labour market and in business (Chigunta 2001; Kambewa et.al, 2001; Mkandawire, 2001; including several in Swaziland, Zambia, South Africa and Malawi). The education system is largely geared to equip learners with formal education skills, making them unable to cope with the basic realities of their environment. This view was shared by some participants who see little relevance in their education and career paths.

The number of young workers who trade down [their qualifications] reflects the degree to which the increase in the supply of qualified workers has outpaced the increase in the number of professional and technical jobs, leading to a high level of underemployment. In developing countries, underemployment among those who have completed their undergraduate studies has led to a rise in graduate school

enrolment. In Europe the trend is more recent, but it is estimated that almost six in ten 16- to 26-year-olds regard themselves as underemployed, working in lower-level jobs than those in which they might make more appropriate use of their skills (ILO, 2003).

The next section will look at “the way in which social and economic systems [in Swaziland] ... have responded to the labor market challenges posed by the youth bulge. Such responses will be reflected by youth employment..., as well as youth earnings”. In addition, “The relative size of the youth cohort is also of interest in describing future trends. For the purpose of assessing labor supply pressures it is the size of the youth population relative to the working age population that matters” (Assaad and Levison, 2013:8). “Based on projections of both the absolute and relative sizes of the youth population, we can expect that demographically-driven labor supply pressures will be subsiding significantly in the post-2015 developing world, except in Sub-Saharan Africa” (op cit:8). What holds in the country is the flip side which is not the boon but a challenge where the youth bulge is threatening social stability with increasing criminal and inactivity related social mischiefs.

6.2.2.2 *Mismatch between training and career*

Interesting definitions contrasting career and employment were found in the study. Participants understand and perceive career as engaging in something of passion and is enjoyable; whilst employment is a means of earning money to sustain a livelihood. They use several interesting phrases to describe career including; boost, enlightening, enjoyable, passionate, uplifting, interesting experience; while employment is working for pay, a job, job security, sense of freedom, platform for improving life, and selling labour.

There are mixed views on the meaning of employment and career. Employment means routine - doing the same thing every day, working for pay or getting paid for work. Some participants perceive employment as lack of motivation in self-fulfilment, pursuing other people's dreams and agendas, showing lack of innovation in own potential. Some participants present feelings of ambiguity in their mixed feelings about employment.

The majority perceive career in much more optimistic terms; as a passion, what one loves doing, interesting, enjoyable, enlightening, elevating, a moral boost, uplifting and bringing happiness. Career comes from choice, brings innovation, and may or may not be relevant to educational training but may be accompanied by work related experience. Some participants view a connection between career and skills developed from work experience which may be gained formally or informally, and something that improves the worker's long term gratification.

The term "career" can therefore be defined as the sequence of interaction of individuals with society, education and organisations throughout their lifespan. It is necessary, however, to emphasise that the majority of the responsibility now rests on the individual for their own career progression, which requires sustained employability (Beukes, 2009; Herr et al., 2004 cited in Assaad & Levison 2013:10).

There is consensus among participants that employment is a life changing experience which changes lifestyles, affordability, and provides a sense of worth and fulfilment. Employment emancipates them from dependency on parents and intimate partners creating feelings of independence, control, responsibility and progress. As said earlier in the introduction chapter of this thesis, I assume that the state of

earning generates a set of moods that resonates with the preliminary expectations of the world where young people live. It follows then, that, “for [employment] dividends to materialize, economic conditions must make it possible to quickly absorb the new entrants to the labor force into productive employment” (Ashford, 2007).

Regardless of the excitement that comes with a job, the topic of employment relevant to career and training brings serious emotions to participants. Although, employment is found appealing and provides a sense of belonging to most participants, they struggle with career suitability and acquiring jobs matching their training. For some participants in entrepreneurship, if the opportunity to make a choice between business and employment had presented itself, they would choose employment for the reason that employment has a guaranteed income. They also see less underhanded tactics and bribes compared to business.

Participants seldom viewed entrepreneurial careers in affirmative terms but resorted to them in the absence of formal employment. Two of three participants who are in business are not positive about its outcomes. They describe business as a risky precarious venture which relies entirely on the market situation where sometimes no clients come through resulting in losses of income, yet still incurring overhead costs. One participant mentioned that what sustains him is having faith as a religious person, and advises young people to ignore pressure, have faith, not to give up, and move with a focus. He perceives failure in entrepreneurship as an element of young people going into business for the wrong reasons – *“rushing to satisfy their needs, attracted by the flashiness of business and a different life and lifestyle”*.

Differing opinions on developing entrepreneurial skills also came from some participants who were interested in business to improve their financial stability. They justified their thinking as response to the country's small size and competition for limited employment, with a number of graduates queuing for limited formal public sector jobs. One participant already in business training customers in computers in the corporate industry desires to consolidate himself by acquiring certified paper qualifications to improve trust and respect from professional clients. Outside the auspices of this study I was fortunate to interact with young entrepreneurs who presented motivational talks at a business seminar. They presented very moving and passionate testimonies about how they started their own businesses after graduating from university and listed the numerous successes they have achieved against all odds.¹ These presentations confirmed some observations that entrepreneurship can be a major goal and not an alternative to employment for young people.

I therefore argue that entrepreneurship requires an enabling environment to flourish. "Most youth entrepreneurship initiatives in the country are happening in the absence of a national plan or strategy to operationalise the National Youth Policy or even to develop and empower the youth from a multi-stakeholder perspective. The Swaziland National Youth Council is there to coordinate initiatives, especially in the public sector, but that does not constitute a national strategy or plan for youth empowerment and development" (Times of Swaziland, 10/04/2014). Effort by non-governmental organisations, faith-based organisations, and the private sector are commended although lacking coordinated effort to effectively measure the impact nation-wide. Therefore, the country needs an integrated plan or strategy that will

¹ My notes from the Methodist Church, Manzini, Entrepreneurship Seminar September 7, 2015 & October 24, 2015

harness the synergies arising from government, private sector and civil society initiatives for youth empowerment and development. In addition to the plan, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms (including impact assessments) to track progress at the national level are also required.

The findings also indicate that some participants feel trapped in careers they feel less passionate with and hope to entirely change their field of study. They attribute this mismatch to lack of career guidance policies and a national qualifications framework (that is still pending) in government policies. One participant wants to specialise in a less over-subscribed field of study to improve his marketability. Another wants to develop “people’s skills” which she describes as learning to respect other people’s thoughts and understanding them. Similarly, another participant wants to learn psychology as she has developed a hobby of writing about people and their thoughts, while another participant wants to learn public speaking to be interactive. These are examples of non-traditional career passions that are not addressed by the country’s education system.

ILO (2003) rightly argues that in establishing policies for youth employment, governments tend to focus on the supply side of the labour market rather than on labour demand. In other words, they typically try to reduce unemployment by addressing the lack of skills or poor attitudes of young people rather than concentrating on promoting economic growth and job creation. They continue that providing young people with opportunities to learn through work may prove more effective than attempting to upgrade their skills before they enter the labour force.

Concurrently, another compelling argument for desiring to change career, is the non-responsive nature of institutions of higher learning in the country which still

focus on traditional academic courses that lack career diversity (Marope, 2010). The country needs an integrated plan or strategy that will harness the synergies arising from government, private sector and civil society initiatives for youth empowerment and development. In addition to the plan, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms (including impact assessments) to track progress at the national level are also required (World Bank, 2012).

One of the ways the ILO has sought to build bridges between education and the world of work is by promoting “dual-system education strategies”, which combine school-based education with apprenticeships and on-the-job experience (ILO, 2010). “This model, which has proven effective in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland, provides large numbers of young people with quality education and training in recognized qualifications demanded by firms. The involvement of social partners in program design and implementation ensures that apprenticeship programs meet labor market requirements” (Assaad & Levison, 2013).

They continue to argue that the German system includes several key features: (i) the content of enterprise-based training is determined jointly by representatives from government, employers’ organizations and trade unions, (ii) individual firms choose their own training methods, (iii) training costs are shared between the government and the employers (government typically covers the school-based component and employers finance the enterprise based training, (iv) conditions under which apprenticeships take place are determined through collective agreements specifying the minimum apprentice wage, (v) qualifications are awarded upon completion of written and practical examinations, set and marked by tripartite external examiners, (vi) competent bodies (e.g. chambers of commerce and industry

or trade associations) issue certificates that are recognized throughout the country (ILO 2013a cited by Assaad & Levison 2013:40)

As pointed out in Chapter 4, labour market relevant training to youth outside the formal education system in Swaziland is limited, as are opportunities for school-leavers to re-enter the education system. Overall, the vocational training system suffers from lack of access, low quality of training, and a low connection between the training system and the private sector (Marope, 2010).

