

University of the Western Cape



Exploring the risks and resilience experienced by Day Labourers at a hiring site in Cape Town.

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**Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Master of
Social Work, at the University of the Western Cape,**

Faculty of Community Health Science, Department of Social Work

Submission:

November 2018

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Definitions of key terms

Confidentiality is the protection of personal information (Hepworth, Rooney, Rooney, Strom-Gottfried, & Larsen 2010).

A **community** is a group of people who live in the same place or have particular characteristics in common (Blaauw, Pretorius, Schoeman, & Schenck, 2012).

An **employer** is a person who, or an organisation which employs people (Cihon & Castagnera, 2016).

Employment is the state of having paid work (Cihon & Castagnera, 2016).

An **investigation** refers to a formal or systematic examination or research (Oxford Dictionary, 2016).

A **labourer** is a person who performs unskilled manual work for wages (Laszlo, 2013).

Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or even significant sources of stress (Mosala, 2008).

Risk entails exposure to danger (Crush, 2010).

Ethnography is the study of people in their own environments, through the use of methods such as participant observation and face-to-face interviews (Maanen, 1988).

Research participants are people who take part in research studies.

ABSTRACT

Although the practice of day labouring can be traced back for centuries, it has become a steadily growing global phenomenon and has significant implications for the populations and economies of both developed and developing countries. In South Africa, the day labour market serves as a catchment area for the fallout from a formal economy which is unable to provide employment to all South Africans. The day labourers are often excluded from the benefits of modern societies, such as access to social services, opportunities for employment, and adequate incomes. This study took the form of a qualitative case study and made use of an ethnographic research design. The qualitative data was collected through the conducting of semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and by making use of photovoice, while the quantitative data was generated through the administration of a questionnaire. The triangulation of several sets of data ensured the trustworthiness of the findings. The research population for the study comprised the day labourers who gathered at a particular hiring site in Cape Town. The qualitative data was analysed by means of thematic analysis, while the quantitative data was analysed by means of the SPSS software package to generate descriptive statistics, which were represented graphically in the findings in the form of pie charts and bar graphs. Although there were inherent limitations in the data which was obtained, it nevertheless provided valuable insights into the plight of day labourers in South Africa.

Keywords: Day labourers, hiring sites, employers, risks, resilience, SDGs.

Acknowledgements

I am sincerely grateful to God Almighty, without Whom the completion of this thesis would not have been possible.

I wish to thank a number of people who supported me steadfastly throughout the writing of this thesis and helped me in a great many ways. I would like to render my heartfelt thanks to my supervisor, Professor Catherina Schenck for her support, patience, encouragement, guidance and expertise throughout the writing of this thesis. I also wish to thank the day labourers from all corners of Cape Town, who gathered at a hiring site in Ravensmead, for allowing a stranger, who later became a friend, to conduct my research study with them. I would like to thank my dear friends and guardians, Russell Davies and Selina Palm, for their unstinting support throughout my academic endeavours. You have been God-given parents in my life and I cannot imagine where I would be now without you. And the rest is history. I cannot thank you enough.

I would like also to extend my sincere thanks to Dr Tyanai Masiya for reading my work and providing constructive feedback. To my mother, I wish that you were here to see the results of my studies. May your soul rest in eternal peace. I wish to express my deep gratitude to my sister, Nyarai Matutu, for being my pillar of strength and for your moral support throughout my academic years. Special thanks go to members of the staff of the Department of Social Work and my colleagues, particularly Dr Minaar-McDonald, Dr Beytell, Mrs Davids, Mrs Brey, Mr Opperman, Dr Dykes, and Mrs Nukelelo for all of your support from my undergraduate years until this far. I would like to thank Dr Sherran Clarence, Mr Mtetwa, and Wenzokuhle Ncube, my colleagues at the Writing Centre and the Primary Health Care Department for their encouragement throughout the writing of my thesis.

My sincere gratitude goes to my friends and relatives, far and near, for all of their support: Musa Kika, Collen Goniwe, Lucky Teledi, Travor Chimani, Zvidzai Tapiwa, Shingirai Nyakabawo, Emily Matnjie, Fikile Matikica, Rufaro Magidi, Rodwell Kadzitonge, Ashraf Arendse, Ricardo, and Jonathan Cupido. To my pastor, Evangelist Masanga., thank you for encouraging me to further my studies and for introducing me to this prestigious institution.

I would like to express my deepest thanks to my family in Christ, the Rondebosch United Church (RUC). Without them, this country would not be a home away from home. I love you all so much. May God bountifully and richly bless you.



Dedications

I dedicate this thesis to my late mother, Violet Mpofu, and my God-given parents, Russell Davies and Selina Palm, whose ceaseless support and prayers encouraged me to complete my studies. You are wonderful blessings.



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Declarations

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and that I have not previously submitted it to any other university towards a degree. All of the sources which I have quoted have been duly acknowledged by means of references.



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Signature

#pendere

Date: 19/12/2018

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

1.1 Introduction and background

The term ‘day labourers’ refers to people, usually men, who gather on sidewalks, parking lots, near building supply stores, or other locations which enable them to be visible to potential employers, waiting to be hired for a day’s employment (Blaauw, Pretorius, Schoeman, & Schenck, 2012).

Day labouring is a form of informal employment. Although these workers sometimes work in the formal sector, they do so on a casual basis (Davies & Thurlow, 2010: 440). According to Toma and Esbenshade (2001), although the day labour market has probably existed since the Great Depression during the 1930s, it increased dramatically in size during the 1980s, owing to factors such as shifts in demographics, economic and technological developments, and political developments throughout the world. In addition, the rapid rise of the day labour market as a global phenomenon has also been influenced by the widespread scarcity of opportunities for employment throughout the world, particularly in developing countries such as South Africa. According to Statistics South Africa (Stats SA, 2018) the official rate of unemployment in South Africa stands at 26.7%.

Moberly (1987) contends that the day labour market in the world has become a growth industry in its own right. Contingent working arrangements are becoming increasingly commonplace in the United States, as the numbers of part-time and contract workers continue to grow. The growth of day labour contracting and contingent work in many parts of the world has resulted in no small part from the desire of companies to reduce the cost of inputs and increase production (Peck & Theodore, 2001). Hiring short-term employees every day enables companies to avoid

paying for the benefits which are extended to permanent employees, such as housing allowances and bonuses.

As the numbers of sites at which day labourers gather to wait upon the arrival of prospective employers and those of day labourers have increased, interactions with the owners of nearby businesses and local residents have also increased, some of which entail conflicts (Blaauw, Pretorius, Schoeman, & Schenck, 2012). Although these conflicts contribute to the risks to which the day labourers are exposed every day (Blaauw, Louw & Schenck, 2006), the stoical persistence which they demonstrate by standing at hiring sites such as street corners every day provides compelling testimony to their resilience. A significant number of day labourers in Cape Town are foreign nationals who, like their South African counterparts, are the sole breadwinners in their families (Reardon, 1997). Malinga (2015, p. 44) explains that as a result of significantly diminished opportunities for employment in their home countries, often owing to political strife and turmoil, people are obliged to emigrate to other countries in search of employment. Sterken (2010) found that the ranks of day labourers in Cape Town comprised not only South African-born men, but also many who were immigrants, with Zimbabweans being particularly strongly represented. Pretorius and Blaauw (2015) found that large numbers of Zimbabwean immigrants engaged in day labour work throughout South Africa. The apparent resilience of day labourers in South Africa could possibly be partially explained by the extents to which their families are financially dependent upon them (Louw & Schenck, 2006). To date, most studies which have been conducted concerning day labourers in South Africa have been quantitative in nature and have endeavoured to describe their socioeconomic conditions (Louw & Schenck, 2006). To the best of the knowledge of the researcher, this study is the first which has been conducted to

investigate the risks to which day labourers are exposed in Cape Town in South Africa and the resilience which they display in the face of them.

1.2 Problem statement

Day labourers constitute a highly marginalised population, with many people having limited options for employment owing to outsourcing, the closures of factories and businesses, discrimination in the workplace, and immigrant status (International Labour Organisation (ILO), 2001). As day labourers are informal workers, in most cases they are socially excluded from the benefits which societies extend to their citizens, such as access to appropriate social services and opportunities for employment and decent incomes. The constant fear of deportation among immigrants often provides supervisors and employers with the means to exploit desperately poor foreign workers and to intimidate them into accepting many types of abuse (Laszlo, 2013:114). The findings of researchers who have conducted extensive research into the phenomenon of day labouring in South Africa, such as Blaauw *et al.* (2006), have revealed several instances of abusive treatment of day labourers by employers. Abuses have included failing to pay employees, denying them breaks during their working days, and requiring them to work in unsafe conditions, thereby exposing them to significantly increased risks of sustaining work-related injuries.

The study is strongly aligned with some of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), namely:

- SDG 1, to end poverty in all its forms, everywhere
- SDG 8, to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment, and decent work for all.
- SDG 10, to reduce inequality within and among countries.

The study was conducted in order to obtain an accurate understanding of the depth of the poverty in which the day labourers lived, the nature of the risks to which they were exposed, and the resilience which they displayed in the face of the hardships which they encountered. The findings could assist social workers to guide policies and programmes to reduce poverty and to facilitate social inclusivity with respect to informal workers. The findings from previous research which was conducted by Theodore *et al.* (2011) in the United States revealed that the risks to which day labourers were exposed included exploitation by employers, the effects of being away from their families, living a harsh life on the streets, and unfavourable living conditions in poor and run-down neighbourhoods. Conversely, the findings which emerged from research which was conducted by Blaauw *et al.* (2010) in South Africa revealed that employers tended to require day labourers to work for longer hours without breaks than workers in formal employment and to pay them considerably less. Foreign day labourers, in particular, have limited access to facilities such as healthcare and the ability to exercise basic human rights such as to protection by the police, mainly owing to a lack of relevant legal documents. It is against the backdrop of these realities that the researcher endeavoured to assess and evaluate the risks to which the day labourers at a particular hiring site in Cape Town were exposed and the resilience which they displayed by listening to their voices.

1.3 Research question

What are the risks to which day labourers at a hiring site in Cape Town are exposed and how is the resilience which they display manifested?

1.4 Aim of the research

To investigate the risks to which day labourers are exposed in Cape Town

1.5 Objectives of the research study

According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouché, and Delport (2005:104), the term ‘objective’ refers to the desired outcome of a particular enterprise or endeavour. This research study was conducted in order to attain the following specific objectives:

- To investigate the risks to which day labourers are exposed at a hiring site in Cape Town and the resilience which they display.
- To investigate the risks to which the day labourers are exposed at their workplaces and the resilience which they display.
- To investigate the risks to which the day labourers are exposed in their living quarters and the resilience which they display.
- To investigate the social networks which the day labourers had formed in order to overcome the risks and hardships to which they are exposed.

1.6 Research methodology

The research will follow an ethnographic study design. Hence, the research will be making use of both the qualitative and quantitative research methods. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994: 106), qualitative research studies are conducted in order to obtain answers to research questions in real life settings by evaluating the subjective perceptions, opinions, and beliefs of individual participants. In qualitative research, researchers endeavour to make sense of the verbal data which they gather and from observations of the ways in which people interact. Data is usually

obtained from interviews, focus group discussions, and direct observations. Qualitative research methods enable researchers to obtain richly detailed descriptive data pertaining to the events, occurrences, or phenomena which their studies are conducted in order to investigate. Denzin and Lincon (2006), cited by Klenke (2008:7), define qualitative research as a research process which entails the use of a variety of empirical modes of enquiry, such as case studies, personal experience, introspective reflection, life stories, and interviews which generate descriptions of routine and problematic events and occurrences in the lives of individual participants (Creswell, 2009; Henning, Van Rensburg, & Smit, 2004; Klenke, 2008). As this study concerned the lived experiences of day labourers, a qualitative approach was considered to be more appropriate than a quantitative one. Quantitative studies are conducted in order to endeavour to explain phenomena by collecting numerical data which is analysed through the use of mathematic-based methods. The conceptual orientation of quantitative approaches concerns discovering relevant facts pertaining to social phenomena. Measurable data is gathered, analysed using numerical comparisons and statistical inferences, and presented in the form of statistical analyses. By contrast, qualitative research can be defined as a means of investigating and obtaining an understanding of the meanings which individual people or groups assign to particular social or human events, occurrences, or phenomena (Cresswell, 2009).

1.7 Research design

1.7.1 Ethnographic studies

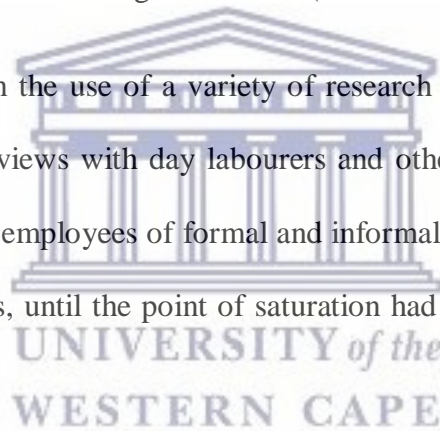
The research design took the form of an ethnographic study. Ethnography is the study of people in their own environments through the use of methods such as participant observation and conducting interviews with individual participants or groups of participants (Van Maanen, 1988)

and Babbie (2010). Ethnographic research is field-based, in that it is conducted in the settings in which people actually live, work, and function, rather than in laboratories, which permit researchers to control the elements of the behaviour which they wish to observe or measure.

Hoey (2014) maintains that ethnography can be equated with virtually any qualitative research project whose intent is to provide a detailed, in-depth description of everyday life and practice.

Geertz (1973) uses the term 'thick description' to describe the detailed and in-depth descriptive data which qualitative research methods yield. Ethnographic research designs also allow for a great deal of flexibility, as they do not require extensive pre-fieldwork designing and allow for changes which occur during the conducting of research (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983).

The data was collected through the use of a variety of research methods, such as observations and individual and group interviews with day labourers and other people, such as members of local communities, owners and employees of formal and informal businesses near the hiring site, and employers of day labourers, until the point of saturation had been reached and no new data was generated.



1.8 Research population and sampling

Polite and Beck (2004) define a sample as a subset of a population. Conversely, Creswell (2013) describes the population in research study as a well-defined collection of individual people, animals, or objects which are known to have similar characteristics. In addition, he distinguishes two types of research populations, namely, target populations and accessible populations (Creswell, 2009). Karlton, (1983), cited by Creswell (2009), defines a target population as the group of individual people, animals, or objects to whom or to which researchers desire to

generalise their conclusions. By contrast, an accessible population is a subset of a target population.

The research study was conducted at one hiring site in Cape Town, at which more than 50 day labourers gathered each morning and from which data was gathered for a broader national research project. The researcher made use of purposive convenience sampling to select the research sample at the site. Purposive or non-probability sampling entails the deliberate selection of research samples on the basis of the characteristics of a research population and the objectives of a particular study. Purposive sampling is also known as judgemental, selective, or subjective sampling (Babbie & Mouton 2008).

Babbie & Mouton (2008) explain that critical case sampling is a type of purposive sampling technique which is particularly useful in exploratory qualitative research, research which is conducted with limited resources, and research in which a single case or a small number of cases can be decisive in explaining a particular phenomenon of interest.

During April of 2017, the researcher participated in fieldwork for the National Day Labour Study in Cape Town. The database of hiring sites in Cape Town was used to identify a suitable site for this research study. The site and the participants were selected on the basis of the following criteria:

- It should attract both foreign and local South African day labourers.
- It should attract male day labourers.
- There should be a minimum of 50 day labourers at the site each day.
- The day labourers who were interviewed should be over the age of 18 years.

The adult day labourers were randomly invited to participate in the study through convenience sampling.

1.9 Procedures followed to collect the data

The data was gathered from interviews, direct observations, and the use of photovoice. Photovoice is a fairly new means of collecting data. According to Wang and Burris (2006), cited by Liamputtong (2010:197), photovoice is a process by means of which people are able to identify, represent, and improve their communities by means of a particular photographic technique. Photovoice permits a deeper understanding of the experiences of participants to be obtained than would be possible through the use of quantitative research methods. It entails the purposeful use of particular photographic images which are related to associated reflection questions. The use of photovoice in research method is informed by empowerment, feminist theory, and documentary photography (Vollman, 2008:406). As photovoice represents an effective means of advancing social justice through activism, it was ideal for this research study, as it permitted the day labourers to explain, in their own words, the hardships which they endured and the risks to which they were exposed, and also enabled the researcher to hear and record their unique expressions of resilience. However, the research participants will be men and the feminist perspective is used to note the societal connotations on gender and gender balance in heterosexual societies we are living. So the gender perspective is paramount in a research where human beings are involved because regardless of gender people have a say at the end of the day. The researcher used photovoice to photograph the hiring site, the workplaces of the day labourers, and the places where they slept.

The following research methods and instruments were used to collect the data:

- A questionnaire which enabled the researcher to gather data pertaining to the socioeconomic backgrounds of the day labourers.
- Recorded semi-structured interviews with day labourers, owners of local businesses and prospective employers.
- Recorded focus group discussions to gather in-depth qualitative data concerning the risks to which the day labourers are exposed and the resilience which they display.
- Observations: The researcher made field notes at the hiring site to record the interactions of the day labourers with one another, employers, owners of local businesses, and local residents.
- Photovoice: Disposable cameras and mobile phones were used to capture details of the social and geographical contexts in which the study was conducted.

1.10 Procedures followed to analyse the data

The qualitative data was analysed by means of thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006:6) explain that thematic analysis is used to identify patterns which emerge from raw data and to classify them into distinct themes. From a similar standpoint, De Vos *et al.* (2011) explain that the analysis of qualitative data refers to the categorisation, ordering, and summarising of data to obtain answers to research questions. By contrast, Babbie (2004) characterises the process as a non-numerical assessment of observations, through content analysis, in-depth interviews, and other qualitative research techniques, each with its own logic and techniques. As Creswell (2007:5) explains, thematic analysis permits comprehensive analyses of qualitative data to be formed by identifying and coding raw data into themes.

After he had completed the gathering of the data, the researcher carefully transcribed all of the interviews and read them in conjunction with the field notes, in order to gain an overall impression of the information which had been collected. After transcribing the audio recordings of the interviews, verbatim, the researcher translated the transcriptions which were written in isiXhosa into English, in order to make them understandable for readers who were not fluent in isiXhosa. Creswell (2009) recommends that researchers should commence their thematic analyses by reading the shortest and most interesting transcripts, reflecting upon their underlying meanings, and making notes concerning any points of interest which emerge. After he had subjected most of the data to this process, the researcher made lists of all of the topics of interest and clustered similar topics together.

When thematic analyses are performed in conjunction with the use of photovoice, the initial step entails identifying any features of the photographs which are particularly interesting or stand out. Once the features have been identified, photographs which display common features are grouped together, assigned names in accordance with the thematic headings under which they fall, and discussed in relation to the quantitative data. The qualitative data was analysed by following the steps which Braun and Clarke (2006) enumerate. The analysis is discussed in detail in Chapter Three. The quantitative data was captured by using MS Excel software and analysed by means of the SPSS software package.

1.11 Self-reflexivity

Nagata (2004:141) describes self-reflexivity as having an on-going conversation with oneself concerning what one is experiencing, while one is experiencing it. To be self-reflexive is to engage in this meta-level of feeling and thought, while at the same time remaining in the

moment. The life histories of individual people, their personal encounters, and their beliefs all contribute to the perspectives from which they view, comprehend, and interact with the world around them. Consequently, a sound understanding of self-reflexivity is crucial to evaluating data which reflects the subjective perceptions, beliefs, and opinions of individual people.

1.12 Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of the findings of qualitative research studies is evaluated against four specific criteria, namely, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The criterion of credibility is predicated upon an assessment of whether or not the findings of a particular study are credible in relation to all existing knowledge of the research topic. Conversely, transferability refers to the extent to which the findings could be generalised to other similar settings or target populations. Dependability refers to the stability of data over time and in changing conditions, while confirmability refers to the extent to which the findings could be corroborated by other researchers. According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), the context in which qualitative data is collected both defines the data and contributes to the way in which it is interpreted. For these reasons, the generalisability of the findings of qualitative research studies is limited. Glaser and Strauss (1967) explain that triangulation in qualitative research is accomplished by putting the same questions to different participants, collecting data from different sources, and using different methods to answer the research questions upon which individual studies are based.

Member checking is a means of establishing the accuracy which entails researchers asking participants to review both the data which has been collected by interviewers and the interpretations which researchers have assigned to the data (Dye, Schatz, Rosenberg, &

Coleman, 2000). Participants are usually enabled to the member checking process, as it provides them with opportunities to verify their statements.

1.13 Limitations of the study

The researcher concedes that his profile as a male foreign student could introduce a degree of bias in a qualitative research study, influence the quality of the data which is collected, and colour the observations which are made. In addition, as a long-time resident in Cape Town, it is possible that he may have subconsciously acquired local generally negative perceptions of the areas which are acknowledged to be the catchment areas for most day labourers. That also might influence his discussion the findings are not supposed to be generalised. The other limitation is that the data collection was done in one area which might give a biased outcome in relation to other day labourers on other sites. In addition, the study focus entirely on men which will give an impression that the researcher is gender bias and it is not the case. All day labourers at the site were men.

1.14 Ethical considerations

Edwards and Mauthner (2012:14) explain that the term ‘ethics’ in relation to professional research in the social sciences refers to the need for researchers to be acutely aware of the standards which apply to their conduct, their need to weigh up very carefully all decisions which have moral implications, and to be completely accountable throughout the conducting of their research studies. Ethical concerns arise in all types of research. The researcher was aware that his use of photovoice and photographs would need to be carefully monitored. The proposal to conduct the study was submitted to the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape for ethical clearance and registration. After

permission had been obtained to conduct the study, a pilot study was conducted in order to ensure that the language of the questionnaire was understandable, generated the type of data which was required, and the procedures for collecting the data were effective.

Before the participants agreed to take part in the study, they were provided with an information sheet and a consent form to sign once they had been informed of the nature of the study and what their participation would entail. The researcher took all reasonable measures to ensure that the participants were informed that their participation would be strictly voluntary and they would be within their rights to withdraw their participation at any time, without incurring penalties of any sort whatsoever, and that they were able to make informed decisions whether or not to participate. They were also informed that the information which they provided would be treated as strictly confidential and that it would not be possible to identify them from any published excerpts of their responses. Hepworth, Rooney, Rooney, Strom-Gottfried, & Larsen (2010) define confidentiality as the protection of personal information. Accordingly, all information which the participants provided, particularly sensitive and personal information, was properly safeguarded and not made available to anyone without their consent (Bless, Higson-Smith, & Hagee, 2006:143).