The European Union (EU) which has contributed immensely to the education system in Swaziland is also concerned about educational foundation. They argue that experiences in education (starting with early childhood education) lay critical foundations for a person's entire life course. In particular, early school leaving and barriers to accessing affordable, quality education and training are common occurrences in the life trajectories of socially excluded young people, which affect their ability to secure comfortable living conditions, enjoy cultural and political participation, protect their own health, avoid risky behaviours, and obtain help and assistance when in need. Combating these problems has been the EU's aim in establishing the target of reducing the rates of early school leaving to below 10% as part of its EU 2020 strategy (ICDP, 2014).

Therefore, addressing issues of mismatch early in the education system considers the effective use of educational resources and human capital. Mismatch theories postulate that mismatch occurs in situations whereby individual skills are not used effectively (Felstead and Green, 2013). In Swaziland, discussions of effective resource use in the education sector occupy the policy agenda, although with limited discussion on skills utilisation which is becoming contentious with the increasing

imbalance between qualified individuals and available matching jobs (MoET, 2011/12). Attempt to discuss this issue here is limited by the paucity of data informing skills mismatch. Data available on Labour Force Surveys is not adequately disaggregated to show the qualifications and jobs acquired, particularly by young people between 25-34 years (SLFS, 2010).

Although the focus of this thesis is not on issues of unemployment, occasional reference is inevitable. The employment of young people is among the many social issues in the country that requires the use of a sociological imagination to connect "personal troubles to public issues" (Mills, 1959). This is where issues of a sluggish performing economy creating limited capacity to create jobs contribute to increasing unemployment of young people making them vulnerable to volunteer work, part-time jobs particularly in the hospitality industries which are fast becoming dead end jobs.

Mills' (1959) sociological approach allows me to situate employment in both the private and public spheres, looking at employment not just as a personal issue but also a public issue, requiring adequate attention from academics and policy makers. This idea is a good point of entry to the next question about the character of employment and how it has impacted on the livelihoods of participants of this study.

6.3 Question two:

This question elicited data on how youth inclusion in employment impacted on individual agency as they navigate life's opportunities.

6.3.1 Theme three: Stories of employment, livelihoods and aspirations for the future

In Chapter 2 I argued that the state of earning generates a set of moods that resonates with the preliminary expectations of the world where young people live. These expectations link to what Bourdieu refers to as habitus and I argue that they demonstrate ways of being that predisposes these young people to have a distinct worldview. Habitus is created through a social, rather than an individual process leading to patterns that are enduring and transferrable from one context to another, but that also shift in relation to specific contexts and over time (Navarro 2006: 16). Habitus “is not fixed or permanent, and can be changed under unexpected situations or over a long historical period” (op cit). I believe that making habitus part of the analysis allows for a more coherent and deeper understanding of the social self of young people, while being “careful that analysis can help to reveal the power relations that have been rendered invisible by habitus and misrecognition” (Navarro 2006: 19).

The findings indicate that participants learned new visions about their own personality, new interests and talents, and appreciation for new undertakings that were never apparent. Moreover, some participants indicated appreciation for the interview as it presented them with an opportunity to articulate and rationalise about future opportunities for personal development.

Indications are that participants value employment for its benefits which have shaped their lives for the better. Employment is cherished for stability and security, providing a definite monthly income against the volatility of business where the business environment determines flow of income. For participants employment not

only elevates self-esteem and social confidence, but, also means they have the material resources necessary to cater for their needs reducing dependency and powerlessness.

Although family support contributes immensely in shaping the lives of participants, as anticipated, all participants have a sense of modesty and pleasure in achieving economic independence and standing on their own. For some participants when growing up family identity was the key to opening doors including education and entering the job market. However, they have now managed to establish their own identity and are successful. There is an undeniable sense of fulfilment, control, and confidence in the expression of participants when talking about the outcomes of employment. For participants employment brings happiness and is described as a life changing experience. It changes participants' lifestyles, affordability, and provides a sense of worth and fulfilment.

General discussion with participants drawing parallels between employment and career solicited common descriptions of carrier including, passion and interest in doing something, a response resonating with job satisfaction. My analysis of the interviews is that participants give prominence to career rather than employment. For participants the passion for the job done defines the separation of a job from a career, as such, they view employment as a stepping stone, an opportunity to establish a career and/or business later in life. *“The more your career choice is aligned with your personality, interests, values and skills the more likely you are to be fulfilled and productive at your job (M31Mz8).”*

Not getting the right jobs in the initial stages of the career could impede success which disturbs progress stimulating thoughts of career change sometimes

necessitating going back to tertiary training. In addition, dissatisfaction with the type of job done and qualifications attained has prompted plans of career change. Instances of lack of career guidance and 'wrong decisions' made in career choice also affect the satisfaction and carrier growth of participants in later life.

Talking to two participants, one in banking and the other in business, I got the impression that job satisfaction to them is seeing a satisfied customer, updating knowledge of their careers, and connecting with trends around the world. "Hall (1996) proposes that success in the 21st century era is no longer viewed as getting to the top of the corporate pyramid, but is now defined by psychological success unique to that individual. Hall continues to explain that the ultimate goal of the career is psychological success, the feeling of pride and personal accomplishment that comes from achieving ones most important goals in life, be they achievement, family happiness, inner peace or something else" (Assaad and Levison, 2013:8) .

Further, "Hall (1996) postulates that the career of the 21st century will be protean. He argues that "the protean" career is driven by the person, not the organisation, and will be reinvented by the person from time to time, as the person and the environment change. According to Hall (1996), the term protean is derived from the Greek god Proteus (who could change shape at will). There appears to be a growing trend towards a career of constant change where, as Cascio (2003) points out, individuals in high technology jobs are often proud of the fact that they have held two jobs in the past three years as a badge of honour, an indication that they are on the cutting edge of their fields" (cited in Assaad & Levison 2013:9).

The young people in my study exhibited proactive personalities that could be easily changed to proactive behaviours in an enabling environment, time and space. This is well-articulated by Clarke (2008:9) who says that ideally, “to succeed in the new career structures, such as protean or boundary less careers, individuals will either possess a proactive personality or be able to adopt proactive behaviours to sustain their employability”. Looking at the findings of my study I am persuaded to also link them to the suggestion by “Rosenthal and Pilot (1988) that “career decisions need to be made throughout the lifespan because a career has a major bearing on individuals’ lifestyle.”

Therefore, “Organisations can assist youth preparing to enter the world of work [and those already inside] in understanding the decisions that need to be made, and provide those individuals with the skills necessary to make well informed decisions. It therefore seems reasonable to suggest that organisations should not ignore the fact that individuals need to develop and maintain their employability. Employers [could] embrace the process as a strategy for employee empowerment and motivation development” (Op cit.).

Some participants are disappointed with employment agreements that are not honoured and respected by some employers. They argue that some employers discourage them from furthering their studies something that participants view as a setback to career development. Participants view studying as enabling their promotion to senior positions in the organisation. All participants desire improved positions at work and in business. However, they perceive unfairness and nepotism in hiring and promotion practices influencing their career advancement. They note

their lack of connections (what Bourdieu calls social capital) as an impediment to success (Bourdieu, 1986).

Considerable attention has been focused on issues of unemployment and its negative impact on youth development. However, insufficient attention has been paid to the benefits of employment that my thesis explores, while consciously interrogating “employment tendencies of masking high rates of vulnerable employment and working poverty” (Pieters, 2013). Pieter rightly argues for youth employment policies that secure decent work for young people, for productivity, earnings, social protection, and ...job security to be considered (Op cit).

Robbins et al. (2003) supposed that most employees will look for payment systems that they believed to be fair, definite, and aligned with their expectations. Satisfaction is expected to be achieved if the payment seems to be equitable, equal with job demands, individual skill level and community payment standards. In contrast, the findings of a survey performed by Brainard (2005) figured out that job satisfaction is less likely to be connected with the payment and benefits (Op cit).

With employment participants feel secure to plan for the future and seeing those plans through. The interactions made with colleagues in the work place oriented participants to the world in general and the country in particular. One participant notes that young people are complacent and have no drive because they are not desperate like in other countries. There is not much mention of social contacts throughout the data except those few cases of participants meeting people with similar interests in workshops, keeping in contact with those considered as role models and happiness with participation in the labour market enabling social

inclusion. In some cases social integration meant sharing similar situations and participating in the same labour market and social circles.

From a theoretical perspective, I link my argument to Bourdieu, that the young people reside in a multidimensional space where I find the intersecting fields of family, school and work as the most significant. These fields are where they learn about the world, its dynamics and classifications, of what could be considered the structural roots of their worldviews. These fields have the potential to powerfully shape their lives as well as restrict their development. By examining how these young people navigate such fields, it is possible to understand what structural forces lead them to employment and the benefits they enjoy or suffering they endure.

6.4 Question three:

This question elicited data on why employment is the most desired mechanism for achieving social inclusion.

6.4.1 Theme four: Stories of concerns and fears

My intention in this section is to identify the need for a good quality of life through access to employment and economic opportunities, and the need for an enabling society and personal freedoms, as things participants consider important and valuable to them. There is seemingly a preference to be employed than taking up entrepreneurship opportunities even where they exist and this preference is not aligned with government strategies for vision 2022. As said earlier all participants are of the view that employment is a life changing experience for them, it changes lifestyles, and they afford basic needs and luxuries. They gain skills

that open numerous opportunities, they are groomed by experts in various fields, they are in a position to pass on the knowledge, and they gain confidence in work.