The principle of anonymity required the researcher to ensure that only a few other people, in their professional capacities, such as his supervisor, promoters, a translator, or an independent coder, were aware of the identities of the participants (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:472). Consequently, no names were revealed in the research report. The researcher was also acutely aware of his ethical obligation to protect the participants from any form of physical, psychological, or emotional harm.

1.15: The area in which the study was conducted

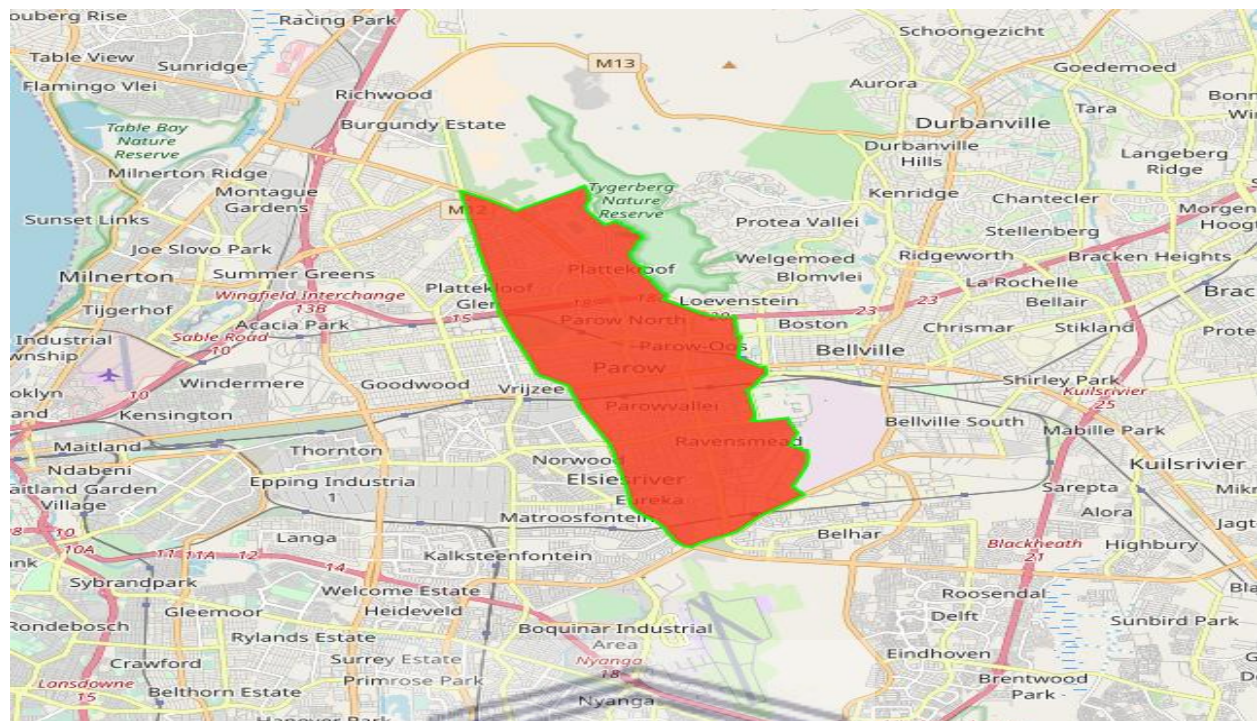


Figure 1.1: Location of Parow Valley

Source: Google map, 2018

According to Statistics South Africa (2011), Parow Valley has a population growth rate that stands at 0.15% of the total Cape Town population. The ward has an estimated population of 119 462 people and an unemployment rate of 34.1% (Stats SA, 2011). It covers an area of 27.1 square kilometres and has a population density 4 412 people per square kilometre. The average household size is 4.1 occupants per household. Although most of the members of the community live in brick houses, there are unrecorded backyard shacks in some households with asbestos or zinc roofing. According to the Western Cape Department of Social Development (2017), a number of privations are prevalent in the community of Parow Valley, including a lack of food security, high rates of unemployment, backlogs with respect to infrastructure, housing shortages,

generally low levels of educational attainment, a lack of adequate healthcare facilities, widespread conditions of degradation, and high incidences of infection with HIV or AIDS.

1.16 Structure of the thesis

Chapter Two takes the form of a comprehensive review of the relevant available literature pertaining to the research topic and covers research which has been conducted in South Africa and other countries. The chapter also provides an overview of the changing character of day labouring over time and the researcher endeavours to establish whether the changes which are discussed in the literature are universal or have occurred as a result of contextual factors. It also includes a discussion of the pull and push factors which influence the numbers of people who resort to day labouring, such as unemployment and a lack of the skills which are required to secure employment in the formal sector.

Chapter Three is devoted to a comprehensive discussion of the research methodology and covers the ethnographic approach which was adopted to conduct the study, the research design, and the procedures which were followed in order to collect and analyse the data. It includes a discussion of the research population, the research sample, and the sampling techniques which were used to select it, before proceeding to a discussion of the ethical standards which were rigorously upheld during the conducting of the study, and a reflection upon the role of the researcher in the research process.

Chapter Four takes the form of a presentation, a discussion, and an analysis of the quantitative findings in relation to the aim and objectives of the study. It also includes an assessment of the implications of the findings for the participants.

Chapter Five is devoted to a presentation, discussion, and analysis of the themes which emerged from the qualitative study and includes relevant verbatim excerpts of the interviews.

In Chapter Six the findings are summarised and the conclusions which were drawn from them are presented and discussed. Recommendations are made on the basis of the conclusions, in relation to policy and relevant interventions, to improve the lives and working conditions of day labourers. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future research.



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CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The term ‘day labourers’ refers to people, usually men, who gather on sidewalks, parking lots, near building supply stores, or wherever they can be visible to potential employers, waiting to be hired for short-term employment, performing tasks such as cleaning, gardening, loading merchandise on and off trucks, and construction (Peck & Theodore, 2001). This chapter provides a brief history of the phenomenon of day labouring throughout the world and endeavours to demonstrate the significance of the phenomenon, particularly within the contexts of South Africa and Cape Town. It also includes a discussion of the myths and misconceptions which surround day labouring and day labourers, in order to provide the study with a phenomenological basis which is appropriate to a qualitative study. Much of the discussion in this chapter concerns the roles which poverty and unemployment continue to play in determining the size of the day labour market in South Africa. The research topic also underscores the need to provide economic support to unemployed people in South Africa, particularly with respect to assisting them to make themselves employable.

Particular attention is given to the factors which contribute to the hardships which day labourers in South Africa endure and the risks to which they are exposed, along with the ways in which they are stigmatised and subjected to discrimination. The plight of day labourers in South Africa is also assessed in relation to specific Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which are of particular relevance to the research topic. The remainder of the chapter is devoted to a discussion of the theories which were used to construct the theoretical framework upon which the study was based. One of the principal purposes of the chapter is to demonstrate that the day labour market entails more than the mere availability of day labourers and the arrival of prospective employers

at hiring sites. Meaningful insights into the lives of day labourers could be instrumental in creating an awareness of their vulnerability and the adoption of a social development approach to the day labour market and its management.

2.2 Towards a definition of day labourers

Davies and Thurlow (2010) characterise day labouring as a classic example of informally employed workers who sometimes work in the formal sector, although they do so in these instances on a casual basis. As it has been explained, day labourers are workers who wait at locations such as street corners or other public places for opportunities to obtain work (Blaauw, Louw, & Schenck, 2007). Throughout the world, day labourers are employed on a temporary, day-to-day basis, normally in construction, light manufacturing, landscaping, and other similar industries. They find work either through temporary day labour agencies or by waiting at designated hiring sites for employers to arrive and to hire workers whom they need. Consequently, day labourers often do not know from day to day whether they will be successful in obtaining employment (Valenzuela, 2001). Theodore, Blaauw, Schenck, Valenzuela, Schoeman, and Meléndez, (2014) characterise day labourers as people who gather at informal hiring sites which are located in public spaces, to obtain work in construction, landscaping, and other forms of manual labour employment. According to Blaauw *et al.* (2006:458), one of the most visible signs of widespread unemployment is provided by day labourers who stand at the side of the road or on street corners every day, waiting for any form of employment which may become available to them.

2.3 A brief history of the day labour market

Looking for work in public spaces is a time-honoured tradition in many parts of the world. According to Valenzuela, Theodore, Meléndez, and Gonzalez (2006), day labour has been practised for centuries and dates back to medieval times. In the United States, the phenomenon of day labouring can be traced back to the 1780s, when common labourers such as cart men, scavengers, chimney sweepers, and wood cutters are believed to have needed to seek employment each day.

Valenzuela *et al.* (2006) explain that in New York and other ports in the North-East of the United States, parks and street corners provided a system for hiring dockworkers for the day or half-day, through seemingly arbitrary selections from gatherings of men. Men seeking work were obliged to gather on the docks each morning to await the call of a hiring foreman. After World War II, the phenomenon of Kelly Girls proliferated and today temporary workers constitute a significant proportion of the workforce of the United States (Valenzuela *et al.*, 2006). According to Valenzuela *et al.* (2006), although Kelly Girls were usually female temporary workers, the term became widely used for temporary workers, irrespective of whether they were employed by Russell Kelly Office Service or gender. In addition, on-call workers have long constituted a significant portion of the workforce of the construction industry in the United States. The findings of International Day Labour Survey (IDLS, 2006) which was conducted by Valenzuela, confirmed that day labourers are numerous and found throughout the world today.

According to Toma and Esbenshade (2001), although the day labour market probably existed since the Great Depression during the 1930s, the numbers of day labourers increased dramatically in many countries during the 1980s, owing to demographic shifts, changes in the

economies of countries, technological advances, and political strife and upheaval throughout the world. They also explain that day labourers have long histories in countries such as Greece and France and in the state of California in the United States, where sections of the public places were set aside for unemployed men to gather to be hired for day labour. Laszlo (2013:302) also emphasis the rapid growth of the day labour market during the 1980s by maintaining that although day labour has probably been practised in many countries in the world, it was not very common until the 1980s, owing to significantly increased urbanisation, particularly in the United States and the United Kingdom.

The rapid rise in the day labour market is also influenced by the general scarcity of opportunities for employment for particular segments of societies in countries throughout the world, particularly in developing countries such as South Africa (Theodore *et al.*, 2009). Although migration is not a new phenomenon in Africa, there have been significant increases in both the volume and velocity of international migration over the past five decades (Pringle, 2010). The findings of empirical studies suggest that decisions to migrate to another country are strongly influenced by economic factors, mainly with respect to opportunities for employment and increased wages (Todaro & Maruszko, 1987). There is evidence of diverging opinions concerning the likely origins of the day labour market if both ancient sources and modern researchers, such as Peck and Theodore (2001) are consulted. According to Peck and Theodore (2001:423), the re-emergence and growth of informal day labour hiring sites has been found in African countries such as Egypt (Zohry, 2002), Namibia (Gonzo & Plattner, 2003), and South Africa (Louw & Schenck, 2006; Blaauw, 2010). Recent academic and popular literature has documented the re-emergence of day labour in a diverse range of countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America (Valenzuela *et al.*, 2006; Blaauw *et al.*, 2006).

Theodore *et al.* (2014) characterise the day labour market as a highly unstable one which provides low and uncertain wages and few prospects for continuing employment. As a result, like a great many workers in the informal economy, day labourers, and their dependents tend to live in poverty (Blaauw *et al.*, 2006; Valenzuela *et al.*, 2006). Theodore *et al.* (2014) maintain that the United States and South Africa provide appropriate points of departure for answering questions pertaining to the risks to which day labourers are exposed and the resilience which they display in the face of adversity, against the backdrop of the enormous growth which has occurred in the day labour markets of both countries over the past two decades. The data which was collected in the day labour survey which Theodore *et al.* (2014) conducted reveals that an estimated 117,600 workers either seek work as day labourers or are employed in the capacity, whereas in South Africa, at least 45,000 day labourers congregate at more than 1,000 informal hiring sites. In both the United States and South Africa, the day labour workforce is almost exclusively male (Theodore *et al.*, 2014). According to Vakalisa (2005), the vast majority of day labourers in South Africa are young, which is a manifestation of the persistent unemployment and under-employment. The present rate of unemployment among the youth in South Africa stands at 59.3%.

2.4 Myths and misconceptions concerning day labouring

There are a number of common myths which surround day labour and day labourers. Although many are extremely inaccurate and misleading, they have nonetheless entered public discourse concerning the day labour market (Valenzuela, 2003). Peck and Theodore (2006) maintain that on the basis of more than 10 years of research, the general public needs to be made properly aware of the risks to which day labourers are exposed and the resilience which they are required

to display and that an acknowledgement of their lived realities needs to provide the basis for thoughtful approaches to appropriate social policy.

Myth 1: Day labour is confined only to large, immigrant-heavy cities. The National Day Labour Survey (NDLS, 2006) identified day labourers in 139 cities in 20 states in the United States. It also identified 487 day-labour hiring sites and surveys were conducted at more than half of them. From the findings of the survey, it was concluded that day labourers can be found in inner cities, rural areas, suburbs, or areas which are characterised by industrial growth. According to Valenzuela (2003), day labourers are found in cities as far apart in the United States as Atlanta, Hempstead, New York, Houston, Las Vegas, Phoenix, Portland, San Jose, and Seattle. The largest concentration of day labourers is in the West of the United States (42%), followed by the East (23%), the Southwest (18%), the South (12%), and the Midwest (4%) (Valenzuela, 2003). The main factor which contributes to the preponderance of day labourers in the West is its proximity to Mexico, as Mexico serves as a conduit for most immigrants from Central and Latin America. In South Africa, the findings of a study which was conducted by Blaauw, Pretorius, and Schenck (2016) also revealed that day labourers are to be found in both urban and rural areas, thereby confirming the findings of an earlier study by Blaauw (2010), which revealed that large numbers of day labourers worked in rural areas.

Myth 2: Day labour attracts only uneducated, illegal immigrants. According to the findings of a study which was conducted by Valenzuela (1995) in the United States, only a small percentage (6%) of the day labourers in his research sample lacked formal schooling. The remainder had been educated, either in the United States or in their home countries. Less than a quarter (22%) had received 5 years or less of schooling, while 30% had

attended school for 6 to 8 years and 42% 8 years or more. These findings accord with those of a study which was conducted by Blaauw *et al.* (2006) in Pretoria in South Africa, which revealed that significant numbers of day labourers were educated foreign nationals.

A common rallying cry among anti-immigrant right-wing groups in many countries is that as day labourers are illegal immigrants, hiring them or opening worker centres to assist them is also illegal (Valenzuela, 2003). According to the findings of the NDLS (2006), of the order of 25% of all day labourers in the United States are legally in the country, while a further 11% have adjustments to their immigration status pending. In addition, the findings also revealed that an estimated 78% of the immigrant day-labour workforce had learnt of informal hiring sites after emigrating to the United States. The finding directly contradicts the frequent claims of right-wing factions that day labour and hiring sites together constitute the alleged magnet which draws immigrants to the United States. The notion that immigrants would travel thousands of miles, pay thousands of dollars, and risk their lives crossing a desert to seek employment on street corners is inherently and self-evidently preposterous (Blaauw *et al.*, 2006). A more accurate assessment might contend that immigrants are attracted to the United States by the promise of opportunities for employment which do not materialise, thereby obliging them to gather at hiring sites. Similar conclusions could be drawn concerning the migratory patterns of immigrants from sub-Saharan African countries to South Africa.

Myth 3: According to Valenzuela (2003), the third myth concerns the common perception that day labour is good, safe work. Although the anti-immigrant right claims that immigrant day labourers are stealing opportunities which citizens covet (Valenzuela, 2003), the findings of relevant research studies confirm conclusively that day labour is hardly lucrative, abuses are

rampant, and the work is sporadic (Kerr & Dole, 2001). In their assessment of the safety of the conditions under which day labourers worked in the city of Cleveland in the Midwest of the United States, Kerr and Dole (2001:16) revealed that an estimated 70% of day labourers worked in unsafe working environments.

In addition, as the lengths of any working assignments which they do receive are generally short, usually one day, most day labourers are obliged to earn a living from the assignments which they manage to accumulate, albeit one which is nearly always below the poverty line (Valenzuela, 2003). Apart from their meagre earnings, day labourers are regularly subjected to many forms of abuse at the hands of employers, which, in turn, expose them to a correspondingly large range of risks. Camou (2009) expands upon this theme by explaining that day labourers often accept employment without adequate knowledge of their prospective employers, which often results in abusive behaviour on the part of employers, such as failing to pay them. Both Blaauw *et al.* (2006) and Theodore *et al.* (2009) make similar assessments, maintain that even if day labourers are able to negotiate their wages with prospective employers, doing so does not necessarily guarantee that they will be paid at the end of the day for their work.

According to Valenzuela (2003), almost half of the day labourers who were surveyed in the United States reported at least one instance of wage theft, in the form of either non-payment or underpayment during the 2 months prior to being surveyed, and 44% were denied food or water breaks. Instances of violence were also found to be common. Although keen competition to obtain work sometimes resulted in fights breaking out among day labourers, it was also learnt that employers and passers-by took their frustrations out on them. Many of the day labourers reported that they had been subjected to violence, that employers had taken advantage of them,

belittled their performance at work, or paid them less than the wages which they had been contracted to earn.

In addition, harassment of day labourers while they waited for work by the local police and municipal officials was also found to be common. According to Peck and Theodore (2001), large numbers of day labourers throughout the world have reported having been insulted by either category of authorities or having been refused service by local businesses. Some have reported having been insulted or arrested by the police, and, in some instances, having been deported. Day labourers who work as temporary construction workers are particularly vulnerable, as they seek work in an industry which is widely known for its high rates of injuries (Valenzuela, 2003). Day labourers are often hired to perform dangerous tasks, with little meaningful enforcement of the health and safety laws of the countries in which they work.

Myth 4: It is widely assumed that day labouring is a new phenomenon (Valenzuela, 2003). By contrast, as it has already been emphasised, standing at street corners and other public spaces to wait for work is a time-honoured tradition in the United States and other countries throughout the world. According to Valenzuela (2003), the phenomenon of day labouring has existed for centuries and dates back to medieval times. Since at least the mid-1800s, shape-up sites in New York and other cities in the world provided a system for hiring dockworkers for the day or half-day by means of apparently arbitrary selections from gatherings of men and women. Under this casual labour system, day labourers who sought work were required to gather on the docks every morning to await the ‘shape-up’ call from a potential hirer (Peck & Theodore, 2001).

Myth 5: Demand for day labour is fleeting and day labouring represents a mainly underground phenomenon. This assessment has connotations of illegality and the unenforceability of rights

and relevant labour laws by the police and other government agencies. By contrast, the phenomenon of day labouring is ubiquitous, to be found in neighbourhoods and street corners throughout the world, and day labourers' activity, while unregulated, is an everyday occurrence, and well-known to city officials (Kerr & Dole, 2001). From a similar standpoint, Peck and Theodore (2001) contend that the changes which are taking place in day labour markets in countries throughout the world tend to encourage the belief that day labouring has no history and is growing primarily as a result of significantly increased inflows of unauthorised immigrants. According to Theodore *et al.* (2014), a more truthful assessment would hold that throughout the world day labouring is predicated upon the complex interaction between the supply of and the demand for labour, patterns of industrial change, the boom in residential construction and home improvement, and increased migration.

According to Blaauw *et al.* (2006), because opportunities for formal employment in the global economy are declining steadily, workers are increasingly turning to the informal economy in order to find employment. Hammond, Bowen, and Cattell (2016:989) maintain that the difference between self-employment and formal employment is manifested in the behaviour of some who seek work in the informal sector to display the tools of their trades, notices concerning their skills, and the numbers of their mobile phones, which is indicative of a contractual relationship between self-employed workers and potential employers. Plant closures and mass layoffs continue to plague many cities, particularly old industrial centres, which have witnessed the widespread loss of employment in manufacturing and also in ancillary industries. For many workers in cities with declining prospects for employment, day labouring provides a foothold in the urban economy. According to Martin (2014), the proliferation of day labour hiring sites is also the result of changing patterns of immigration, particularly outside of traditional ports of

entry of any country. Labour migration to urban areas has increased dramatically and day-labour hiring sites have provided a mechanism for organising the supply of immigrant labourers for the construction industry and other sectors of the economy (Blaauw, 2010).

2.5 Day labourers in South Africa

As very little research has been conducted concerning day labourers in South Africa, the names of the same small group of researchers are inevitably cited on several occasions. Unemployment continues to represent one of the most significant adverse macroeconomic trends in South Africa. The resulting combination of high demand for employment and limited opportunities for obtaining it have resulted in ever-increasing numbers of people turning to the informal sector. The assessment is ably borne out by Whiteford and Van Seventer, (1999), who maintain that the high levels of unemployment in South Africa oblige steadily increasing numbers of people to venture into the informal sector to work in capacities such as day labourers, in order to earn incomes. The persistently high levels of unemployment and the severity of absolute poverty in South Africa have been well documented. Consequently, many people are effectively forced into the informal economy where they engage in a variety of survivalist activities (Blaauw, Pretorius, Botha, & Schenck, 2013).

According to Harmse, Blaauw, and Schenck (2008), the behaviour of day labourers throughout South Africa tends to conform consistently to particular norms, irrespective of the cities or towns in which they are to be found. Blaauw *et al.* (2016) explain that as a consequence of the grim prospects of obtaining formal employment in the South African economy, both illegal and authorised foreign immigrants are finding the informal economy to be an increasingly vital source of economic opportunities and income. Crush (2011:16) maintains that the growth in

irregular labour migration has been accompanied by a corresponding growth in immigrant labourers finding employment in the informal sectors of the economies of the countries to which they have migrated. According to Theodore *et al.* (2014), the most striking difference between the day-labour workforces of the USA and South Africa lies in their compositions, in terms of race and nationality. They observe that in South Africa, the day-labour market is made up mainly of black and coloured members of the population. They contend that differences which are to be found concerning the nationalities of day labourers in the United States and South Africa raise significant concerns pertaining to the dynamics which prevail within the day-labour markets of these countries, and also questions concerning differences in the types of risks and hazards to which the two workforces are vulnerable (Theodore *et al.*, 2014). Although South African-born workers predominate in the day-labour market of South Africa, that of the United States is made up mainly of foreign immigrants. In South Africa, the trend does not appear to be entirely static, as Blaauw *et al.* (2016) found that the immigrant population of day labourers appeared to be growing significantly in Tshwane, on the basis of differences which were found between the findings of studies which were conducted in 2007 and 2015.