Being awarded a voice to tell their story was particularly gratifying to participants. Most participants talking about themselves brought a sense of achievement and feelings of empowerment that often brought a smile to their faces. Some participants report a sense of achievement in various contexts; for example in their personal growth, as evidence that young people have potential, and as proof that they could be responsible adults. Some had broken difficult ground to start and sustain viable business ventures. Qualifying for access to public and social services was easier when employed.

Education was the top most priority in the achievements of participants to the extent that they are still anticipating improving their prospects by furthering studies to get a job that would match their capabilities. Some participants have plans of starting their own businesses, while others aspire to settle down and start a family now that they are employed. "While in theory formal education should increase human capital and thus productivity at the societal level, in practice there are impediments. The curricula taught in schools and universities have... [Remain traditional and not adapted to modern requirements]. Thus, in spite of reasonably good formal education, there may be a mismatch between the goals of educators and the needs of employers." (Assaad & Levison, 2013:31)

"In general, the concept of labor market mismatch is used for situations where new labor market entrants or the unemployed do not have the set of skills needed by employers who are hiring. That is, there is a mismatch between labor supplied and labor demanded. With youth who are entering the labor market for the first time, the

mismatch arises from a combination of causes, including (i) they are well-educated/trained but not in the needed areas or skills; (ii) the quality of parts or all of their education was poor. Importantly, youth and their families may not be aware of the deficiencies of their education/training until they attempt to put it to use.

Employment is another positive development in their lives emancipating them from dependency, and presenting them with a sense of belonging and responsibility in their communities. Some participants feel driven by desire and not only by expectations to participate in the community. However, they point out that community expectations often exceed their low salary packages and some young people commit to a credit lifestyle trying to live up to community expectations. Some young people cannot cope with the demands and they borrow from loan sharks entangling themselves in perpetual debt. Some participants are of the view that some young people have a misguided concept of achievement in that they want too much too soon picturing a flashy lifestyle as a major goal.

ILO also found that “for young people, jobs provide a source not only of income, but also of dignity and self-respect. Youth who enter the workforce with limited job prospects, underdeveloped skills and inadequate education face the highest risk of long-term unemployment, underemployment and low-wage employment throughout their working lives, making them more vulnerable to social exclusion” (ILO, 2003). They continue to argue that “focusing job-creation efforts on young people could help reverse these trends, giving youth the opportunity to become more active and productive participants in the workforce and enjoy a greater degree of social integration (op cit).

Participants who are entrepreneurs are content with their achievements although they recognise business is unpredictable and often view employment as providing income security. They view challenges of a limited market resulting in strapped profits. They remain positive exercising tolerance in nurturing the business, never quite as expectations do not always breed desired results.

6.4.1.1 *Concerns and fears of participants*

Receiving no feedback on job application is a common concern among participants. Some participants recall how they virtually joined the statistics of discouraged workers after continuously applying for employment without getting any feedback from prospective employers. Issues of power - seniority and respect in the cultural and socio-political behaviour of employers lacking the courtesy to respond to applicants require attention.

Low salary packages are frequently mentioned by participants as impacting negatively on their integration to society. The feelings of excitement, inclusion and participation in community life, emancipation from dependency on parents and intimate partners, control and making decisions, responsibility for siblings and family welfare and personal growth, are diminished by low salary packages that hinder the capacity to satisfy basic needs and effective participation in community life.

Employers' lacking confidence in young people and situations that deny them the opportunity to explore full potential in the workplace concerns participants. Delegation of responsibility to young workers is minimal denying skill transfer to young workers.

Slow returns, bribery, corruption, and lack of experience in business discourage participants from making entrepreneurship the main option. Fears of providing a service and payment defaulted or extremely delayed to the detriment of business viability are a reality of the precarious nature of this venture. In turn, income patterns are affected and livelihoods become highly uncertain. Although not considered in immediate plans, business is viewed as a solution for upward mobility by the majority of participants. Those in business, while seeing the positive aspects, are mindful of the challenges in the volatile business environment that interrupts income flows and results in negative growth and security of the business.

The subject of Entrepreneurship training and small business assistance has dominated literature in many countries. There is some evidence that entrepreneurship training and small business assistance are effective programs for older and better educated workers, but even on that count, the evidence remains fairly weak (McKenzie and Woodruff 2012). Older individuals are able to use their existing knowledge of local markets to plan their entrepreneurial ventures, and better-educated workers are capable of handling the accounting necessary to run a small business. The only study we found that has rigorously evaluated the effectiveness of entrepreneurship training targeted at youth was of a program directed at undergraduate students in Tunisian universities (Premand et al. 2012). The program was shown to increase self-employment among graduates, but only slightly and also had positive effects on job skills, business knowledge and optimism. However, the program had no impact on overall employment. (Assaad & Levison, 2013:46).

In Swaziland, “Youth entrepreneurship promotion requires increased access to credit, business regulation reform, and entrepreneurship programs that combine different types of skills training – including “hard” and “soft” skills – with support services such as coaching and mentoring. Livelihood self-employment should be targeted separately from entrepreneurship and address the specific needs of vulnerable groups of self-employed workers” (Pieters, 2013:5).

Gender discrimination at the workplace appeared in one interview, where a female mechanic found herself discouraged by male colleagues in a male dominated field of motor mechanic. This story brings in the element of gender discrimination and specialisation in the workplace that has not been obvious in this data. Contrary to expectation, in this case, this negative energy was turned into a positive through perseverance. “One of the examples of the changing face of Africa that the youth as future leaders need to seriously consider is the role of women in the development of the continent. If the youth are the catalysts for Africa’s development then they will have to fight for the liberties of women in the household and in public sphere of the workplace where women are excluded from decision making.” (MINDS, 2014:20)

6.4.2 Stories of participation in political decision-making

Participants were most vocal when discussing this topic recognising the limited effort to include young people in political decision making and policy formulation. Thus the topic of how the country is responding to the employment of young people prompted mixed emotions from participants. This topic allowed participants to express what they desire to see happening regarding employment. Expressions of concern about the response of the country in providing employment

to young people were presented with serious and emotive responses. Participants view the country as not responding well in employing young people, as the government does not appear confident in young people, frequently recalling retired personnel to serve government, recycling old people in jobs that could be secured by young people without jobs.

Some participants are positive that the country is responding by encouraging entrepreneurship schemes and micro projects to improve young people, however, the sluggish economy is viewed as a setback. Some participants acknowledge the problem of abuse in such schemes by the custodians who run them and that the beneficiary selection process further polarised the economic differences of young people. Others were indifferent even wondering what response the interviewer was talking about. These participants pointed out that everyone was on their own when it came to finding employment.

“One of the main messages of the World Bank World Development Report (2013) on Jobs is that jobs are essential to social cohesion. Jobs not only convey a greater sense of dignity and belonging in society, but also encourage voice and participation (World Bank 2012b). The flip side is that a lack of jobs can result in reduced trust and lower levels of civic engagement, and, as ... demonstrated in the Arab Spring, can lead to social unrest and violence. In other contexts, lack of job opportunities for youth is associated with crime and gang-related violence.” (Assaad & Lavison (2013:33).

Lack of focus in techno-savvy jobs is viewed as lack of recognition of young people’s talents. One participant felt that as long as job creation is still viewed in the traditional sense of bureaucratic office jobs and not in the modern technological

sense, letting young people explore their potential in being technology savvy, jobs will continuously shrink. He referred to his visit to a government ministry where piles of files litter the sides of the corridors yet there are computers in every office that could reduce the reliance on paper correspondence. In another incident he came across a cashier who was busy calculating change using a pocket calculator yet she had a computer in front of her. All these he argued are examples of how young people can work in these offices with ease and efficiency, reducing the constant queues that are a daily feature. He acknowledged one mobile telephone company for seeing the technology savvy-ness of young people who make up approximately eighty percent of their employees, but was quick to note the abuse of their qualifications that are not commensurately remunerated.

Some participants perceive nepotism as presenting a big challenge in that jobs are acquired through favouritism and not on merit. Further, labour brokers are taking workers benefits, and employers are reluctant to employ full time workers particularly in the private commercial sectors like the retail, service and hospitality industries. One participant made an example of degree holders who are working in call centres as an example of professionals wasting away and getting frustrated.

This study also discovered that young people still make up a very small proportion of employees in organisations and some participants observed that there is need for a mandatory quota for young people's employment in organisations. They further stated that a policy to channel young people to opportunities is essential. Ideas of establishing an employment agency were suggested to prevent what they describe as "educated criminals" roaming the streets for extended periods spanning from nine to ten years, perceived to be the most dangerous by participants.

There is little doubt that a necessary condition for addressing the youth employment challenge is to foster a dynamic economic environment in which economies can thrive and economic growth can lead to continuous growth in labor demand. While this depends in part on the overall health of the global economy and the external economic environment that countries are facing, it also depends on the pursuit of sound economic policies, what the World Development Report 2013 calls “the fundamentals.” What these fundamentals consist of is fairly predictable: macroeconomic stability, good governance and the rule of law, respect for rights, a healthy investment climate and sound investments in human capital, including education and health (World Bank 2012b, Ch. 9 cited in Assaad & Levison, 2013:37).

Swaziland has resisted political party democracy since 1973 when the 1968 independence constitution was abrogated, thus even though the 2005 national constitution has a Bill of Rights its enforcement has been violated from time to time by the state. I am in agreement with the observations made by MINDS as follows:

“Africa is amongst the most conservative societies in the world, resisting any form of change that does not resonate with past cultural beliefs and practices. However the experiences of the older generation of leaders and the more dynamic and versatile youth are different. Youth in Africa are more realistic to the changes that are happening to African society and the world in general because they are consumers of the global culture more than their conservative leaders. This environment makes the youth more acceptable to change and more likely to accept previously despised groups ..., as well as according women an equal status in society” (MINDS, 2014:20).

“At community level age is more important than education-so that young educated people are often thwarted when they try to make their voices heard. The more the individual is able to influence decision making in non-political spheres like the family, school, or work the more ego-strength they develop therefore gaining political competence and efficacy (Schlee, 2011). It can be argued that submission to authority and the tendency to avoid conflicts which are rooted in traditional culture, have contributed to the political apathy of youth in Africa” (MINDS, 2014:16).

Internationally, the agenda of youth participation, particularly, involvement in political processes and in decision-making, has risen in prominence through the last two decades. The underlying rationale is that engaging youth in decision-making process promotes empowerment, ensures buy-in and ownership, will lead to youth-sensitive policies, and encourages youth leadership development. The motivations for this are often related to changing demographics; 50% of the world’s population is currently made up of people younger than 25 years of age. This ‘youth bulge’ – combined with increased global communication and youth activism, has put governments under increasing pressure to make efforts to listen to and respond to the demands of young people. Youth participation is defined in terms of the role that the youth play in political governance, as well as in the socio-economic and cultural life. McGee & Greenhalf (2011) [cited in Mavundla, 2015] state that youth participation is in most cases shaped or influenced by the historical, political, economic, societal, cultural factors. Hence, Swaziland’s historical and cultural background has a bearing on youth participation, be it in decision-making processes or socio-cultural life (Mavundla et al, 2015). Attitudes towards youth serve to reinforce low levels of youth participation and affect the responsiveness of public

policy to the needs of young people. This enforces the belief that young people are recipients of policies and programmes and that they will accept whatever is presented to them (Op cit).

6.4.3 Stories of encouragement to other young people

Again this topic prompted feelings of empowerment in participants as they often searched deeply in their minds to find appropriate messages and how to communicate them explicitly.

Participants viewed studying and continuously improving oneself as the keys to success. One participant said “*education sustains livelihood more than money does*” which could be interpreted to mean the more years invested in education paid more dividends. Young people are also advised to follow their dreams and desires and to ignore peer and parental pressures in determining their careers. Young workers without university degrees are worse off in finding and keeping employment.

Young people need to be patient “*patience is a virtue that needs to be exercised by young people*”. This participant felt young people were giving up easily and thus ended up discarding their dreams. They are advised to set goals annually and review their attainment each year to persevere.

According to participants overnight success will not happen, thus young people need to take one day at a time as quick rich schemes have destroyed young people who end up with debt burdens. One participant said “*consumerism has engulfed our behaviour*” resulting in living beyond our means. She also observed that, a poor background should not be a deterrent to success as other poor people do find means to arrive at success.

Caution is sounded to procrastinators. One participant was emphatic about not procrastinating about one's future thinking you're still young as opportunities are not in abundance.

Seek knowledge everywhere particularly in books as they still command a lot of wisdom, is the response of one participant. In addition, role models are still considered important in guiding and measuring the aspirations and future goals of young people. The participants also advise young people to seek employment in what they love doing most because that would make their growth and career path easy to attain.

Youthful pleasures are seen as derailing many young people, thus they need to delay pleasure because it would always be there and be determined and focus on studying. Participants also advise young people to place God at the centre of everything they do and be *"the captain of your own ship"*.

Young people are also advised to work hard and diligently, to make a mark of their successes and enjoy what they do in order to improve.

6.5 Question four:

The aim of this question is to reflect on lessons learned from the research to contribute knowledge in theory, practice and methodology.

6.5.1 Lessons learned from the research

This research did not discover any new theory and methodological practices. However, a report is made on lessons learned. I value the opportunity to fully explore the significance of qualitative research in youth studies.

The first and valued lesson I learned when writing my thesis was to read extensively. I diligently read journal articles and textbook material, perusing over examples of qualitative studies. As such I appreciate the broad on-line scholarly articles that I downloaded. More and more, I learned to read with a critical eye; to pinpoint the strengths and weaknesses of the article or book chapter. I even learned to increase my speed of reading as I am a slow reader. However, the paucity of literature on youth employment in the country is startling and it stimulated me to continue my search for youth employment literature elsewhere. I did not stop reading I kept reading as I did not know what new insights I would derive from the literature at any stage of the research process. Reading has vastly assisted me to clarify and crystallise concepts, methodologies and theoretical frameworks, as well as shaping my research.

The greatest experience I had was being a sole researcher and getting a fuller appreciation of qualitative research, listening to participants stories 'with a heart' first through interviews, then transcription and data analysis. In the process learning to practically find meaning behind the words spoken by participants. "Qualitative research has the unique goal of facilitating the meaning-making process" (Krauss, 2005:763) and I appreciate participants' photographic insights making me see into their lives.

Methodologically, I learned that face to face in-depth interviews still produce the most effective complete results showing into the full emotions, body language and tone of voice which all matter in creating meaning behind the words.

As a researcher, I learned to have the authorial presence in my thesis, to command my own style of writing and articulate the overall architecture of my writing.

My previous authorships have followed the conventional objective school of thought using the third person. Through consultations with my supervisor and colleagues, I decided to use the first person “I” “Me” “My” as a signature of my own voice, opinion, and intellectual disposition. Griffiths argues that “this ambivalence [third person] inhibits my writing, as in the process of constructing social knowledge I have to ‘declaim’ my authorial self as if it does not correspond to who and what I write ‘on/for/with’ (Griffiths, 1998: 35-6). I often see my doctoral research as a personal journey, reflecting on my internal debate about my experiences, challenges and interactions.

6.5.2 Theme five: Reflexivity, my journey and experiences with the research

The purpose of this section is to share my experiences and research journey with readers particularly researchers. Creating transparency in the research process I engaged with my data, research diary and field notes at key points in writing my thesis. My aim was to make my decisions, and the thinking, values, and experiences behind those decisions visible, to both myself and to the reader.

A reflexive approach to the research process is now widely accepted in much qualitative research. Researchers are urged to talk about themselves, “their presuppositions, choices, experiences, and actions during the research process” (Mruck & Breuer, 2003:3). Reflective practice such as this aims to make visible to the reader the constructed nature of research outcomes, a construction that “originates in the various choices and decisions researchers undertake during the process of researching” (Op cit: 3).

My research was primarily interview-based and I was the main and sole researcher, conceiving the topic, developing research objectives and questions, instruments of data collection, collecting data, transcribing interviews and analysing data. The main textbook I was reading was *Writing Dissertations & Thesis* by Murray & Beglar (2009), I recommend this book to every researcher writing a dissertation or thesis. Reading this publication clarified my role as a researcher writing a thesis away from my usual academic and consultancy research. Alongside much of my reading about my role of the researcher I was also reading qualitative methodology texts and articles to ground myself and be informed about the research process and ethical considerations Patton (1990).

In relation to interviewing,” this requires the interviewer to be non-reactive in order to increase the reliability of the interviewee’s responses, that is, the same answers would be given if the questions were asked at another time, in another place, even by another interviewer” (Glensne & Peshkin, 1992).

6.5.2.1 *Positioning myself in the research*

I am an academic educator at a tertiary institution often supervising student’ research projects and I needed to be careful of complacency. Being a woman and gender activist influenced my choice to maintain parity between men and women participants not that gender parity supersedes other considerations of gender in employment.

I do not claim a neutral position in the research from the outset and this is clearly stated in my introduction on motivation for the research. I have issues, concerns and opinions about the treatment of young people in the workplace, and

how its nature is obscured by the focus on unemployed youth. Nonetheless, I have consciously raised issues to discover ‘truths’ that resonate with my views of what is desirable and undesirable in the workplace.

My other concerns relate to what Denzin (1994:501) refers to as “the interpretive crisis” in qualitative research. The debate about the problem of bias in qualitative research remains unresolved and I am not raising it here. Although, wanting to mention that there is lack of agreement on the amount and type of researcher influence that is acceptable, and whether and how it needs to be “controlled” and accounted for. Scheurich (1997) proposes that research interviewing can be reconceptualised in keeping with a postmodern approach by making the “baggage” we bring to the research visible.