According to Blaauw *et al.* (2012), immigrants are among the most vulnerable members of any society, particularly in developing countries. Deumert, Inder, and Maitra (2005: 304) explain that they are effectively uncoupled from the social support structures and traditional safety nets which had been available to them in their home countries. The findings of research which Blaauw *et al.* (2012) conducted among foreign day labourers in Tshwane in South Africa revealed that immigrant workers are often subjected to expressions of racism, xenophobia, and various forms of discrimination in their adopted countries. Negative perceptions and sentiments tend to become even more pronounced in times of economic downswings and the resultant

growing unemployment in the countries to which the workers have migrated (Pringle, 2010). According to Blaauw *et al.* (2012), in developing countries such as South Africa, the informal sector often serves as a catchment area for the fallout from a formal economy which is unable to provide employment to all who seek it. In this pool of mainly unskilled labour, the likelihood of a return or a transition to the formal economy is very limited, as the existing levels of human capital can be eroded very quickly (Blaauw et al, 2006).

As Lewis (2003) explains, the formal sector encompasses all work which is performed in normal working hours and with regular wages. In addition, income taxes are levied on the incomes which are generated in the formal sector. The informal sector is the part of the economy of a country which is neither taxed nor monitored by any form of government. Revenues which are earned in informal economies are not included in the gross national products (GNP) and gross domestic products (GDP) of individual countries (Lewis, 2003). Other economic activities which can be characterised as falling within the informal sector are black markets, which are considered to operate within shadow economies and underground economies, and day labourers. Although informal sectors account for significant portions of the economies of developing countries such as South Africa, they are often stigmatised as being troublesome and unmanageable. By contrast, Lewis (2003) maintains that the informal sector provides vital economic opportunities for the poor and has been expanding rapidly since the 1960s. According to Carr and Chen (2001), integrating the informal economy into the formal sectors of developing countries needs to be accomplished through the formulation and implementation of appropriate policies.

A distinctive characteristic of the day-labour markets of South Africa and other countries in the world is the lack of employment contracts or benefits for day labourers, although in many cases they perform work for employers who operate in the formal sectors of their countries. Day

labourers are usually paid in cash, are vulnerable to exploitation, and lack stable employment and incomes (Theodore *et al.*, 2014).

As the numbers of sites at which day labourers gather to wait for employers to arrive and the numbers of day labourers have increased, there have been corresponding increases in incidences of conflicts with the owners of nearby businesses and local residents (Blaauw *et al.*, 2012). The conflicts represent but one facet of the unpleasant and dispiriting conditions under which day labourers are required to display sufficient resilience to enable them to survive (Blaauw *et al.*, 2006). According to the expanded definition of unemployment, which includes discouraged workers, the unemployment rate stands at 36.6%, a small increase from the already alarmingly high 36.4% for the first quarter of 2017. In addition, applying the expanded definition of unemployment to the youth below the age of 25 years yields a shockingly high rate of 67.4% (StatsSA, 2017).

According to Statistics South Africa (2018), the unemployment rate subsequently decreased to 26.7% in the fourth quarter of 2017 from 27.7%. The number of unemployed fell by 330 000 to 5.88 million and the number of employed declined by 21 000 to 16.17 million. The average rate of unemployment in South Africa was 25.52% from 2000 to 2017, reaching an all-time high of 31.2% in the first quarter of 2003 and a record low of 21.50% in the fourth quarter of 2008 (StatsSA, 2008). The rate of unemployment among the youth of South Africa decreased to 51.10% in the fourth quarter of 2017, from 52.20% in the third quarter of 2017. The average rate from 2013 to 2017 was 51.91%, reaching an all-time high of 55.90% in the second quarter of 2017 and a record low of 48.80% in the fourth quarter of 2014 (StatsSA, 2017). The percentages for unemployment among the youth need to be understood in relation to principal considerations:

- People from 14 to 35 years of age comprise the youth of South Africa.
- Day labourers are generally relatively young, with most falling into the age group from 20 to 45 years.

Blaauw *et al.* (2006) estimate that there are nearly 1000 places in South Africa from which people are hired and that a minimum of in the region of 45 000 men, most of whom are black and either South African or from other African countries, stand at these sites every day, seeking work. The numbers of day labourers tend to vary from site to site. Inequalities in levels of socioeconomic development among regions and areas of individual countries are found throughout the world. South Africa is no exception with respect to this trend and the country is characterised by an uneven distribution of economic activities (Blaauw *et al.*, 2006).

In South Africa, Blaauw, with various teams of researchers, has conducted several surveys concerning day labourers. One took the form of a longitudinal study, which was conducted over 10 years in Tshwane, and the most recent was a national survey, whose findings were published in 2016. Two highly significant findings emerged from the studies. The first was that the foreign component of the day-labour workforce in Tshwane had increased from 12% to 55% over 11 years. The second was that the economic circumstances of both South African and foreign day labourers had deteriorated significantly (Blaauw *et al.*, 2016). From the longitudinal survey it emerged that Zimbabwe had consistently supplied the largest numbers of foreign workers to the day-labour market of Tshwane, had 8%, 33%, and 50% of the foreign day labourers in 2004, 2007, and 2015 respectively. Mozambique is the second-largest source of day labourers (Theodore *et al.*, 2014). The findings of the most recent study reveal that the estimated numbers of hiring sites and day labourers in Tshwane has increased dramatically, from in the region of 70 hiring sites and 2420 day labourers in 2004 to an estimated 150 hiring sites and 4240 day

labourers in 2015 (Blaauw *et al.*, 2016). It also emerged that over the same period, the proportion of foreign immigrants among the day labourers in Tshwane had increased from approximately 12% in 2004 to 55% in 2015, after peaking at 60% in 2007.

According to Blaauw *et al.* (2006), spatial disparities in unemployment have existed for decades, both within individual countries and throughout the global economy. Empirical studies have demonstrated that there is a geographical or spatial coincidence between levels of unemployment and levels of gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (Suedekum, 2005: 165). Studies have also demonstrated that the disparities in the spatial patterns of unemployment closely resemble the core-periphery structure of regional GDP per capita. Rates of unemployment tend to be low in rich core regions, in which populations, production and income are concentrated, while high rates are usually found in small and economically peripheral regions (Suedekum, 2005:160; Lopez-Bazo, 2006; Artis, 2005).

Levels of unemployment in South Africa also reveal marked spatial disparities among the nine provinces of the country. In 2004, the provinces of North West (39.5%), KwaZulu-Natal (37%), Limpopo (34.1%) and Gauteng (34.1%) had the highest levels of unemployment, while the Western Cape (18.6%) had the lowest. Data from 2004 has been cited because it represented the most recent available data for making comparisons concerning regional GDPs in South Africa (StatstSA, 2005). The high rate of unemployment in Gauteng and the finding that very few day labourers find work in the province of Limpopo could plausibly be attributed to the relatively short distance between Gauteng, the industrial heartland of the country, and Limpopo, and the general paucity of opportunities for employment in Limpopo. In addition, as Harmse *et al.* (2008) explain, migration from rural to urban areas constitutes one of the factors which contributes to increases in the sizes of the populations of some provinces and decreases in those

of others. There is also a general trend for people to migrate to cities which are perceived to offer many opportunities for employment.

2.6 Day labourers in Cape Town

Very little research has been conducted concerning day labourers in Cape Town. Cape Town was included in the national study which was conducted by Blaauw (2010) and the qualitative study which was conducted by Malinga (2015) in Cape Town is a valuable source of insights and data pertaining specifically to the phenomenon in Cape Town. The factors which determine where day labourers stand are the availability of potential employers, the degree of access which potential employers have to day labourers, and the visibility which individual sites afford.

Many hiring sites in Cape Town are located close to garages, traffic lights, intersections, or open fields. According to Hammond *et al.* (2016), although the day labourers who gather at locations such as roadsides in the hope of finding employment in South Africa comprise a diverse range of groups of immigrants from many southern and central African countries, Zimbabwean men tend to predominate. Black people who are not South African citizens are not included in the definition of black in the Employment Equity Act (RSA, 1998; Hammond *et al.*, 2016).

2.7 Poverty among day labourers in South Africa

A symbiotic relationship exists between unemployment, low levels or a lack of education, health, culture, and poverty. Not only is unemployment a significant driver of poverty, but it also serves to reinforce poverty by precluding the possibility of improved circumstances (Grange & Zumla, 1999). One of the many adverse consequences of poverty is poor health, which affects the overall well-being of day labourers and their families, as it does that of all poor families. Grange and Zumla (1999) maintain that poor people suffer not only from economic poverty, but also

from poverty with respect to human resources. They are deprived of education and resources which would enable them to attain adequate levels of health and well-being. Apart from the political will to enforce appropriate socioeconomic policies, the government needs to find ways to ensure access to opportunities for employment, particularly for people who lack education and skills. SDG 8 underscores the responsibility of the government in this respect.

As day labouring work requires people to move from their homes to hiring sites in the hope of being hired for the day, transport costs may be incurred. Valenzuela (2001:199) provides a comprehensive assessment of the effects of unemployment upon poverty. He maintains that the higher the rates of unemployment are in particular countries, the higher is the likelihood that the countries will be peopled by large numbers of poor people and communities. By contrast, he also maintains that the relationship between unemployment and poverty can be exaggerated or misleading in some instances. He explains that there are different types of unemployment, such as voluntary unemployment, which does not automatically imply that people who are voluntarily unemployed are necessarily poor, but rather that they are not willing or prepared to work.

Folke *et al.* (2010) conclude from their investigation of the dynamics of poverty in South Africa that although there is no simple solution for eradicating it, strategies can be formulated and implemented to reduce it significantly. Economic growth has thus far failed to benefit those who are most in need of the benefits which are usually ascribed to achieving economic growth. Solutions which have been suggested for reducing poverty include improved service delivery and the development of infrastructure through decentralised local governance, the provision of social grants, the redistribution of assets such as land, and investment in education (Government Gazette,). Although some of these solutions would have only short-term effects, strategies such as investment in education are implemented with long-term benefits in mind. A lack of basic

education is one of the principal factors which oblige people to resort to working as day labourers (Blaauw, 2010). Folke *et al.* (2010) cite widespread HIV infection in communities as a constraint to reducing poverty in a sustainable manner, because research has demonstrated that the effects of HIV-related illness and the deaths of breadwinners result in drastically reduced incomes for affected households and a correspondingly reduced ability among their members to cope with illness.

Poverty also exposes people to other risk factors such as pollution, risky sexual behaviour, low levels of awareness concerning hazards to health, a lack of basic healthcare services, and a lack of potable water and adequate sanitation. Substance abuse among day labourers was found to be a highly prevalent form of risky behaviour at one hiring site in Cape Town. As substance abuse impairs the health of people, it has profoundly negative implications in terms of aggravating poverty and reducing human productivity (Murray, 2010). Poor health also imposes enormous burdens upon the economies of individual countries. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) (2013), tuberculosis alone absorbs US\$12 billion from the incomes of the world's poorest communities every year, which results in massive strain upon national budgets and patterns of expenditure.

Murray (2010) suggests that effective measures to reduce poverty in developing countries could significantly reduce the numbers of people who are obliged to resort to day labouring. He maintains that countries should prioritise alleviating poverty by channelling the flow of resources from high- income to low-income countries, through strategies which effectively combat both poverty and unemployment. He contends that the designing of strategies to reduce unemployment is hampered because policies pertaining to the relationship between poverty and unemployment remain unclear. As a result, interventions continue to be concerned more with

service delivery than alleviating poverty as a strategy for reducing unemployment. By contrast, in some cases the urgency of the need for immediate relief and intervention precludes the sustainability of the measures which are taken. Providing economic support to the poor needs to be viewed from this perspective.

2.8 Economic support as a solution

Hart (1973) characterises unemployment as a driver of impoverishment. He explains that as household assets become depleted and income and assets are lost, consumption decreases to levels which are below the minimum needs of households. He calls for policies pertaining to health, employment, income, and human rights policies which protect households from all costs which are incurred from ensuring their basic well-being. He maintains that preventing diseases is central to controlling them. At the same time, he contends that it is imperative that those who are tasked with formulating policy should recognise the effects of household poverty and unemployment upon the ability to control diseases and devise measures to protect households from sinking further into poverty owing to illness.

There is widespread general consensus that poverty undermines the ability of people to obtain employment. Poverty also impedes the ability of people who are poor to find employment because they cannot afford to pay for transport to locations where employment may be available. The findings of relevant research demonstrate conclusively that financial constraints constitute a significant obstacle to endeavours to reduce unemployment in South Africa (Lutge, 2014). As economic interventions could provide a means of overcoming the obstacle, Lutge (2014) conducted a study to investigate the effects which economic interventions had upon unemployment. The findings of the study revealed economic interventions by the government significantly reduced unemployment.

There has been a considerable amount of debate in South Africa concerning the merits of providing social welfare and social protection in the form of economic support to poor and unemployed people (Government Gazette, 2017). Concerns have been expressed that if people are provided with these forms of assistance, they will behave in ways which ensure that they continue to benefit from the grants. By contrast, the need for the Old Age Grant, disability grants, and the Child Support Grant is not usually a matter for debate (Kirst-Ashman, 2003).

The findings of studies have revealed that the grants which have been mentioned are usually used to benefit not only the children or the elderly on whose behalf they are received, but rather to support entire households (Lutge, 2014). Researchers have contended that as the sharing of grants is an almost universal phenomenon in South Africa, those who formulate and implement policy pertaining to them should be aware that the material benefits of grants or cash transfers are distributed throughout the household, as it would be unimaginable for beneficiaries to keep the grants for themselves in their impoverished households. Lutge (2014) suggests that if the amounts which financial assistance programmes provide were larger, the likelihood of improving the lives of other members of impoverished households would be significantly increased. As they are relatively small, sharing them is likely to result in neither the beneficiaries of grants nor their households benefiting significantly from them.

Researchers such as Lutge (2014) have referred to the ‘deserving poor’, a term which is used to denote poor people who deserve to receive social assistance from the state. Categories of deserving poor include children, the elderly, and the disabled. It has been suggested that there are others who may be poor, but not sufficiently poor to warrant assistance from the government. The assessment raises serious concerns in South Africa, where opportunities for formal employment are steadily decreasing and people are unable to work in order to meet their basic

needs (StatsSAfrica, 2016). Although social grants have become a crucial means of survival for many, they are not accessible to all, but rather confined to those who have been classified as being 'deserving' cases and falling into specific categories.

The complex interrelations of poverty and unemployment are further exacerbated by the high prevalence of HIV. In South Africa, people who are infected with HIV have access to social assistance if their CD4 counts are below 350 cell/mm³. Daftary (2012) contends that policies which contain provisos of this type neglect the financial burdens of poor and unemployed people and the responsibilities from which they are unable to escape.

2.9 Factors which affect day labourers and the day-labour market

2.9.1 Socioeconomic factors

Social and economic factors such as poverty, poor education, and a lack of the skills which make people employable play a significant role in determining whether people find themselves in the ranks of the employed or the unemployed. In the case of unemployed people, money to pay rents and rates is likely to be redirected to meeting other needs (Kagee, 2005). Maintaining good health inevitably entails expenses, including the cost of transport and child care when people need to seek medical attention, often owing to poor nutrition, as a direct consequence of poverty. Kagee (2005) explains that the competing demands of responsibilities such as work and family life and the stress which is associated with poverty and difficult circumstances are likely to result in defaulting with respect to payments which do not enable them to meet their immediate basic needs.

Levels of social support play a significant role in enabling people to cope with the various negative effects of long spells of unemployment (Blaauw *et al.*, 2007). Unemployed men often

view their present circumstances as reflecting a loss of social status. As they could be likely to avoid contact with friends as a result of feelings of shame, their potential for receiving social support is inevitably diminished as a consequence (Gonzo & Plattner, 2003). Social resources reduce the negative consequences of stressful events and can help to maintain the physical and psychological well-being of individual people (Gonzo & Plattner, 2003:26). In the case of day labourers, as they are often separated from their immediate families for long periods of time, it is necessary to determine the extents to which they form social support groups in order to cope with the hardships which they encounter in their everyday working lives (Blaauw *et al.*, 2007).

The findings of a study, which was conducted in South Africa by Blaauw (2010), concerning the socioeconomic conditions in which day labourers in Pretoria lived, revealed that their own socioeconomic status and that of the households and communities in which they lived were all extremely low. Unemployment was particularly rife in areas which were characterised by high levels of inequality, irrespective of the circumstances of individual households. Although the findings suggested that there was a strong correlation between poverty and engaging in day labouring, the relationship has not yet been sufficiently thoroughly researched. By contrast, it could be concluded that socioeconomic status was a reliable indicator of poverty in South Africa.

2.9.2 Psychological factors

A lack of psychosocial support and encouragement from families and friends has been found to contribute significantly towards a lack of self-esteem among day labourers (Hagee, 2005). Valenzuela (2010) maintains that low self-esteem and a lack of self-efficacy often stem from insufficient support and encouragement from families and friends, as people are often prone to have poor perceptions of themselves in the absence of positive reinforcement. The findings of

the research which was conducted in Pretoria by Blaauw *et al.* (2006) suggested that the relationships which individual people had with their families and friends were the most significant, owing to the tendency of people to form their perceptions of themselves in relation to how they perceive that they are perceived by those to whom they are closest.

2.10 Levels and differentials with respect to wages

Orthodox human capital theory suggests that paying wages reflects making investments in human capital (Baldacci, Inglese, & Strozza, 1999). The levels of education which individual people attain and the amounts of training which they receive while they are working both represent significant investments in human capital (Gao & Smyth, 2010). General theories concerning wage determination are insufficient to describe the most pertinent factors which influence the earnings of immigrants (Baldacci *et al.*, 1999). In order to obtain a realistic and relevant understanding of the wages of immigrant workers, it is necessary to study their post-immigration activities and assess their wages in relation to them (Skuterud & Su, 2008). Chiswick (1978) made a significant contribution in this respect, concerning the ways in which immigrant workers integrate into the local labour markets of their host countries. He found that there was a strong positive correlation between increased rates of growth in the incomes of immigrant workers and the lengths of their stays in their host countries.

The continuous migration of foreign workers to South Africa has not been well received by many indigenous people. The prevailing ‘curb-side’ opinion at the time of the 2007-08 survey whose findings were published by Schenck, Blaauw, and Viljoen in 2012, was that foreign day labourers were willing to work for much less than their South African counterparts (Schenck *et al.*, 2012). One South African day labourer was quoted in 2008 as saying ‘These *makwerekweres* are spoiling the employers by charging R20 per day when we charge

R100' (Schenck *et al.*, 2012). *Makwerekwere* is a local derogatory slang word for foreigners, especially illegal immigrants (Blaauw *et al.*, 2012). Blaauw *et al.* (2012) found that although this sentiment was prevalent to a certain extent in Tshwane, it was not necessarily prevalent in other parts of South Africa.

2.11 Stigma and discrimination

In South Africa, poverty has traditionally been associated with black people (Vakalisa, 2009), owing to the socioeconomic ravages which were wrought by the policies of the apartheid regime. The highest percentages of unemployed people in South Africa are also found among black people (StatsSA, 2016). By contrast, researchers whose work concerns social policy reject the notion that black people constitute the only racial group which can be characterised as being poor, as the compositions of all socioeconomic classes in post-apartheid South Africa and in Cape Town, in particular, are multiracial in character. The most predominant racial groups in the province of the Western Cape are coloureds and whites, by comparison with the other provinces of South Africa, in which blacks are predominant (StatsSA, 2016).

According to Gonzo and Plattner (2003), rating levels of poverty entails more than mere racial semantics. They maintain that several different social dynamics interact to determine social classes. Stigma, discrimination, and cultural beliefs are social manifestations which deter people from seeking formal employment and consequently contribute to the emergence of informal labour markets such as the day-labour market.

As it is widely acknowledged that the stigmatisation of people on the basis of the racial groups to which they belong usually has severely negative effects upon their self-esteem (Deacon, 2009), people who could find formal employment either delay or never seek employment in the formal

sector. Deacon (2009) classifies stigma into three principal types, namely, anticipated stigma, lived experience of stigma, and self-imposed stigma. From their experiences of the society in which they are obliged to function and their understanding of the ways in which black people are generally perceived in some quarters, day labourers sometimes assume that they are stigmatised or believe that they are likely to be stigmatised. In some instances, perceived stigmatisation stems from the actions of others. In these instances, people who perceive that they are stigmatised become withdrawn owing to feelings of unworthiness which result from the social status which is assigned to them by others. According to Abney (2011), stigmatisation is a form of violence which affects individual people and their social networks by isolating individual people and setting them apart from others. Stigma of any form has severely negative effects upon people and their ability to cope in their lives. If it not understood and effectively neutralised, its adverse effects can severely impair the psychological, physical, and mental well-being of people.

Court-Wright and Turner (2010) conducted an in-depth investigation of the phenomenon of stigmatisation. They explain that when a particular trait or characteristic of an individual person is singled out by others as being undesirable, the person concerned is likely to internalise the experience of being socially ostracised or shunned, only for the experience to manifest itself in feelings of shame, self-loathing, and guilt. In many cases, the person attempts to compensate by altering his or her behaviour to conceal the trait or characteristic which others hold to be undesirable, which can ultimately result in low self-esteem. Both Vakalisa (2009) and Gonzo and Plattner (2003) maintain that although economic, social, and psychological factors are often the principal drivers of stigmatisation, geographical and cultural factors can also influence the ways in which particular populations subject people to stigmatisation (Court-Wright & Turner, 2010). Ignorance in populations can also result in people who appear to be strange or different being

stigmatised. According to Court-Wright and Turner (2010), there are communities which believe that poverty is a punishment from a divine power for wrongdoing. Consequently, poor people are stigmatised by these communities, whose superstitious members are unwilling to associate with anyone who has failed in life and attracted punishment in the form of poverty.

2.12 Day labour and gender

There is substantial evidence to demonstrate that there are high levels of unemployment among both men and women in low- and middle-income countries such as South Africa (Jiménez-Corona, 2006). Gender inequality is a significant determinant of the social contexts of exposure to the outside world, vulnerability, and opportunities for employment. Gender differences in social interactions in traditional societies are often evident in behavioural patterns which entail men socialising more outside of their homes than women, sometimes with people who are likely to provide them with opportunities for employment. By contrast, cultural norms in traditional societies often require their female counterparts to spend most of their time in and around their homes (Atre, 2004). Understanding the role of gender in employment-seeking behaviour permits valuable insights be obtained into how socially conferred meanings influence social responses (Atre, 2004; Vlassoff & Moreno, 2002). In this study, the experiences of men are investigated and evaluated in order to determine the social dynamics of gender in the day-labour market.