Ultimately, the baggage I am bringing to the research includes practical examples of students’ who have graduated from university in non-teaching subjects and are employed by government as non-qualified teachers drawing reduced salaries by virtue of not possessing teaching diplomas. These stories are coupled with those of underemployment and underutilised talents in the work place. In the introduction chapter of my thesis I acknowledge that these experiences, feelings, and opinions have influenced the choice of topic and continue to sub-consciously influence what I focus on in selecting the data for analysis and the interpretation of that data.

Pertaining to self-reflection on the research design I was prompted to change my research design by aborting the focus group method of data collection relying solely on the in-depth interview method. To discard a pre-planned way of going about the research that I had included in my research proposal was a difficult but

necessary decision. Writing the research proposal using a structured format (one size fits all) hinders methodological variation and creativity. Even though no new methods are adopted in my research the in-depth interviews proved to be very effective in acquiring rich in-depth data. The second method of focus groups as I say in the methodology section proved difficult to execute due to the varying times of participants' availability. In addition, with continued reading about qualitative research I discovered competing views on validity (trustworthiness) in qualitative research. My readings indicate that there are some problems with the idea of trustworthiness and the usefulness of triangulation in qualitative research. In relation to what I initially thought I would do I critically evaluated whether my original idea about validity is still appropriate given that data saturation occurred early and I have been considering an interpretivist perspective.

Regarding personal reflection, undertaking this research study has been an invaluable learning experience. I have accentuated my understanding of the research process. I have learned, for example, that things do not fit neatly into categories and that research sometimes is tedious and frustrating, yet at times very challenging and rewarding. Nonetheless, I have had a very lonely final year of writing with feelings of frustration about process and content. The first year of proposal writing was the most productive with the support of graduate seminar weekends sharing and receiving feedback on thesis progress from academic staff, supervisors, and colleagues. Being alone has been a very trying and testing period particularly as a non-resident international student.

6.5.3 Recommendations for future research

Conducting this research has unearthed potential areas for research in employment of young people. There is lack of evidence based studies in the country on issues of; underemployment, underutilised skills and skills transfer in the workplace.

Volunteer work is an interesting research area that is outside the scope of this research and remains obscured in the radar of academic research and policy development.

There is paucity of literature on youth employment in the country and studies on who the employed youth are; the sectors where youth are employed and potential employment sectors.

Increasing discussion of mismatch between jobs and training of youth is vague without empirical evidence indicating the desired qualifications framework to match available jobs.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented a discussion of findings with five themes that revealed stories of employment relating to; 1) family background and how it has impacted on education attainment, 2) transitioning from training to the labour market, 3) employment and its significance to livelihoods and aspirations for the future, 4) what young people consider most important in life and the concerns and fears they perceive in society, 5) Lessons learned from the research, and 6) recommendations for future research. The next chapter, Chapter 7 concludes this research study.

7.1 Introduction

This qualitative study sought to investigate the impacts of employment on the personal growth and livelihoods of young people in Swaziland, the reasons and motivation for preferring employment over entrepreneurship, the role of education in transitioning from training to work, extent of family and society influence on preferred career paths, and providing a voice to young people on their experiences with employment. There is general paucity of sociological literature on the subject of youth employment globally, and particularly in Swaziland. Employment research is overwhelmed by unemployment studies, and this research sought to contribute to this gap in knowledge. Theoretical relevance limitations were complemented by converging relevant philosophies within the sociology of work and employment discourse, particularly Bourdieu's practice theory, habitus, and Mill's (1949) sociological imagination. The findings of my study are limited to twenty participants and therefore, I do not claim generalisation of findings in the context of Swaziland. However, my study offers suggestive evidence for concerns of limited access to opportunities for young people in general.

The objectives of the study were:

1. To document the experiences of young people with employment.
2. To investigate the outcomes of employment on young people's livelihoods.
3. To critically analyse the socially constructed meanings of employment.
4. To contribute to the literature on youth employment studies.

The study sought to answer one major research question:

What do we know about employment in the lives, agency, livelihoods and capacities of young people?

This major question was explored using four critical questions:

1. What are the key challenges in the transition of young people from education and training to employment?
2. How does youth inclusion in employment impact on individual agency to navigate life's opportunities?
3. Is employment the most preferred mechanism for achieving social inclusion?
4. What are the lessons learned from the research to contribute knowledge in theory, practice and methodology?

This chapter is organised into a discussion of the main conclusions arising from the findings discussed in Chapter 6 and presenting justifications for my conclusions and suggestions for future research and limitations of the study. The chapter begins with a synthesis of the major conclusions to each research question; the implications of the research, contributions of the research, and limitations of the research.

7.2 Major conclusions of the research findings:

7.2.1 Question one: What are the key challenges in the transition of young people from education and training to employment?

Firstly, employment is certainly perceived as an answer in the growth and livelihood of young people, including their inclusion into community life without

feelings of ostracism. Participants identify material benefits and job security as the main factors determining their attitude towards work. The majority of young people mention that work should generate material wealth. Youth livelihoods entail economic independence (independence of earning), affording basics and luxuries of life, and starting a family; all conforming to societal expectations about individual life trajectories. These expectations are linked to the economic, cultural capitals and habitus Bourdieu referred to. Family background has a positive effect on participants' education attainment and career choice. "Certainly, in a capitalist society one's value to family and society derives from having a job in the formal market, managing a middle class lifestyle, and the ability to provide for the family. Youth feel that belonging is not a 'piori' but something that must be purchased by participating in the everyday economy" (UNDP, 2012). Also, linked to material benefits was the recognition that employment increases professional capacity and can allow for the accumulation of social skills, acquiring new technologies, and overall, increases young peoples' experience working in the real world.

Secondly, the findings indicate a close relationship between education and access to employment. Education is an important part of human capital, and young job seekers who have higher levels of schooling are at an advantage compared to early school leavers (UNESCO, 2005; Vallejo & Dooly, 2013). Although this is generally true for the workforce overall, it seems particularly true for younger people and in the context of an economic crisis (OECD, 2013). Yet, while tertiary graduates tend to have higher employability, possession of a tertiary degree is not necessarily a clear path to employment, thus an increase has been seen in volunteer work which was viewed by participants as a stepping stone to better employment.

Further, a study conducted on the state of youth in Swaziland (2014) also found the transition between education and work quite daunting. In part, they attributed this challenge to their lack of knowledge of what is expected of them regarding their entrance into the labour market. Thus, they advocated for mentorship from more experienced experts in their field of learning, to educate them on the steps needed to become successful in their fields of learning. To address this problem, a number of initiatives have been instituted. For example, “the National Youth Council office in Shiselweni has established an internship programme through which young people can work at the council offices to gain critical skills. In addition, the council provides an opportunity for young people to engage in social action as peer educators” (Mavundla et. al., 2015).

Thirdly, the study found that skills mismatch hinders access to targeted jobs. Skills mismatch is a concept gaining popularity in employment circles and various explanations have been presented for its surfacing. “The mismatch arises from a combination of causes, including (i) they are well-educated/trained but not in the needed areas or skills; (ii) the quality of parts or all of their education was poor. Importantly, youth and their families may not be aware of the deficiencies of their education/training until they attempt to put it to use. In addition, scholars believe that college graduates are not adequately prepared to enter the job market” (McKinsey, 2012). This is likely due to the loose connection between educational institutions and industry in many countries around the world. In fact, research shows that in countries where educational institutions send strong signals about job seeker skills and abilities, youth unemployment rates are lower (Breen, 2005). Furthermore, internships and work-based learning tend to provide more secure paths to employment.

Similarly, I argue that more investigation is necessary in the country context to understand what informs the skills mismatch in the employment of young people. I have argued that the youth bulge factor (the demographic situation of youth) needs more attention from a policy perspective rather than focusing on skills and work experience as a mechanism for restricting the hiring of new entrants. There is a need to work with employers about the importance of providing adequate job orientation and training for youth as a way of fostering good relations and ensuring that employer/employee workplace expectations are communicated and understood. Therefore, the widely expressed view that there is a mismatch between training and job requirements still requires further investigation in the country to properly inform necessary action by both tertiary training institutions and employers.

In a study on youth and public policy in Swaziland (2015) it was indicated by the participants that in some fields, such as marketing, there are far more students than can be realistically catered for in the labour market. Thus, they complained of 'saturation' in the labour market, which results in many being unable to access work (Mavundla et al., 2015). Also, the participants indicated that there are better, well-paying jobs in the private sector; however entry into those jobs is usually quite competitive given the high number of individuals applying for available positions, as well as the requirements of employers. Furthermore, participants noted that securing the available jobs, particularly in the public sector, often depends on personal networks. Participants indicated that they or their peers were asked to pay a bribe of some form in order to secure a job (Op. cit). This study resonates with the findings of my research further confirming the need to illuminate the voices of young people in telling their stories about employment.

Fourthly, the findings indicated that some participants waited long to enter the job market having applied for extended periods without positive response from employers. These are indications of a glut for qualified workers in the labour market requiring policy direction and programming. The continued lack of a National Qualifications Framework in the country is a major contributing factor. Entering the labour force late presents a challenge to skills transfer, whereby the future workforce' readiness is put to question. Young people are the future for any economy, not only as consumers and clients but also as workers. Current evidence from around the world indicates that young workers are facing particular problems and challenges in gaining access to the labour market and finding secure employment delaying the transfer of necessary skills, a point I have discussed in Chapter 6.

In addition, the existence and proper execution of succession plans is required for effective dividends of the young workforce. Adhering to the stipulated retirement guidelines will balance the entry and exit into the job market. The practice of delaying the age of retirement by extending contracts of retired personnel in the public sector creates further tensions with active young job seekers queuing for limited jobs. I argue that this is where the philosophy of "personal becoming political" as not only the individual that suffers but the work environment and the economy that will be forced to rely on less experienced personnel to make major decisions in the future. This is another area requiring statistical data, to measure the impact and occurrence levels, and inform policy planning.

Lastly, giving a voice to young people to tell their stories about employment was highly appreciated by participants.

7.2.2 Question two: How does youth inclusion in employment impact on individual' agency to navigate life's opportunities?

Finding employment is an outcome on its own particularly employment that matches with qualifications and training. Employment is a life changing experience which has shaped the lives of young people for the better. They have been empowered economically, they feel a sense of belonging in society, and are empowered to participate in activities of life. It is important to note that what the youth in contemporary society consider important and valuable is access to employment opportunities. Lack of employment for youth is both a crisis for personal life and broader forms of connection to the community. Work plays several significant functions in a person's life and fulfils important needs not only economically, but psychologically and socially.

A distinction was made between employment and career by participants. Employment is equated to selling labour power for economic gain; while career is linked with personality and passion, arousing proactive behaviours that require a work environment that is enabling to change. The findings indicate participants opined they were still to achieve career objectives showing the difficulty of finding a suitable career path soon after leaving education. Career is a lifelong guidance for learning and work. Participants' valued career development over employment, their concern is lack of career guidance opportunities in the country. I argue that lifelong learning needs to be incorporated in the planning of education and youth development programmes in Swaziland.

In this regard, "career maturity as a developmental construct can be enhanced through structured programme interventions" (Stead & Watson, 1998 cited

in ASIB, 2010:19). “Structured programme interventions should be initiated within the school environment in order to prepare the individual for the transition from school-to-work” (Op cit). The country has a career guidance programme in schools, but it is inadequately framed and developed, lacking proper personnel and financial resources to make it effective (Khumalo, 2013). Stead & Watson also suggest that “the preparation of individuals for the world of work through the education system should progress to effective organisational orientation programs” (ASIB, 2010).

7.2.3 Question three: Is employment the most preferred mechanism for achieving social inclusion?

The findings are consistent with previous studies elsewhere perceiving employment as a life changing and liberating experience not only for young people but for society in general (cp USAID, 2005, 2010). Regarding social inclusion material benefits were again regarded as a mechanism for enabling participation in civil society without feeling ostracised for inactivity. Participants also exhibited a positive attitude towards volunteering, which indicates availability of their skills and willingness to be active, hence the discussion earlier on the positives of the youth bulge dividends. Participants’ opinions about the integration of young people into the labour market and into the existing social realities were elaborated in Chapter 6.

Bourdieu’s theory of practice symbolised by economic, cultural, and habitus were confirmed in the perceptions and behaviour of participants and their preference for employment. Participants preferred employment for its guaranteed income which unlocked a number of opportunities including; independence from parents and partners, affording basic needs and luxuries, and enabling them to participate in

society without feeling ostracised for not conforming with societal expectations of transitioning to adulthood.

Preference for employment superseded entrepreneurial choices, yet the government and other key stakeholders in the private and business sectors see entrepreneurship as an alternative to a bulging labour market. Entrepreneurship has generally been associated with low academic achievement and thus low income and therefore, not appealing to young people in the country. It is mainly characterised by small to medium informal service sector operators. Attention to entrepreneurship has slowly gained prominence over the last decade due to the rising unemployment of young people. However, its drivers have not defined clear strategies for its integration as an employment possibility. This study found that young people (with the exception of two participants) define and experience employment in the formal sector and mention entrepreneurship as an alternative but not a first choice employment preference. Therefore, a mind shift is necessary and this can be enabled with entrepreneurship developed and natured in a lifelong education process in the country.

A UN study (UNDP, 2003) found that young people were drawn to entrepreneurship as a means to escape unemployment, secure a means of livelihood and to realise their personal visions while contributing to national development. The same study also found that in addition to some of the structural factors... (such as capital, cost of business registration, licencing, etc.) the attitudes of the Swazi society towards young entrepreneurs is also a challenge to the growth of youth entrepreneurship. This is because young people are generally perceived as incapable of handling serious financial transactions.

The findings of the UN study could be said to reflect the situation of youth employment and entrepreneurship in Swaziland. However, it should be pointed out that the UN study focused on already successful youth entrepreneurs in urban areas, and did not explore geographical or gender dimensions. Therefore, its findings may be specific to the challenges faced by a particular group of urban youth entrepreneurs. Also, as suggested by the report itself, given that the data was collected at a time of financial crisis. It has been noted in a different study that the Global Financial Crisis has a significant effect on Swaziland (Mavundla et al, 2015). A further investigation beyond this research is required on the views of young people and their experiences in starting private businesses.

The study on youth and public policy in Swaziland (2015) indicated that youth were unable to access capital from financial institutions, which made it impossible for them to fund their business ideas or grow them. However, it was noted that young people with certain skills were more confident of being able to access funds from financial institutions, although these individuals appeared to come from privileged backgrounds.

The young people were not aware of government programmes put in place to provide funding for private businesses. However, they indicated that they were unable to access such funds owing to a number of factors including a lack of understanding of the criteria that qualify them to receive loans or grants, the requirement to submit a business plan - which they lacked the skills to develop, and being unable to form and sustain a cooperative group for long periods of time (Mavundla et. al, 2015). Further, as previously mentioned in the political background, the national schemes for youth enterprise development are coordinated and

accessed through *Tinkhundla* centres, thus, some young people feel excluded from them because of their orientation to proscribed political parties. Access to finance provided by the state is also perceived as politicised by some participants.

Consequently, lessons can be learned from other countries on efforts to support young entrepreneurs. Chigunta (2002) suggests that this can be considered in terms of three distinct phases; each with their own particular challenges. These stages include the formative, developmental, and start up. Such distinctions are helpful in identifying and attending more directly to how best to identify distinct training needs of young people.

For example, the formative stage focuses on the factors influencing the early desire to become an entrepreneur, whereas the developmental phase is more concerned with the acquisition of key skills, in which it can be useful to differentiate between learning and strategic skills. Youth need spaces to articulate their positions, needs and realities and take meaningful action to ensure that they access what they want. Youth need to move from artificial category, to multiple identities that need recognition and realisation with larger facets and aspects of society, including active engagement with governance processes and leadership as social shifters (SIOP, 2014).

Generally, there is a lack of adequate understanding of the potential benefits of youth entrepreneurship as a means of improving livelihoods but also in how best to direct support specifically for young people (Cassia, Criaco, & Minola, 2012). As with other studies in the area of work, there are differences between distinct categories of young people, which reflect the value of adopting a more tailored and nuanced approach rather than seeking simple solutions (SIOP, 2014).

Entrepreneurship needs to be considered as a far more significant option for young people, with evidence showing the importance of early experiences in raising awareness and later positive attitudes towards this as a potential work option. Psychological factors, such as self-efficacy, personal initiative, but also social support and effective training are also significant factors in making individuals more able to withstand the failures that are a necessary part of this route to successful employment (Glaub et al., in press). Resilience and tenacity are clearly important as most entrepreneurs experience a number of set-backs and challenges in their life journeys. The role of educators, employers, psychologists, and career professionals remains underdeveloped for young entrepreneurs (Op cit).

7.2.4. Question four: What are the lessons learned from the research to contribute knowledge in theory, practice and methodology?

7.2.4.1 Methodology implications

There was no new methodological ground broken by my research, but, I have certainly practiced and re-affirmed the continued quality of traditional or classic qualitative methodological approaches. Such as; in-depth interviews that talented qualitative researchers observed and keenly understood in body language, facial expressions, voice variation and so much more. The experience was invaluable.

The paucity of local literature on youth employment was compensated by access to internet to broaden the search. Secondary data desk research was enormously enhanced by the availability of scholarly articles and various materials on internet through scholarly website search and off-campus internet access of The

University of KwaZulu Natal. Time and money was saved by just the click of the button also contributing to reduced time spent on literature review.

The decision to abort focus group discussions due to challenges of organising participants employed by different sectors was compensated by data saturation combined with member checking to account for reliability of data.