The types of tasks which categories of employment entail in most cases determine the genders of those who seek employment (Atre, 2004). As the findings of surveys of day labourers which have been conducted throughout South Africa reveal, women do not participate to any significant extent in day labouring. Culturally-based perceptions undoubtedly contribute to the gender distributions which have been found. For black people from traditional communities, work such as construction, loading and off-loading heavy goods, carpentry, and harvesting are considered to

be the sole preserve of men. By contrast, the findings of the research which Valenzuela (2006) conducted in the United States and Mexico revealed that significant numbers of women participated in the day-labour market. In these instances, women tended to perform tasks such as babysitting, house cleaning, filing papers, and others which are generally perceived to be less physically demanding than manual labour. According to Atre (2004), cultural beliefs concerning the role of women in their homes and communities make it difficult for them to seek employment as freely as men do. Owing to their social vulnerability, they are often likely to seek employment only if they are divorced or left as single parents, either upon the deaths of their husbands or if their husbands are no longer able to provide for their families. According to Jiménez-Corona (2006), unemployment, a lack of formal education, and low levels of literacy may also contribute to the factors which tend to discourage women from seeking employment. Although the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (2005) stipulates that males and females should have equal access to opportunities for employment, to a large extent gender and cultural beliefs continue to determine the scope of work which is performed by either gender. Gender also affects the ability of individual people to cope with others at workplaces (South African Department of Labour, 2007). Domestic workers could be considered to work as day labourers in some instances, but they usually follow different procedures for obtaining employment, although some have taken to gathering at particular locations in towns and cities.

2.13 The Sustainable Development Goals (SGGs)

The aims of this study accord with those of specific Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are intended to be achieved by 2030. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have superseded the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were articulated in the United Nations Millennium Declaration of 2000. The SDGs were accepted by the member states of the

United Nations in 2015. The United Nations Declaration affirmed that every individual human being has the right to dignity, freedom, equality, and a basic standard of living which provides freedom from hunger and violence and encourages tolerance and solidarity (United Nations, 2015). The SDGs have set concrete targets and indicators for reducing poverty, in order to grant the rights which are enumerated in the Declaration to all human beings.

The SDGs as formulated by the UN (2015) emphasise three specific areas of concern, namely, human capital, infrastructure, and social, economic, and political human rights, with the aim of raising living standards. Objectives in relation to human capital include nutrition, healthcare, including combating child mortality, HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, and improving reproductive health, and education. Objectives pertaining to infrastructure include ensuring universal access to safe drinking water, energy, modern information and communication technology, increased agricultural outputs through the adoption and use of sustainable practices, improved transportation, and protecting the environment. Objectives concerning human rights include the empowerment of women, reducing violence, giving a political voice to all, ensuring equal access to public services, and increasing the security of property rights. The goals were formulated with the intention of increasing the human capabilities of people and providing them with the means to live productive lives. The SDGs emphasise that as the policies of each nation for achieving them should be tailored to the specific needs of its people, most suggestions in relation to policy are general (SDGs website, 2015).

Three specific SDGs are of particular relevance to any study of the day-labour market in South Africa: SDG 1, with its emphasis upon ending poverty, SDG 8, with its commitment to promoting sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full productive employment, and decent work for all, and SDG 10, which is committed to reducing inequalities. This research

study was conducted in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of poverty in South Africa, particularly with respect to the risks to which day labourers are exposed and the resilience which they display. It is hoped that the findings will enable social workers to guide the crafting of policies and programmes which are dedicated to reducing poverty and ensuring social inclusivity for informal workers. As many of the day labourers in Cape Town are foreign nationals who are the breadwinners in their families (Reardon, 1997), their resilience may result from necessity, as their families are dependent upon them to put food on the table (Louw & Schenck, 2006).

Clearly articulated initiatives and interventions are most likely to attract funding to achieve the SDGs. SDGs prioritise interventions, establish obtainable objectives with useful measurements of progress, despite the inherent difficulties which measurements entail, and serve to increase commitment and participation by the developed world in reducing poverty throughout the world. Prioritising interventions enables developing countries with limited resources to make appropriate decisions concerning how their resources are allocated. Global commitment to achieving the goals significantly increases the likelihood of success and it is widely acknowledged that SDGs are the most broadly supported targets for reducing poverty in world history.

2.14 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework upon which this study was based was informed by resilience theory, the strengths-based approach, and interpretive theory.

2.14.1 Resilience theory

According to Warthington & Scherer (2004), resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or even significant sources of stress. The concept of

resilience draws upon past work in the area of psychology in which resilience is conceptualised not as an individual trait or characteristic, but as a dynamic process in the lives of people who encounter adversity or significant hardships (Walker, Anderies, Kinzig, & Ryan, 2006). Resilience is conceptualised by Tedeschi & Calhoun (1995) as an ability or tendency to perceive painful experiences constructively. Resilience can be described as an ability to regain equilibrium and functionality after a traumatic event. For the purposes of this study, traumatic, threatening, or stressful events refer to the harsh experiences to which day labourers are subjected at hiring sites and workplaces and the stress which they experience as they try to ensure their own survival and that of their families, on the small incomes which they earn. Day labourers also experience stress owing to the risks to which they are exposed when they sleep in the bushes and on the streets and the harsh working conditions which they frequently encounter, with little support and few safety nets.

Neimeyer (1994) suggests that people construe events in order to be able to anticipate thematically similar events in the future. In the case of day labourers, who have no option but to continue in their present circumstances, anticipating negative experiences could have profoundly negative effects upon their resilience. Their understanding and experience of each hardship or setback are determined by its disruptiveness and the threat which it poses to their functionality. Consequently, they are likely to experience and respond to each event in differing ways and to assign correspondingly differing meanings to them.

2.14.2 The strengths-based approach

According to Saleebey (1992), strengths-based practices in social work endeavour to assist people by enabling them to make optimal use of their self-determination and strengths. He emphasises

that the adoption of strengths-based approaches and the application of strengths-based practices is founded upon philosophy which conceptualises individual clients as resourceful and resilient in the face of adversity.

Strengths-based approaches endeavour to identify the strengths, abilities, and potential of individual clients, rather than the problems, deficits, or pathologies which preclude them from functioning in an optimal manner (Saleebey, 1992). Theorists such as Cohen (1999), Rapp (1992), and Saleebey (1992) all maintain that a strengths-based perspective is not a model for practice, but rather a systematic bringing together of particular principles, ideas, and techniques. It also provides a change of paradigm, away from being concerned with perceived defects to the strengths of individual people.

Strengths-based practice is a collaborative process between the person who is receiving support in the form of social work services and those who supply the support, in order to achieve an outcome which draws upon the strengths and assets of the recipient of support (Pulla, 2017). In this study, the strengths-based approach was used to evaluate the strengths of the day labourers in the research sample and their support systems. Hammond *et al.* (2010) explain that teaching self-awareness and assertiveness and enabling people to develop their interpersonal relationships and communication skills enables people to acquire strength, hope, and solutions, as opposed to motivating them to capitulate to problems and feelings of hopelessness. Day labourers tend to be afflicted by the psychosocial effects of poverty, severe stigmatisation, and exploitation at the hands of employers (Mellins & Mellins, 2013). Consequently, it should fall to social workers and community workers to use their professional skills and knowledge to assist day labourers to identify and optimise their strengths through life skills programmes (Mbedzi, Qalinge, Schultz, Sekudu, & Sesoko, 2015). Through interventions which enable people to develop appropriate life

skills, social workers are able to help vulnerable and abused people to regain and develop their strengths (Kurian & Kurian, 2014). Training in life skills would enable day labourers to attain their goals and achieve a measure of independence in their daily lives (Pulla, 2017).

2.14.3. Interpretive theory

Interpretive theory emphasises obtaining an understanding of particular events, occurrences, or phenomena, through the ways in which people interpret their surroundings. Consequently, it endeavours to understand, rather than explain human behaviour. The construction of knowledge entails not only the observation of phenomena, but also includes the ability to assess and describe the intentions, beliefs, and values of people, the reasons for their behaviour, to divine meanings, and also to achieve an adequate level of self-understanding (Henning, 2004:20). Consequently, interpretive theory refers to a communal process which is informed by participating practitioners and endorsed by others. Henning (2004:20) maintains that people understand events, occurrences, or phenomena through interpretive mental processes which are influenced by and interact with individual social contexts. Discourses become the means by which researchers perform analyses to determine how people make meaning in their lives (Henning, 2004:20). Consequently, researchers are required to discern the conceptual frameworks which shape the meanings which the participants in their studies assign to the events, occurrences, or phenomena in which they are interested.

Interpretive theory encourages the gathering of different types of data from a range of different sources and using different methods to analyse it, in order to ensure the validity of the findings (Henning 2004:20). Grix (2010) maintains that despite the use of scientific methods in research, the interpretivist paradigm underscores the need to develop a separate science, by acknowledging that human beings cannot be comprehensively studied solely through the use of the techniques

which are used to study the natural world. Grix (2010) propounds the concept of symbolic interactionism, which holds that human beings attach meaning to symbols in order to understand their actions and interactions.

Interpretive research is fundamentally concerned with meaning and it seeks to understand how the members of societies develop definitions of concepts which are relevant to their experience and how they perceive the events, occurrences, and phenomena of which their worlds are composed (Henning, 2004). The interpretive paradigm does not concern itself with searching for broadly applicable laws and rules, but rather seeks to perform descriptive analyses which emphasise acquiring a deep interpretive understanding of social phenomena. (Henning, 2004:21).

The relevance of interpretive theory to this study lies in its recognition that human beings are not passive actors in social, political, and historical affairs, but have particular capabilities which enable them to judge, perceive, and make decisions. The theory acknowledges that any event or action is explained in terms of several different interacting factors, events, and processes. It also recognises the inherent difficulty in achieving complete objectivity from individual people who attribute different meanings to events, occurrences, or phenomena (Henning, 2004). Consequently, it tends to concern itself more with individual cases, rather than with discovering universal laws or making predictions.

2.15 Summary and conclusion

This chapter has endeavoured to provide an overview of the origins of day-labour market and day labourers and to justify why the phenomenon of day labouring constitutes a public and social concern in South Africa and other countries throughout the world. Concerns such as stigmatisation and discrimination, poverty, and gender have been discussed in relation to the

ways in which they affect human living standards. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been discussed in order to emphasise that the conditions in which day labourers are required to live are unacceptable by world standards. The socioeconomic status of day labourers in South Africa and other countries provides eloquent testimony to the social ills which result from abject poverty.



CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter takes the form of a detailed discussion of the research methodology which was developed in order to conduct the study. It covers the approach which was adopted, the research design which was developed, the methods which were used to gather and analyse the data, the research instruments, and the ethical standards which were rigorously adhered to at all times during the conducting of the study. It commences with a re-statement of the research question and the aim and objectives of the study.

3.2 Research question

What are the risks to which day labourers who gather at a hiring site in Cape Town are exposed and how is the resilience which they display manifested?

3.3 Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of the research study was to investigate the risks to which day labourers who gather at a particular hiring site in Cape Town are exposed and the resilience which they display. The objectives are summarised as follows:

- To investigate the risks to which day labourers are exposed at a hiring site in Cape Town and the resilience which they display.
- To investigate the risks to which day workers who gather at a hiring site in Cape Town are exposed at their workplaces and the resilience which they display.

- To investigate the risks to which day labourers who gather at a hiring site in Cape Town are exposed in their living quarters and the resilience which they display.
- To investigate the social networks which day labourers who gather at a hiring site in Cape Town had formed in order to overcome the risks and hardships to which they are exposed.

3.4 Research approach

3.4.1 Qualitative research

According to Guba and Lincoln (1994: 106), qualitative research represents a means of finding answers to research questions pertaining to the subjective perceptions, beliefs, and opinions of people concerning particular events, occurrences, or phenomena in which researchers are interested. Qualitative research is a process which entails researchers endeavouring to make sense of verbal data which was gathered through interacting with participants in interviews and forums such as focus group discussions, and also through observations of the ways in which they interact with one another. Qualitative research methods enable researchers to collect richly detailed, highly descriptive data concerning research topics. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), qualitative research permits far more in-depth analyses of emotions, behaviour, and attitudes to be performed than would normally be possible if quantitative methods were used. In addition, the openness of qualitative methods such as interviews and focus group discussions encourages participants to expand upon their responses, thereby contributing to the richness of the data which is obtained.

Denzin and Lincon (2006, cited by Klenke, 2008:7) characterise qualitative research as a process which entails the studied use of a variety of empirical methods, such as case studies, personal

experience, introspective reflections, life stories, and interviews, in order to obtain descriptions of both routine and problematic events and occurrences in the lives of individual people, through the meanings which they ascribe to them (Creswell, 2009, Henning, 2004:126; Klenke, 2008). On the other hand, quantitative methods endeavouring to explain phenomena by collecting numerical data which is analysed by using mathematically-based methods. A quantitative component was incorporated into the research design for this study to permit relevant factual information to be obtained concerning the social phenomenon the researcher endeavoured to investigate. The research population comprised all of the day labourers who gathered at the hiring site at which the study was conducted and all of the people with whom they interacted, such as employers, members of the local community, and owners of local businesses.

3.5 Research designs

According to De Vos *et al.* (2011), a research design is a logical structure for a scientific enquiry which is developed by researchers before they commence collecting their data. It is not only a plan for conducting a study, but it also serves the function of ensuring that the data which is obtained enables the researcher concerned to answer the research questions which had guided the conducting of his or her study (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). Babbie and Mouton (2008) emphasise the function of a research design as a working blueprint of a research project which is drawn up prior to commencing it. Research designs specify the methods and techniques which are to be used to select participants who would be most able to provide the information which is required for particular studies and the research methods which are to be used to obtain the data.

The researcher made use of an ethnographic research design to conduct the study. As it was explained in Chapter One, ethnography is the study of people in their own environments, through

the use of methods such as direct observations, focus group discussions, and individual interviews. According to Gabbay (2004), ethnographic research designs make use of standard research methods such as observations, semi-structured and structured interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis to collect data. The data for the quantitative component of the study was collected through the administration of a questionnaire. The data was used to develop a socioeconomic profile of the day labourers at the hiring site in Ravensmead at which the study was conducted (Van Maanen, 1988; Babbie & Mouton, 2008).

Babbie & Mouton (2008) explain that ethnographic research designs are developed in order to conduct field-based research studies in the settings in which people actually live, work, and function, rather than in laboratories, in which researchers control the elements of the behaviour which they wish to observe or measure. The adoption of ethnographic approaches also allows for a great deal of flexibility, as the research designs which they require do not require extensive pre-fieldwork formulation and allow for changes which may become necessary during the conducting of research studies (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). As Geertz (1973) explains, ethnography has two possible meanings, each of which depends upon whether the word is used as a count noun or an uncountable noun. An ethnography is a graphic and written depiction of the culture of a particular group, while ethnography is the systematic study of people and cultures. According to Geertz (1973), ethnographic field studies reflect both the indigenous knowledge of particular cultural groups and the systems of meanings which its members ascribe to events, occurrences, and phenomena in the world around them.

A feminist perspective was also incorporated into the research design, in order to preclude the possibility of gender bias. According to Olivier and Tremblay (2000), feminist orientations in research prioritise the generation of new knowledge and driving social change. Feminist

perspectives permit the conducting of revolutionary research while continuing to acknowledge that all research takes place in patriarchal societies. In addition, feminist perspectives are characterised by diversity and apply feminist principles to all relevant considerations in research studies. Reardon (1993) holds that the ultimate goal of feminist methodologies is to unearth and eliminate domination and suppression which are based upon socially constructed groupings of gender and other overlapping categories, such as sexual orientation, race, and class. Feminist approaches to research also permit more open-minded evaluations and appraisals to be made than those which are permissible through adherence to dominant frameworks which are often narrow and embody distorted, generally held perceptions which emphasise domination and subordination (Olivier & Tremblay, 2000). Feminist research endeavours to transform these misleading suppositions to allow more truthful accounts of the lives and experiences of those who are not favoured by present distributions of power and wealth to emerge. Although the site which was used by the researcher to conduct the case study upon which this thesis is based was frequented by males, it has been acknowledged that women also participate in day labouring, by performing tasks such as babysitting and cleaning houses.

3.6 Methods employed to collect the data

According to Babbie and Mouton (2008), collecting data entails a process of gathering and measuring information concerning variables which are of interest to particular researchers, in an established systematic manner which enables them to answer the research questions which they have formulated, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes. Research which is carried out in all fields of scientific endeavour, including those which fall under the physical and social sciences, entail the collecting of data. Although individual disciplines determine the methods which are used to collect data, the emphasis upon ensuring strict adherence to the procedures which are

considered to be optimal in each discipline for collecting the type of data which is required remains the same for all (Babbie & Mouton, 2008). The sections which follow describe the procedures which were followed in order to collect the data.

3.6.1 Sampling

Before the gathering of data can commence, qualitative researchers need to establish the research populations from which the people who will comprise their research samples will be drawn. Selecting research samples entails researchers designating particular populations which are of interest to them and attempting to select a subset of a predetermined size from them (Bailey, 2008:82). The subset should adequately represent the population from which it has been drawn with respect to the characteristics in which the researcher who selects it is interested. A representative sample should ensure that the information which is gathered from a subset provides meaningful insights to be gained into the population which is under investigation. In the case of this study, the research population comprised the day labourers who gathered at the hiring site on each of the days during which the study was conducted. The site attracted from 20 to 50 day labourers each day.

The researcher made use of availability or convenience sampling to select participants to provide the quantitative data through the administration of the questionnaire and purposive sampling to select the participants from whom the qualitative data was obtained. According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012), convenience sampling or availability sampling is a specific type of non-probability sampling method which relies upon collecting data from members of research populations who are willing and available to participate in studies. Availability sampling makes it relatively easy to collect data in a short space of time and it is useful for conducting pilot studies and generating hypotheses (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). The disadvantage of convenience

sampling is that it is highly susceptible to selection bias and influences which are beyond the control of researchers. It was necessary for the researcher to go to the hiring site early each morning to meet potential participants, in order to do so before prospective employers arrived. The questionnaire contained structured questions, in order to generate quantitative data pertaining to considerations such as the ages and genders of the participants, the numbers of days each week they gathered at hiring sites, the numbers of day labourers who gathered at hiring sites each day, and the amounts which they were paid per day.

As Black (2010) explains, purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling which entails the deliberate selection of participants on the basis of characteristics of populations in which individual researchers are interested and the objectives of their studies. Saunders *et al.* (2012) expand the definition by pointing out that purposive sampling is also known as judgemental, selective, or subjective sampling. Palys (2008) maintains that purposive sampling is virtually synonymous with qualitative research. Qualitative researchers are not usually interested in obtaining insights into central tendencies in relation to large groups of people. In most cases purposive sampling is used to investigate the perceptions, beliefs, or opinions of individual people or groups concerning the events, occurrences, or phenomena with which particular research topics are concerned and to determine why people feel as they do (Black, 2010). Purposive sampling is one of the most cost-effective and time-effective sampling methods available. It is the only appropriate method available if there are only limited numbers of sources of primary data. In the case of this study, as it took the form of a case study which was conducted at one hiring site in Cape Town, sources of primary data were indeed limited. The researcher made contact with a day labourer whom he met at a hiring site, who introduced him to other day labourers, who, in turn, agreed to take part in the study. In each instance, the researcher

introduced himself and explained the purpose of the study, prior to conducting the interview. In the cases of participants who were not available to be interviewed owing to having been hired, alternative arrangements were made and the interviews were conducted at more convenient times.

As it was explained in Chapter One, the hiring site and the participants were selected on the basis of the following criteria:

- The site should attract both foreign and South African day labourers.
- The site should attract male day labourers.
- There should be a minimum of 50 day labourers at the site each day.
- Day labourers who were interviewed should be over the age of 18 years.
- Adult day labourers were randomly invited to participate in the quantitative study through convenience sampling.

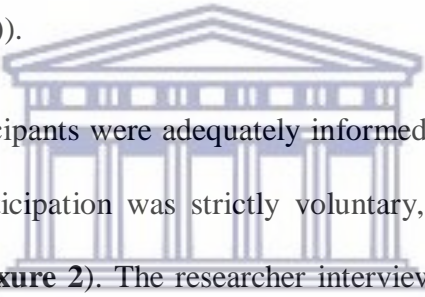
3.7 Research methods and instruments

The sections which follow take the form of discussions of the research methods and instruments which were used to gather the qualitative and quantitative data.

3.7.1 Interviews

Interviews can be individual, in-depth, exploratory, semi-structured, or unstructured, depending upon the requirements of individual qualitative studies (Symon & Cassell, 2004). Interviews were chosen for this study in order to enable the researcher to investigate the research topic from the subjective perspectives of the participants and to understand their perceptions of their lives as day labourers. Semi-structured interviews are conversations between interviewers and interviewees which are guided and directed by interviewers in order to yield the information

which they require (Fylan, 2005). Fylan (2005:66) explains that semi-structured interviews are particularly well suited to endeavouring to establish why people have particular perceptions, beliefs, and opinions concerning the events, occurrences, or phenomena which are studied in qualitative studies because they make use of open-ended questions. The open-ended nature of semi-structured interviews extends to interviewers a considerable degree of flexibility to probe for in-depth information. The interviews which were conducted in this study were designed to allow the interviewees room to express themselves and talk openly about their experiences and their perceptions of the risks to which they were exposed and the hardships which they endured. The questions which guided the semi-structured interviews were prepared in advance (**Please refer to Annexure 1(A) and (B)**).



In order to ensure that the participants were adequately informed concerning the purpose of the study and aware that their participation was strictly voluntary, they were required to sign a consent form (**Please see Annexure 2**). The researcher interviewed individual participants and groups. Before he commenced each individual interview, the researcher introduced himself and explained that if the interviewee saw a potential employer, he would be free to terminate the interview immediately. All of the individual interviews were completed.

In order to conduct the group interviews (**Please refer to the audio CD and transcript in attached Annexure 5**), the researcher requested the participants to gather outside a shop on the street corner on which the hiring site was located. Although the participants were also told to leave if they saw potential employers, as the researcher arrived at the site at 06:00 each morning, before prospective employers began to arrive, it was not necessary for any of the participants to leave before the interviews had been concluded. The participants in the group interviews were requested to speak freely, but also to give other members opportunities to speak. The group

sessions were successful, because none of the participants felt neglected or deprived of opportunities to speak from his own perspective. Although the researcher was born in Zimbabwe, as he has resided in South Africa for a long time, he is able to speak and understand isiXhosa. As some of the participants were not fluent in English, the researcher was obliged to converse with them in isiXhosa, which put them at their ease. The researcher subsequently translated the interviews into English in the written transcript (**Please see attached Annexure 3: Transcript**).

3.7.2 Narratives

Narratives were used in order to obtain data from participants who wished to narrate their experiences as day labourers and the hardships which they endured. The process required the researcher to initiate the narratives by raising particular topics and then refraining from interrupting the participants as they narrated their stories. Denzin and Lincoln (2011:422) emphasise that researchers need to pay close attention to the linguistic practices of individual narrators, such as their choices of words, repetition, hesitation, and laughter. All have great potential for revealing the feelings and attitudes of participants towards the subjects which are discussed and emotions which discussing them evokes. The researcher also endeavoured to ask probing questions concerning the experiences of day labourers, in order to determine the extents to which members of the local community, owners of local businesses, and employers accepted or stigmatised them.

3.7.3 The questionnaire

Primary quantitative data was collected through the administration of a questionnaire (**Please see attached Annexure 6**), a permissible means of gathering data in ethnographic studies (Bless,

Higson-Smith, & Hagee, 2006). The design of the questionnaire was informed by the format which was used in studies which were conducted by Blaauw *et al.* in 2010, 2015, and 2017. The researcher elected to incorporate a questionnaire into the study because it was deemed to provide the most suitable method for generating primary data to describe the research population and provide data in the same form for all respondents (Louw, 2007; Blaauw *et al.*, 2010). Fylan (2005) maintains that questionnaires represent the most affordable means of gathering quantitative data, an assessment which is echoed by Mears (2012), who explains that apart from being inexpensive, questionnaires also provide a very practical means of gathering quantitative data.

3.7.4 Observation

Two types of observation are practised in qualitative research, namely, simple observation and participant observation (Babbie & Mouton, 2008:293). In simple observation, the researcher is positioned outside of the field in which the behaviour in which he or she is interested occurs and observes the actors, whereas in participant observation, the researcher becomes a member of the group which he or she is studying. According to Mears (2012:165), observation is rarely a stand-alone technique. It usually constitutes the first phase of a research project and the methods which are subsequently used to gather data are determined by the information which the initial observations provided. In this study, observation was used to collect non-verbal data such as information pertaining to the environment, the actions of participants, physical characteristics, and non-verbal communication. The researcher made extensive use of observations of non-verbal communication, particularly body language, as it provided an expressive barometer for reflecting the feelings and attitudes of the participants towards the subjects which were discussed. The researcher went to the hiring site each day and spent a great deal of time among the day

labourers, observing their day-to-day activities. He paid careful attention to how they presented themselves to prospective employers and endeavoured to adopt their *patois*, in order to gain their trust, reduce suspicion, and increase their willingness to divulge information.

3.7.5 Photovoice

Photovoice is a fairly new means of collecting data in research studies. Wang and Burris (2006, cited by Liamputtong, 2010:197) define it as a procedure which enables people to identify, represent, and improve their communities through the use of a specific photographic technique. The use of photovoice permits a deeper understanding to be obtained of the experiences of participants than would be possible through the use of quantitative research methods. It entails making effective use of particular photographic images which are related to reflection questions concerning qualitative research topics. The use of photovoice as a research method represents a dynamic fusion of empowerment, feminist theory, and documentary photography (Vollman, 2008:406).

As photovoice can, in a sense, be regarded as an effective means of engaging in activism for social justice, it represented an ideal means of enabling day labourers to have a voice to raise their concerns in relation to their dire socioeconomic circumstances and the pariah status which is generally accorded to them in local communities. The data which was gathered by using photovoice was used to depict the hiring site at which the study was conducted. Photographs were taken at the hiring site by the participants, who forwarded them to the researcher through the WhatsApp mobile application. In order to adhere to the ethical standards for conducting research in the social sciences, the researcher asked the participants to consent to the taking of the photographs. The participants were requested to sign a separate form (**Please see attached**

Annexure 4). The photographs were taken randomly and the researcher requested that the participants should not pose for photographs, but rather continue with their business. The researcher needed to ensure that those participants who had not consented to be photographed were visible in the photographs. Those who were concerned that they might have been photographed were permitted to view the photographs which had been captured by the camera and any images which were unacceptable to any of the participants were destroyed, leaving the researcher with a set of photographs which was nonetheless an accurate reflection of the research sample.

3.8 Methods employed to analyse the data

The qualitative data which had been collected was analysed by means of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is used to analyse qualitative data by identifying patterns within it and assigning themes to clusters of similar data (Braun and Clarke, 2006:7). Thematic analysis is often used by qualitative researchers as an initial means of analysing their data, because it enables them to become sufficiently conversant with the data to subject it to other types of analysis subsequently (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Braun and Clarke (2006) explain that although there is not universal consensus concerning specific guidelines for conducting a thematic analysis, they suggest a series of detailed steps which provide a sound basis for doing so. They point out that the steps are not unique to thematic analysis, as they are shared by many other approaches to analysing qualitative data. The steps are articulated as follows:

- *Phase 1: Familiarisation with the data:* Braun and Clarke (2006) explain that during this phase researchers actively immerse themselves in their data, to the extent that they become thoroughly familiar with its contents. The researcher subjected the data

to several close readings, searching for meanings and patterns. It is recommended that during this phase researchers should begin to formulate ideas for the coding of the data in subsequent stages (Braun & Clarke, 2006). During this phase, the researcher made written transcripts of the data, a process which can assist researchers to immerse themselves in their data during the initial phase of the analysis (Creswell, 2003).

- *Phase 2: Generating initial codes:* Once researchers have familiarised themselves sufficiently with their data and listed the points which appeared to be particularly significant, they begin the process of assigning codes to specific clusters of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Coding entails identifying features of the data which are of particular interest to the researcher concerned and identifying the most basic units of data which can be evaluated meaningfully (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher organised the information which had been collected into clusters of data which appeared to be related and assigned codes to them. The codes were then grouped and colour coded to identify similar categories, which enabled the researcher to identify potential patterns.
- *Phase 3: Searching for themes:* This phase entails organising the codes which have been identified into potential themes. Initial codes may become main overarching themes, be relegated to sub-themes, or eventually discarded (Braun & Clarke, 2006). During this phase, the researcher analysed the codes in order to determine which codes belonged to any particular theme and which codes did not appear to be particularly relevant to the research topic.

- *Phase 4: Reviewing themes:* During this phase, the researcher identified potential themes and refined them accordingly. It is during this phase that it may become evident that some of the themes which have been identified are either not supported by the data or need to be broken down. It is crucial to re-read the data during this phase, as doing so enables researchers to determine whether the themes accord with the data and to ensure that all of the data has been coded. Once the themes appear to be sufficiently congruent with the data, it is advisable to move on to the next phase. The researcher took care to re-read his transcribed data and listen to the recordings of the interviews once more, to ensure that the coded data was correct.
- *Phase 5: Defining and naming themes:* During this phase, themes are further refined and defined, as researchers endeavour to identify the essential characteristics of each of the themes which have emerged from their data. Each theme should correspond to a particular aspect of the data and should not be excessively complex. Coherence and consistency between themes is the goal of this phase. Researchers are required to explain why they consider particular themes to be relevant to their studies and provide reasons for their assessments. A detailed analysis of each theme is then conducted, in order to articulate the story which each theme narrates. Once the themes have been clearly identified, each theme should be assigned clear and concise names (Braun & Clarke, 2006).
- *Phase 6: Producing the report:* Once a researcher has a set of themes which have been analysed in sufficient detail, he or she is in a position to start writing up the report. The final analysis must tell a coherent story and convince the reader of the

value and soundness of the analysis. The themes need to be adequately supported by evidence from within the data itself (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The quantitative data was captured by means of MS Excel software and analysed through the use of the SPSS software package, to which the researcher was permitted to have access by the postgraduate department.

3.9 Limitations of the data

It was anticipated that the data and the findings which it generated would have inherent limitations, owing to the cross-sectional nature of the study and the collecting of data from a single geographical location. The size of the research sample of day labourers was relatively small, because Ravensmead is a small community, although it has a thriving informal sector.

3.10 Ethical considerations

As it was explained in Chapter One, one of the principal ethical standards for conducting professional research in the social sciences concerns the ethical obligation which researchers have to take all reasonable measures to protect the participants in their studies from any form of physical, psychological, mental, or emotional harm. The researcher showed the participants his student card and provided them with an information sheet which explained in clear terms that the research was being conducted purely for academic purposes and that he was not acting on behalf of any law enforcement agency (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995:102).

All of the participants were reminded of their right to choose not to participate in the research study or to withdraw their participation at any time, without incurring penalties of any sort whatsoever for doing so (Louw, 2007:86; Xipu, 2009:24; Blaauw, 2010). The principle of

confidentiality and anonymity was adhered to throughout the course of conducting the study, in accordance with the definition of confidentiality as the protection of personal information (Hepworth *et al.*, 2010). The researcher endeavoured to be truthful and to respect the dignity of the participants at all times, by answering their questions as comprehensively as possible and not making false promises concerning any possible benefits from the findings of the study.

3.11 Summary and conclusion

This chapter has provided a comprehensive overview of the procedures which were followed to ensure that the study had a sound scientific basis and the study was conducted with sufficient rigour. The researcher endeavoured to ensure that the data which was obtained from the questionnaire, the interviews, and observations was of a suitable calibre to enable substantive inferences to be drawn in relation to the aim and objectives as they were articulated in Chapters One and Three of this thesis. The research population, the research sample, sampling techniques and the procedures which were followed in order to collect and analyse have been covered in detail. The ethical standards which were rigorously upheld throughout the conducting of the study have been enumerated and the empirical limits of the study have been assessed. The quantitative findings are presented, discussed, and analysed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION, AND ANALYSIS OF THE QUANTITATIVE DATA

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an account of the hiring site at which the study was conducted, before proceeding to present, discuss, and analyse the findings of the quantitative study.

4.2 Making contact with the participants

The researcher visited the site every morning for a period of 3 weeks, in order to conduct the study. On his first visit, he introduced himself to one of the day labourers, in order to solicit his assistance in obtaining access to the other day labourers. The person to whom he introduced himself on the first day had been randomly chosen, as he was the first person whom the researcher met when he arrived at the hiring site. He explained the nature and purpose of the research study which he intended to conduct. He also explained that it would be conducted purely for academic purposes and that he was not in a position to offer assistance or employ anyone. The man agreed to be a participant and introduced the researcher to the group which had gathered at the site. The researcher informed those who did not wish to participate on the first day that they would be welcome to do so if they elected to do so at a later stage.

The researcher proceeded to explain who he was and the purpose of the study to the small group of men who had expressed their willingness to participate. The formats of the individual and group interviews were explained to the participants and they were requested to sign separate consent forms to participate in the interviews and to permit the researcher to photograph them. The researcher also asked the participants to take pictures for him for the photovoice component of the study after he had explained the nature of photovoice and the purpose of taking the

photographs to them. The photographs which appear in this thesis were taken by the researcher and some of the participants. The photographs which were taken by the participants were forwarded by them to the researcher by means of the WhatsApp mobile application. **Photograph 4.1** depicts a segment of the group of people whom the researcher met on the first day and were willing to participate in the study.



Photograph 4.1: The group of men at the corner of the Builders Warehouse store in Ravensmead who were willing to participate in the study

Source: Research participant

4.3 Details of the community in which the hiring site is located and observations by the researcher

The Ravensmead branch of Builders Warehouse falls within the suburb of Parow Valley in the province of the Western Cape in South Africa, which, in turn, falls under the Cape Town Metropolitan Municipality.



Photograph 4.2: A section of the hiring site outside of the Builders Warehouse store in Ravensmead at which the study was conducted

Source: The researcher

The hiring site at the Builders Warehouse store is adjacent to the predominantly industrial area of Parow Industrial, on the corner of the busy De la Rey Road, which makes the day labourers highly visible and provides easy access for prospective employers. Photograph 4.3 depicts day labourers standing at the corner of the Builders Warehouse store waiting for potential employers. The researcher observed that there appeared to be strict segregation with respect to their home countries, as Zimbabweans stood on one side of the road while their South Africans counterparts stood on the other.



Photograph 4.3: Day labourers standing at the hiring site, displaying the tools of their trades

Source: Research participant.

The researcher learnt on the first day that two principal groups of day labourers gathered at the site, namely, Zimbabweans and South Africans. As the members of each group were unwilling to participate in group interviews with members of the other, it was necessary to interview each group separately. Although there were several group dynamics at play during the interviews, such as dominant participants wishing to silence others and some not respecting the contributions of others, the researcher was able to manage the flow of the discussions throughout the interviews.

The researcher also observed the interactions which occurred during the hiring of day labourers throughout the period during which he visited the hiring site. When the pickup truck or other type of vehicle of a prospective employer stopped at the site, day labourers rushed to arrive first

at the vehicle. The negotiations were very quick and most questions did not concern remuneration, but rather the type of work which needed to be done and whether the day labourers possessed the skills which the prospective employer required. The first person to interact with a prospective employer had a significantly higher likelihood of being employed for the day than the others if he had the skills which the work required. The researcher also observed that language played a decisive role in obtaining employment, particularly if the prospective employer was English-speaking. Day labourers who could not communicate well in English were often unlikely to be employed in these instances. The hiring site appeared to attract only men, as the researcher observed no women at the site during the conducting of the study.

The next section is devoted to a discussion of the demographic profile of the participants which was developed from the responses to the survey questionnaire.

4.4 Demographic profile of the participants

Demography is the study of statistics such as births, deaths, income, or the incidence of disease, which illustrate the changing structure of human populations. It can also be defined as the composition of a particular human population in a research study (Langa *et al.*, 2007). This section takes the form of a detailed discussion of the demographic details of the participants which are summarised in Table 4.1 and a comparison of the findings with relevant concerns which arise from the literature review.

Table 4.1: Demographic profile of the day labourers who participated in the study (N= 24)

| Variable | Frequency (Numbers) | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Age (years) | | |
| 20-25 | 3 | 12.5 |
| 26-30 | 5 | 20.8 |
| 31-35 | 2 | 8.3 |
| 36-40 | 5 | 20.8 |
| 40-45 | 5 | 20.8 |
| 46-50 | 3 | 12.5 |
| 51-55 | 0 | 0 |
| 56-60 | 1 | 4.2 |
| Gender | | |
| Male | 24 | 100 |
| Race | | |
| Black | 21 | 87.5 |
| Coloured | 3 | 12.5 |
| Language | | |
| English | 2 | 8.3 |
| isiZulu | 1 | 4.2 |
| Afrikaans | 3 | 12.5 |

| | | |
|------------------------------------|----|------|
| isiXhosa | 14 | 58.3 |
| Other (Zimbabwean languages) | 4 | 16.7 |
| Home country | | |
| South Africa | 17 | 70.8 |
| Zimbabwe | 7 | 29.2 |
| Home province | | |
| Western Cape | 3 | 12.5 |
| Eastern Cape | 14 | 58.3 |
| Other (Zimbabwe) | 7 | 29.2 |
| Marital Status | | |
| Never married/ Single | 12 | 50 |
| Separated/Divorced | 4 | 16.7 |
| Married Traditional/Western | 4 | 16.7 |
| Widowed | 1 | 4.2 |
| Living with a partner | 3 | 12.5 |
| Highest educational | | |

| qualification | | |
|---|----|------|
| Grade 1-3 | 1 | 4.2 |
| Grade 4-6 | 3 | 12.5 |
| Grade 7-9 | 2 | 8.3 |
| Grade 10-11 | 4 | 16.7 |
| Matriculated | 4 | 16.7 |
| Tertiary education or training | 10 | 41.6 |

Source: Data derived from the survey questionnaire

4.4.1 Ages of the participants

The ages of the participants ranged from 20 to 60 years. A majority of 41.6% fell into the age range of from 35 to 45 years. The active age group of from 20 to 30 years of age was the second largest and comprised 33.3% of the sample, while the remainder comprised older men who were from 46 to 60 years of age. As it has already been mentioned, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (2005) defines the youth of the country as those citizens who are from 18 to 35 years of age. Although South Africa has a high overall rate of unemployment of 27.7%, according to Statistics South Africa (2018), among the youth it stands at a staggering 53.3%. The findings of the study which was conducted by Blaauw *et al.* (2006) confirmed that the majority of unemployed people in South Africa were to be found among the youth. Owing to the strenuous nature of a great deal of day labour work, being young and physically strong provides individual workers with definite advantages.

4.4.2 Gender and the research sample

According to Rao, Venakatachalan, and Joshi (2012), there is a distinct gender dimension in the day-labour markets of most countries. From a similar standpoint, Valenzuela (2010) maintains that the day-labour market of the United States is comprised mainly of men. The findings of the study which was conducted by Blaauw *et al.* (2016) in South Africa also confirm that the vast majority of day labourers are men. As only men were found at the site during the conducting of the study, the research sample was homogeneous with respect to gender. Although the main purpose of this study was not to investigate the gender dimensions of the day-labour market in Cape Town, the makeup of the research sample did reflect the gender distribution of the day-labour markets in South Africa and many other countries.

4.4.3 Levels of educational attainment among the participants

A surprising finding, which is reflected in Table 4.1, was that 41.6% of the participants had attained qualifications beyond matriculation, in the form of vocational diplomas. By contrast, the findings of the international comparative day labour study which was conducted by Theodore *et al.* (2014) revealed that levels of relevant skills and educational qualifications among South African day labourers were generally low. The findings of the national study which was conducted by Blaauw *et al.* (2010) in South Africa were similar in this respect, as they revealed that most of the day labourers whom they surveyed were illiterate and lacked the basic skills which were required for formal employment. Consequently, low levels of schooling leaves the people who gravitate towards the day-labour market vulnerable and excluded from the formal labour market. The factors which contributed to the majority or 58.4% of the participants not

completing their schooling are discussed in the following section, which takes the form of a presentation, discussion, and analysis of the findings of the qualitative study.

4.4.3.1 Reasons which the participants cited for not having matriculated

The reasons for the high rates of illiteracy which prevail in the day-labour market in South Africa take the form of social, political, and economic factors. According to Grant and Ray (2006), poverty plays a significant role in the lack of educational attainment which afflicts and marginalises many families in South Africa.

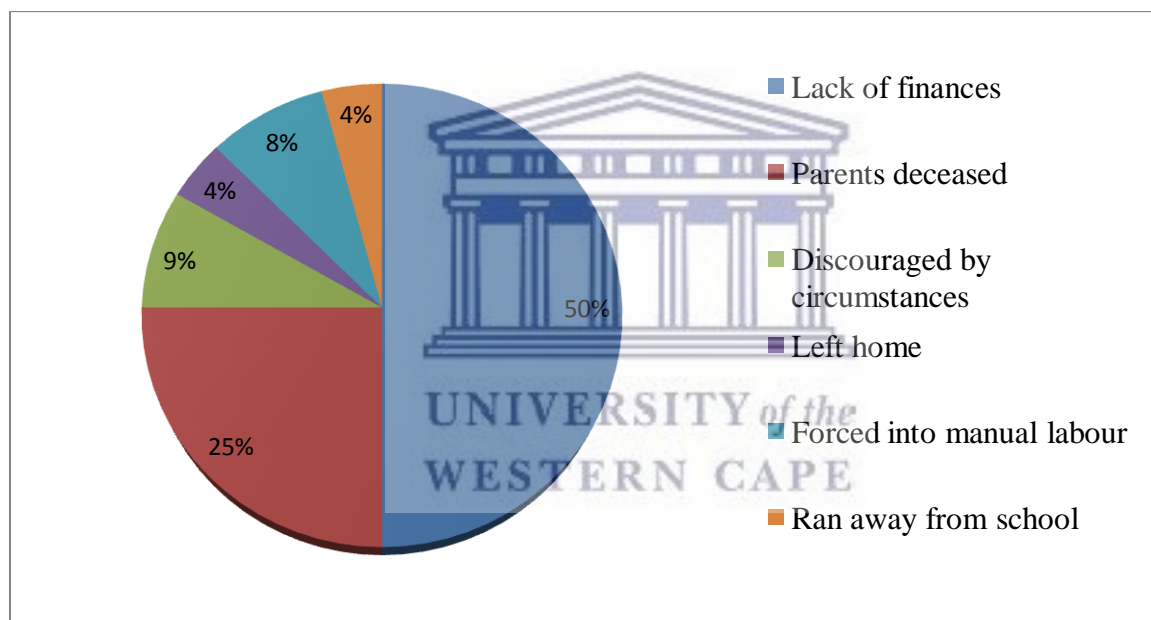


Figure 4.1: Reasons cited by the participants for not having completed Grade 12 at school

Source: Data derived from the survey questionnaire

The pie chart in Figure 4.1 is a graphic depiction of the distribution of the reasons which the participants cited for having been unable to complete Grade 12 at high school. It demonstrates that the largest group of 50% of the participants maintained that they had dropped out of high

school owing to lack of funding. A further 25% explained that they had been unable to continue at school because one or both of their parents had died. They had been obliged to become breadwinners and to leave school to find employment in order to be able to feed their siblings. Small minorities explained that they had run away from school for various reasons and others that they had left owing to circumstances which had been beyond their control. In addition, apart from all of the reasons which were cited, it emerged that the participants had not had adequate safety networks in their communities or families which could provide them with support, particularly with respect to career guidance. A total of 75% of the participants who had not completed school had been obliged to leave school owing to poverty, the death of one or more parent, or the lack of safety nets. They had been vulnerable as children and had had no means of escaping from living conditions which had been characterised by abject poverty.

4.4.4 Home countries of the participants

A large majority of 70.8% of the participants were South Africans, while the remainder had come from Zimbabwe. The findings of the national study which was conducted by Kok, Cross, and Rowe (2010), revealed an even more skewed distribution, with South Africans accounting for 86% of the overall research sample while the remaining 14% were foreign workers. The findings of the study of day labourers which was conducted by Blaauw (2010) in South Africa and that of waste pickers which was conducted by Viljoen (2014) were similar, in that foreign workers comprised less than 10% of both research samples.

4.4.5 Racial groups to which the participants belonged

The research sample was made up of black and coloured men, of whom 21 were black and 3 were coloured. The finding was a surprising one, as the coloured population represents the largest single group in the province of the Western Cape.

4.4.6 Home languages of the participants

Most of the participants were isiXhosa-speakers, while the second largest group, which comprised Zimbabweans, indicated on the questionnaire that their home language was ‘other’, as Zimbabwean languages had not been listed among the alternatives. Although they could speak English, they did not regard it as their mother tongue. Only three of the participants indicated that Afrikaans was their home language. The findings also revealed that the Western Cape was not the home province of most of the participants, who had migrated from either the Eastern Cape or Zimbabwe.

4.4.7 Marital statuses of the participants

The findings revealed that only 16% of the participants were married and a further 13% were cohabiting with partners. A significant majority of 50% were single and had never been married, 16% were either separated or divorced, and 4% were widowed. Those who were cohabiting with partners were also not married. The statistics closely resemble the findings of Kok *et al* (2010) in South Africa, as 70% of the day labourers in their research sample had never been married, while 12% were married. Trimble and Fisher (2006) maintain that the high percentages of unmarried day labourers might be indicative of their ‘dislocation’ from family life and the difficulty which they experienced in forming and maintaining relationships. These findings are supported by those of the qualitative interviews, which are presented in the next chapter. The participants described a variety of family problems which had acted as push and pull factors for their entry into the day-labour market. Most prominent among the problems which they cited had been their inability to pay *lobola* in order to marry, as their culture and customs demand.

4.5 Findings which emerged from the analysis of the quantitative data

This section presents the findings which emerged from the analysis of the data which was collected from the administration of the questionnaire. The findings of the quantitative study are presented in the form of brief discussions and illustrated with graphic representations.

4.5.1 Types of work in which the participants engaged

According to Theodore *et al.* (2014), day labourers in both the United States and South Africa perform a wide range of manual labour work, often in industries such as construction and landscaping. They explain that the work is usually physically demanding and can expose workers to many risks to their health and safety. As the pie chart in Figure 4.2 illustrates, the most common types of work which the participants were hired to perform were gardening and painting.

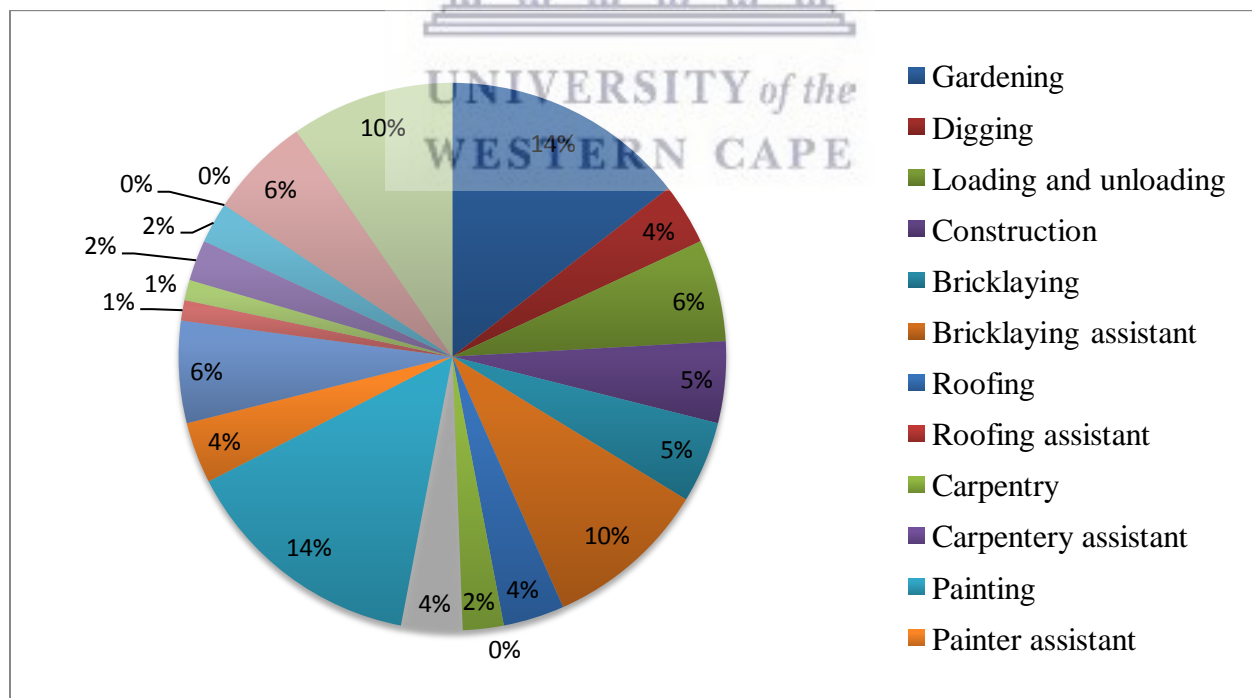


Figure 4.2: Types of work which the participants were usually required to perform

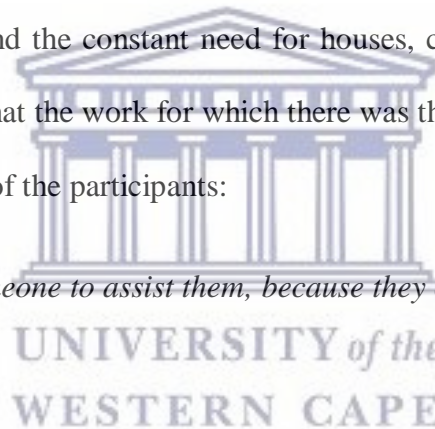
Source: Data derived from the survey questionnaire

The participants performed a number of different types of work, depending on the requirements of employers. As one explained:

I can do any job that is giving me money. I don't choose because if I choose work I will not find money.

Gardening and painting represented the types of work which the participants were most often required to perform, with 14% specifying each category. They believed that the high demand which was perceived for gardeners and painters stemmed from the desires of many people to keep their gardens attractive and the constant need for houses, cottages and garden walls to be painted. They also contended that the work for which there was the least demand was working as assistants. In the words of one of the participants:

Most people do not require someone to assist them, because they can do the job on their own and the money will be more.



As Photograph 4.4 illustrates, some of the participants advertised their skills by making the tools of their trades highly visible to prospective employers.



Photograph 4.4: Tools used by a day labourer to advertise his skills

Source: Research participant.

4.5.2 Work which the participants were qualified to perform

As the findings revealed, although some of the participants indicated that they had tertiary qualifications, they had been obliged to work as day labourers, owing to a lack of opportunities for employment in the formal sector. Most of the participants who indicated that they had tertiary qualifications had migrated to Cape Town from Zimbabwe. One said:

I can do any job, but I am a qualified carpenter. So, if a person comes and wants someone who can do gardening, I go, because I need money.

Figure 4.3 is a bar graph which illustrates the types of work which the participants indicated that they were qualified to perform. It demonstrates that more than 40% of the participants were qualified painters, while slightly more than 20% were qualified plumbers. The rest were qualified bricklayers, tilers, electricians, cabinet makers, or carpenters. 'Other' was indicated by

the participants who held qualifications to perform work which was not listed in the questionnaire.

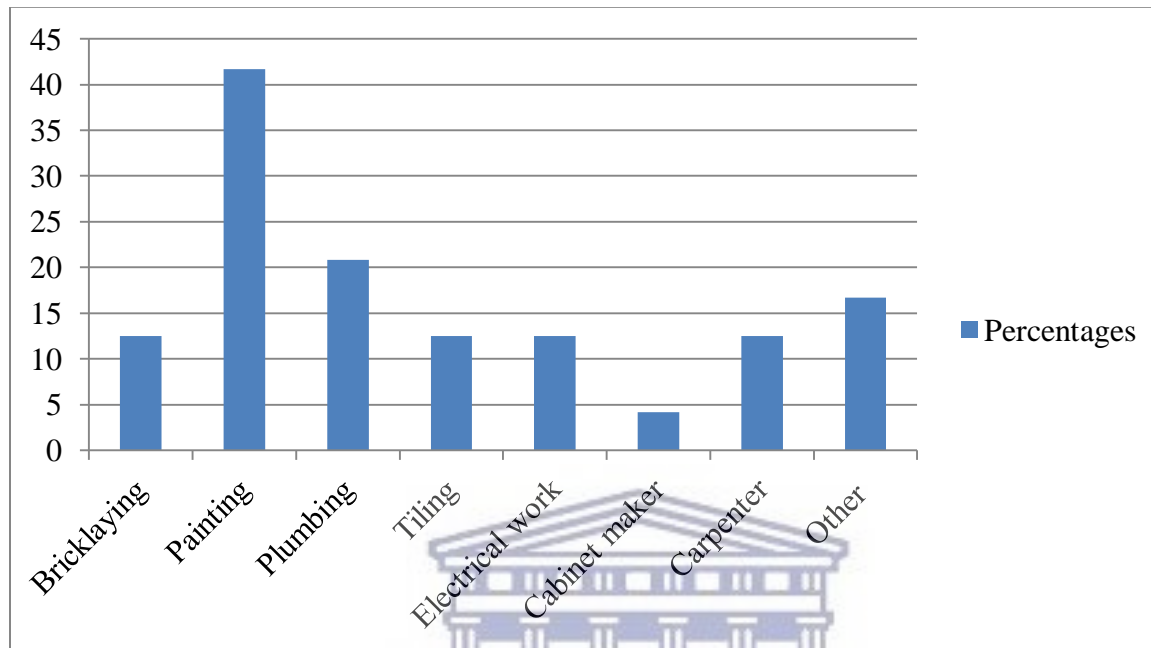


Figure 4.3: Work which the participants indicated that they were qualified to perform

Source: Data derived from the survey questionnaire

In many instances, the qualifications are obtained through training which is received by artisans while they work in particular trades, and not necessarily through formal training.

4.5.3 Numbers of days on which the participants gathered at the hiring site each week

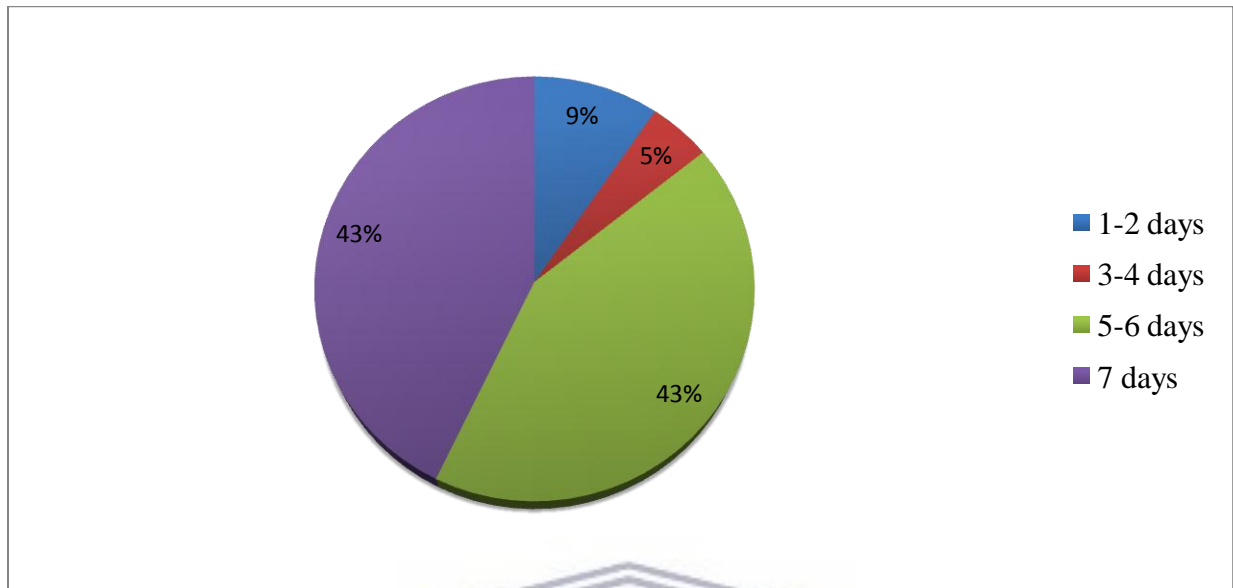


Figure 4.4: Numbers of days on which the participants gathered at the hiring site in search of employment

Source: Data derived from the survey questionnaire.

The pie chart in Figure 4.4 illustrates the numbers of days on which the participants gathered at the hiring site to wait to be hired by prospective employers. The findings of the study which was conducted in South Africa by Kok *et al* (2010) revealed that the day labourers in their research sample spent an average of 5 days a week standing at street corners, business parks, and traffic lights in order to find work. In this study, although small minorities indicated that they went to the hiring site on from 1 to 4 days a week, a total of 86% indicated that they did so for from 5 to 7 days a week. As half of this group indicated that they went to the site on 7 days a week, their desperate need to obtain employment and incomes was quite evident.

4.5.4 Suburbs and townships in which the participants resided

The researcher was able to determine that the hiring attracted day labourers not only from Ravensmead. He concluded that the location of the hiring site in a busy area and its close proximity to Parow Industria would be highly likely to be significant factors in the ability of the site to attract day labourers from far and wide. Those who needed to travel great distances to the site who could not afford taxi fares were obliged to leave home very early, in order to walk to the site and arrive ahead of prospective employers.

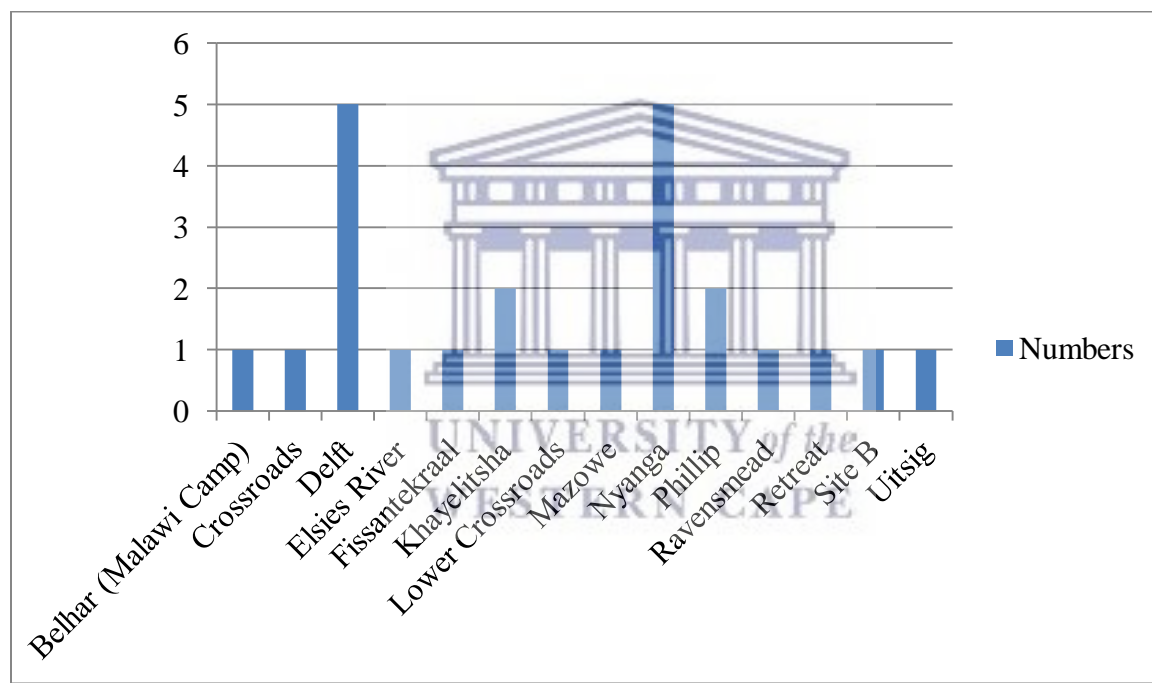


Figure 4.5: Suburbs and townships in which the participants resided

Source: Data derived from the survey questionnaire

The bar graph in Figure 4.5 illustrates that the highest numbers of the participants came to the site from the townships of Delft and Nyanga, which contributed five participants each to the research sample. As these townships are also associated with informal settlements and cheap

accommodation, they are obvious choices for day labourers, whose meagre earnings preclude them from residing anywhere but in extremely insalubrious areas in Cape Town. The interviews revealed that the participants preferred to try to obtain employment in Ravensmead because they perceived that it had greater potential for doing so than most other sites. In the words of two of the participants:

We come here because there are a lot of job opportunities.

This place is busy compared with other areas around Parow. So we come here, because we can get a job quickly.

Most of the suburbs, townships, and informal settlements which are listed in Figure 4.5 were home to a single participant only. The researcher observed, during the conducting of the study, that some of the participants did not return to their homes after work. From questions which he put to the participants, it emerged that they did not always elect to return home after a day of work, but did so when they did not receive money to cover their transport costs. On those occasions on which they elected to sleep in the veld near the hiring site, they would inevitably be exposed to risks in relation to considerations such as a lack of food security, health and well-being. Day labourers who live in Fisantekraal who cannot afford to pay for transport are obliged to walk 26 kilometres to and from the hiring site.

4.5.5 The amounts of time which it took the participants to arrive at the hiring site

As it can be seen in Figure 4.5, the greater the distances which day labourers are required to travel to the hiring site, the longer it takes them to reach it. The hours which they spent travelling to the site are given to the nearest hour. It was learnt that day labourers who travelled to the site from Retreat spent the most time travelling, as they needed to make use of at least three forms of

transport to arrive at the site. The participant who resided in Retreat reported that he needed to take a train from Retreat to Cape Town, another train from Cape Town to Parow, and then a taxi to the hiring site.

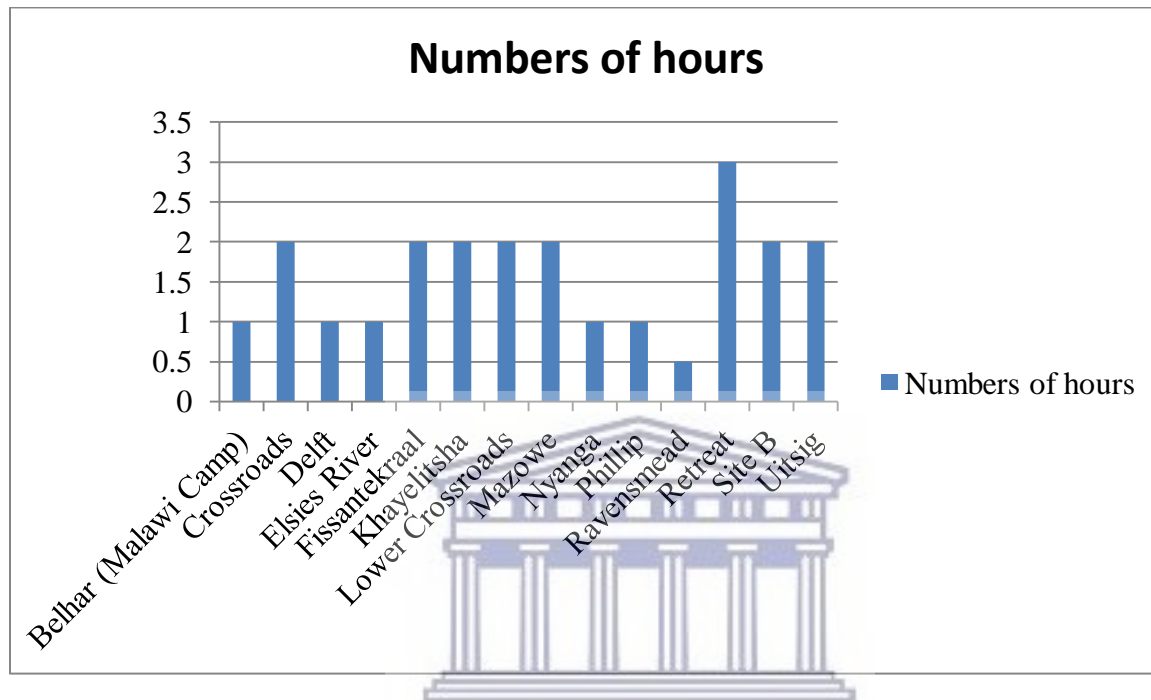


Figure 4.6: The amounts of time which it took the participants to arrive at the hiring site

Source: Data derived from the survey questionnaire

The participants who resided in Fissantekraal, Khayelitsha, Lower Crossroads, Mazowe, Site B, Uitsig, and Crossroads reported that they spent at least 2 hours travelling to the hiring site, while those who lived closer to the site in areas such as Belhar (Malawi Camp), Delft, Elsies River, Nyanga, and Phillip reported that it took them at least an hour to arrive at the hiring site.



Source: Research participant.

Photograph 4.5: Day labourers in Ravensmead waiting at the corner of the Builders Warehouse store for prospective employers

4.5.6 Types of full-time employment in which the participants had worked prior to becoming day labourers

All the participants indicated that they had worked in full-time employment before they became day labourers.



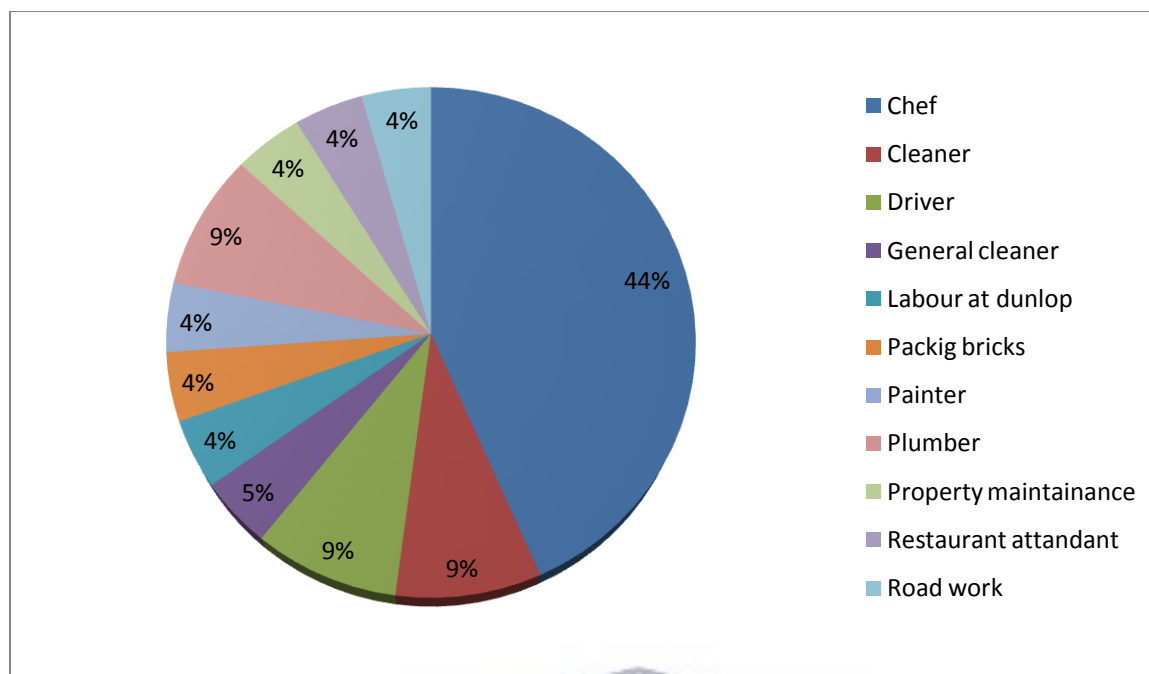


Figure 4.7: Types of full-time employment in which the participants had worked prior to becoming day labourers (N= 24)

Source: Data derived from the survey questionnaire

The pie chart in Figure 4.7 illustrates the wide range of different types of employment which the participants had held before they became day labourers. It reveals that 44% of the participants had worked as chefs in restaurants or hotels. Those who had been employed as plumbers, drivers, or cleaners comprised the second largest groups of 9% of the research sample. The remainder had performed similar tasks to those which they performed as day labourers, although they had done so on a full-time basis previously. As it can be seen in Figure 4.7, the participants had worked in a diverse range of different capacities as full-time employees.