7.2.4.2 *Theoretical implications*

I have observed the exponential progress made in developing theories of employment and work; from the traditional theories of workplace motivation, classical and Keynesian theories of employment and unemployment, industrial relations theories, labour participation theories, work as employment, career theories, interest and money (not listed in any particular order). While all these theories have a place in employment literature and I have read them while searching for an appropriate theory for my study, I experienced a challenge in finding a theory appropriate for my qualitative approach telling young people's stories of employment. Bourdieu's theory of practice came close and it still dominates studies of employment despite enormous criticism for its economic determinism and weak gender application among others. Theory is dynamic in research guiding content, thoughts, and processes. Merton (1968) alluded to this intertwining relationship between empirical research and theory in one of his earlier works, which is aptly captured in Bourdieu's perspective that "research without theory is blind, and theory without research is empty" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Academic research which this thesis is a part is supported fully by this notion.

Considering this theory gap, I therefore, believe there is space in youth research to develop theory of youth employment without allowing its framework to degenerate into issues of unemployment and giving them prominence. There are numerous issues of focus within the youth employment discourse that came up in the stories of young people that could not be followed up by this study. These research areas are outlined in the section on future studies.

7.3 Implications for policy

Firstly, the findings indicate that the education system is perceived as failing to produce employable young people with the skills required to navigate their way into the modern labour market. Therefore, interlinking policy is required to ensure that the pathway from early childhood development to primary and secondary school, to higher and tertiary education and into the labour market is coordinated. More ingenuity and creativity is also required in the conception of learning pathways, particularly with regard to career choice and training through policy and programming.

Secondly, for promoting effective entrepreneurship, government, private sector, and business community need to consider [up-scaling existing] mentorship programmes and business development support services for young entrepreneurs, and actively develop business links with youth-owned small businesses². From participants it was clear that mentorship contributes a lot in shaping their careers.

Thirdly, there is a need for effective communication campaigns to inform young people of opportunities for economic development and participation; to

² My notes from the Methodist Church, St. Paul's Society, Central Swaziland Circuit, Entrepreneurship Workshop September 7, 2015, Manzini, Swaziland

increase the uptake of the youth in existing programmes; and to promote access to achieve high usage levels particularly with social media where young people are very visible. These efforts will also require a significant increase in resources dedicated to youth employment programmes, with tight coordination across relevant government departments and public institutions, alongside agreements with social partners, for these interventions to be successful.

These recommendations require deeper work at a programmatic level to cost the various programmes that are proposed and to address their sequencing over time to complement existing programmes. It is also worth mentioning that government has a role principally in the formulation of public policies, development of infrastructure, dissemination of information, and support for education and training. In addition, any strategies should also be a consolidated effort of a very broad range of stakeholders, ranging from government, private sector and the public or civil society and international institutions to businesses and non-governmental organizations.

The study of youth and public policy in Swaziland (2015) also found that there are many policies in place for young people, and that young people are unaware of them. However, it is frequently only those who work in a particular policy area who know about these developments, suggesting that the approach to policy formulation in the country is from top-down rather than bottom-up. This approach has led to excellent policies and programmes not being translated into practice and failing to benefit the intended audience (Mavundla et al, 2015). Thus there is a need for robust, inclusive, well-coordinated, and evidence-based programme of action to

meet this challenge and make sure all young people in Swaziland can live their dreams.

7.4 Implications for participation in civil society

Firstly, although young people comprise a majority of the country's population, their views and voices have few channels of expression. Those who have direct influence upon their lives, such as policy makers, generally do not view them as a powerbase and, therefore, make little effort to include them in local or national affairs or in decisions that directly affect their lives. Supporting young people's participation in decision making processes such as local councils and authorities, youth organisations and governing bodies of civil society and faith-based institutions can benefit society as a whole.

As mentioned in the political background, Mavundla et al. (2015) also observe that in Swaziland "P[p]eople suffer retribution for speaking out against the status quo, and fear those in power. Both traditional and political authorities have contributed to a climate in which people can only express their political views "behind closed doors". Political debate does not occur publicly and is suppressed by the cultural dictate that those in authority must not be questioned (Dlamini, 2013). Like the Commonwealth observed in the 2013 elections, the presence of the monarch in the structures of everyday political life inevitably associate him with politics. As such, the media is often told not to question the King on sensitive political issues, and criticism of the monarchy remains strictly off-limits (Mavundla et al., Op cit).

Unfortunately, the prospects and structures for youth participation are profoundly lacking and under-resourced at community and national levels. The

socio-cultural issues of trust between adults and young people deter youth participation. For young people to be appropriately heard, they need constructive channels for communication to decision-makers at all levels. Starting in their local communities, young people can influence policies through consultations, the establishment of youth parliaments and similar instruments for local participation. I earlier mentioned the initiative of young people's parliament that lacks policy support and has unravelled through the years.

Secondly, at policy level, the country has policies on youth (National Youth Policy, 2005; ILO Decent Work Policy, 2010; Youth Entrepreneurial Development Fund, 2010, Higher Education Scholarship Fund/Policy), to mention a few. The main challenge, however, is the rolling out of various policies and programmes without proper plans and commitment to monitor implementation and impact of diverse initiatives that lack coordination, which has impeded the social development of Swazi young people (UNDP, 2014). However, in order that a good number of youth policy initiatives are implemented, it is first necessary to establish a well-researched knowledge-base about youth such as their desires, fears, sentiments, dispositions, expectations, hopes and perception of their futures, and other related issues and concerns. Although the present study has started establishing this knowledge base about employment experiences, there is still a need for more research on strategies where the state and other stakeholders can actively invest resource.

Lastly, Mavundla et al. (2015) aptly put it that too frequently, young people lack the capacity, activism and coordination required to bring about change and have not presented a united voice in demanding that their views should be integrated into policies that affect them. Youth participation in policy formulation and decision

making processes is under-prioritised. There is a cry from the youth that they are not included in policy formulation and/or are marginalised in one way or the other. As such the reality is that youth are excluded from these processes.

In reference to my theoretical framework I would argue that the lack of existence of social capital in Swaziland which Mavundla et al. (2015) above also observe has disadvantaged the existence of lasting “social relations, networks and contacts. Investing in social capital acts as a kind of strategy which further serves as a mechanism to exchange other capitals. In other words, for group members social capital facilitates ownership of collective capital. Social capital is manifested in relations and networks which are useful resources in determining and reproduction of social positions” (Bourdieu, 1986).

7.5 Suggestions for future research

Very specific points arise from the limitations of this study and these will be addressed in future investigations. The broader theme of this thesis concerns how young people are supported to be active in socio-economic, socio-cultural and political terms in Swaziland. Formal education is one key component of several interconnected initiatives designed to institute preferred moral and social attributes in young people. For this research, one of my biggest learning points in the process of this investigation was awareness of scholarship failure to produce literature on young people’s activity. As a more general research interest, I encourage academics in particular, to motivate use of student projects for investigating questions of ‘youth’ in the context of youth activity, social policy, and active political participation.

I have mentioned the paucity of research on youth employment, and further referred in the literature review to “youth research as a relatively new academic discipline and is on its way to being established around the world, although the United States, Europe, and Australasia have a majority of resources in this field” (ASIB, 2010). Thus, the intention of the Arab League and UNDP to call for the establishment of a Centre for Youth Research and Advocacy is a welcome response to the deficit in knowledge about youth (Op cit). Hopefully, this initiative will be replicated globally at national levels and positively impact on generating youth research.

Possible topics for research identified from the data include:

- Volunteer work and its impact on employment creation
- Mismatch between training and employer requirements
- Investigating the existence of a youth bulge and its demographic dividends in Swaziland
- Investigating the views and experiences of young people in starting private businesses
- Establish a knowledge-base on youth, similar to Knowledge and Practices (KAP) studies; to learn about their desires, fears, sentiments, dispositions, expectations, hopes and perception about their futures, and other related issues and concerns.

7.6 Contributions of my study

Since the subject of youth employment has limited literature, my study has made a contribution to sociological literature on the topic. Firstly, there have been no

qualitative studies on youth employment in Swaziland and my study has managed to bring to life stories of employment and how it impacts the livelihoods of young people who participated in my study. However, I acknowledge that a longitudinal study would present a more informed position of; the changing status of participants, their personal growth, changing perceptions, and their reflections on social inclusion..

I have also contributed to the sociological research agenda on youth employment through the suggestion of gaps in knowledge that came out from the study as discussed in section 7.5 above.

In addition, some voices that could not appropriately fit in the content of the analysis, but, had particular relevance in the lives of young people are presented below:

7.6.1. *Participants' observations*

Participants were asked to make any additional comments and further contributions outside the study questions and this attracted limited but very persuasive feedback.

Pertaining to tertiary training one participant was of the view that local institutions were still offering largely traditional curriculum and they needed to align themselves with international and regional institutions in Southern Africa that offer a modern and diversified curriculum suitable for all specialisations. This lack created a gap that has resulted in the exodus of tertiary students to institutions in South Africa.