4.5.7 The reasons which the participants cited for having left full-time employment

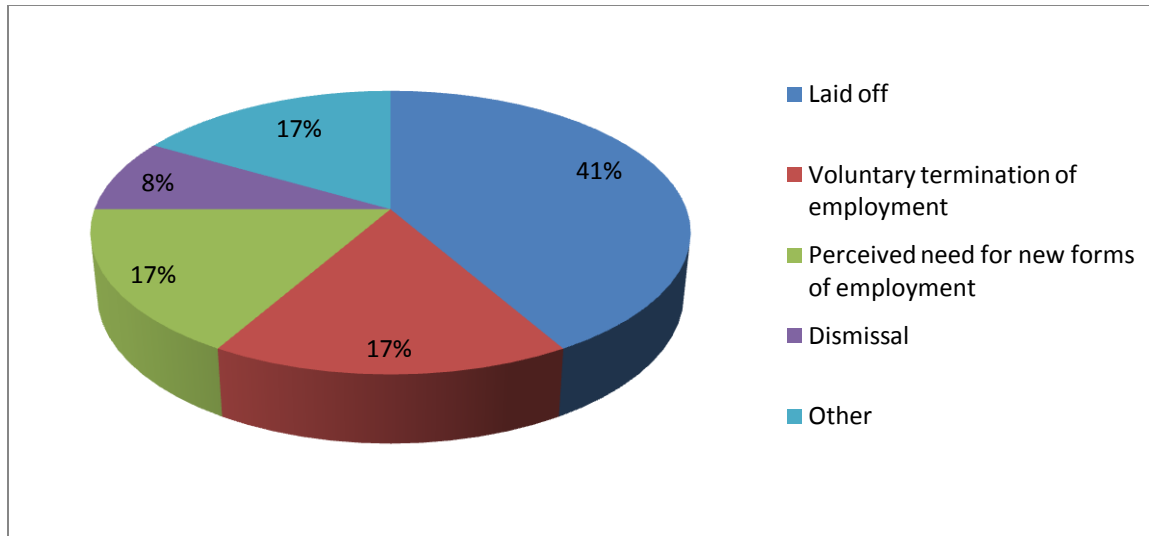


Figure 4.8: Reasons cited by the participants for leaving full-time employment

Source: Data derived from the survey questionnaire

It was significant to find that the largest group, which comprised 41% of the research sample, had worked as contracted workers and had not been in full-time employment. Smaller groups of 17% each reported that they had left their previous employment because they wished to seek new opportunities or owing to circumstances which had been beyond their control. A further 17% selected the 'other' option and 8% cited dismissal.

4.5.8 The lowest wages which the participants were prepared to accept for a day's work and the highest wages which they sometimes earned

The findings revealed that on difficult days, when opportunities for employment were scarce, some of the participants had been sufficiently desperate to be prepared to accept a wage of R30 a day. By contrast, days which they considered to be 'good' days could yield wages in excess of R1000. These findings are presented in the form of pie charts in Figures 4.9 and 4.10.

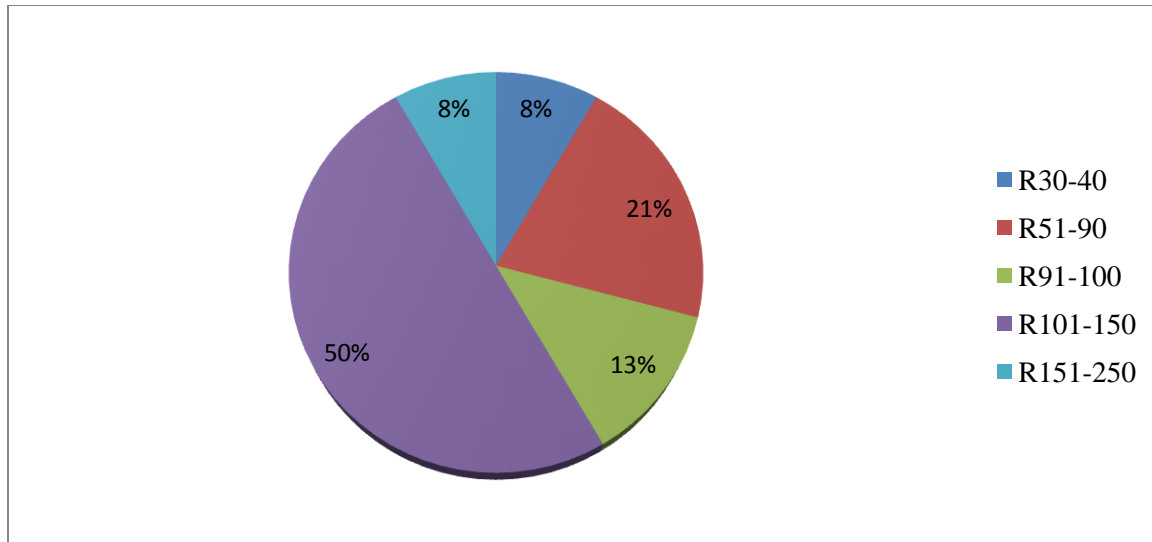


Figure 4.9: The lowest wages which they the participants indicated that they were prepared to accept for a day's work

Source: Data derived from the survey questionnaire

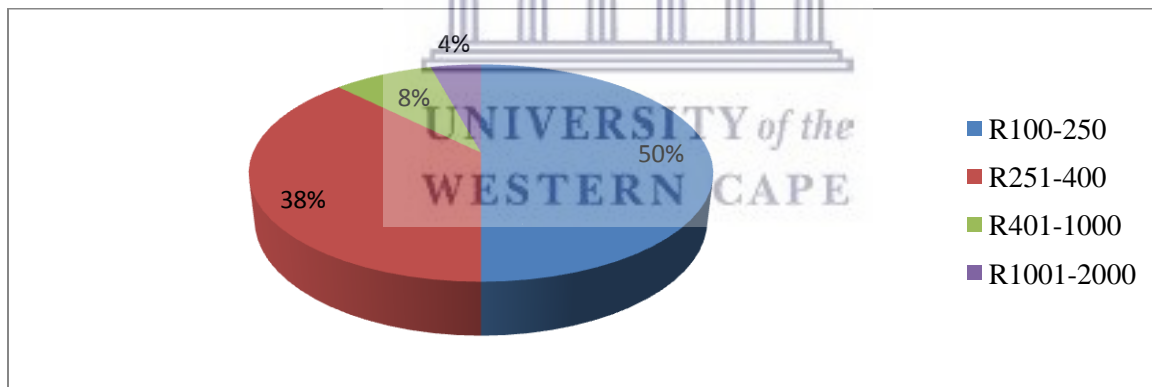


Figure 4.10: The highest wages per day which the participants had been paid

Source: Data derived from the survey questionnaire

Figures 4.10 and 4.11 provide eloquent testimony to the extremes which remuneration can entail in the day-labour market. Some of the participants indicated that they were prepared to earn as

little as from R30 to R50 for a day when there was little or no work to be found, while others indicated that their wages peaked at from R1000 to R2000 a day.

4.5.9 Reasons cited by the participants for being prepared to accept low wages

The pie chart in Figure 4.11 illustrates that 75% of the participants indicated that they would accept low wages if they were desperate to earn money. A further 12% indicated that they would be prepared to accept relatively low wages if the tasks which they were required to perform were of short duration, while 13% indicated that they would do so if no other work was available on a particular day.

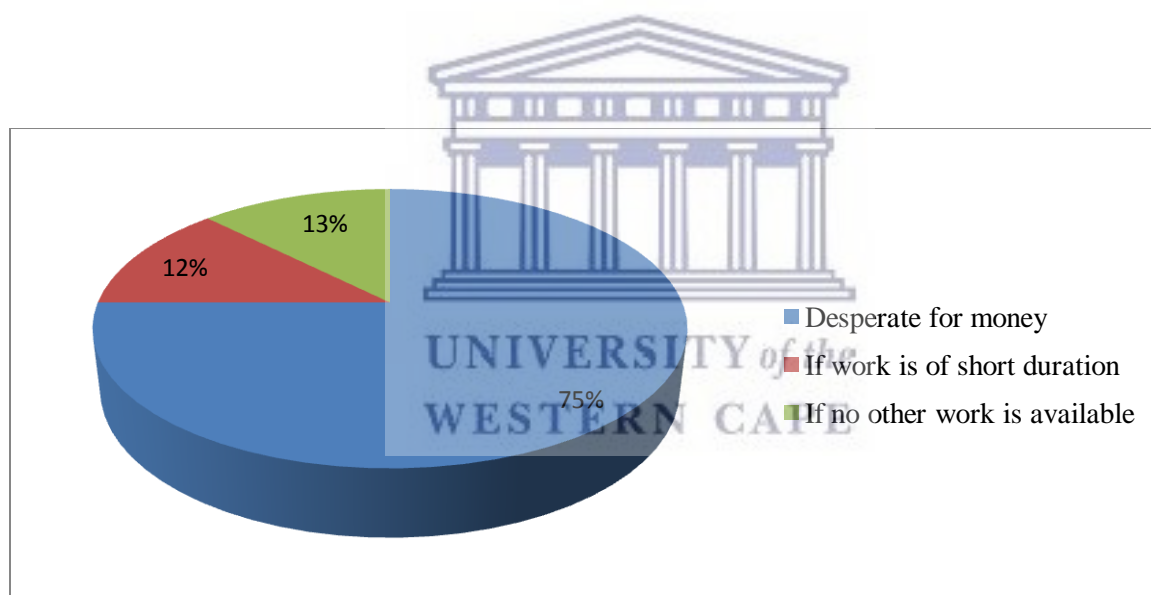


Figure 4.11: Reasons cited by the participants for being prepared to accept low wages

Source: Data derived from the survey questionnaire

Three of the participants said:

We take any amount, especially when it is towards month-end, because we want to pay rent and buy food.

I take any amount, even R50 to buy bread, so that I can be able to work tomorrow”.

Half a loaf is better than nothing, so if there are no jobs, we take any amount.

All of the excerpts demonstrate the vulnerability of day labourers with respect to not being able to bargain or negotiate their wages with employers at times. If they are desperate, they take the amounts which are offered, thereby leaving them highly vulnerable to exploitation.

4.5.10 Numbers of dependants whom the participants supported

The participants indicated that they had varying numbers of dependants to support. Ten (42%) of the participants indicated that they supported from three to four people, while for six (25%) the numbers ranged from four to six. Small groups of two each indicated that supported from one to two people and from seven to ten people, while four (17%) indicated ‘other’, which could suggest that they had no dependants.

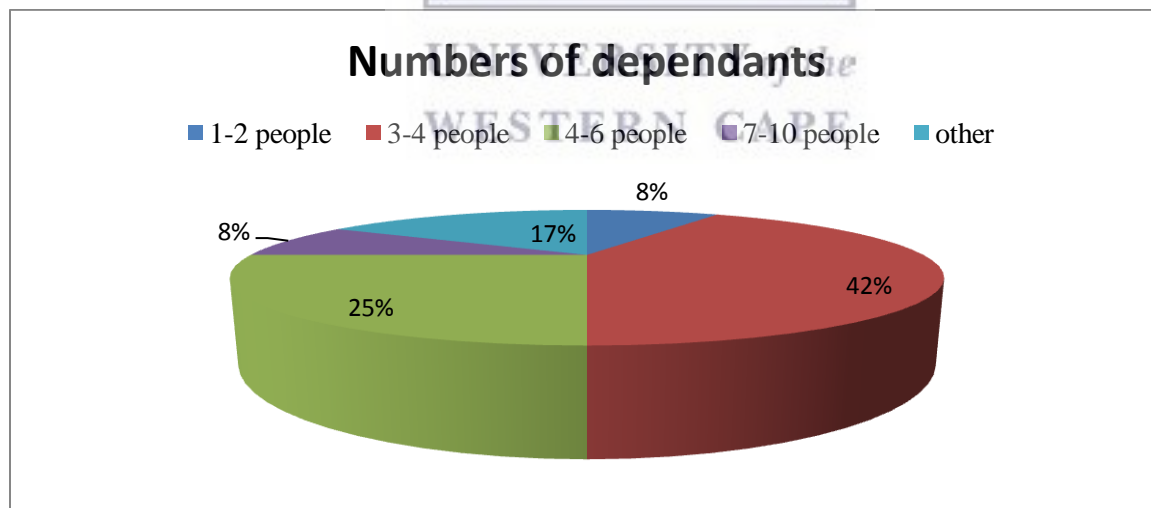


Figure 4.12: Numbers of people who were dependent upon the participants for their survival

Source: Data derived from the survey questionnaire

4.5.11 Sources of the food which the participants consumed at the hiring site

The pie chart in Figure 4.13 illustrates that a majority 50% of the participants indicated that they brought food from their homes to the site, while 25% indicated that they were given food once or twice a week by charitable groups, such as church groups and members of the local Muslim community. They also received bread from SASKO, the bread manufacturer, on occasion. A small group of 12% admitted that they resorted to begging from local residents and a further 13% indicated that they bought food from local shops.

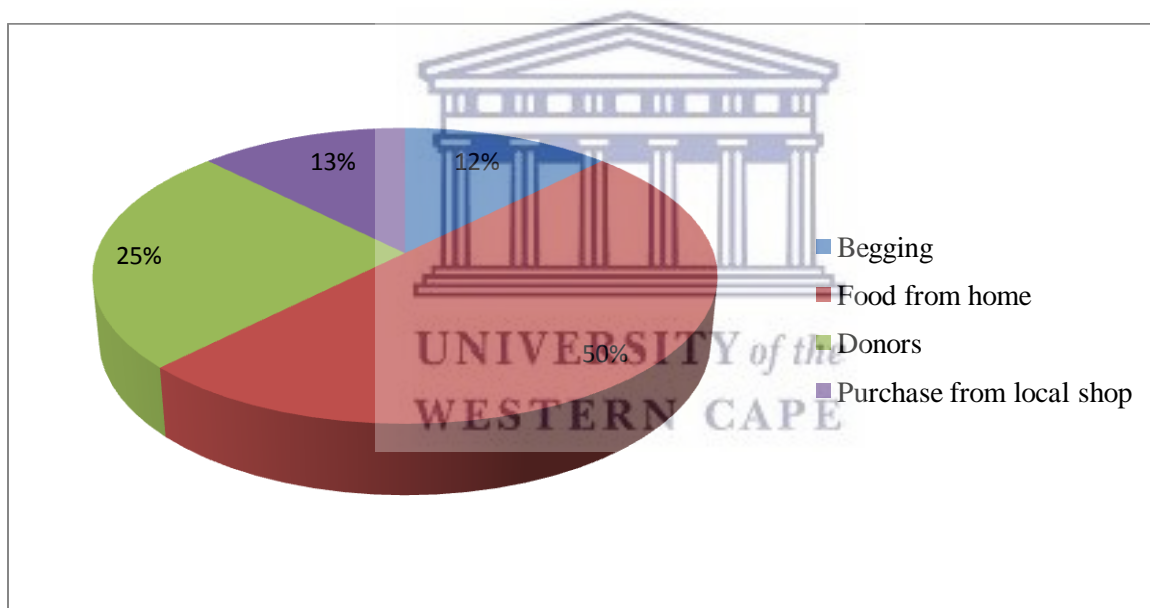


Figure 4.13: Sources of the food which the participants consumed at the hiring site

Source: Data derived from the survey questionnaire

4.5.12 Summary of the quantitative results

This chapter presented, discussed, and analysed the data which was obtained by administering the questionnaires and amplified particular points by means of relevant excerpts of the interviews. Although the relevant available literature reveals that relatively few studies have been conducted of day labourers in South Africa, the findings of a comprehensive nationwide study which was conducted in South Africa by Blaauw (2010) revealed that unemployment was a persistent characteristic of the day-labouring sector throughout South Africa. In addition, unemployment further exacerbates the poverty of those who engage in day labouring, which is accompanied by severely negative socioeconomic consequences. Day labourers are subjected to many hardships as they try to eke out existences through their day-to-day activities, such as being overworked by employers, little or no remuneration, threats from employers, particularly in the case of foreign workers who do not possess the required legal documents, discrimination, and shortages of opportunities for employment. Day labourers also display considerable resilience in the face of adversity. Irrespective of all of the hardships and risks which are associated with day labouring, they continue to search for work because doing so provides the only means of survival which they have available to them.

CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION, AND ANALYSIS OF THE QUALITATIVE DATA

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present, discuss, and analyse the qualitative findings in accordance with the steps for performing a thematic analysis which were enumerated by Braun and Clarke (2006) in Chapter Three. The initial step of the thematic analysis of the qualitative data which was obtained from the interviews and through the use of photovoice entailed the researcher familiarising himself sufficiently with the data to begin to search for meanings and patterns in the written transcriptions of the interviews and the photographs. Excerpts of transcriptions and photographs which had features in common were grouped together and themes and sub-themes eventually emerged from a diligent application of the steps for performing a thematic analysis which were suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). In this chapter, the researcher has endeavoured to follow the advice of Merriam (2002) that data should be presented in the form of comments and assessments which are made by individual interviewees, in order to substantiate the themes which emerged from the data. Table 5.1 summarises the main themes and sub-themes which emerged from the thematic analysis of the qualitative data.

Table 5.2: Summary of the themes and sub-themes which emerged from the thematic analysis

| THEMES | SUB-THEMES |
|--|---|
| Theme 1: The resilience which day labourers display | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilience in the form of mutual support • Resilience owing to support received from other people |
| Theme 2: The constant risks to which day labourers are exposed in relation to obtaining employment and generating incomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lack of sufficiently regular employment • Factors and considerations which motivated the participants to continue to try to obtain employment as day labourers |
| Theme 3: Forms of discrimination to which day labourers are subjected | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination among themselves • Discrimination at the hands of employers |
| Theme 4: The risks which the working conditions of day labourers entail | |

| | |
|--|--|
| Theme 5: Food security among day labourers | |
| Theme 6: The risks to which day labourers are exposed in relation to inconsistent earnings and non-payment of wages | |

5.2.1: Theme 1: The resilience which day labourers display

To recapitulate the discussion of resilience in section 2.14.1, Warthinton and Scherer (2004) define resilience as an expression of the ability to adapt well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or even significant source of stress. A perspective which is particularly relevant to this study is provided by Walker, Anderies, Kinzig, and Ryan (2006), who emphasise the conceptualisation of resilience not as an individual trait, but rather as a dynamic process in the lives of people who face adversity or significant hardships.

The resilience which the participants displayed was evident in the support which they provided to one another to compensate for their often dire economic circumstances owing to a lack of opportunities for obtaining employment.

5.2.1.1 Sub-theme: Resilience in the form of mutual support

As it was explained in section 2.14.1, although Neimeyer (1994) contends that people endeavour to interpret the events and occurrences which they experience in order to be able to anticipate thematically similar events in the future, it is highly likely that if day labourers were to anticipate

unpleasant or demeaning experiences, their resilience could be negatively affected as a consequence. It was evident from the responses of the participants that mutual support represented a vital means of coping with the stresses and anxieties which they encountered in their daily lives. One of the participants, explaining how they took care of one another in the event of injury, said:

We just take him, as a friend, we just take him and call his neighbours or relatives, then you take him to hospital or call an ambulance, then take him to hospital.

Other relevant excerpts included:

We can also help each other to find work. Let's say, for example, someone is hired by a construction company, then the owner of that construction company wants some more guys.

Okay, as Zimbabweans we understand each other, where we come from. That is why we usually come together so that we can find some work. We do not come here as friends, we just come closer because we support each other and we speak the same language, then we start to look for jobs" (14)

Because that is idea - do you know someone? I have this ideal friend, but when he is with me and I have an idea and someone and me talk that my friend 'Do you want to go to work like this piece work?' After that he give me an answer or no.

In the case of the final excerpt, the participant attempted to explain that knowing people or having friends who were in full-time employment often facilitated obtaining work for day labourers. The excerpts were taken from responses to questions which had been framed to encourage the participants to explain why they continued to work as day labourers in the face of

significant hardships and risks. The mutual support which day labourers frequently give one another was also borne out by the findings of the national study which was conducted by Blaauw (2010), which revealed that day labourers supported one another in times of need when fellow day labours experienced privations such as being unable to pay for transport, having no food to eat, or lacking shelter.

5.2.1.2 Sub-theme: Resilience owing to support received from other people

Communities, churches, and benevolent organisations all play crucial roles in human development and survival (Nattrass, 2002). The participants reported that they received support from churches, members of their communities, relatives, and well-meaning people. There appeared to be a general consensus among the participants that the assistance was beneficial and helped them to avoid succumbing to feelings of despair.

In the words of four of the participants:

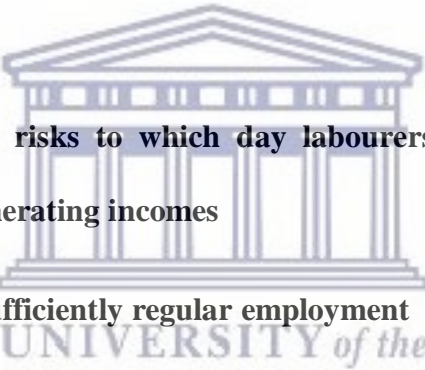
Yeah, sometimes I struggle to find that money and sometimes my relatives they help me to raise up that amount.

I used to borrow from some people so is just living without... End of the month you just find out you have nothing and you ask other friends to help and you are here just to improve our lives because you borrow every month.

We do survive from handouts, people giving us bread and, if we are lucky, some cool drinks. Hope you going to buy one for us too.

I think that is how we do survive, like we do survive from handouts, like churches come with food here and some clothes, but not every time ... Actually if you do not have work, life is tough because you just come here to look for handouts.

The responses confirmed that day labourers received assistance in the form of food and clothes, although their principal priority was to obtain employment in order to generate incomes. The truck which delivers bread to day labourers once or twice a week at the site can be seen in Photograph 4.2.



5.2.2 Theme 2: The constant risks to which day labourers are exposed in relation to obtaining employment and generating incomes

5.2.2.1 Sub-theme: A lack of sufficiently regular employment

Erdogan and Bauer (2009) explain that the adjective ‘insufficient’ denotes a lack of something which is either necessary or required. The participants complained that their inability to find sufficiently regular employment represented the defining characteristic of their daily lives as day labourers. If they are not able to obtain employment every day, their ability to survive is severely jeopardised, particularly in the cases of those who support families or dependants. The findings from the questionnaire revealed that some participants supported as many as seven dependants, which obliged a great many to go to the site as often as 7 days a week, to wait for potential employers.

In the words of two of the participants:

I struggle, my brother, because we struggle to get that money that is little, for me to pay rent here and to buy my food. It is very difficult... sometimes I get that little money I have, I just make a quarter of it and give it to my family, other times I will try to pay my rent, thinking that maybe something can happen tomorrow, you see.

It is very tough. It is very difficult because there is no job here. There's no money to buy food, to pay rent and other things like buy food for family. It is very tough; sometimes we do get people who might bring us some food parcels here at the site, like church people.

5.2.2.2 Sub-theme: Factors and considerations which motivated the participants to continue to try to obtain employment as day labourers

The participants cited several different reasons for continuing to come to the hiring site in an attempt to obtain employment as day labourers, despite the risks which doing so entailed for them. Kerr and Dole (2001) maintain that, in many instances, day labourers accept the risks which their work entails owing to the pressures which are exerted by socioeconomic factors such as poverty and unemployment. Nevertheless, the researcher endeavoured to establish why day labourers continued to gather at the hiring site in Ravensmead in the light of their claims concerning the scarcity of opportunities for employment which were reflected in their responses to the questionnaire. The excerpts which follow provide relevant insights into the factors and considerations which motivated the participants to keep returning to the hiring site almost every day.

You know, the thing is most of us, we come here because we want to feed our families back home. We have dependents back at home, but since we do not have work there is nothing we can do. This is the place to look for work.

We live within our means. What I am basically doing is to make sure at the end of the month I have enough money for rent and for food.

5.2.3 Theme 3: Forms of discrimination to which day labourers are subjected

5.2.3.1 Sub-theme: Discrimination among themselves

According to Hepworth *et al.* (2010), discrimination is manifested in prejudicial attitudes, actions, or treatment. Potgieter (1998) characterises discrimination as acting negatively towards others on the basis of their ages, languages, races, social classes, or cultures. The researcher found that discriminatory behaviour among the participants tended to result from different national identities and home languages and also from fierce competition for work. The participants explained that they formed groups according to their home countries, as it was evident from the segregation of South African and Zimbabwean at the hiring site.

As it has already been explained, Blaauw *et al.* (2012) concluded from the findings of their study that immigrants are often among the most vulnerable members of any society, particularly in developing countries. Deumert, Inder and Maitra, (2005: 304) also explain that they are effectively uncoupled from the social support structures and traditional safety nets which had been available to them in their home countries. The findings of the research which was conducted among foreign day labourers in Tshwane in South Africa by Blaauw *et al.* (2012) suggested that they are frequently exposed and subjected to vociferous and vindictive expressions of racism, xenophobia, and other forms of discrimination in South Africa. As Pringle

(2010) observes, these tendencies often become increasingly pronounced in times of economic downswings and the escalating levels of unemployment which result from them in the countries to which foreign immigrants have been attracted (Pringle, 2010).

The three excerpts which follow serve to amplify the points which have been raised in this section.

The thing we going to do first, I am going to take the people I know. It is not my friend or friend or it is family, but I am going just pick up the people that I know first to communicate that there is work. I cannot just take the people who are not in my group because they are not like us.

I will start with the bad, bad side. The first thing is discrimination, like some of us guys are foreigners. So the local people, some of them they might not be happy that foreigners are coming here to participate and give them competition for the same job. So on that side it is always discrimination, they try to fight you, they try to cause conflict and things like that.

And also at some point where I go to work, which we get to work with the South African guys, they used to classify us and it is hard for us to be just taken as foreigners.

5.2.3.2: Sub-theme: Discrimination at the hands of employers

The participants reported that employers often subjected day labourers to severe discrimination, particularly with respect to differential rates of remuneration. Similar findings were generated by the study conducted by Blaauw *et al.* (2016) in Cape Town, in which one of the day labourers whom they interviewed maintained that there were significant differences in the wages which employers paid day labourers, which appeared to be determined by the racial and social groups to which employers belonged. There appeared to be a common perception among day labourers

that the wages which were paid by coloured employers in Cape Town were significantly lower than those which were paid by employers who belonged to other racial groups (Blaauw *et al.*, 2016).

As one of the participants explained:

There is a struggle to get a job. Then there is an issue of race, you do not get paid the same. One employer is going to pay you R150 for the same job.

It appeared that discrimination against foreign workers, particularly those who did not possess the necessary legal papers in the form of work permits or documents to confirm their asylum status, was often extremely severe. According to two of the Zimbabwean participants:

In this place I find there is too little work, there is not too much. So if you get a job here, the boss, if they see you they do not have the papers, after the work they do not give you R100 or even R25, because you do not have papers.

The other problem we face here is when the guys who hire us for employment, they take us for granted because we are foreigners, but local South Africans think that we are favoured to get work and we steal their jobs.

Although the South African participants tended to believe that foreign day labourers received special treatment at workplaces or from employers, the belief has little foundation in fact. By contrast, as employers tend to perceive that foreign day labourers are often better qualified and more highly skilled than their South African counterparts, expressions of hostility and resentment are inevitable. There appears to be a fairly general consensus among researchers that the claim that South African workers are being driven out of the informal labour market by influxes of foreign immigrant workers to South Africa needs to be investigated and evaluated

(Blaauw *et al.*, 2012). According to Blaauw *et al.* (2006), the conditions which day labourers encounter at hiring sites in the main industrialised cities and provinces of South Africa tend to vary considerably. A very good example can be provided by the finding that every city or town has sites at which the incomes which day labourers earn are higher than at other sites, owing to the dominant groups of day labourers which frequent them.

5.2.4 Theme 4: The risks which the working conditions of day labourers entail

One of the participants explained the hostile working conditions which he had experienced as follows:

So we are also exposed, we do not have that kind of protection, so they can take us to wherever they want to take us and they can do whatever they want to do with us. So that is the other risk that we could have here.

Another referred to the risk of physical or verbal conflicts, particularly when foreign workers were obliged to mix with South Africans at workplaces. In the words of one of the Zimbabwean participants:

You know how it is at the workplaces: sometimes we get mixed with the locals here. Some of the locals they do not like us to be at the workplace because they feel that we compete with them for the jobs. So at the workplace there can be some fights that are going to erupt or exchanges of words.

The risk of fights erupting and the risks which day labourers are obliged to incur owing to the absence of appropriate safety regulations, were articulated, as follows, by another participant:

So at the workplace there can be fights and the boss will not speak. The other thing is, at the workplace there are no safety regulations that are being followed. So we just work there, not being protected from job injuries. When you are injured, you are not covered, you cover it at your own expense, and that is another risk.

Another complained that day labourers were not given breaks at workplaces, even for lunch, and that employers did not appreciate their hard work.

Sometimes there is no break, there is no lunch. We work overtime and if you work overtime they do not recognise it and, they do not appreciate our effort.

Malinga (2015) maintains that day labourers are always at great risk of being exploited by employees because they are desperate to earn money. Blaauw *et al.* (2010) make a similar assessment by contending that day labourers are often overworked and underpaid or not paid at all.

5.2.5 Theme 5: Food security among day labourers

The researcher discovered that some of the participants did not generate sufficient income to buy food and pay rent. As a consequence, some resort to sleeping on the street and under bridges, which has adverse implications for their health, which, in turn, is often further exacerbated by a lack of sufficient nutritious food. According to the definition which is provided by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2014), food security entails people having access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food at all times, in order to maintain healthy and active lives.

Although the researcher was unable to establish conclusively from the interviews whether the participants had access to sufficient food each day, he was able to infer from their responses that they generally lacked food security. The findings of the qualitative study revealed that slightly

less than 15% of the participants admitted that they searched for food in dustbins at a nearby shopping mall and at petrol stations in the area. Some explained that at times when they had money, they bought food, which they shared in groups. In the estimation of Wood (2010), a lack of food security is a form of social exclusion which is as debilitating as being homeless. According to the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) (2000), a lack of educational qualifications and unemployment are among the principal contributory factors to vulnerability and to homelessness. Wood (2010) explains that food insecurity can result in severe undernourishment, which inevitably results in other health and behavioural problems. The findings which were generated by the questionnaire revealed that one of the participants indicated that he had gone for 15 days without food.

5.2.6 Theme 6: The risks to which day labourers are exposed in relation to inconsistent earnings and non-payment of wages

Inconsistent earnings tend to represent a burden for day labourers throughout the world. Blaauw *et al.* (2006) found a significant level of inconsistency in the wages which employers paid to day labourers in Pretoria, which accorded with the findings of this study in this respect. The extent to which the amounts which the participants were paid for work were highly inconsistent are glaringly evident in Figures 4.10 and 4.11.

One participant said:

The next thing is the inconsistency, like sometimes you get picked once or twice or three times a week. It is not always that you go there and find a job. You go there for nothing, because they do not pay and your bills never stop coming. You must pay rent at the end of the month. You must do something, if you got kids back home, your family they all depend on you, but you are not consistently working, and you work once or twice in a row.

It also emerged from the interviews that the participants often did not negotiate for wages, owing to fierce competition for the work which became available. Van Breda (2014), a researcher in the field of resilience among the youth and children, emphasises the necessity of young men who seek employment at roadsides being able to navigate the social processes which negotiating wages entails. The following excerpt provides a compelling elucidation of the consequences which can result from unsatisfactorily concluded negotiations for wages:

Yeah, they say you must go, you are not working. Kanti funeka ulinde imali ayipeyayo phaya emlungwini ngoku umlungu uthi khangе utsho ukuba uzokhetsha imali. Ngoku kunzima ukuna ndikunike imali ndingakunika imbahla, mhlawbi ndizokunika xa usebenzile, kubonakala ba usebenzile. Ugqiba kwakho ke (You have to wait for him to pay you, but he will claim that you didn't say that you wanted money and end up giving me clothes. And I went with someone who said to me 'I cannot give you money now, maybe I will give it to you when I am satisfied with your work'.

Other responses revealed that in many instances in which the participants were paid, the amounts failed to match the amounts which had been cited during the brief interactions with employers at the hiring site. Although it also needs to be emphasised that wages tend to vary according to the types of work which day labourers are required to perform, in this case the participants complained that their wages for performing the same types of work tended to vary considerably. As it was noted during the literature review, Camou, (2009) maintains that day labourers often accept employment without having sufficient information concerning prospective employers, which often results in their being subjected to abusive behaviour such as non-payment of wages. Conversely, both Blaauw *et al.* (2006) and Theodore *et al.* (2014) suggest that even if there are negotiations between employers and day labourers, they do not necessarily guarantee that the day

labourers will be paid for the work which they have performed. The following excerpts serve to illustrate the findings pertaining to this theme:

Yeah, it depends on the type of work but basically it ranges from R150 to R200.

Sometimes they pay a small amount, maybe R60, and the type of job that we do is hard, you know.

I think one of them is that if you find someone to go and work with, you are going to face the problems that I do and not get the real money I am supposed to get. Some of them are going to give you the money that they want to give you....Like 10, 20, or 50 Rand.

5.3 Conclusions

This chapter has taken the form of presentation and discussion of the themes and sub-themes which emerged from the thematic analysis of the qualitative data. The findings have been supported by verbatim quotations, some of which were translated by the researcher from isiXhosa to English. The findings have also been discussed in relation to relevant excerpts of the literature review. The final chapter is devoted to a summary of the findings, a discussion of the conclusions which were drawn from them, and the recommendations which have been made on the basis of the conclusions.

CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS WHICH WERE DRAWN FROM THEM, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The aim and purpose of this chapter is to provide a summary of the findings of this study and an elucidation of the conclusions which were drawn from them, in relation to the aim and objectives of the study. On the basis of the conclusions, recommendations are made concerning the formulation of policies to guide appropriate interventions to resolve the problems which were identified in this study. The final section offers suggestions for further research, on the basis of the findings and limitations of this study.

6.2 Summary of the findings

The findings of the quantitative study enabled the researcher to develop a credible profile of the day labourers who gather at the hiring site in Ravensmead in Parow Valley. The site appears to be, for all intents and purposes, exclusively the preserve of males whose ages tend to cluster around the range from 36 to 45 years. The finding suggests that at present the day labour market may not have fulfilled its potential in relation to combating the alarmingly high levels of unemployment among the youth of South Africa. Although the racial composition of the research sample was significantly at variance with the distribution of population in groups in Cape Town, it could be suggested that the racial skewing is indicative of the predominantly black character of the day labour market in South Africa. The ratio of South African to Zimbabwean participants in the research sample accorded with those concerning ratios of South African to foreign day labourers which emerged from the findings of other studies which have been conducted in South Africa. The predominance of Black men from the province of the Eastern Cape contributed significantly to the large majority of isiXhosa-speakers in the sample. The finding that nearly all

of the participants were unmarried and had never been married was consistent with the profiles which have been developed for day labourers throughout South Africa. The most surprising finding was provided by nearly half of the sample indicating that they had received post-school education or training. Although this finding did not accord with those of most other studies which have been conducted in South Africa, it was offset to a certain extent by the other members of the sample who had not matriculated and some of whom had received little formal education.

The qualitative findings were expressed in the form of the theses and sub-themes which emerged from the thematic analysis of the qualitative data concerning the nature of the risks to which day labourers are exposed, the coping strategies which they adopt, and the external factors which contribute to the degree of resilience which they are able to display in the face of hardships. It was found that their resilience had two principal drivers, namely, the support which they provided to one another in times of need and the material assistance and support which they received from outsiders. The continuous risk to which they were exposed in relation to obtaining employment and generating incomes had two components, namely, a frequent lack of employment and their dogged persistence in a market which they themselves perceived to offer few opportunities for gainful employment. The theme of discrimination revealed that although day labourers are often subjected to severe discrimination and stigmatisation at the hands of outsiders, including employers, some also practise intense discrimination themselves. In the latter case, it often takes the form of vociferous and sometimes violent expressions of xenophobia and racism against foreign workers, whom they perceive to be 'stealing' their opportunities to obtain employment. The resentment which they express is often fuelled by feelings of frustration and envy, because employers tend to prefer foreign workers owing to their

superior qualifications and ability to speak English. It was found that the risks to which day labourers are exposed owing to their working conditions stem from the unregulated nature of the day labour market, as it is impossible to enforce the regulations which are adhered to in the formal sector in relation to the health and safety of workers. The findings concerning food security revealed that it was likely that a great many day labourers did not have sufficient nutritious food to eat at times, although little comprehensive quantitative data appears to be available. The final theme which emerged concerning the risks to which day labourers are exposed concerned the pronounced inconsistency in the amounts which they were able to earn and the constant thread of either being underpaid or not paid at all by employers.

6.3 Conclusions

Day labourers and the phenomenon of day labouring in South Africa together provide a constant reminder that the promise of a better life for all after the privations which were endured by the majority during the colonial and apartheid eras has remained an empty one for vast swathes of South African society. Members of the most vulnerable segments of population groups are obliged to try to eke out meagre existences from informal forms of employment such as day laboring, owing to a lack of opportunities for employment in the formal sector. Low levels of education and the skills which enable people to find gainful employment effectively preclude the least advantaged South Africans from entering the formal labour market and obtaining secure and adequately remunerated employment. Some commentators have suggested that rather than heralding a new dawn for all South Africans, 1994 instead marked the advent of a new and more insidious form of apartheid which ensured the social exclusion of a great many South Africans with few prospects of the calls for social justice from the rest of the world which eventually made apartheid untenable. Consequently, if social justice is to be extended to all South Africans

and South Africa is to honour its commitment to meeting the SDGs, strategies need to be developed to ensure that those who are obliged to work in the informal sector are able to earn incomes which permit them to have standards of living which accord with at least the minimum requirements for decent lives or make it possible for them to make transitions into the formal labour market. The inescapable conclusion is that the need for social upliftment, to which lip service was paid before the demise of apartheid and continues to be paid today, needs to be driven by appropriate policies.

The following section provides suggestions concerning appropriate policies which could be implemented in the day labour market in South Africa.

6.4 Recommendations and relevant considerations in relation to policy

6.4.1 Introduction

The findings of the study revealed that although some day labourers are highly skilled, skills do not necessarily enable them to earn adequate incomes or to enjoy decent standards of living. Consequently, policies which are implemented solely to increase the skills of day labourers and other informal workers may not provide a sufficiently efficacious remedy for their inability to earn adequate incomes. Appropriate recommendations would include the development of overall frameworks to increase incomes through the acquisition of relevant skills, the promulgation of mandatory health and safety regulations for all employers, measures to promote and maintain environmental health, and reducing the disparities in wages between skilled workers and unskilled and semi-skilled day labourers. Interventions should also be implemented to increase the likelihood of day labourers making transitions into the formal labour market and having their terms of employment regulated by labour laws, through formulating new laws or amending existing labour laws to meet the needs of the day labour sector. The recent amending of laws

pertaining to domestic workers in accordance with the Basic Conditions of Employment (BCE) Act (2014) represents a decisive, positive step towards making significant inroads into reducing poverty. In summary, the main thrust needs to concern the expansion of existing policies to accommodate and include informal workers to provide a viable means of improving their working conditions and regularising their daily wages.

The following section is devoted to a discussion of policy interventions which may be applicable to the circumstances of the day labourers who participated in this study.

6.4.2 The day labour market in Ravensmead, Parow Valley

The day labourers who gather at the hiring site in Ravensmead are obliged to do so owing to the high rates of unemployment and poverty which afflict their communities. The findings of the study revealed that there was not a positive correlation between the incomes and living standards of the participants and the skills which they possessed. It is plausible to conclude that the finding suggests that the alignment of the market forces of supply and demand often do not favour the day labourers who are frequent at the site in Ravensmead.

As enabling day labourers to increase or expand their skills alone is not likely to result in increased incomes and improved standards of living for them, policy frameworks need to prioritise making the day labour market more responsive to the basic needs of day labourers, with the SDGs providing a fair, unbiased, and universally accepted set of criteria according to which their basic human rights should be upheld. Those who are tasked with the formulation of policy would be well advised to investigate the feasibility of adopting the worker-centred model, which has been used successfully in countries such as the United States. The application of the model should not only provide a formal structure to provide day labourers with the means to hire themselves out on equitable terms, but also to provide appropriate regulatory mechanisms to

ensure that the rights of day labourers accord with those of workers who are employed in the formal sector. Structures which embody the worker-centred model could act as labour brokers to facilitate the formal hiring of day labourers according to their specific skills by employers. Adequate regulation would contribute significantly to precluding day labourers from being underpaid and overworked, and also to ensuring that their working conditions comply with national standards for the formal sector. This regulation of the day labour market could be further formalised by requiring both day labourers and potential employers to be officially registered. Within South Africa, interventions in day labour markets have been coordinated by Men on the Side of the Road (MSR), a social enterprise organisation which was founded in the Western Cape, in Cape Town in 1999 and has affiliates in other parts of the country. In addition, it has been reported that MSR has endeavoured to increase the skills of day labourers, through in-service training and developing procedures for enabling employers to evaluate the skills of workers. The need to certify the skills of workers in the informal economy has been recognised in relevant literature (Revell, 2010).

There is a considerable amount of evidence to suggest that day labourers who negotiate their wages and have a reservation wage are more likely to earn high wages than those who do not. Consequently, interventions which are based upon the worker-centred model to regulate the day labour market could entail the setting of minimum wages in accordance with the skills of the which day labourers possess. In addition, they could also significantly reduce incidences of unemployment by introducing a roster system, by means of which opportunities for employment are evenly distributed among registered day labourers. Obliging registered day labourers to attend workshops which provide training and opportunities to upgrade their skills on days on which they are unable to find employment would significantly increase the probability of their

securing permanent formal employment in the future and also increase the frequency with which they are hired.

There can be little doubt that opportunities for employment for day labourers would increase dramatically if the government were to offer segments of the formal sector, such as the construction industry, incentives such as tax rebates or financial assistance to hire formally registered day labourers who possess the skills which they require. Appropriate strategies would contribute significantly to fulfil the urgent priorities of the government to reduce unemployment and create employment.

6.5 Suggestions for future research

It would be advisable for future studies to be concerned mainly with endeavouring to overcome the limitations and to shed light upon the inconclusive findings of this study. The most severe limitation pertains to the use of cross-sectional data, which effectively precluded determining causality. Consequently, a more comprehensive study should use the limitations of the data which was generated by this study as a starting point for deepening the contexts in which the lived realities of day labourers are understood. Doing so would contribute to determining the makeup of the day labour market in relation to the ratio of day labourers who are skilled workers who choose not to engage in full-time formal employment and those who enter it owing to external factors such as a lack of opportunities for formal employment. Further research also needs to be conducted to investigate the internal and external factors which influence the risks to which day labourers are exposed and the degree of resilience which they are able display throughout South Africa. Sufficiently detailed data could provide invaluable insights into the types of institutional support structures which could be implemented in order to counteract the effects of negative internal and external factors at present. A further recommendation also for the

future study is that the researchers must take women day labourers perspectives so that they can also err their views. This was totally focusing on male day labourers, however the feminist perspective could not be ignored considering the gender dynamics and societal perspective on gender and gender balance.



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