“Yah maybe you can make the change, like we’ve got the university here of Swaziland – this is a very old university but it still has the same courses, like

why is it *not upgrading its course offering – things like offering through IDE part time degrees so that it facilitates the education of employed people. ME: Other faculties are already offering degrees in IDE and it's unfortunately the department you want that is not offering the degree. ME: I explained most of the operations of the IDE centre and also the new restructured programmes of the university that will be implemented soon. Participant: really wanted her complaint to be relayed to the University of Swaziland” (F31St18).*

Another participant added that education should not be discouraged even if no jobs existed. He was of the view that human resources should continuously be produced so that when the need arose they would be readily available as the country was currently over reliant on expatriate labour.

“I'd say that ehm please do something for young people, maybe some sort of fund for those who wish to continue with school coz some people are unemployed coz they can't continue with their studies and you find they go up to the age of 27 still with only Form 5 not because they don't want to go to school but coz financially they don't have. And another thing for those who are like myself they must open up job opportunities for us coz they always say there are jobs coming to Swaziland but when you apply you find they are looking to employ within the ministry. And the system of nepotism is used whether you qualify or not they go for relatives most of the time” (F25St1).

This view was substantiated by another participant who felt government should do something about young people who do not want education. She felt that this created problems of supply in a skilled workforce as the old retire from their

positions. The result would be creating what she described as “a generation of the hopeless”.

“I wish government can do something about young people who are not interested in education. You wonder what will happen in the future who will be the workers if they don’t want school. Five in ten don’t want education, it will increase crime, prostitution, etc. and it’s very stressful. They take money from parents go to town to spend it and not pay school fees. The generation that comes after us is just hopeless. The way I grew up without knowing my dad made me to think about life differently I learnt to embrace him later in life and I didn’t question his absence. I was fortunate to grow up in a rural setting and many things were passing me by such that I didn’t have boyfriends and all the things youth do skipped me. But now that I’m older I have had a dream to assist young people and I registered an NGO named Girls without mothers, the mission is to empower young girls who are living without mothers and act as an advisor and counsellor. Girls have challenges and the needs they have, have grown bigger than just basic necessities” (F27Mb5).

Another participant was disheartened by treatment from colleagues at the workplace. She described the difficulty she faced when joining her organisation meeting up with unwelcoming workmates making it difficult to orientate with the work chores.

“Yah the difficulty is that when you come in with the degree and you find someone who doesn’t have a degree. And you come in at the same scale and expect that person to teach you the work it’s going to be a battle for him to cooperate. But if you come in slightly above in the salary grade then they

may cooperate. The difficulty is that there is no job orientation for new recruits so if you meet up with rude and difficult employees you end up not knowing the job coz you're scared to ask them as they will ask you what you were hired for if you still want them to teach you. So the work suffers coz this person is angry that you came in and you're now at same scale with them. As much as you're more educated than the person in his mind he thinks work is just routine and you should be able to do it if you have a degree. So they want to ridicule you that you don't know anything and they know, that it's the experience that counts more than the education at the end of the day. So that compromises your position, you remain unhappy and become less productive. Thus the motivation to go to work is reduced" (F29Nh15).

7.7 Limitations of the study

Firstly, the study by its nature is small scale and limited to; employed young people with tertiary qualifications, located in the major towns and cities of the four regions, for the reasons outlined in the methodology section. A better resourced future study would attempt to sample wider, drawing from across various categories of young people. It would incorporate a comparative perspective of urban and rural settings of the country, and sample a wider education diversity of participants.

Secondly, in Swaziland, youth specific disaggregated data (except in education and health) has not been collected, which makes it difficult to build generalisations on youth employment from a small sample size.

Lastly, even though the sample size limits making generalisations of findings to young people in the country. Nonetheless, the findings offer an opportunity for

comparison and making connections with other research on the lived experience of young people in the country.

7.8 Concluding comments

As a sociologist and an academic researcher I am interested in investigating the impact of socially constructed realities in shaping the lives of the affected populations. Growing up in a society that has expectations about life trajectories postulated in practices and stages of transition from childhood to adulthood creates tensions and feelings of uncertainty when these expectations are not met. Illuminating participants' perspectives on paths of transition to employment advances our understanding of the complexities of youth education, employment and development. It also exposes conflicting paths and values that participants base divergent actions on, while pursuing the common goal of sustaining livelihoods. Whilst employment provides independence, growth, stability and guaranteed income, a deeper insight is required on the elements that make it unpalatable and retarding to the development and prosperity of young people and the nation. This research has sought to give a voice to young participants to tell their stories about employment and consequently contribute to the sociological literature on this topic. Thus, the major aims of contributing to the limited scholarship and knowledge on the topic, and giving a voice to young people have been achieved.

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Footnotes

My notes from the Methodist Church, St Paul's Society, Central Swaziland Circuit,
Manzini, Entrepreneurship Seminar September 7, 2015 & October 24, 2015

My notes from the Methodist Church, St. Paul's Society, Central Swaziland Circuit,
Entrepreneurship Seminar September 7, 2015, Manzini, Swaziland

APPENDIX 1

Title: Employment and its implications on opportunities, constraints and challenges for young adults in Swaziland

I Interview Schedule

Opening

(Establishing Rapport) [Greetings] My name is Thandi Khumalo a PhD student at UKZN Pietermaritzburg campus. Give little bit of background on how participant was located and why they were chosen.

(Purpose) I am conducting research on Employment and its implications on young adults regarding opportunities, and the social entitlements it presents for young people. I hope to use this information in my PhD thesis and in subsequent publications. The information can better inform employers and policy makers on issues of young people's employment.

(Motivation) We will discuss your family and professional background, aspirations in life, strengths and weaknesses, and abilities. The major aim of this interview is to give an opportunity to young people to tell their own stories on employment and what it really means to them. It will present you with the opportunity to record your story and give you a voice in the discussion about employment. I would appreciate your participation in this research a great deal. The information from this interview will benefit you in that your story will be told and the publication of this research will inform policy makers and employers on young people's experiences in employment.

(Timeline) The interview will take 45 to 60 minutes. If you agree to participate I would like you to sign this consent form.

List of topics to be covered:

Transition (let me begin by asking you questions about your family and educational background)

II Body

Tell me about your family background.

Tell me about your educational background.

What skills/experience or abilities do you have?

Tell me about your work/professional background.

What are your work/professional goals in the next 5-10 years?

Describe your own understanding of career and/or employment.

Describe your own understanding of the expectations/outcomes of employment.

To what extent have these expectations been fulfilled for you?

What do you think your strengths are? Also describe your weaknesses.

Tell me about your life so far (achievements, failures & prospects).

Tell me about your biggest career achievements.

Tell me about your biggest career disappointments. How did you deal with them?

What are the skills you need to develop and advance your career?

What would be your advice to young adults in developing sustainable employment careers?

What would be your comment on the country's response to the employment of young adults?

III Closing

Summarise main points of the discussion to acquire ownership of discussion by participant.

I appreciate the time you devoted for this interview. Is there anything else you think might benefit me as I continue interviews on this topic?

I should have all the information I need. Would it be alright to call you if I have any more questions or points to clarify? Thank you again.

Social Sciences, College of Humanities,
University of KwaZulu-Natal,
Pietermaritzburg Campus,

Dear Participant

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

My name is Thandi Khumalo I am a Sociology PhD candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg campus, South Africa.

I am interested in learning about your experiences with employment as a young person. I am interested in recording your stories of employment; what it means to you, what it has done for you, how it has changed or contributed to your life experiences, what opportunities it has provided for you and what you view as potential areas for improvement in the general employment of young people. Your town has been sampled for my study. To gather the information, I am interested in you sharing your stories with me, and to facilitate that I have some questions to assist us in our discussion.

Please note that:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your inputs will not be attributed to you in person, but reported only as a population member opinion.
- The interview may last for about 45 minutes to 1 hour depending on how much you want to share.
- Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- You have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such an action. I will also give you two weeks after the interview to withdraw your participation in the study, after which information will be transcribed.
- The research aims at recording the stories of young people and their experiences with employment.
- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.
- If you are willing to be interviewed, please indicate (by ticking as applicable) whether or not you are willing to allow the interview to be recorded by the following equipment:

	Willing	Not willing
Audio equipment		
Photographic equipment		
Video equipment		

I can be contacted at:

Email: thandikhumalotf@gmail.com

Cell: +26876045210.

My supervisor is Professor Simon Burton who is located at the School of Humanities, Sociology Department, Pietermaritzburg campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Contact details: email: Burton@ukzn.ac.za Phone number: +27827173568.

You may also contact the Research Office through:

P. Mohun

HSSREC Research Office,

Tel: 031 260 4557 E-mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

APPENDIX 3



31 August 2015

Ms Thandi Fredah Khumalo 213571407
School of Social Sciences
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Ms Khumalo

Protocol reference number: HSS/0978/015D

Project title: Employment and its implications on opportunities, constraints and challenges for young adults in Swaziland

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received on 23 July 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)

/pm

Cc Supervisor: Dr S Burton
Cc Academic Leader Research: Prof Sabine Marschall
Cc School Administrator: Ms Nancy Mudau

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

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Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville