



**UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE**

**INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**DVS 804**

**Masters Mini Thesis**

Title

**An investigation on the experiences, causes and consequences of unemployment  
amongst Graduate Youths in Ga-Kgapane, Limpopo Province of South Africa**

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**2020**

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## DECLARATION

I declare that the information presented and discussed in this mini-thesis about “An investigation on the experiences, causes and consequences of unemployment amongst Graduate Youths in Ga-Kgapane, Limpopo Province of South Africa”, for the degree of Master of Development Studies, has not been submitted by me at the University of the Western Cape before, or at another university. This is my own knowledge, work and all the materials used in this thesis have been acknowledged

Ramatshekgisa Malebo Gratitude

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Signature

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Date



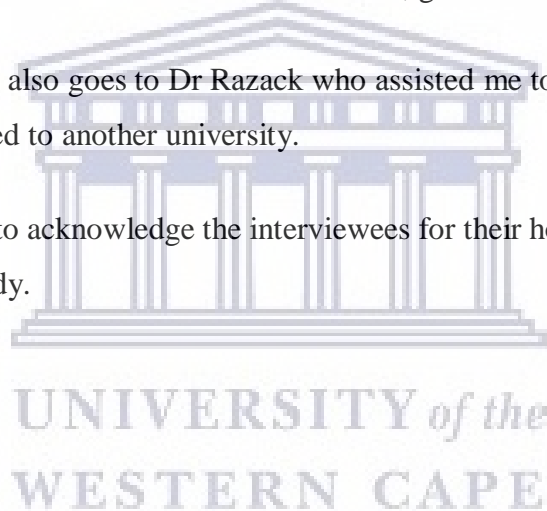
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Throughout the study the researcher was assisted, encouraged, guided and supported by several individuals in different ways.

I would like to give thanks to the Almighty God, for strength and perseverance throughout the research and I also give thanks to:

- a. My parents, Molatelo and Sewela Ramatshekgisa and the rest of my family members for support, appreciation and the space that was provided throughout the study,
- b. I appreciate also my supervisor for her continual advice, guidance and inspiration,
- c. My sincere appreciation also goes to Dr Razack who assisted me to submit this thesis when my supervisor progressed to another university.
- d. Finally, I take this time to acknowledge the interviewees for their honest responses and time to participate in this study.



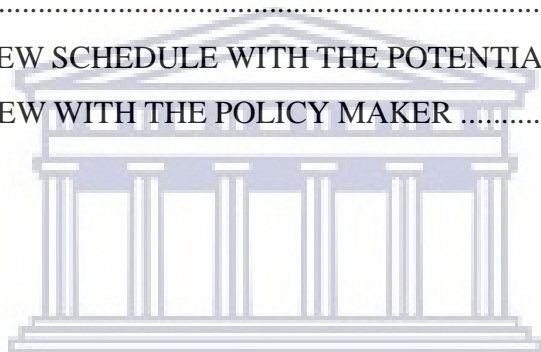
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## Key words

Youth

Graduates

Employers

Government

Potential employer

Policy maker

Recruitment Agency

Greater Letaba Municipality

Unemployment

Ga-Kgapane

Human Capital





## List of Abbreviations

AA	Affirmative Action
ASGISA	Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
BRICS	Britain, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CHEC	Cape Higher Education Consortium
DBSA	Development Bank of South Africa
GEAR	Growth Employment and Redistribution
GLM	Greater Letaba Municipality
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
ILO	International Labour Organisation
JIPSA	Joint Initiative for Priority Skills Acquisition
NDP	National Development Plan
NGP	New Growth Path
NPC	National Planning Commission
NYDA	National Youth Development Agency
NYDP	National Youth Development Plan
NYDPF	National Youth Development Policy Framework
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development
RDP	Reconstruction Development Programme
STATS SA	Statistics South Africa
TVET	Public Technical Vocational Education and Training
UNDP	United Nations Development Plan
WEF	World Economic Forum
YES	Youth Employment Service

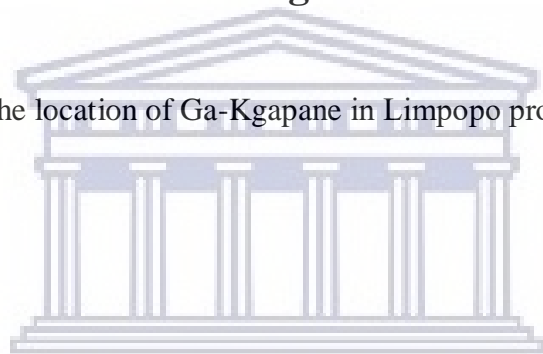
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## ABSTRACT

All around the world, graduate youths are experiencing increasing high number of unemployment, compared to older people of the labour force. This rising rate of unemployment amongst graduate youths has been noticed since the global financial crisis. In South Africa, youth unemployment is on the rise, which leads to social, economic and political challenges. Graduate youth unemployment is crippling the economy of South Africa. Therefore, this study was undertaken to investigate the experiences, causes and consequences of unemployment amongst graduate youth in Ga-Kgapane Limpopo province of South Africa, with an objective to provide concrete recommendations on the ways in which the public and private sectors can tackle challenges of graduate youth unemployment. In the study, a qualitative approach was used to collect data and to analyse data. 13 participants who met the criteria was selected using purposive sampling. To conduct in-depth interviews, a semi-structured interview schedule was used. The data was thereafter analysed using qualitative thematic analysis technique. The study revealed that most of the graduate youths has been unemployed for years and are still continuing to apply for jobs hoping that there would be available chances to get jobs one day. Some of the unemployed graduate youths are losing hope because there are no chances of finding jobs. In another study, it was found that unemployment amongst graduates is as result caused by lack of work experience; job search skills; discrimination based on race; high expectations and higher education institution attended. Which these causes of unemployment lead to bad experiences of the youths as some indicated loss of power when they are with their friends.

This study also found that graduate youths who are unemployed are affected by social, financial and psychological stigma on a daily life situation. Furthermore, in this study, the potential employer states that the unemployed graduate youths should not only depend on government opportunities but rather opt for self-employment. It was also found that the government, policy makers and the Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) play important role to promoting graduate employment amongst the youths. In this study the researcher require that policy makers should be provide youths with skills on the job market for opportunities and be orientated on how to search and apply for jobs. They should encourage private sector and the NGOs to be the mediators between other stakeholders and the youth. The researcher furthermore stated that policy makers should ensure that government promote self-employment in order to reduce unemployment amongst the graduate youths.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### 1.1 Introduction

The State of the Nation Address by the President of South Africa, Mr. Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa, emphasised that youth unemployment is a challenge both socially and economically. Then a programme called youth employment service (YES) was initiated by President Ramaphosa (The Skills Portal, 2018). This is because the country is presently grappling with increasing unemployment rate, particularly among the youth, that have been seen since the early 2000s.

The ILO (2010) reported that in 2009 the youth unemployment rate had reached its highest level globally, pointing that amongst the world's 620 million economically active youth aged between 15-25 years, 81 million of them were without jobs towards the end of 2009. This is the highest number ever recorded, and is 7.8 million more than the figure released in 2007. South Africa is among the countries with the highest levels of unemployment. Persisting unemployment is one of the most pressing challenges facing the country and this threatens the country's social and economic stability.

In South Africa, it is stated that the main goal of higher education is to have young people from minority groups having able to access institutions of higher education. The majority of students around the country go to institutions of higher education for different reasons and with various objectives (Bastedo and Gumport, 2003). The economic view puts emphasis on the significance of educational outcomes that lead to enhanced income generation opportunities in the future, amongst these diverse purposes (Bastedo and Gumport, 2003). Brunello (2001) argues that higher education is more like a centre for training people to be labourers.

This study focus is on graduate youths who are looking for jobs actively and having no luck in securing employment opportunities in South Africa. In this study a graduate is defined as someone having a post-secondary school qualification (Moleke, 2006). Unemployed graduate youths are regarded as those who have just graduated, are aged between 15 and 24 years old,

and without jobs. Unemployment is referred to as a situation whereby individuals aged 15 years and older have the ability and are willing to work, but cannot find jobs.

This study intends to ensure that overlooked aspects of unemployment amongst the graduate youths are examined. Structurally, in the sections that follow, the researcher presents (i) the background of the study; (ii) the literature review and theoretical framework; (iii) significance/rationale of the study, the research setting, research questions, aims of the study, specific objectives of the study; (iv) research methodology; and (v) a chapter outline for the mini-thesis.

## **1.2 Background of the study**

It is now more than two decades since the dawn of democracy in 1994, and yet sustainable economic growth employment and employment they still need more attention (Van den Berg, 2006). Creation of jobs and sustainable economic growth are critical to improving people's living conditions and to alleviate poverty.

In South Africa, the National Development Plan (NDP) presents a vision for 2030 and the context in which the programmes focus on youth based on recommendations. The National Planning Commission (NPC) specified that the NDP was to embrace the youth challenges facing the country, since there was a rapid increase of the population, especially amongst young people in the urban areas of South Africa. Having young people increasing in number in the urban areas can be of a great benefit in the country and, provided that most of these young people are productively employed, the benefit would be referred to as a demographic dividend (Michel, 2016). In South Africa, this dividend is not realised because of a high unemployment rate among young people.

According to the ILO (2013), about 185 million young graduates across the world aged 15-24 are unemployed. Moleke (2006) stresses that the socio-economic future and present well-being of most countries that have high levels of youth unemployment are threatened. The continent of Africa is among those experiencing high levels of youth graduate unemployment; therefore, this issue is affecting South Africa (International Monetary Fund, 2013). South Africa's unemployment in the year 2018 was standing at 26.7%, consisting of dropped marginality from 27.7% in 2017. Job losses in private households and the formal sectors is thought to have come due to the high unemployment rate (Moya, 2018). Present statistics are staggeringly higher,

especially since the recent COVID 19 pandemic and the resultant lockdown measures to control the spread of the virus.

The same definition utilised by ILO, is also applied in South Africa. The focus in this research will be unemployed youth graduates who are active, looking for a job and are available for employment. In South Africa unemployment occurs to individuals differently; therefore, there are different types of unemployment. These different types of unemployment are categorised as follows: **a)** *Structural unemployment* is unemployment caused by structural changes in the economy (Swanepoel and Van Zyl, 1999). **b)** *Frictional unemployment* takes place when people are not stable in their in employment, moving from one employment to another (Keynes, 1973). **c)** *Cyclical unemployment* occurs when an individual loses a job and cannot find another because of the economic recession taking place in a country for a certain period (Keynes, 1973). **d)** *Seasonality of unemployment* is when there is a high demand of certain jobs only during certain seasons. For instance, in agricultural sector jobs, during the season of harvest, which is when the people will be hired (Dornbusch, Fischer and Startz (2011). However, to reduce youth unemployment, a strong economic growth is needed, since job creation is threatened by low economic growth low (Du Toit, 2003).

The National Treasury (2011), came with a suggestion in their report that, unemployment amongst graduates was rife. Although financial schemes are available in South Africa that give young people support to study further, when they are done with their studies they still fight to get employment (Moleke, 2006). According to Moleke, (2006) social, economic and political issues in South Africa they play a role on the causes of youth graduates unemployment. Social issues include the lack of work experience and skills, whilst issues of economy refer to structural changes in a given country, such as economic recession. Political issues include discriminatory labour practices that are based on race, gender or sexual orientation. There are many studies conducted to comprehend this kind of unemployment (Moleke, 2006). For example, in South Africa, Olubukola (2013), found that in banking sector, graduates lacked skills. However, the lack of skills seems less a problem than skills mismatch. According to Du Toit (2003), unemployment affect mostly youth not in possession of education qualifications than those who are in possession of educational qualification.

### 1.3 Significance of the study

The reason behind studying unemployment among youth graduates is because in South Africa, unemployment among youth population rises along with the total unemployment rate. This, despite the fact that there have been changes in the overall rate for unemployment, in which only unemployed graduates youth standing at 5.9% in 2012, this rate in 1995 increased to 7% from 5.4% (Broekhuizen and Van der Berg, 2013). Even though the statistic is huge, this shows that there has been an increase on unemployment youth graduates over time. To sum, majority of the researchers in their study found that in South Africa there's shortage of skills, while the flip side of it is that, job opportunities were not available enough for youth graduates. This contradict conducted studies with findings that the more someone obtain qualifications, is the more they stand a better chance to be employed (Oosthuizen, 2005).

It is important to study graduates youth unemployed because the outcomes and the way of involvement in labour market are shaped at the ages of 20–24. Work experience is significant for young graduates to obtain. Having no opportunities to get work experience can bring undesired results. Banerjee, Galiani, Levinsohn, McLaren and Woolard (2008) state that in possession of experience from previous job is relating to whether an individual can get a job in future or not. It is important to study youth graduate unemployment because it compromises the economic gains that South Africa could be accruing. There are numerous policies that have been used to address unemployment and among those policies was the Joint Initiative for Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA). JIPSA focused on implementation of special programmes for training (Pauw, Borat, Goga, Ncube, and Van de Westhuizen, 2006). Through this scheme, solutions for youth graduate unemployment were put forward, but it is clear that the strategy is not achieving the intended outcomes (Pauw et al., 2006).

There are many different researchers who have conducted studies on unemployment. For instance, Naong (2011), analysed the reasons why graduate youths found is not easy for them to get a job. The researchers found that majority of graduate youths struggled to get employment because of weak education system in South Africa. To mitigate this issue, entrepreneurship was initiated to be integrated in the school curriculum. Sha (2006) found graduates believed employers to blame for graduate unemployment, while employers perceived the attitudes of computer science graduates towards work to be negative. This was thought to make employers reluctant to hire new graduates. If the problem of graduate youth unemployment persists, graduate youths might end up perceiving investment in education to

be a waste of money. Looking at the issue from the Capability Approach by Sen (1999), the increasing rate of unemployment amongst graduate youth might discouraged the youth which will make them to lose hope on realising their functions and capabilities.

Although there are several studies that have sought to enlighten researchers on the dilemma of unemployment amongst graduate youth in South Africa and elsewhere, a gap in the literature is still there. Specifically, there are few studies that focus on the experiences and perceptions of those that are directly affected by youth graduate unemployment, namely unemployed graduates. Thus, we remain little informed of the lived experiences of those confronted by this problem; nor are we able to benefit from the bottom up insights of unemployed graduates and those social actors close to them, such as employment agencies and prospective employers. Such knowledge would surely contribute towards the generation of bottom up recommendations that may lead to the development of more appropriate and responsive policies to address graduate unemployment.

The rationale provided above makes a compelling case for studies that examine the problem of youth graduate unemployment, including how it is experienced, community perceptions of its causes, and ideas on how it might be addressed. For this reason, the study herein proposed seeks to explore unemployed graduate youths' experiences of unemployment, their perceptions of the causes of unemployment, and their thoughts and those of stakeholders such as recruitment agencies and prospective employers on how it can be addressed. The study intends to use the results that are generated to raise awareness among policymakers, by proposing recommendations on how youth graduate unemployment can be addressed.

#### **1.4 Research question**

The main research question in this study is concerned with the experiences of being unemployed, and the perceptions of the causes and the consequences of unemployment amongst unemployed graduate youths in Ga-Kgapane, Limpopo province of South Africa.

#### **1.5 Aims of the study**

The aim of the study is to explore unemployed graduate youths' experiences, causes and consequences in Ga-Kgapane Township, Limpopo province of South Africa as a case study.



## **1.6 Objectives of the study**

- To explore the experiences of being unemployed amongst unemployed graduate youths aged 20-34 years in Ga-Kgapane Township, Limpopo province.
- To explore the perceptions of the causes of graduate youth unemployment among unemployed graduate youths, recruitment agency, potential employer and policy maker in Ga-Kgapane Township.
- To examine the consequences of unemployment from the perspective of unemployed graduate youths.
- To explore solutions on ways to reduce graduate youth unemployment, from the view of unemployed graduate youths, policy maker, recruitment agency and potential employer in Ga-Kgapane, Limpopo province.

## **1.7 Research design**

A research design it can be defined as a plan whereby a study is to be undertaken (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). The research design utilised in this study was case study. A case study gives the researcher the chance to get deeper knowledge on what is being studied by interacting with people in real situations (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000).

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), a case study puts the stress on acquiring more understanding with regard to the situation in a single unit.

### **1.7.1 Research methodology**

This study was conducted using qualitative research techniques. The study presents an explanatory literature overview of the unemployment graduate youth problem. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), when a researcher wants to examine or explore a new interest, the exploratory approach is used in such a manner.

### **1.7.2 Research instruments**

- **Semi-structured interviews**

In qualitative research, the predominant means of data collection are interviews (Greeff, 2011). The researcher used semi-structured interviews; these allow the researcher to have each

participant's detailed picture of beliefs concerning the study subject (Greeff, 2011). Semistructured interviews were conducted with ten unemployed graduate youth, and with officials, which included a potential employer, a recruitment agency and a policy maker.

Some of the interviews were tape-recorded with the consent of the participants, and thereafter transcribed verbatim. The use of tape-recording was to ensure the trustworthiness of the outcomes for the interviews conducted (Brown, 2013).

- **Sampling**

In any research, sampling is an important step because studying the whole populations is seldom practical. This study sample consisted of 10 young, unemployed graduates, one recruitment agency personnel, one potential employer (e.g. human resources manager) and one policy maker. The researcher selected the participants using purposive sampling.

## **1.8 The data analysis and presentation**

The study deployed qualitative data analysis. Semi-structured interviews was used for data collection. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Codes were generated from the transcripts in order to label manifested data, and for sub-themes the codes were collated, which were transformed into major themes. The data were analysed using thematic analysis technique. The data in this study will be presented in the form of quotations and verbal descriptions.

### **1.8.1 The research trustworthiness**

This study used qualitative research methods, which has necessitated the researcher to triangulate the collected information. The following terms were used to evaluate the quality of the qualitative method: transferability, credibility, dependability and confirmability (Wahyuni, 2012).

## **1.9 Ethical considerations**

According to Leedy and Ormrod, (2005) ethical principles are to be followed by every researcher who are conducting a study. Therefore, proper measures are to be adhered to when dealing with people to ensure that their participation is voluntary, and that informed consent is given prior to participation.

This research was only attempted after the University of the Western Cape Senate, the Arts Faculty board and the Institute for Social Development gave out approval. In undertaking this

research, the researcher made certain that informed consent forms are provided to the participants, to ensure that they knew what the study was all about. The names of the participants remained confidential and their privacy was respected (Adams, Khan, Raeside and White, 2007; Fowler, 2014; Somekh and Lewin, 2011). The researcher provided a thorough explanation of the study in the form of an information sheet, which outlined what was required of participants, the voluntary nature of the study, the potential risks of participating in the study, and the commitment to uphold the highest levels of confidentiality.

### **1.10 Chapters of the study**

This study is organised into six chapters. **Chapter 1** presents the background of the study – unemployment amongst young graduates. This chapter will also provide a description of the significance of the study, research questions, aims and objectives. Lastly, this chapter will provide an overview of the contents of the subsequent chapters of the thesis.

**Chapter 2** provides a detailed literature review of studies that have looked at the study topic, as well as the theoretical framework used to understand the research.

**Chapter 3** provides a research design applied in this study. It will provide a description of the study setting, research methodology, and type of sampling, data collection techniques, data analysis plan and the limitations of the study. It will end with a discussion of the ethical considerations pertaining to the research.

**Chapter 4** presents the findings of the study, including a critical analysis thereof.

**Chapter 5** offers a detailed discussion of the findings presented in the previous chapter, Chapter 4.

**Chapter 6** provides the conclusions along with a discussion of recommendations to address youth unemployment amongst graduates, and suggests areas for further research.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the literature review and theoretical frameworks for the study, which will be necessary for the analysis of research data collected (Fouché and Delpont, 2005). The chapter also discusses the youth policy and legislation of South Africa. The literature reviewed in this study is drawn from government publications, national newspaper sources, academic journals and also academic student papers available for review.

To develop an understanding of the body of knowledge on the problem of youth unemployment, particularly amongst unemployed graduate youth, a review of existing empirical studies conducted amongst youth graduates who are unemployed globally, on the continent of Africa and in South Africa will be discussed. In this study, the sources to be used will be those which have been recently published, with a few dated up to 20 years ago. This selection will ensure that the literature reviewed in this study is fairly recent and relevant to answer questions about the current situation of unemployment amongst graduates in South Africa.

#### **2.2 Legislative and Policy Frameworks relevant to South African youth**

##### **2.2.1 National Youth Development Agency and National Youth Commission**

Post-apartheid, South Africa experienced a resurgence in youth interests, which was marked by calls to bring back youth on national agenda, and the development of institutions emphasising development of the youth, such as the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), and the National Youth Commission (NYC). This resurgence occurred against the backdrop of an economy that remains characterised by poor participation among the youth, with youth unemployment one of its features despite the many policies developed for the development of youth (National Youth Commission, 2009).

In 1996, the NYC was constituted; its existence has brought the definition of the roles of youth and their ability to invent their role in advancing youth development. The National Youth

Policy came into existence as a result of the rhetorical acknowledgement by the NYDA that the implementation and design of youth programmes under the support of one implementing agency was important for the youth (National Youth Commission, 2009). These institutions remain ineffective in turning the tide against many challenges facing the youth in South Africa, including those to do with economic disenfranchisement, unemployment and HIV.

### **2.2.2 Reconstruction and Development Plan (RDP) White Paper**

The Reconstruction and Development Plan (RDP) the first post-apartheid policy document, sought to bring about integrated and coherent socio-economic policy framework that would advance democracy in South Africa.

The new South Africa agreed that apartheid perpetrated injustices in terms of racial segregation and the capacity to reach the highest point of achievement possible, which disadvantaged Black people. With reference to the RDP, Chapter 7 of the RDP White Paper speaks about the youth, and section 7.7.4 alludes to the notion that, to correct past injustices, there are interventions that ought to be adhered:

“The youth of our land played a major role in the achievement of freedom. They are our country’s most important resource. Effort will be required to ensure that they are equipped to play a major role in the reconstruction and development of South Africa. The Government will consider establishing special programmes aimed at addressing the needs of young people, in particular, to address the backlog in education and training, job creation and recreation. Young people are our country’s most important resource”. (RDP White Paper, 1994: 41)

This ended showing that the youth of South Africa were proponents of prosperity and change, proposing the youth development advancement facilitation. After this, in June 1996 the National Youth Commission was established. The purpose of its creation was to advance programmes to facilitate youth development. Unfortunately, the RDP was short-lived, as it was soon replaced by the market oriented, neoliberal and non-youth centred Growth, Employment, and Redistribution Plan (GEAR) policy, under which a jobless growth was observed.

### **2.2.2 National Youth Commission Act of 1996**

The statutory body, the National Youth Commission, tasked with the National Youth Policy, was responsible for promoting youth development, coordinating the implementation, as well

as lobbying in South Africa. The main task of the National Youth Commission Act of 1996 was to develop a unified national youth policy to coordinate and to develop a youth development plan that is comprehensive (National Youth Commission Act, 1996).

Furthermore, uniformity is what this Act sought to ensure in the approach to issues that concern the youth, while making sure that different institutions and bodies similar to the Commission would liaise with one other with a mission to promote common practices and policies (National Youth Commission Act, 1996).

### **2.2.3 National Youth Development Policy Framework (NYDPF) 2002-2007**

It was ascertained in the year 2000 that there was a need for a holistic national youth policy to be developed. The policy establishment took place but the policy was not adopted (National Youth Policy, 2009). However, this process led to the establishment of the National Youth Development Policy Framework (NYDPF) in 2002. The government's youth action background document provided by the NYDPF argued for a holistic and integrated strategy for youth development (National Youth Development Policy Framework 2002-2007, 2002). The NYDPF was the culmination of lessons learnt, and advocated that a more focused policy direction was needed to tackle the various needs of young people.

The NYDPF 2002-2007 aimed to make sure that young people had access to education, that they participated in the economy, that there was civic participation and social cohesion, that there was health and well-being for the youth, that there was a service for the national youth and lastly, that the youth had jobs. At the end of the NYDPF term, the National Youth Policy (NYP) was established and the youth interventions were systematically given a platform. However, it remains unclear what particular youth interventions have become successful as a consequence of this policy framework, besides the consequent development of the NYDA.

### **2.2.4 National Youth Development Act 54 (2008)**

The establishment of the National Youth Development Agency was made provision for by the NYDA Act of 2008. The National Youth Development Agency is tasked with all youth development and implementation-led programmes in the country (National Youth Commission, 2009). The NYDA responsibilities with courtesy to services they needed to provide the youth are as follows:

- Offering young people information based on the career guidance and national youth fund services,
- Develop database of job opportunities and administer it,
- Make finances available for youths and also those who start their own businesses,
- Offer services such as mentoring,
- Provide training to work programmes,
- Provide business training for youths,
- Provide guidance to the youths who are unemployed to improve their professional and life skills.

(National Youth Development Agency Act of 2008)

The NYP 2009-2014's overarching goal was to “intentionally enhance the capacities of young people through addressing their needs, promoting positive outcomes, and providing integrated coordinated package of services, opportunities, choices, relationship and support necessary for holistic development of all young people particularly those outside the social, political and economic mainstream” (National Youth Policy, 2009: 8).

Under the set of rules of this policy, the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) initiated and implemented numerous targeted youth projects and programmes. An Act of parliament established the NYDA Act no 54 of 2008 in order to respond to national, provincial and local government youth development issues. In ensuring that priority is made by all major stakeholders for youth development in order to contribute to permanent solutions to address challenges faced by youth, it takes the lead.

Some of the objectives of the policy were as follows:

- To include development of the youth within the government policies,
- Enhancing the main institutions of youth capacity development and making sure that there is integration and coordination in youth services delivery,

- Initiating and putting into action the wide various opportunities and interventions for youth who in needy.

(National Youth Policy 2009-2014, 2009: 8)

### **2.2.5 National Development Plan (NDP)**

The National Planning Commission was appointed in May 2010 by former president Jacob Zuma to draft a National Development Plan and vision. The Diagnostic Report of the Commission depicted South Africa's shortcomings and progress since 1994. The nine primary challenges illustrated in the findings of the report were as follows:

- Labourers are too few,
- Black people's education of poor quality,
- Infrastructure inadequate, not well maintained and poorly located,
- Corruption on high level,
- Divided society in South Africa.

(NDP Executive Summary, 2011)

Ultimately, this led to the draft of the advanced national plan, which was released in November 2011.

A developmental state aspires to create its people's capabilities to take the initiative for their own lives in order to improve them, while intervening to address the injustices of the past. It needs individuals, not the market or government, to stand for themselves, to develop capabilities needed on their own (NDP Executive Summary, 2011). The focus of the NDP is on the idea of capabilities; mostly the following but not limited to the ones mentioned below (NDP, Executive Summary, 2011):

- "Political freedoms,
- Human rights,
- Social opportunities,
- Exchange, consumption, investment, economic facilities, production and work." (NDP Executive Summary, 2011)



The Commission acknowledged that the unemployment burden was carried by young people, and that therefore adoption of a “youth lens” was needed, which involved intentions to:

- Enhance the school system,
- Introduce new programmes based in the community to provide youth with entrepreneurship and life-skills training,
- Strengthen programmes that focus on youth service, (National Development Plan Executive Summary, 2011: 20).

The policies discussed in this section are still operating today (at the time of this research); however, in combating youth unemployment they have not succeeded.

### **2.3 Definition of graduate**

A graduate is a person who is in possession of a secondary post qualification. Van Der Berg and Van Broekhuizen (2012: 22) define graduates as “individuals with at least a bachelor’s degree or equivalent and higher educational qualifications, i.e. honours, Masters, and doctoral degrees”. Van Der Berg and Van Broekhuizen (2012) further argue that university access, the quality of schooling, and the economic structure of the country are associated with youth graduates’ unemployment. In this study, an individual with a possession of at least diploma from institutions of higher learning is regarded as a graduate.

### **2.4 Definition of unemployment**

The definition of unemployment is mostly based on the following criteria: (1) currently available for work, (2) seeking work and (3) without work (ILO, 2005). This definition acts as a guide towards the definition of unemployment, and about 80% of countries globally accept it (Kingdon and Knight, 2001). The first criterion means that when an individual is categorised as unemployed, such an individual is available for paid employment during the referenced period. When a person is looking/seeking for employment, it means that he/she has been taking steps to actively look for a job. Lastly, when a person is without employment it implies that he/she has nowhere whereby he/she can get remuneration (Fourie and Burger, 2010).

### **2.5 The global perspective on graduate youth unemployment**

Unemployment is not new for both ancient and modern generations. It brought devastating effects to the world from as early as the 1930s.

The latest estimates by the ILO placed the global rate of youth unemployment at 13.0% in 2016 (ILO, 2017). This figure is just below the high rate of 13.1% recorded between 2011 and 2013. But there was an increase again in 2017 and 2018 to 13.1%. In 2017, the figure of 70.9 million youth who were unemployed represented a fairly strong decline from the 76.7 million figure reported in 2009. In 2018, the rate of unemployment among youth was expected to increase by 143,000 resulting in 71.1 million unemployed youths (ILO, 2017).

According to Shierholz, Davis and Kimball (2014), in 2009, the global economy was hit by the greatest recession that has ever happened, and there was a slow recovery in the labour markets, which affected workers. The future of youth was deeply affected by the global economic meltdown as well; 1.2 billion people in 2013 who were unemployed were categorised as youth and an estimated 358 million were not participating in the labour market. At the time of the study, the number was declared to be higher (World Economic Forum (WEF), 2013).

In Europe, the rates of youth unemployment remain high. Among the worst affected countries in the region is Spain. The increasing rate of youth unemployment in the economies of the world such as the Middle East and the North African regions has placed a spotlight on the gender gap in the labour market, in which women are the most vulnerable (WEF, 2014). After the global recession in 2009, the duration of youth unemployment increased in the entire world.

In four African countries (Uganda, Malawi, Zimbabwe, and Tanzania), the University of Sussex examining the issue of graduate youth unemployment, reported that educated youth in Africa after they complete their studies, most of them end up finding themselves jobless (IRIN news report, 2004). The latest report of the International Development Committee states that

“over the next few years 600 million young people will be competing over 200 million jobs” (WEF, 2014). The flipside of it is that, even though there was an increase in the rates of youth unemployment in the developing regions, these regions’ statistics for youth unemployment are slightly low compared to the countries that have economies that are more advanced (WEF, 2014). The ILO (2013) however, argues that young people within the developing regions who seem to have jobs, are informal sector employed youth. The current COVID 19 pandemic has plunged the world of work into an unprecedented crises, resulting in major job losses that have not been seen since the Great Depression. Unemployed graduate youths are surely hit as hard as other job seekers, and in fact those were employed but in precarious or temporary work and have consequently lost work in this time, have certainly increased the rate of graduate youth

unemployment worldwide. The COVID 19 pandemic means that the future of work and graduate youth employment in particular, look bleak and uncertain.

### **2.5.1 Graduate youth unemployment in India and Europe**

This section investigates India and European countries' youth graduate unemployment. The examination of unemployment in these countries provides a good comparison to the situation in South Africa. In addition, the review is relevant since these countries are related to South Africa as they are emerging countries economically and belong to Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS).

#### **2.5.1.1 Graduate youth unemployment in India**

Graduate youth unemployment in India has been increasing, and shows a 20% rate of unemployment. The need for technically skilled and qualified manpower was seen immediately after independence in 1947. It was expected that the Indian education system would turn to meet the developing country's requirements. Therefore, a structural shift occurred in India towards skilled labour demand. However, unemployment amongst graduates increased and became a problem, while efforts trying to increase the proportion of skilled labour continued (Chakraborty, 2010).

The nature of graduates' unemployment in India is that there was observed a 20% share in unemployment and an increasing trend of unemployment (Chakraborty 2010). Male graduates had a higher rate of being employed, compared with female graduates, the reason for this being that most of the female graduates did not search for employment after graduating.

In India, the causes of graduate youth unemployment include the problem of mismatched skills and lack of quality of education, amongst other issues. Chakraborty (2010) indicates that, in India, unemployment amongst graduates is a result of mismatched skills between graduates' aspirations and the opportunities available to them. Low quality of tertiary education is also one of the factors that were identified as causing graduate youth unemployment in India; Colleges in India that have often out-dated uniform curricula have the bulk of enrolment. Most of India's institutions are too small to be viable. Government-funded higher education institutions are of lesser quality. There is a substantial expansion in sub-standard programmes

and non-viable institutions, while the number of higher tertiary institutions funded by the government continues to be very small.

### **2.5.1.2 Graduate youth unemployment in Europe**

A comparative study regarding graduate unemployment found substantial differences in the transition to employment across countries in Europe. Although graduate unemployment differs within Europe, the main causes are similar. Through evaluation of graduate unemployment in Europe it can be determined how this issue in developing countries is different from developed countries in terms of graduate unemployment (Kostoglou and Paloukis 2007).

In OECD countries in the years 2000 and 2004, the highest graduate unemployment in Spain occurred between 2000 and 2004 compared to other countries of OECD such as France. Based on a commissioned survey of 10 countries across Europe with a 30 000 sample size of graduates, approximately 5% of graduates experienced hardship in getting employment (Kostoglou and Paloukis, 2007).

In addition, the graduate waiting period before entering the job market differs from one country to another, and can take up to eight months (Kostoglou and Paloukis, 2007). Across European countries, the average period looking for a job was three months, while in countries such as France graduate youths for them to find a job took 9 months. Frictional unemployment was noted, in fact quite sharply, where the percentage of employed graduates increased within seven months after graduation and decreased in subsequent years. Graduates are often employed on a short-term or part-time contract basis and graduates tend to search for other job opportunities, leading to frictional unemployment (Teichler, 2002). A cause of graduate unemployment in European countries is seen to be a lack of soft skills. In two European countries, Sweden and Belgium, which have lowest rates of graduate unemployment, although university graduates have excellent knowledge in graduates' specializations and are hard-working, potential employers see graduates who are not prepared for the conditions of the real-world, which include adaptability, flexibility and creativity, signs shown in few graduates (Kostoglou and Paloukis, 2007). According to Teichler (2002), other causes include the extent to which independent learning is encouraged, the programme length in higher education, academic versus vocational provision and reputation of institution.

## **2.6 Regional graduate youth unemployment**

### **2.6.1 Sub Saharan Africa**

There has not been a decrease in the number of graduate youth unemployment in the regions with major growth rates. Sub Saharan Africa has a pressing problem of youth unemployment (Hilson and Osel, 2014). At the same time, the Sub-Saharan Africa region is number 6 out of the world's 10 fastest growing economies (The Economist, 2011). The region with the highest youth population in the world is sub Saharan Africa. It holds 60% of the population in Africa and labour force of 45% (The Economist, 2011). The youth population figure was expected to increase to over 75% of the population in 2015 (Africa Economic Outlook, 2008). These figures explain why high unemployment in the region is characterised by a fast growing population rate. Nigeria and South Africa which are the two economies that are leading in the region, have 13% and 50% levels of youth unemployment respectively. the proportion of youth unemployment in the case of Nigeria, is high as a result of the country's population size, which is the largest on the African continent, at about 170 million (Africa Economic Outlook, 2008).

### **2.7 Graduate youth unemployment from a South African perspective**

In South Africa, youth unemployment's definition is based on broad and narrow unemployment terms. The unemployed definition of young person, deploying the narrow definition, is when a young person is without a job yet looking for employment in the previous week; whilst in the broad definition, it is when they are not working, nor been actively looking for a job in the previous weeks (Kingdon and Knight, 2001).

In South Africa, the youth unemployment rate exceeds 50%, which is not the highest among countries. Since the end of apartheid, South Africa has been faced with increasing youth unemployment (Dias and Posel, 2007). The high rate of youth unemployment has been striking in the country (Stats SA, 2015), to the extent that even the strategies initiated to improve the situation have failed to do so. For example, the media argues that job creation through such strategies as the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) initiative has failed, and has shown that, in fact, since the initiation of BEE, about 27% of the mining jobs have been lost (KaneBerman et al., 2015). There have also been policies such as the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA), Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR), National Development Plan (NDP) and the New Growth Path (NGP), all of which have not achieved their objectives (Mahadea and Simson, 2010).

The key social difficulties in South Africa are employment creation and reduction of unemployment (Kingdon and Knight, 2001). The ILO In January 2015, marked South Africa as a country having high rate of youth unemployment.

## **2.8 The nature of graduate youth unemployment in South Africa**

South Africa's unemployment rate is one of the highest in the world, using the expanded definition (Stats SA, 2015b) - not working, nor been actively looking for a job in the previous weeks (Kingdon and Knight, 2001). The inconsistencies in unemployment develop further by education and race. Currently, unemployment rates amongst educated young Blacks and Coloureds are much higher than for any other race. For instance, Black graduates are still more vulnerable to unemployment compared to their counterparts who are Whites and Indians (Stats SA, 2015d).

In 2013, the Cape Higher Education Consortium (CHEC) published a survey confirming that the highest unemployment rate was still amongst Black graduates (19%). The survey report further indicated that 35% of Black graduates, compared to 58% Indians and 61% Whites, were employed in the private sector. The study argues that employment status in South Africa reveals that the discriminatory patterns of the labour market that were common practice during apartheid persist (CHEC, 2013).

Categorising the total number of young graduates who were unemployed since 1995, bachelor's degree holders have had a lower unemployment rate compared to diploma holders. Graduate youth unemployment rates between 2001 and 2007 declined as a result of the expansion of the economy in South Africa. From 2008, the rates of unemployment started to increase again, and this was linked to the recession which occurred globally, whereby many were left unemployed and graduate youth found it difficult to secure and protect their jobs (ILO, 2015a).

Within the labour market, graduates have a higher probability of 30% of becoming employed compared to those who have lower levels of education, and they are more likely to get jobs than those who only have matric (Altbeker and Storme, 2013). In both 2008 and 2013, the absorption rate of people with a tertiary qualification was higher, followed by that of people with a secondary education, and primary education yielding the lowest rate of employment. This indicates that there is a relationship between employment and higher education, and it is positive. The absorption rate declined over the years 2008-2013, whilst graduate youth unemployment rates increased. The University of Johannesburg found from their sample of

graduates that 14% of them were neither working nor going to training in the year 2010 after they had graduated (Adams, 2011).

In South Africa, the increasing unemployment rate is largely faced by youth, and mostly by black young people. According to Youth Development Network (2001), youth is disproportionately carrying the burden of poverty along with unemployment. The rate of unemployment differs from one province to another.

## **2.9 Graduate youth unemployment in Limpopo Province**

### **2.9.1 Socio-economic status of Limpopo province**

Since 2003, mining (Platinum) has been dominating in the province of Limpopo's growth since. Consequently, the economy of the province grew fast from 2003 to 2011, however, it has reduced to below the national rate. Limpopo province has also high number of share resident in homelands areas in the country. This brings challenges because this people face unemployment, lack of income and educational level which is low, there are only two universities and numerous colleges (The Real Economy Bulletin, 2016).

Limpopo province accounted for 10% of the population of South Africa, with 5.7 million residents in the years 2014/2015, and it contributed just 7% towards GDP. In 2014, manufacturing, agriculture, mining and construction, which are the real economy, have contributed 33% of output in Limpopo province (The Real Economy Bulletin, 2016).

In the provincial economy, mining, at 25%, was a major contributor to the real economy. In contrast, just 3% was contributed by manufacturing and construction, with agriculture at only 2%. According to the Limpopo Provincial Treasury (2018), the largest contributor to jobs in the province was community service and trade at 46%.

### **2.9.2 Graduate youth unemployment status in Limpopo province**

Limpopo Province is a rural province that has a population of about 5, 8 million (Stats SA, 2017). 10% of the population resides in informal areas and those in formal areas are about 90% (Stats SA, 2017). In Limpopo province 7. 8% of the population were youth (Stats SA, 2014). The unemployment rate in Quarter 4 2018 was 19.3% official unemployment rate, while expanded unemployment rate was 37.4% in 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of 2018. 39.3% of youth in the age

range of 15-34 years were unemployed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2018, compared to 31, 6 % in the year 2017 (Stats SA, 2018).

In the 2018 State of the Nation address by the Premier of Limpopo, Mr Stanley Mathabatha spoke of a need for the provincial government to develop a Limpopo youth strategy. The programme was launched in Mookgophong in Limpopo province, and was aimed at designing and implementing interventions that would bring a wide range of opportunities for youth, especially those in the rural areas (SANews, 2018).

Data from Stats SA (2017) showed that about 21.6% of young graduates had no employment, and that 84 young people had no schooling, while 541 had tertiary education. Limpopo province is seen as a province with a complex education history as a result of the amalgamation of former home lands. This legacy has had a negative effect on the current learning resources of the learners and thus their achievements (Stats SA, 2013). Due to lack of equipment, underqualified teachers, and the lack of basic facilities, the education received by most young people in rural environments tends to be poor, failing to prepare young people for the world post matric and employment (The Real Economy Bulletin, 2016).

## **2.10. The experiences of unemployed youth graduates who are seeking employment**

The job-seeking behaviour of the unemployed is one of the factors that are thought to influence graduate youth unemployment. The motivation to find a job is one that influences this behaviour. There is a relationship between these factors, and they interact in shaping the experience and behaviour of job seeking among graduate youth who are unemployed (De Witte, Rothmann and Jackson (2010). Graduates who are unemployed are affected in their health and life satisfaction. Some unemployed young graduates lose motivation and end up directing their attention away from looking for employment to other less productive and sometimes invidious activities (Maarten, 2004). In a study conducted by Maarten et al. (2005), job seeking showed positive significance with employment and motivation, demonstrating that youth who were unemployed yet motivated and encouraged to look for job, and also unemployed youth who valued their interest in getting a job were the ones who were active in looking for a job. The unemployed also showed that they valued getting a job the more since they felt socially isolated and worthless otherwise. They further said that they experienced negative job seeking experiences and negative psychological well-being. The unemployed youth with higher expectations when it came to jobs reported negative unemployment experiences in their journey of searching for a job.



## **2.11 The causes of graduate youth unemployment**

Young people around the world are the ones mostly challenged by the rise in the unemployment rate, more so than adults (Pauw et al., 2006). There is a need for examination of the causes of unemployment amongst graduate youth. Different explanations have been put forward to account for the unemployment that is the subject of this study. Amongst others, researchers have identified high expectations, job search skills and lack of experience, as well as discrimination based on race and institution of higher learning attended, as factors in graduate youth unemployment.

- **High expectations**

High expectations – where graduates might have it in mind that since they hold qualifications they deserve a high salary – are thought to be one of the causes of unemployment amongst graduate youth (Pauw et al., 2006). According to this idea, graduates aim high, and accordingly become overly selective when choosing jobs. This leads them to be without jobs until they get one they like (Pauw et al., 2006). Graduates are seen by most employers as young people new in the place of work and having no experience and soft skills to attribute them as the candidates needed at work. This leads to the point which they will get little pay and the rest of the budget been used to train them. Consequently, graduates youth who are too selective and high expectations will be unemployed and that will rise the unemployment youth rate in the country.

- **Lack of job seeking/searching skills**

Lack of job seeking/searching skills has also been identified as one of the causes of unemployment amongst young graduates. Job seeking is defined as a “normal occurrence which work seekers use as a form of investment to enhance their position in the labour market” (Moleke, 2006:5). Job seeking requires lot of time and effort to achieve the job seeker’s aims. Graduates often take a while searching for a job, and during this process they are viewed by prospective employers as candidates still new in workplace. This job seeking process involves going through processes such as searching for a job in newspaper advertisements or notice boards, applying for employment and attending interviews before an offer can be made to them. It has been seen that when employers recruit people, they look for workplace skills, interactive skills and good character. Graduates who do not possess workplace skills, good character and interactive skills mostly find it hard to get a job.

With the rapid increase of investments in higher education globally, the number of new graduates continues to increase, which creates a large supply of labour that is not met by a high demand in the labour market (Nel and Neale-Shutte, 2013). By this situation the labour market becomes strained, especially if the context is one of slow economic growth, with low absorption rates for new graduates (World Bank, 2013).

Baldry (2013) states that the capability to execute on the job search in a consistent and efficient manner is important for graduates who need a job. However, the socio-economic circumstances of individual graduates affect the ability of the graduates in the venture of job seeking to be effective and active. Baldry (2013), in his study in South Africa, found that graduates who found it difficult to access resources and to operate technological equipment corresponded with the highest unemployment prevalence, as well as graduates of low socio-economic status. The techniques for job searching such as newspapers or internet access all require money and a certain skill. However, those graduates who are disadvantaged socially and economically will not be able to meet such needs. Kingdon and Knight (2005) explain further that those graduates who are poor and lack job searching skills tend to fall under discouraged job seekers category as a result of being unable to search for a job effectively.

#### • **Institutions of higher learning attended**

Institution of higher learning attended is also among the causes of graduate youth unemployment. Former White and Black institutions merged after 1994 in South Africa, when there was a reduction in the number of learning education institutions from 36 to 23. Baldry (2013) argues that varying levels in the quality of education were seen to emerge after these mergers, which might have impacted on the ability of graduates to secure jobs because of the quality of the education they had attained, as well as the way in which employers viewed those institutions. Traditionally, Historically Black Universities are perceived to offer poor education compared to Historically White Universities (Moleke, 2006). Oluwajodu et al. (2015) conducted a study whose findings were that most employers did not mind using their resources on graduates of certain universities due to their trust in the quality of the education offered at those universities.

#### • **Lack of work experience**

Most of the unemployed youth graduates are not unemployed as a result of lack of jobs; the jobs are available, but the graduates themselves don't have the work experience to access those

jobs. Nel and Neale-Shutte (2013) conducted a study and found that most of the unemployed youth graduates saw work-based learning as improving their chance of being employed, as they would be getting experience while working. Anyanwu (2000) similarly found that many unemployed youth graduates were unemployed because they had never been exposed to a workplace for the experience of working. Lack of experience causes many graduate youths to be unemployed.

However, having experience alone also does not guarantee one a job, because on top of that qualifications are required. The government and companies initiated internships and learnership programmes, whereby they looked to hire those aged 18-25 years. Therefore, those above 25 years of age are unlikely to be hired. This is a problem because while this group of people may be educationally qualified, yet their age disqualifies them.

The ability of the employees is evaluated through previous work experience. Skills and experience are the qualities which the employers are looking for. They perceive job seekers who are inexperienced to be an investment risk (National Treasury, 2011). Employers taking on graduates without work experience have found themselves in the situation of having to train them, and that discourages employers from employing them (The World Bank, 2009). Experienced workers are what the employers are looking for since there is an economic downturn; training graduates would cause employers to incur unnecessary costs. As a result of the downturn, unemployed graduates have found themselves in a state of cyclical unemployment.

#### • **Discrimination based on race**

As a result of race discrimination in the labour market, racial differences continue to prevail in the unemployment figures in South Africa. This tends to be as the result of our history of racial segregation, which negatively impacted figures of unemployment. It will take many years for corrections in the wrongs of the past to show in the figures of labour market.

By the mid-1990s, a Human Sciences Research Council survey showed that there was approximately a 2% unemployment rate for white graduates from tertiary institutions in South Africa, while for black tertiary graduates this figure was almost 25%. Whites are more than twice as likely to be employed compared to the Africans (Du Toit, 2003). Therefore, a disproportionate burden of unemployment is borne by the Africans, which shows that in the South African labour market there is employment discrimination based on race. This may be a

result of a lack of soft skills and the low quality of education experienced by Africans compared to their White counterparts. Also, employers might have racial discrimination against the Africans (Pauw, K. et al., 2006).

It is possible that other races, other than the Whites, are discriminated against in terms of employment opportunities, since discrimination favours Whites (Pauw, K. et al., 2006). It is assumed that the qualifications of the African youths are from institutions that were previously disadvantaged, and this encourages discrimination by employers. This is due to the fact that these institutions were more likely to take in the Africans, in the face of the restrictive access to Historically White Institutions (Pauw, K. et al., 2006). Therefore, it can be stated that employers' perceptions on African graduates from previously disadvantaged institutions is that they do not have the required competences, which causes human capital discrimination.

### **2.12 The consequences of graduate youth unemployment**

The problem of graduate youth unemployment is critical because it does not only affect youth, but the community as a whole. When young graduates are excluded from employment, they start to have negative social and mental health outcomes such as depression, frustration and idleness. These outcomes may lead youth to engage in crime and drug abuse (Kingdon and Knight, 2004). Unemployed young graduates who find themselves idle may experience social, financial and negative psychological effects. Fajana (2000) argued saying that the loss of status, economic power and prestige can occur as a result of loss of purchasing power, responsibility and loss of wage. Furthermore, Ward (2009), with regard to consequences of unemployment among graduate youths, argues that economically excluded young graduates tend to face poverty, which might lead them to engage in criminal activities to survive. To address these consequences of joblessness among youth is expensive (Annamária, 2013).

### **2.13 Promoting youth graduates' employment**

There are some types of social interactions that as human beings we find ourselves in and allow them to drive our opportunities, lives and abilities (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). Bronfenbrenner's (1989) argument shows answers which might offer solutions to the social problems in the communities, which lie in the structure and systems that shape our freedom, capabilities and daily interactions. The social interactions and systems that shape our access to opportunities are managed by the government and other social actors such as Non-Governmental

Organisations (NGOs) and the private sector. These actors are thus important in efforts to improve graduate youth employment (Simmons, 1998).

A study conducted by Nel and Neale-Shutte (2013) asked graduates in their study to point out ways that could bring about the promotion of graduate employment in South Africa. In their study, they found that improving the content and delivery of undergraduate studies may promote graduate youth employment. These researchers also found that the use of technologically advanced teaching tools was thought to be a potentially useful way of increasing the likelihood of graduate employment. Lastly, they also proposed that graduates should be assisted in their transition to the world of work.

According to World Bank, (2013), the authors also highlighted the importance of improving Career Guidance in schools, and of advising first year students to choose universities which were favoured in the labour market. Amongst labour markets limited by the economic growth rate and growing size of youth labour force, a possible way into labour demand expansion illustrates a need for investments to expand the entrepreneurship skills and the informal sectors in the youth labour force. A study by Nel and Neale-Shutte (2013) showed that only 1.4% of the graduates who were sampled were self-employed, and entrepreneurship amongst graduates was the lowest amongst the employability skills.

Bessant (2004) conducted a study and found that strengthening the voice of young people and their agency may promote employment amongst young graduates. The researcher thought that one of the ways which could help in employment increase amongst young graduates would be creating more learnerships and internships for them to gain experience for the real job market. Corruption and nepotism and any form of discrimination in recruitment processes should be dealt with in order to bring about equal employment access opportunities.

## **2.14 Theoretical framework**

The theoretical framework to be utilised in this study is as follows: the Human Capital Theory.

### **2.14.1 Human Capital Theory**

Theodore Schultz pioneered Human Capital Theory in the 1960s; Jacob Mincer and Gary Becker later expanded it on schooling, earnings, investment in human beings and experience. The Human Capital Theory points to the relationship between earnings and educational

qualification. This theory points to the basic premise that human capital is a result of education and training, and that at the end of the period of education there is a productivity increase for an individual who invested in education. This theory points out that higher investments in education lead to increased productivity, which in turn leads to higher earnings. From these statements, it can be stated that the human capital theorises that as people get educated is the more they will have earnings increase. This happens through the acquired knowledge and skills pointing a great chance of earnings in their future jobs (Xiao, 2001).

Typically, when people who are educated people get jobs, they get lower income than those who are less educated; however, since they have a higher qualification than the less educated, they soon overtake them in income (Ehrenberg and Smith, 2009). In addition, Ehrenberg and Smith (2009) state that as people invest in their education, they increase their chances in the future for getting a better job that will satisfy them in their lifetime.

Seeing this and a life time of higher earnings option, is there anyone who would not invest in further education? In this investment there are direct facts such as living expenses, school fees and book fees, and also indirect costs such as forgone earnings for improving education (Ehrenberg and Smith, 2009). Todaro and Smith (2006) point out that there must be a comparison of total costs incurred with the envisaged income gains from education to understand the investment decision taken in furthering education. In order to determine the return rate on the investment made in education, there is need to consider the benefits and the costs which will accrue only later in one's life. According to Ehrenberg and Smith (2009), the human capital theory assumes that people spend a lot of money on other things such as food, and when they have to invest in education they find it difficult on whether to invest in education or not. This might be a result of the state of unemployment in the country, because no one wants to plant without getting something after investment in education. Nevertheless, human capital theory puts forward the suggestion that the costs which people get when investing in education are compensated by the income they get when they start working (Bosworth, Dawkins and Stromback, 1996). Since there is no theory without criticisms, below are some of the criticisms of human capital theory.

Measurement: By its nature, it is difficult to discern the measurement of human capital. To discern how education has effects on productivity, there are factors that need to be measured. The question is: how would education and training quantity and quality be measured? The quality of education and training cannot be determined by the years spent attaining education

(Barker, 2007). The theory fails to explain the problem of the future income, and in measuring the productivity of the workers attached to the particular career (Marshall, 1998).

Change of demand for human capital: the labour market changes over time; therefore, the human capital theory it does not to consider such a situation which affects the demand of human capital. As the country develops, there results in a level of change in labour productivity and for the structure of final demand to be dynamic (Stryker, Cassim, Rajaratnam, Borat, Leibbrandt and Plunkett, 2001).

Predicting labour market needs for the future accurately is not possible (Schugurensky, 2010). Organizations place their own value on the skills they need, and these skills often change over time. There are needs that at any given time best fit the needs of the organization. For example, graduates may study in fields of health science only to find when they enter the labour market that those skills are no longer in demand. Most individuals over-invest in education. It is not considered in the human capital theory that people investing in education can be regarded as over qualified labour in a market. A market that has labour with qualifications that are inflated may cause those with qualifications that are inadequate to be able to do the job and the adequate to be unemployed because of the changing level of the field.

Quality of education: According to Fedderke (2005), found that what determinates an individual to get a job is not the quantity rather the quality of human capital, which is what the theory of human capital doesn't take into consideration. Education policy should not out focus on the dimension of quantity. Investing in human capital brings about improvements in performance growth only when people recognise the quality of education. The existence of graduate unemployment contradicts the postulated relationship that is positive between investments in education and higher productivity, and with higher earnings. The rate of return which is expected is not achieved since employment is not also guaranteed. The theory assumes that productivity rises when individuals invest in education. However, inborn ability is one of the other factors which are not considered as bringing about an increase in productivity. Also ignored is the notion that augmented productivity is not necessarily the result of increased education.

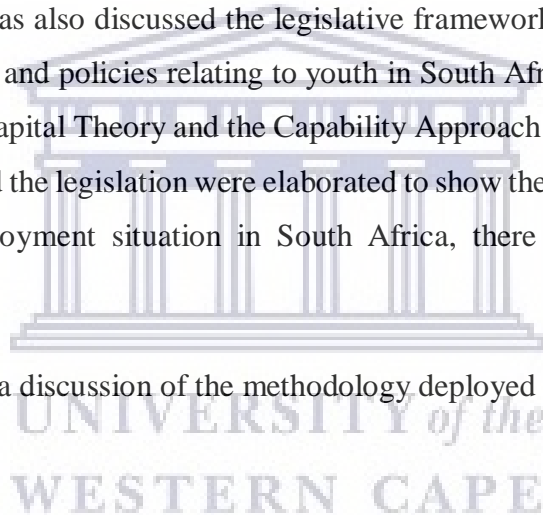
In this study, human capital theory is relevant in the way that this theory justifies the investment in education which people make to bring about growth and improvement in the economy. However, young graduates find it difficult to get jobs. The benefits which they thought they would get after investing in education do not ensue. The human capital theory is contradicted

by the high levels of unemployment amongst graduates. Instead of providing productivity increase and earnings, young graduates who made a massive investment in education tend to be unemployed, while some tend to be over-qualified compared to the demands of the market. In addition, this theory implies that when one graduates or leaves school one will be employed immediately until retirement. In reality, this is not so; graduates might be employed for only a short time after graduating or leaving school, and they might also be unemployed for part of the time after graduating.

## **2.15 Conclusion**

This chapter has presented the literature review, looking at how basic concepts such as graduates, youth and unemployment have been addressed in the literature. The chapter has looked at unemployment amongst youth in South Africa, parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, India and Europe. The chapter has also discussed the legislative framework relevant to this subject, which included legislation and policies relating to youth in South Africa. Different theoretical frameworks, the Human Capital Theory and the Capability Approach theory by Sen, were also discussed. The theories and the legislation were elaborated to show their relevance to this study. In addressing the unemployment situation in South Africa, there is a need for thorough investigation.

The next chapter provides a discussion of the methodology deployed in this research.





# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this research was to investigate the experiences, causes and consequences of unemployment amongst youth graduates in Ga-Kgapane, Limpopo province, South Africa. In this study chapter the research process is discussed. This will include the methodology used, research setting, research design, targeted population, sampling and data collection instrument. Additionally, the data analysis, data management, demographical details of the participants, triangulation, and measures to ensure trustworthiness of the findings as well as the ethical considerations that have guided this research will be discussed.

### **3.2 Research setting overview: Ga-Kgapane Limpopo province: Case study area**

#### **3.2.1 Demographic profile**

This study was based in a township called Ga-Kgapane, located in Mopani district, under Greater Letaba Municipality. Ga-Kgapane Township is located outside a town called Tzaneen. The population in the township is at 212701, which is made up of Black, White, Coloured and Indian people. However, most of the people in the area are Blacks. The youth population of Ga-Kgapane is about 28583. There are about 58261 households in the area (Greater Letaba Municipality, 2013).

The researcher comes from the Township of Ga-Kgapane, the researcher has noticed that there are many unemployed graduate youths in the township, which might explain the rising rate of criminal conduct by the youth in the area.



Source: AfriGIS (2019).

**Figure 3.1: Map showing the location of Ga-Kgapane in Limpopo province**

### 3.2.2 Socio-economic characteristics of Ga-Kgapane

According to Greater Letaba Municipality Integrated Development Plan (GLM IDP) 2018/19, most people in Ga-Kgapane have their own dwellings. There are just a few informal settlements in the area. The primary causes of informal settlement involve issues of unemployment, urbanization and poverty. This issue of informal settlement destroys vegetation when people build their houses, and it creates building patterns that are unregulated. Ga-Kgapane settlement is characterised by dwellings located relatively close to one another; higher level of services, meaningful social and economic activities and availability of services for potential business. One of its challenges is land shortage for development (GLM IDP, 2018/19).

Smits (2005) states that water is an important resource in people's lives. Ga-Kgapane Township has a water problem, according to the Greater Letaba Municipality IDP (2018), as a result of not enough bulk in the water supply in the area, and the provision of water supply is gradually worsening. This lack of enough water bulk is a result of inadequate water resources which cannot cover the demands. The people in the community have their own private boreholes as an alternative way to have water.

Public transport is important in every community to move people from one area to another timeously. In Ga-Kgapane, public transport is accessible, whereby most people walk only 10 minutes to get the transport. There is one clinic and one hospital in Ga-Kgapane.

Looking at the employment profile: 3239 male people in the area were employed, compared to the smaller number of 2127 employed females. In this township, females were the most affected by unemployment; this pattern is also reflected in the young people without employment. In terms of the income of the people in Ga-Kgapane, a few have no income and

depend on government grants, while most are government employees (GLM IDP 2018/19, 2018).

### **3.2.3. Agriculture in Ga-Kgapane**

In Ga-Kgapane, agriculture is part of the community's livelihood, and makes up 5.5% of the agricultural sector of the District. In this township, the agricultural sector creates more jobs on a continuous basis. In the Mopani district, which this township falls under, this sector employs more than 19.8% of the workforce in the district, and some of the workforce comes from GaKgapane Township.

In this sector there are limitations that hamper the farmers; lack of water is seen as challenging issue. Limpopo province is located in the Savannah sub-region which is dry. There is an average annual rainfall of only between 300-400 and 600 mm, a hot summer and a winter that is mild. There is land which is privately owned and used for cultivation.

## **3.3 Research design**

Research design can be understood as a “blueprint” showing how to execute research. It provides guidance to the researcher throughout the process on what to follow, so as to arrive to the needed information for the research problem. The researcher find the research design helpful in providing a map to show the way in terms of how to conduct the research, and in looking at types of questions to be used in the research. Qualitative research methodology involves various research designs such as case study design (Creswell, 2014).

To better understand the subject of this study, the researcher deployed an exploratory research design. Brown (2013: 161) argues by saying “an exploratory, qualitative approach has proven to be a useful way to study sensitive opinions, attitudes, preferences, and the behaviours of individuals, particularly when the opinions are reflections of larger underlying attitudinal constructs”.

### **3.3.1 Research methodology**

The nature of the study was qualitative. A qualitative approach is based on generating a deep understanding of meanings and experiences people have regarding a particular issue (Meanwell, 2017). The advantage of this approach is that it helps the researcher to obtain

greater and more in-depth insight into complex phenomena, due to the methodology's great explanatory power. It also provides a chance for participants to have their say (Biggam, 2008). This kind of approach was selected because the researcher believed it would help to gain indepth understanding of the subject matter, focusing on process and discovery (Gray, 2014).

### **3.3.2 Target population**

Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007), defined a target population as a number of people which the researcher select to study. In this study, the target population comprised both male and female young graduates aged 20-34 years, with a diploma, masters, honours or bachelor's degree qualification obtained between 2012-2016 period, who were unemployed, and who stayed in Ga-Kgapane Township. Other study participants were comprised of recruitment agency personnel, potential employers (e.g. human resources managers) and policy makers. The reason for choosing this geographical area is that in this community, the majority of young graduates are unemployed.

In this study, there were two population groups and two sampling methods applied to meet the objectives of this study. One population from which the research sample was drawn was all the unemployed youth graduates in Ga-kgapane with higher education qualifications. There were also officials in the area. Access to this population was through the municipality in control of the area.

### **3.3.3 Data collection**

- Sampling

According to Scott and Morrison (2007), sampling can be stated as the process of choosing a subset of things or individuals from a bigger population, which ultimately will be used to represent the entire population.

- Sampling Strategy

The selection of the sample was based on the criteria that participants possessed the knowledge that the research sought, and were voluntarily able to take part in the study (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006). For the selection process of the graduate youths who were unemployed, the researcher visited one of her friends in the area who is unemployed and told her about the objectives of the research and her role as a participant. Then the friend helped in locating other

friends of hers who were unemployed. In doing so, the snowball effect was used to make up the sample.

- **Sample Size**

Sample size can be regarded as the selected number of units from where data derived (Lavrakas, 2008). This study's sample size consisted of 10 young graduates who were unemployed, one recruitment agency personnel, one potential employer (a human resources manager) and one policy maker. The sample size was determined to be sufficient to reach saturation, and indeed the study reached saturation within the first 5 interviews among unemployed graduate youths.

- **Sampling Technique**

There are two types of sampling techniques; non-probability and probability sampling. The sampling technique that is utilized in this study is non-probability sampling, because it is not expensive to conduct (Alvi, 2016). In this study, purposive sampling was applied. In purposive sampling, the researcher chose participants who have detailed information, and adequately capacitated to give rich and detailed responses. Snowball sampling was also used to get more participants. It is also called referral chain sampling, whereby one person refers the researcher to another person who has the characteristics the researcher is looking for.

### **3.3.4 Data collection methods**

- **Interviews**

The interview can be defined as an exchange of information in the form of a social relationship which happens between the researcher and the participants (Monette, Suluvan, Dejong and Hilton, 2010). This study was conducted using semi-structured interviews. This assisted the researcher in generating in-depth discussion on topics which the researcher wanted to address with the respondents.

- **Semi-structured interview**

According to Greeff (2011), a semi-structured interview can be regarded as a collection model for collecting data which can help in making comparisons. According to Greeff (2011), the semi-structured interview provides a degree of flexibility for the participants and the researcher. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009: 30), “the interviewer encourages respondents to describe as precisely as possible what they experience and feel and how they act”. The

advantages in using this type of interview are that the respondent's response rate is high, and long questions can be utilized during the interview (Creswell et al., 2010).

A semi-structured interview was selected to allow more probing and clarifying with 10 unemployed graduate youths. Furthermore, interviews were conducted with one recruitment agency personnel, one potential employer (e.g. human resources manager) and one policy maker. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with the officials. The advantages for data collection were as follows: the researcher was able to explore the subject with the officials and obtain their understanding and perceptions regarding graduate youth unemployment (De Vos and Fouché, 2005). Nonetheless, there are disadvantages to the approach in data collection and data analysis; such as time consuming.

#### □ Interview schedule

In this study, an interview schedule was used as a guide to go in-depth into the themes which will be discussed later. The schedule had four Annexures. Annexure A focused on interview with unemployed graduates youth, looked into the demographic characteristics of the unemployed young graduates and the officials, job seeking experiences. The causes and consequences of youth unemployment and kind of policy which should be implemented for job creation. Annexure B focused on interview with recruitment agency, Annexure C interview with potential employer and lastly Annexure D focused on the interview with policy maker.

### **3.3.5 Data management**

In this study, a digital recorder was used to record the interview process. This helped the researcher to focus on exploring the topic and to ensure that non-verbal words (body language, gesture and expressions) were noted and written down during the process (Opdenakker, 2006).

### **3.3.6 Demographics of the participants**

To understand the participants' characters with regard to the criteria for selection applied in this study, gender, age, name of higher education institution attended, occupation, department and years since graduation, qualification obtained, was collected using interview guide.

### **3.3.7 Triangulation**

Triangulation can be stated as a process to improve the robustness and validity of the findings through using different techniques in order to investigate the problem identified in the research. It helps the researcher to be able to present findings with confidence without being biased when multiple angles are used to analyse the research question (Yeasmin and Rahman, 2012).

To produce findings that are robust, there are a various methods of triangulation that can be utilised. And they are as follows: theoretical triangulation, data triangulation, methodological triangulation, investigator triangulation and analysis triangulation. To improve the robustness and the validity of the findings using the theoretical triangulation from different views, the researcher used different theories applied in the study to be able to reject or accept the findings (Hussein, 2009). Theoretical triangulation has been used in this study applying the Human Capital Theory and Capability Approach. As these theories are different from each other, they shed a light by which the unemployment amongst young graduates can be evaluated.

In order to improve the validity of the study using data triangulation, there is need for data collection using many information sources. This information can be obtained from beneficiaries of an intervention and so on. In methodological triangulation, numerous methods are needed in studying phenomena that are the same, in which analysis can take place at research design or data collection level (Hussein, 2009).

Triangulation investigation involves vast investigators in the study field of data collection, analysis process, done via an evaluation team (Guion, Diehl, and McDonald, 2011). The same data collection methods are used by the evaluators and the findings are compared among the evaluators (Guion et al., 2011). Analysis triangulation focusses on utilising over two methods for validation when analysing data (Hussein, 2009).

### **3.3.8 Data analysis**

According to Majesky (2008), data analysis stresses to bringing in smaller size the collected data and also editing it in order to manage proportions, while busy indicating various data and patterns to help understand the research data. In qualitative research, thematic data analysis technique can be referred to as the process of understanding the data collected from participants' experiences and views (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). This research data was analysed using thematic analysis technique, wherein each transcript was read and re-read,

and thereafter codes generated by labelling manifest data and the codes, then collated into subthemes, which can then be transformed into major themes. Below are the themes:

### 3.3.8.1 Themes and categories

**Table 3.1: Main themes and categories**

Main Themes	Categories and Sub-categories
The experiences of unemployed youth graduate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Confidence</li> <li>- Unsuccessful applications</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Losing hope</li> <li>- Energy</li> </ul>
Causes of graduates youth unemployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of work experience</li> <li>- Discrimination based on race</li> <li>- Lack of job seeking skills</li> <li>- Higher education institution of learning attended</li> <li>- High expectations</li> </ul>
The consequences of youth unemployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social wellbeing</li> <li>- Economic well-being</li> <li>- Psychological well-being</li> </ul>



<p>Ways of promoting job creation in South Africa for young graduates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learnership and internship programmes</li> <li>- Self employment</li> <li>- Policy failure</li> <li>- Job creation programmes' efficiency</li> <li>- Initiative leaders</li> <li>- Working together between universities and potential employees</li> <li>- Provision of resources</li> <li>- Responsibilities of the government</li> <li>- Responsibilities of higher education institutions</li> <li>- Responsibilities of the private sector</li> <li>- Responsibilities of the youth</li> </ul>
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### 3.3.9 Measures that guided this research to ensure trustworthiness of the findings

In this research, for evaluating the research quality, “credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability” were utilised (Wahyuni, 2012).

- Credibility: the truth-value

The researcher in the process of data collection and analysis, had to ensure that truth-value was addressed. Through doing member checking and debriefing the participants, truth-value of the study was ensured (Babbie and Mouton, 2001).

Credibility, as the truth-value, aims to portray that the research has been done in a way that shows that the participants are identified and described accurately. As the researcher conducted the study at the place where the participants lived, this tended to make the engagement with the respondents long (Babbie and Mouton, 2001).

- Transferability: findings applicability

According to Schurink, Fouché and de Vos (2011), transferability can be referred to as the range whereby the findings can be used in a contexts. Purposive sampling was used in this research, which caused the researcher to obtain certain information needed from a certain sample. The researcher used thick description of the findings, whereby enough description was provided in order to be able to perform comparison for one or two findings (Babbie and Mouton, 2001).

- Dependability: findings consistency

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), with regard to dependability, there is a question which is asked: If the study had to be conducted repeatedly with the same participants in the same context, would the results be the same or not? The first measure to be ensured is credibility in order to have dependability (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). To additionally ensure dependability, the researcher ensured that the documents relating to findings were well documented.

- Confirmability: the findings' neutrality

Confirmability can be referred as the extent to which the researcher is not biased in the presented findings (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). For confirmability, the researcher recorded the interviews in order to obtain raw data that is accurate. This would likely make sure that another researcher could confirm the validity of the findings, and that the data analysis would be performed on only recorded data and nothing else.

### **3.3.10 Ethical considerations**

This research conformed to issues of ethics in that the following measures were observed.

Ethical approval: Reviewed and ethical approval of the study was granted by the University of the Western Cape (UWC), the Arts Faculty board and the Institute for Social Development.

Informed consent: In ascertaining the participants' capacity to consent to participate in the study, protocol was followed (Palmer, Dunn, Appelbaum, Mudaliar, Thal, Henry and Jeste, 2005). The participants were told about their participation as voluntary in this study and the

participants were also informed about the research purpose. All the participants signed the informed consent forms and satisfactory responses were provided.

**Voluntary participation:** In the study, all participants voluntarily participated and participants were informed that if they wished to withdraw their participation they had the right to do so at any time.

**Anonymity:** Participants were each provided with pseudonyms names and these were utilised in the study's findings, in publication and for the consent forms, data collection, data analysis process, transcripts, recordings, and reporting. Therefore, participants' real names were not used on the transcripts of the interview, thus assuring anonymity.

**Confidentiality:** From the period of transcribing the interviews, the tape recordings will be destroyed after five years. The participants were informed that the collected information would be used for the purpose of the study only.

**Possible risks:** In this study, trauma was foreseen risks as potential risks.

**Possible benefits:** The opportunity was provided to participants to know about the social and economic issues affecting youths' employability and youth development. Arising from the foreseen risk of trauma, treatment for trauma was provided by the mental health school from the Ga-Kgapane community. An opportunity was also provided to discuss their quest to secure a job and problems that affected them personally.

**Dissemination of data:** All interview recordings documenting data were securely stored in the computer of the researcher with protected password at the researchers' place. A hard drive and the iCloud were used to back up the files.

### **3.3.11 Limitations of the study**

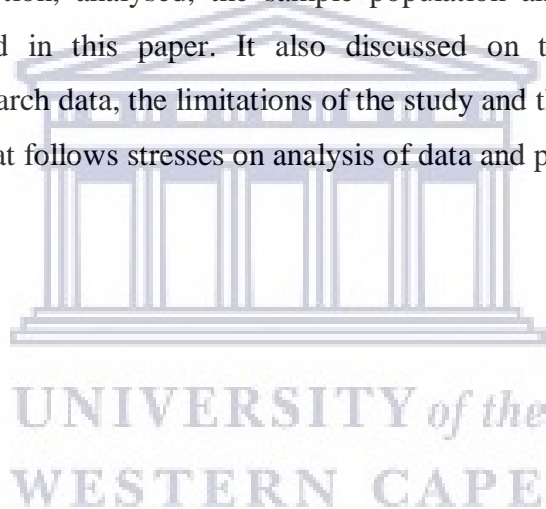
A combination of purposive and snowball sampling were used in this study. Since these kinds of sampling strategies do not yield a probability sample, the sample was not selecting all unemployed graduate youths to represent all the unemployed graduates in Ga-Kgapane, Limpopo province. Consequently, there was no generalisation of findings from this study. However, the study provided sufficient in-depth and rich insights to contribute towards our thinking and understanding of how graduate youth unemployment might be addressed in South Africa.

The other limitation was that, since the data collection took place in December, most of the young people kept on rescheduling the interview dates and that became a challenge. Accordingly, the solution was to find other youths who met the requirements to be interviewed for this research.

Despite these challenges, the researcher made it a point to provide insightful findings on the experiences, causes and consequences of unemployment amongst graduate youth in Limpopo province, Ga-Kgapane, South Africa through using semi-structured interviews with young unemployed graduates and three officials.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the methodology utilised in this study. Research design was also revealed, how data collection, analysed, the sample population and how the sample was selected were approached in this paper. It also discussed on triangulation, measuring trustworthiness of the research data, the limitations of the study and the ethical considerations adhered to. The chapter that follows stresses on analysis of data and presentation of findings.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents detailed research findings from semi-structured, face to face interviews which were conducted with unemployed graduate youths and different officials respectively. This chapter begins with the demographic profile of the participants, followed by presentation of the field work, themes and categories that were developed from the study. At the end of this chapter the summary is provided.

#### 4.2 Demographic characteristics of the officials and unemployed graduate youths

The participants interviewed were 13 in number, including 10 unemployed graduate youths and 3 officials from different work-fields. These 13 participants were chosen using purposive sampling method. Below are the separate tables which summarise the biographical details of the total of 13 participants interviewed individually using semi-structured and face to face interviews.

##### 4.2.1 Participants' biographical details

**Table 4.1: Unemployed youth graduates' biographical details**

Participant	Gender	Age	Qualification obtained	Number of years since graduation	Higher education institution attended	Occupation	Department
Unemployed graduate 1	Female	24	Diploma	3	University Of Limpopo	None	None
Unemployed graduate 2	Male	24	Honours	4	University Of Venda	None	None

Unemployed graduate 3	Female	28	Diploma	4	University Of Limpopo	None	None
Unemployed graduate 4	Female	26	Honours	4	University Of Limpopo	None	None
Unemployed graduate 5	Male	27	Bachelors	5	University Of Limpopo	None	None
Unemployed graduate 6	Female	25	Diploma	3	Capricorn FET college	None	None
Unemployed graduate 7	Female	24	Bachelors	3	University Of Venda	None	None
Unemployed graduate 8	Male	27	Bachelors	5	University Of Venda	None	None
Unemployed graduate 9	Male	29	Diploma	7	Letaba FET	None	None
Unemployed graduate 10	Female	28	Diploma	6	Letaba FET	None	None

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**Table 4.2: Officials' biographical details**

Participant	Gender	Age	Qualification obtained	Number of years since graduation	Higher education institution attended	Occupation	Department
Official 1	Female	29	Masters	5	University Of Limpopo	Potential employer	Department of Health
Official 2	Male	28	Masters	6	University of Pretoria	Recruiter	Solution Recruitment Agents

Official 3	Male	50	Masters	25	University of South Africa	Policy maker	Department of Basic Education
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#### 4.2.2 The profile of the officials and unemployed graduate youths

The interviewed participants were 13 in number, comprising 10 unemployed graduate youths and three officials. Among the unemployed graduate youths, 6 were female and 4 male. The graduate youths' age ranged from 24-29. According to Stats SA (2015), people in this age group are highly affected by the unemployment rate in the country. Therefore, the study captured a relevant age group for the research question. With regard to their education, three of the unemployed graduate youths had bachelor degrees, five had diplomas and two, Honours. With regards to occupation, none of the graduate youths were employed. The years since graduation for the graduates ranged from 4-7 years. The tertiary institutions which the graduates attended were University of Venda, Letaba Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College, Capricorn FET College and University of Limpopo. None of the graduate youths were employed.

In this study, three officials were also interviewed, comprising one policy maker, one recruitment agent and one potential employer (human resources officer). The officials were one female and two males, and their age ranged from 24-50. All of the officials had a postgraduate qualification, i.e. a Master's degree. The policy maker was employed in the Department of Education, the recruitment agent was from Solution Recruitment Agents and the potential employer was at the Department of Basic Education

### 4.3 Presentation of the field work with unemployed graduate youths and with officials

#### 4.3.1 Experiences of unemployed graduate youths

The first research question in this study explored the experiences of the graduate youths of being unemployed. Many if not most of the participants showed that they had been looking for jobs for as long as 5 years, and that they initially believed they would get hired at some point in the future. Most of the participants indicated that it was difficult to look for jobs because the process entailed completing many applications while coming back empty handed at the end of

it. They found this demotivating. Many of the unemployed graduate youths revealed that they spent many hours surfing the internet at the local library searching for jobs, but without any success. Others said that they scanned newspapers that they bought on Sundays or found at the library:

*“Uhhh...it has been 5 years now of being unemployed, I’m not working and busy searching for a job without any luck, but I’m hoping to get a job one of the good days”* (Individual interview, unemployed graduate 1).

*“In order for me to find a job, I go to the library to use the internet, and I even make use of the newspapers that I usually find at the library, public space boards and I sometimes feel that all my energy is drained down for nothing”* (Individual interview, unemployed graduate 2).

*“To tell you the truth, is not child’s play, it is difficult to the point that I always think of giving up, especially, when I don’t get any positive response”* (Individual interview, unemployed graduate 3).

Most of the participants indicated that it was difficult to look for a job because applying many times with no positive response caused them to lose hope. At the same time, most of the participants revealed that they used the library to surf the internet looking for jobs, and became tired because of the effort this needed. While some said they used the internet at the library, others said they used newspapers bought at home on Sundays and others found at the library to check for available jobs. Therefore, the job search with no luck tends to make the unemployed youth tired and to lose hope. However, others seemed hopeful that one day they would get hired.

The unemployed graduate youths were asked a question on the types of jobs they applied for. Most of the unemployed graduate youths said they applied for formal jobs to become accountants, environmental clerks, and for internships to become attorneys, because they wanted office jobs where they would have their own office space. Most of them said that they had sent out more than 10 job applications. The majority said that none of these applications had been successful, and a few revealed that they did once have successful outcomes, but in jobs not relevant to their field of study. The graduates with unsuccessful job applications said that the situation discouraged them and that they often gave up applying for jobs. This is how they expressed themselves:



*“The job which I apply for are only formal jobs, such as being an environmentalist officer or attorney, because these are decent jobs relevant to my qualifications, you know.... I wish I could just get one to have my own office”* (Individual interview, unemployed graduate 2). *“With the applications I sent out, probably, I have sent out about 10 applications to various companies and departments and I did not make it for interviews especially in my preferred field. I was only successful on internship which was just only a year and it was not the field I specialise in and, that 1 year experience was not enough at all”* (Individual interview, unemployed graduate 4).

From the above quotes, most of the unemployed graduate youths applied for formal jobs only. The unemployed graduate youths with unsuccessful job applications said that the situation led to their giving up applying, although some said that they would keep on applying even though things were as yet still not good. They also found that some companies did not only choose candidates based on their fields, and as such welcomed applications from an assortment of backgrounds. This tended to be especially common for semi-skilled types of jobs. For example: unemployed graduate youths applied for jobs such as tellers at shops using their matric results. They claimed that they applied for these unskilled and semi-skilled job categories because they knew that their higher qualifications would lead to a disappointment.

In contrast to these prevalent experiences, Naong (2011) argues that graduates should shift from the mentality of seeking to become employed, to the mentality of employing, meaning they should be job creators not seekers. Therefore, this suggests that there is need for a paradigm shift towards an entrepreneurship mind-set among unemployed graduate youths in South Africa. There is also a need for the government and companies to consider the number of years of internship and choose according to the field which the candidate studied. Importantly, the practice of unemployed graduate youths of being selective in sending applications for formal jobs only may not assist them, given the lack of jobs, especially now that the country is plunged into the COVID 19 crisis.

#### **4.3.2 The causes of graduate youth unemployment**

The unemployed graduate youths identified various causes of unemployment, including high expectations, discrimination based on race, lack of job seeking skills, lack of work experience and higher education institution of learning attended.

- **High expectations**

When it comes to jobs, most of the graduates pointed out that they preferred formal jobs. They also pointed out that since they possessed higher education qualifications, they expected and preferred jobs with high salaries. The recruitment agent also confirmed that unemployed graduate youths expected office jobs and better salaries after they had completed their tertiary education:

*“Apparently am a university graduate, with the years I spent studying I don’t think of getting less salary or informal job, I expect more (giggling)”* (Individual interview, unemployed graduate 9).

The recruitment agent further pointed out that unemployed graduate youths expected much after they completed their tertiary education. As such, they were choosy when it came to jobs and did not take just any job available.

*“The unemployed young graduates seems to be selective when comes to jobs. They want office work and they want to look “professionally-like”, they want to earn more. They see farm work as not an ideal work to them and their levels. Ahmm...They think better salary comes from office based work as they need better paying jobs. Because of their high expectations after their graduation, they tend to be selective”* (Individual interview, recruitment agent).

- **Discrimination based on race**

The unemployed graduate youths believed that as a result of South Africa’s history of apartheid, and thus the marginalization of black people from formal employment, their White counterparts were still shown preference in the employment sector. This is confirmed by this quote of the interviewee:

*“Race discrimination is real and, in those days as black young people, we were discriminated against, only whites were advantageous to get jobs, just imagine. So, now there is paradigm shift”* (Individual interview, unemployed graduate 7).

This finding shows that unemployed graduate youths were discriminated against as young Black persons at workplaces. These discriminatory practices clearly indicate that the exclusion of Black people from the labour sector that was common during the era of apartheid remains. Black people were segregated and first preference was given to White people because apartheid

legislation made this appropriate. That this remains common practice in post-apartheid South Africa is concerning, because it is not propped up a discriminatory legislative framework, in fact the laws in South Africa are clearly anti-discrimination. Not only that, there are instruments such as the Employment Equity Act which should eliminate the discrimination of Black people in the workplace. How the discrimination of Black people in the labour market continues should therefore be investigated and better understood so as to implement appropriate curative interventions.

- **Lack of job seeking skills**

Job seeking is a process that requires time and dedication. It was found in this study that most of the graduates perceived that, in addition to hard work, they needed to possess job seeking skills. The following stance supports this:

*“Most graduates who managed to get jobs, I think it is because they have abilities and skills that enable them to search for jobs on various sites and to look around public space, billboards for job adverts”* (Individual interview, unemployed graduate 6).

The quote shows that skills applicable to the job requirements and those for applying for a job are needed amongst the unemployed graduate youths in order to search for jobs effectively. The unemployed graduate youths revealed that some of those who gained employment did so because they had these skills and were also able to go around public space bill boards.

In terms of employing graduate youths, the potential employer stated that they looked at the skills an applicant possessed, such as computer and research skills. They found that if graduate youths were able to search for a job and submit an application, this meant that they had computer skills, research skills and were able to apply themselves to a task. This is how she expressed her view:

*“We are looking for graduates with soft skills. When a graduate is able to search for the vacancy and to apply, it tells us something about that graduate and, it shows that a person has an ability to work hard on something. And research and computer skills are skills and abilities which we’re looking for when we recruit in our department”* (Individual interview, potential employer).

Potential employer (human resources officer) from the quote above shows that it is not going to be easy for a graduate without soft skills to possess employment, since these are some of the

skills they are looking for when they recruit. Therefore, unemployed graduate youths ought to develop themselves while they are at school.

- **Higher education institution of learning attended**

As the demographic characteristics of participants indicated (4.2), the participants graduated from previously disadvantaged higher education institutions, such as the University of Limpopo, University of Venda, Capricorn FET and University of South Africa. Most of these graduates believed that these institutions disadvantaged them, since most employers prefer graduates from historically advantaged universities such as the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) and the University of Cape Town. This was echoed in the following quotation by one of the unemployed youth graduates:

*“I pursued my studies at one of the disadvantaged universities and, wherever I send out my job application to, the people who work at those companies they are from top universities such as WITS. So this makes me to think that graduates like me from universities that are disadvantaged won’t be employed in those companies”* (Individual interview, unemployed graduate 10).

There was a strong perception among unemployed graduate youths that while some universities produced graduates that are employable, others did not.

The potential employer interviewed for this study confirmed that, indeed, employers did consider the university that an applicant had attended when reviewing job applications. Pauw et al. (2006) perceived that most of the students from historically disadvantaged higher education institutions lacked skills. This perception limits the chances of employment for graduate youths from historically disadvantaged higher education institutions. This is supported by the following sentiment:

*“We are looking for young graduates based on the institutions of learning/universities they graduated from, because it gives us hope that they will do impressive work since the universities they come from are well advanced and exceptional”* (Individual interview, potential employer).

From the above quotes, it is clear that the potential employer (human resources officer) considered the higher education institution of learning that the job candidate went to. Therefore, potential employers think that this criterion would best suit them to grow their businesses. On

the other hand, because of the institutions the young graduates studied at they are unable to get employment and, therefore, face unemployment.

- **Lack of work experience**

According to the understanding of most of the graduates, their lack of work experience played a role in their lack of employment. The majority of the graduate youths did not possess the standard 5 years' work experience that most employers require. They believed that an increase in the number of internship and learnership programme years would at least ensure that they had 2-3 years' job experience, and thus make them more employable.

*“I have seen on jobs advertised that they need someone with 5 years' experience. So the Internship programme that some of us took part in was just a year. If only the years of the programme are increased, it could be better. Honestly, sad part of it I don't have enough years of experience that most companies or departments are looking for as reflected in those job adverts”* (Individual interview, unemployed graduate 5).

The recruitment agency also mentioned that a lack of work experience was one of the causes of unemployment amongst graduate youths.

*“Most of the unemployed graduate youths lack jobs, mainly not only that their qualifications are not in demand as it is in most of the cases, it is also because they don't have experience of the work they apply for”* (Individual interview, Recruitment Agent).

The findings show that unemployed graduate youths have a problem with lack of experience. One of them expressed the view that having no work experience had played a role in their lack of employment. Looking at their profile, as provided at the beginning of this chapter, the majority of the unemployed graduate youths showed that they had no 5 years' experience of work. But if internship and learnership years, which involve working, increase from 1 to 3 years, this will boost their work experience and make them more employable.

The quotes from the recruitment agency show that qualifications that are not in demand at that time and lack of experience are causes of unemployment amongst graduate youth. This factor, as mentioned by unemployed graduate youths, will therefore increase graduate youth unemployment if not addressed.

### 4.3.3 The consequences of graduate youth unemployment

Unemployment amongst the graduate youths has resulted in social, psychological and financial effects (Fajana, 2000). As a result of unemployment, depression, criminal activities and alcohol abuse occur. In addition, when graduate youths are unemployed, it is not only they that are affected; the society also suffers (Toye and Infanti, 2004).

In terms of social well-being, most of the unemployed graduate youth stated that they experienced discrimination and loss of power when they were with their friends, whereby their friends did not take them seriously because they did not work and did not have money. In addition, according to Kingdon and Knight (2004), youth unemployment is a problem that affects an individual and their relationships. The following sentiments expressed by unemployed graduate youth 5, 4 and 9 is echoed as follows:

*“The challenge of unemployment has made me to look like am nothing when am with my friends. They literally discriminate me only because I don’t have money, they go out and they won’t even tell me. I feel like am no longer important to them because even if I tell them where to go for fun they don’t take my decisions anymore”* (Individual interview, unemployed graduate 5).

Most of the unemployed graduate youths interviewed for this study survived by being dependent on their parents, and one said that he survived by committing crime in order to meet his needs. This is echoed as follows:

*“The situation that unemployment has put me in has a negative impact and has distorted my well-being in a way that I have to steal money from people to do other personal things”* (Individual interview, unemployed graduate 2).

*“Being dependent on my parents helps me to survive and to live from hand-to-mouth. My parents do their best but I see this is not a responsibility that they have to carry on even to this day, no longer worthy, because I have grown up and I’m an adult now”* (Individual interview, unemployed graduate 7).

*“I survive by criminal activities, like stealing someone’s wallet when they leave it on the table in order that I can get some cash to buy what I need”* (Individual interview, unemployed graduate 2).

Most of the graduates indicated that as a result of unemployment they were depressed. One graduate shared that she had a child and was depressed because she was not able to meet the needs of her child due to her joblessness and lack of income. This is how she expressed herself:

*“It is so depressing to be unemployed, my sister. I have a child, but there is no job to take care of my child, I can’t provide anything nice as a responsible mother. Due to this pressure I tended to drink a lot in order to cool down my stress”* (Individual interview, unemployed graduate 6).

In relation to the above, these unemployed young graduates feel deeply depressed by their situation of unemployment. Findings also indicate that having no job, the needs of everyday life cannot be met. Therefore, unemployed young people with responsibilities might find themselves depressed from not knowing what to do to anymore.

Furthermore, it was found that most of these unemployed graduates engaged in binge drinking as a way of coping with their joblessness and the psychological effects of it.

*“Because of the situation of being unemployed, I drink too much, I don’t care if is during the week or not. When I drink, the problem I have for being unemployed goes away, just like that (finger snaps)”* (Individual interview, unemployed graduate 8).

Importantly, in this study, unemployment among graduate youths was also linked to low self-esteem. One graduate youth shared that his joblessness made him feel stressed, because he could not find employment. Stress levels increased and alcohol abuse was seen as a solution to the stress. It is thus clear from these results that, indeed, unemployment amongst graduate youths results in social, psychological and financial struggles (Fajana, 2000). Not only that, unemployment in this sub population affects society as a whole, as communities witness a fruitless investment in their children (Toye and Infanti, 2004).

#### **4.3.4 Ways to promote job creation in South Africa for unemployed graduate youths**

When participants were asked what the government of South Africa in general, and the provincial and local governments of Limpopo province specifically, were doing to address the issue of unemployment among graduate youths, the following quotes expressed their views:

*“What the government is doing in general terms to address the issue of unemployment among graduate youths, looks like out there, the programmes such as learnership and internships in many departments are created for unemployed young graduates to get experience. Ummm ya, I see these promoting employment among the young people”* (Individual interview, unemployed graduate 1).

The majority of the unemployed graduate youths indicated that the provincial and local governments of Limpopo played a role in promoting employment for graduate youths by coming up with policies for learnership and internship programmes. Therefore, this shows that they perceived all these programmes as a way of promoting employment.

On the question of whether unemployed graduate youths were aware of the programmes initiated to combat unemployment amongst the graduate youths, the unemployed graduate youths 5,3,7,8 and 10 stated same respond as they stated that corruption, nepotism steals their opportunity to be employed after the programmes are initiated to assist them with employment. The following respond is for one of the unemployed youth

*“There are many programmes in this province and in our community that help us to be employed and be financially independent. Internships, learnerships and EPWP are programmes that I know for now. These programmes are helpful but, eish, the problem you know is now corruption and nepotism that we have a challenge with in our province today”* (Individual interview, unemployed graduate 3).

The findings showed that the unemployed youths were aware of a few programmes that created access to the job market, such as the Expanded Public Works Programme, learnerships and internships operating in their community, and so was the policy maker from the public sector who was interviewed. Although some of the unemployed graduate youths believed that these programmes improved the lives of the youth, since some were able to gain employment and meet their needs, few of the unemployed graduate youths in this study reported having seen these programmes operating effectively. Instead, participants viewed them as sites for nepotism and corruption. Further, the EPWP programme was thought to have a small budget, which undermined its ability to meet its objectives. Bokolo (2013) recommended that both public and private enterprises should join together and work to ensure the success of the programmes. The majority of the unemployed graduate youths expressed the view that they would like to see the



government do away with nepotism and corruption, and use revenue generated from taxes to create more jobs for young people.

From the interview with the policy maker in the public sector, on the initiated programmes, came the following:

*“I am aware of many policies, initiated programmes, if I can mention the few (Youth Enterprises Development Strategy and the Expanded Public Works Programme [EPWP] and START and GO”* (Individual interview, policy maker).

From the above, we saw that the policy maker was aware of the policies initiated to promote graduate youths’ employment, such as the EPWP. These initiated policies brought a difference in the lives of unemployed graduate youths.

The policy maker was asked to comment on the impact that the initiated programmes had on the youth. He stated that the programmes initiated improved the lives of the youth, since some were able to gain employment and meet their needs. It was also found that some of these policies helped the youth in being able to start their own enterprises and be self-employed. The above is supported by the following statement:

*“The initiated programmes have at least improved the lives of the youth and their families as well. Some of the youth were able to be employed and they managed to meet their needs through the salary they get. It has also made the youth to become self-employed and own their own business or enterprises”* (Individual interview, policy maker).

In light of the above, initiated programmes play an important role in the lives of the unemployed graduate youths. The policy maker showed that, through some of the policies, youths could get jobs and look after themselves and their families and, on other hand, some policies make them become self-employed. This tends to boost the economy because they will create jobs, and unemployment among graduate youths will subside.

In this study, the researcher asked the unemployed graduate youths whether the initiated programmes were effective. Effective policies always bring effective results that benefit the people they target. The following respondents expressed their views:

*“The programmes initiated indeed they are effective in our community and in our lives. When we get chance to be part of the EPWP programme we are able to get money and also work experience”* (Individual interview, unemployed graduate 7).

*“Learnership programmes that are initiated in this province are effective, even though corruption and corrupted official are the contributory factor to the causes of unemployment. I see other young graduates participating in Learnership programmes and getting certificates after they complete their experiential work”* (Individual interview, unemployed graduate 10).

It was found that a few unemployed graduate youths saw these programmes as very effective and helpful for their future career endeavours and also for their present living situations. This is because when they got jobs through these programmes they were able to get money and experience. However, it was also found that there were some hindrances that impact on the success of the programmes, such as corruption. Therefore, all hindrances to the success of the programmes must be looked at and resolved before more damage can occur.

The policy maker was asked to indicate why policy fails. The policy maker remarked that some of the policies to promote graduate youths employment were not effective as a result of poor implementation. The other reasons cited by the policy maker for the failure of these policies and programmes included community backlash, lack of accountability and lack of finances.

The respondent stated:

*“Policy fails because they are just written in paper without being implemented. They also fail because the government doesn’t account on policies for youth. Furthermore, they fail because of no allocated resources to implement on such commitment to their work, for example, financial resources. Lastly, it fails because of strong negative reaction coming from many people, mostly, the politicians”* (Individual interview, policy maker).

From the above quote, the researcher perceived that the policy maker knew that there were policies which were just on paper and not been put into action. Furthermore, lack of resources and negative reactions by the local people and politicians had prevented the success of policy.

Initiated policy needs to be put into action in order to address what it aims to address.

The study also sought to determine participants’ perceptions regarding who should lead the initiative to promote employment of the graduate youth in South Africa. The graduates believed

that a collaborative effort involving unemployed graduate youths, the government, the private sector and NGOs should be mobilized to develop and lead such an initiative.

*“Perceiving the South African situation today, government can’t tackle this issue of graduates youth unemployment. Private sectors, us the youth and also NGOs should be formed as a linkage to lead most of the initiative to promote youth employment”* (Individual interview, unemployed graduate 3).

In light of the above, it is the view of the unemployed graduate youths that graduates, the NGOs and the private sector are the key to youth employment. This shows that initiatives without these three won’t do justice to the resolution of this dilemma.

Furthermore, the researcher wanted to know what measures should be put in place to reduce unemployment amongst graduate youths in Ga-Kgapane, Limpopo province. What the youth say in the following quotes corroborates findings.

*“What should be put in place to promote graduate youths employment I think the government should advise young people to start their own business and stop waiting for them. And you know also internships and learnerships they provide, I think they are significant to promote employment because as young people we have to start somewhere to get experience, you know”* (Individual interview, unemployed graduate 2).

In line with the above, the participants suggested that programmes such as the EPWP, internships, self-employment promotion initiatives and finances for programmes should be strengthened to ensure that they delivered on their objectives to promote youth employment.

Moreover, special emphasis was placed by all participants on the government’s responsibility in ensuring that unemployed graduate youths had jobs. The researcher asked unemployed graduate youths to indicate the roles which they thought the government should play.

*“The government’s role, I think should be to make money available to run the programmes effectively and also work together with NGOs to provide more job opportunities for us because if we don’t have jobs we end up engaging ourselves in some intolerable activities”* (Individual interview, unemployed graduate 6).

*“I think the government’s role is to engage with, what we call, NGOs so that they can both create better environment for youth to work in. Most of NGOs are located in our areas and they see our struggles every day”* (Individual interview, unemployed graduate 10).

It was found that from the unemployed graduate youths’ perspective, the government’s responsibilities were to provide resources such as money to run the programmes for job creation; retirement-age revision in the main areas that the graduate youths saw as crucial in providing employment opportunities; and also encourage the private sector and NGOs to create jobs, assist the graduates in finding jobs and hire graduate youths to enable them to get work experience since they said that the lack of experience caused them to be unemployed.

The recruitment agent believed that the strongest solution for unemployed graduate youths would be promotion of, and provision for, self-employment, and career guidance for the employment of graduate youths. He stated this as follows:

*“Mmhh...actually, solution to this challenging issue among graduates, there should be opportunities for youth to gain skills and experience relevant to their workplace. There should be promotion of self-employment whereby youth start their business. I can also say, uhmm...career guidance is important for them to be able to know which field to go to and which higher institution of learning offers such skills needed. Yes, which will definitely promote employment amongst graduate youths”* (Individual interview, recruitment agent).

From the above quote, opportunities for unemployed graduate youths, self-employment and career guidance are factors that need to be adhered to if the high unemployment rate of the graduate youths is to be addressed. In short, the above responses shed light on how this increasing rate of unemployment among the graduate youths can be resolved.

The potential employer, on the question of how to improve the employability of the graduate youths, expressed her understanding of the question as follows:

*“To improve the employability of the graduate youths in Ga-Kgapane township, I think what should be done is that the institutions of higher learning and the potential employers should work together to ensure that they provide the students who are about to be graduate on what is needed by the employers. To add, the unemployed graduate youths should also be encouraged to be self-employed”* (Individual interview, potential employer).

The findings indicated a belief from the potential employer's point of view that the higher education institutions of learning and the potential employers should work together to fashion job opportunities and job placements for graduates. Such collaborative initiatives could include providing students who are about to graduate with guidance on what is needed by potential employers out there and also encouraging entrepreneurship among graduate youths.

On the question of ways to promote graduate youth employment, the policy maker was asked to indicate how graduate youths could find jobs. Below is what he had to say:

*“Recruitment agency should also train the youth to be entrepreneurs and they should also help the graduates not be afraid to engage with them and tell them their qualifications in order to match them with the requirement for the job. The labour brokers should help by keeping graduates’ information in their system so that when certain temporary jobs are available they will be able to locate them (the youth). This will help graduates to gain skills relevant to the study field”* (Individual interview, policy maker).

The policy maker supported the suggestions of the potential employer on possible ways to promote graduate youth employment. The policy maker also believed that graduates should be encouraged towards entrepreneurship. Furthermore, he pointed out that recruitment agencies should play a stronger role by actively encouraging graduate youths not to hesitate to consult with them regarding jobs. The policy maker also made the suggestion that the details of graduates should be kept in databases to be revisited whenever a new post became available.

- **The responsibilities of higher education institutions**

The unemployed graduate youths remarked on the role of higher education institutions in providing career guidance and training on job searching for students about to graduate. These unemployed graduate youths also believed that higher education institutions should provide quality education and skills needed by the job market, to increase the graduates’ employability. This is supported by the quote below:

*“I think the role of the higher education is to provide with job seeking training for those who are in their final year of study. So that when they graduate they can know how to apply for jobs, and career guidance as well is also their role”* (Individual interview, unemployed graduate 9).

The above quote indicates that unemployed graduate youths see the role of higher education institutions of learning as being to provide career guidance and training on job searching for the graduates, that they might learn effective ways of seeking a job and which sites on the internet to look on. Furthermore, they said that higher education institutions should provide quality education and skills needed by the employers for graduates to be employable, which would promote employment among the graduates.

- **The responsibility of the private sector**

Most of the unemployed graduate youths remarked that the private sector could promote the employment of graduate youths by playing an advisory role. They could become the voice of the graduate youths and advise the government on how to promote the employment of graduates in the country. , the unemployed graduate youths, 3, 4, 7, 8 and 9 stated same respond.

The following is the respond which majority of them stated the same with graduate youth 3:

*“Private sector’s roles in promoting youth employment are too many, what I know is that they provide with services by commuting us through making the government responsible to their governance, employment opportunities and empowering us the youth with training”* (Individual interview, unemployed graduate 3).

The above sentiments are supported by the NYP (2006), which states that the private sector is a stakeholder that could also focus on improving youth, for its own development. This indicates that it is also the private sector’s role to empower the youth.

- **The responsibilities of the unemployed graduate youths**

The research wanted to know the responsibilities of the graduate youths in promoting graduate youth employment. This is because, as youth, they also have to play a role and not wait for other parties/stakeholders. Below are the corroborated responds from unemployed graduate youth 1.3 and 4. They all stated same responds which unemployed youth graduate 1 stated which is as follows:

*“The South African government spoiled us by firstly providing us with education that train us to study and look for job after and not to be entrepreneurs. But then since we see situation now, as youth some of us try to do something on our own to promote ourselves”* (Individual interview, unemployed graduates 1).

From the quotes above, the unemployed graduate youths perceived their role to be concerned with self-promotion, and developing entrepreneurship skills.

#### **4.4 Summary of the chapter**

The data obtained from interviews by the researcher were presented and analysed in this chapter. The findings presented spoke to the research question and objectives. The chapter began by showing the characteristics of the participants interviewed in this study. It further showed the experiences of graduate unemployed youths. Following this were the causes and the consequences of unemployment. It was found that the situation unemployed graduate youths with unsuccessful job applications found themselves in can cause them to give up applying for work, although some said that they would keep on even though things were not yet good for them. Based on the findings on the causes of unemployment amongst graduate youths, the graduates' understanding of the causes of their unemployment is clear and consists of lack of experiences, job seeking skills, high expectations, discrimination based on race, and higher education institution of learning attended. Evidence has been seen that unemployment has negative consequences which affect the society and the wellbeing of the graduate youths socially, financially and economically.

Furthermore, the programmes that would promote employment amongst graduate youths were discussed, and among these were internships, learnerships and EPWP programmes. The roles which graduate youths, private sector, higher education institutions of learning, NGOs and the government play in promoting graduate youths employment were also discussed in the findings. A policy maker indicated that recruitment agency and labour brokers should help in matching the unemployed graduate youths with the right jobs.

This chapter presented the essential themes which brought in numerous, rich data on the experiences, causes and consequences of unemployment amongst youth graduates. All these have shown that promoting youth employment is multi-dimensional in a stakeholder approach. Therefore, there is a need for partnering for better results for the unemployed graduate youths to be employed. The chapter that follows presents the discussion of the findings.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter, research findings were presented and this chapter will discuss the contribution of the study towards the literature, based on an investigation of unemployment amongst graduate youth; the implications of the findings, and also how the findings of the study relate to the theory of human capital applied in this study.

#### **5.2 Contribution to the knowledge**

This study builds on the existing knowledge exploring the issue of unemployment amongst youth graduates. This challenging issue of unemployment amongst graduate youths is a matter of concern, and has interest for policy makers, governments, recruitment agencies, potential employers and higher education institutions of learning. The reason for this is that unemployment is a political, economic and social dilemma.

This study found that most of the young graduates who were part of the study lacked the work experience that could give them an entry into the job market. The literature (Oluwajodu et al., 2015) supports these findings, stating that without experience, young graduates found themselves unable to get employment. According to the South African National Treasury (2011), employers found it risky to employ a person without experience. Therefore, lack of experience is read as a huge limitation to employment for unemployed youth graduates.

The dynamics shaping the labour market led the unemployed graduate youths to realise that while White graduates gained access to a job with ease, Black graduate youths found a similar achievement difficult. As a result, unemployed graduate youths concluded that the choice of the higher institution of learning attended was fundamental with respect to the labour market and employers for job application success. They mentioned that they had studied at disadvantaged higher institutions of learning, such as University of Venda and Letaba FET College. This finding is consistent with Naong's (2011) findings that graduate youth were



unemployed because the higher institutions of learning they had attended were historically disadvantaged. Liu, Salvanes and Sorensen (2015) added that the primary mechanism behind the loss of careers for graduate youth was the failure of some higher institution of learning graduates to provide skills demanded by the companies they wanted to be hired by. This finding highlights the importance of a broad review of the sector of higher education in South Africa, to understand the ways in which historically disadvantaged universities can be enabled to shake off the stigma and stereotypes associated with learning in these institutions. Furthermore, an advocacy and awareness campaign is needed to educate employers on the importance of opening up opportunities to all of the country's graduates, so as to reduce inequality and the continued marginalization of the Black child.

Each and every employer looks for certain skills when they employ people. Workplace skills, soft skills and applied knowledge are some of the skills they look for in graduates (Griesel and Parker, 2009). Oluwajodu et al. (2015) concur, stating that a lack in graduate youths of the skills mentioned is the reason for their job applications to be unsuccessful. Griesel and Parker (2009) argue that it is graduates from historically black institutions that mostly lack these skills that are required by employers. The unemployed graduates in this study showed that these historically black institutions had disadvantaged them in gaining access to work opportunities. This is because the universities and colleges at which they had studied did not offer the soft skills required.

The unemployed graduates in this study revealed that they had high expectations when they went out to search for jobs. Sirat and Shuib (2012) made the suggestion that unemployed young graduates were selective when it came to jobs and did not mind being unemployed until they got their desired job. These issues have also been seen in this study, where the unemployed graduate youths preferred office jobs and high salaries to any other kind of work.

Juare, Clares and Cuso (2014) stated that the most effective ways of looking for a job were based on family related network contacts; however, this study revealed that most of the graduates simply went to libraries to search for jobs through the internet and newspapers, and there were no interventions of the family in their job search process.

This study found that the unemployed graduate youths found themselves no longer enjoying life because they were unemployed, and were depressed by their unemployment situation, which affected their present lives and their hopes for the future. Knabe and Ratzel (2011)

concur on psychological outcomes of youths without jobs, and found that unemployed graduates suffered psychological outcomes, and were robbed of life satisfaction by this dilemma, both in the present and in future. Young graduates without work in this study showed that they were financially poor and no longer taken seriously by their friends. Similarly, De Witte et al. (2010) found that graduate youth who were unemployed experienced loss of power, depression and economic hardship.

Asaju, Arome and Anyio (2014) found that nepotism resulted in high levels of unemployment in both public and private sectors. The unemployed graduate youths in this study revealed that some of the government programmes to promote employment had corruption and nepotism, which resulted in their not being able to get a job.

Criminal activity is the result of suffering; when people are hungry, they do whatsoever they can to put food on the table. This study found that some of the unemployed graduate youths engaged in criminal activities because they had nothing else to do to meet their needs as young people. According to Ward (2009), on the consequences of graduate youth unemployment, economically excluded unemployed graduate youth tend to face poverty, which leads to their engaging in criminal activities to survive.

Bhorat and Visser (2010) conducted a study and found that historically white universities graduates had better employment prospects compared to historically black universities graduates. The former tended to get jobs after graduating sooner than those from historically black universities that are disadvantaged. Similarly, the Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA) found that the high rate of unemployment in South Africa mostly affected the category of young persons, and more especially those who graduated from historically black universities (DBSA, 2011). These findings show that the university attended by the graduates plays a role in the labour market.

The findings show that young graduates do their utmost to become employed, since they search on the internet for jobs. In a different vein, Naong (2011) argues that graduates should move from the mentality of seeking to become employed and rather develop a mentality of seeking to employ; meaning that they should be job creators not seekers. Therefore, this shows that there is a need for a paradigm shift towards an entrepreneurship mind-set among unemployed graduate youths in South Africa.

This study found that discrimination based on race affected the graduates; however, a directional change was later seen, whereby the practice of only hiring white graduates changed to the hiring of other races as well, more especially blacks, as a result of Affirmative Action (AA). Similarly, Van de Rhee (2012) found that from 2008 to 2010 there was a decline in the likelihood of Whites getting preference in employment over Black graduates.

### **5.3 Theoretical reflections**

In order to encourage and justify the massive investments in education, the theory of human capital theory has been utilised in this study. However, the results found here are different from the ones posited by the theory. Most of the unemployed graduate youths completed school and expected to harvest the benefits thereof, but had no luck in finding employment. This results in a situation whereby the benefits of education start to be undetermined as young graduates find it difficult to become employed.

There is a contradiction between what the researcher heard from the unemployed graduate youth and what is portrayed by the human capital theory. Graduate youth who had put their effort and money into investing in education were unemployed, instead of having their education work for them to increase earnings and productivity. Some, when they applied for jobs, did not get them mainly because they lacked the experience and skills to enter the labour market.

Furthermore, this theory implies that investing in education increases the chances of acquiring a better job in future, and one with which one would be satisfied for a lifetime. However, in the study findings it was found that one of the graduates was depressed because while she had gone to school, she had no job and no money with which to look after her child.

The human capital theory also implies that a graduate will get a job right away and work over many years until they retire after graduating from their higher education institution of learning. However, that is not so in the reality shown in this study. Most of the unemployed graduate youth remained for many years without employment, as shown in this study, with unemployed young graduates having been without a job for over three years, even with having been busy applying for jobs. This shows that a person can take years without getting a job, and also that one can be employed for a certain period of time and suddenly lose a job due to reasons of the economy.

The researcher found this theory able to provide a simplified way of understanding the unemployment among graduate youths within Ga-Kgapane Township, Limpopo province. Overall, the researcher found this theory useful in assessing the causes, experience and the consequences of unemployment amongst youth graduates.

The researcher noted one weakness, namely that the theory of human capital does not cover fully other concepts of this study, concepts like as ways to promote employment. However, the participants were able to highlight ways to promote employment amongst the youth graduates.

#### **5.4 Summary of the chapter**

In this chapter, the findings from other research studies were discussed in order to know what other literature contributes to the findings of this study. The researcher further showed how the theory of human capital used in this study responds to the findings of this study. The last chapter, which follows, discusses the conclusions and recommendations of the study.



## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1. Introduction

This study was based on investigating the experiences, causes and consequences of unemployment amongst graduate youths in Ga-Kgapane Township, Limpopo province in South Africa. This chapter marks the last chapter of this thesis and presents the conclusion. It is not limited to the summary of the key findings, which are in close relation with the objectives of the study, but also includes suggestions for further research, and ends with the conclusion of the study, which includes a few suggestions for policy makers to take into consideration when enacting laws.

#### 6.2. Summary of the key findings

The researcher endeavoured to complete and meet the main aim of the research objectives through qualitative research design and methodology. The findings of the study show that the unemployed graduate youths still have a strong confidence that there would be employment opportunities, even though it had been about five (5) years for most of the participants without any luck of employment. The majority of participants highlighted that the use of the internet and newspapers played a major role in searching for job opportunities.

However, the analysis indicated that most of the participants found the process difficult, especially in a situation where one has to apply many times without any positive responses. This in turn causes negative impacts that leave unemployed graduate youths feeling hopeless. Indications were found showing that unemployed graduate youths had sent out more than 30 applications for employment resulting in no feedback or being shortlisted for interviews. It was also found that one year's experience was not enough to qualify them for employment in both public and private sectors.

The findings show that most of the unemployed graduate youths perceived the causes of their unemployment to be their expectations regarding employment, higher education institution of learning attended, lack of job seeking skills, lack of work experience and racial discrimination. The findings also indicate that unemployment amongst the graduate youths had resulted in negative social, psychological and financial effects (Fajana, 2000). Most of the unemployed graduate youths showed that, due to unemployment, they had resorted to participating in criminal activities and in engaging in the abuse of alcohol and drugs to quench stress, because the scarcity of employment opportunities caused frustration and depression in their lives. In addition, lack of employment does not only affect unemployed graduate youths but also affects the society as a whole.

Due to high economic and social problems encountered by the graduate unemployed youths in this study, discrimination and loss of power were the socio-economic problems unemployed graduate youths encountered on a daily basis. In terms of economic problems, the analysis showed that most of the unemployed graduate youths were without an income and experienced economic hardships. It was expressed that most of unemployed graduate youths survived by being dependent on their parents, while a few stole to meet their economic needs. In psychological terms, the unemployed graduate youths being depressed could affect their health and well-being, making difficult for them to access opportunities that could make their lives better.

Therefore, it is argued that if unemployed graduate youths' confidence and enough resources during the course of the period of time spent sending out applications for employment in government departments and private sectors, would have resulted in positive feedback for the positions they applied for. Thus, the negative experiences in the job search, losing hope and lack of experience were identified as reasons for youth graduates' unemployment. The lack of work experience, the higher education institution of learning attended, racial discrimination and the labour market skills demands contribute to graduate youth unemployment. It is pointed out that lacking experience and job seeking skills limited their chances of being employed; this is apart from racial discrimination, best higher education institutions of learning attended being favoured and the high expectations of the graduates.

Another comment made was that the higher education institutions of learning where the graduate youths attended determined employability. The importance of the higher education institution attended meant that those who attended historically black higher education

institutions received less recognition, and were less likely to be hired than those who went to white higher education institutions. Institutions attended by graduates were indicated by the potential employers as one of the causes of unemployment. The recruitment agency mentioned lack of skills increase as a result of obtained qualification from historically black education institutions as seen as one of the youth unemployment causes, and potential employer mentioned that missing supporting document and untidy applications when applying for jobs lead to graduates' applications being unsuccessful and for the candidate not to be employed. Unemployed graduate youths, potential employer and recruitment agency showed their understanding of the causes of unemployment amongst the unemployed graduate youths.

Furthermore, the private sector, the youth, the government and NGO's are seen as key players to promoting graduate youths' employment. The suggestion was for the government to incentivise the promotion of self-employment, more employment provision and internship opportunities for skills and experience which promote graduate youths' employment. Moreover, graduate youths viewed government support with finances and self-employment as ways that could promote youth graduates' employment. In addition, the advocatory private sector in advisory roles and provision of career guidance, and the NGOs' role in supporting graduates were seen by the graduate youths as ways to improve youth graduate employment.

The primary data analysed showed that most of the graduate youth had high expectations when it came to jobs. As the theory of human capital states, investing in higher education leads to higher earnings than those of a person who comes to the workplace with matric certificate and no higher institution of learning qualification. This is exactly how graduate youths think when they go to the workplace. Unfortunately, the issue of lack of experience bars them from the labour market.

Furthermore, it was found that those who got jobs such as internships were successful because of their job searching skills. It is clear that job searching skills are important for graduate youths to obtain employment. When the graduate youths have jobs it is obvious that they will not engage in criminal activities to meet their needs as a consequence of unemployment.

The research findings showed how important it was to take into consideration the graduate youths' employment status. It showed that the relevant stakeholders have to intervene and ensure that the proper measures are taken to resolve the dilemmas of graduate youth unemployment affecting the unemployed graduate youths, society and the economic growth of

the nation. The officials from various departments were also included in order to get information from their side on how they perceived the graduate youths' unemployment dilemma.

This study was guided by the human capital theory, which states that higher investment in education leads to higher earnings, and the capability approach which places emphasis on the things which hamper people's ability to get what they value.

### **6.3. Objectives and findings of the study**

Through the study, the researcher has met all the four objective of the research study. The main focus of this research was on the causes, experience and consequences of graduate youth unemployment, as well as the exploration of solutions for reducing graduate youth unemployment. The research was qualitative in nature, and interviews, semi-structured interviews using an interview schedule were used as methods of data collection. The purpose of the research methodology was to address the aim and objectives of the study clearly. The researcher used purposive sampling technique for the research sample of the study and the targeted population was sampled from one population at Ga-Kgapane Township. The findings of the research were presented and analysed using the thematic analysis technique.

### **6.4. Further research suggested**

Unemployment in graduate youths is a universal challenge which cannot be left unattended to, nor can it be addressed by a single study focusing on the causes, experience and the consequences in a sample of those youths. A multipronged approach is needed to address the issue. In South Africa, not only in Ga-Kgapane Township, graduate youth unemployment is one of the major concerns among the social problems affecting the youth.

Minimal research was conducted on this study topic in Ga-Kgapane Township, Limpopo Province of South Africa. Therefore, the researcher, based on the research findings, suggests that in the near future the following should be addressed by other researchers with regards to the challenges of unemployment among graduate youths in South Africa:

- Guidance on higher education institution of learning choice, and the skills offered at those institutions and whether they are related to those skills required by the employers.
- The relationship between the labour market and higher education institutions (the historically disadvantaged institutions).



## 6.5 Conclusion of the study

From the findings, the graduate unemployed youths showed that employment would be promoted through the NGOs' advocatory and the private sector's advisory roles to influence policy change, self-employment, and employment opportunities by addressing the lack of work experience among the graduate youths. In addition, the potential employers showed that providing career guidance for students to choose universities that provides skills they knew they were required in the work field could promote employability of the graduate youths. It is pointed out that universities should interact with employers to learn the skills that the employers require from graduate youths and assist with training to provide graduate youths with skills on how to search for jobs. It is argued that the government should do away with corruption by strengthening laws and policies; and the government, youth, private sector and NGOs should lead the initiation of programmes that promote employment amongst unemployed graduate youths. Based on the presented findings, policy makers should consider the need for potential employers to provide job application feedback to the unemployed graduate youths; this would assist unemployed graduate youths in seeing where they went wrong in the application process. Policy makers should ensure that potential employers, workers and institutions of higher learning work together in order to address the skills shortages needed in practice among the unemployed graduate youths, through implementation of relevant programmes. The professional bodies such as recruitment agencies, and employers, should more effectively interact with universities and play a role in career guidance. It is the duty of the policy makers to make sure that the appropriate bodies in the black universities interact with employers and recruitment agencies to understand the skills required in the workplace, in order to offer them to the students. This would therefore help the employers to view the black institutions in a different way from before, and unemployed graduate youths will possess soft skills such as public speaking and time management skills, which will play role in the productivity of the workplace in which the unemployed graduate youths will be placed.

Policy makers should ensure that learnerships and internships are monitored in both the government and private sectors, and this will assist in fair job appointment and more job creation in the EPWP, internships and learnerships, and should also ensure enough money to pay for and run the EPWP effectively. The policy makers should ensure that higher institutions of learning and NGOs work together to provide job search skills training for unemployed graduate youths, on how to search for a job and how to apply. In order to develop intensive job-search and job readiness, policy makers should ensure more extensive and cohesive

employment services with enough skills and capacity. Ultimately, the youth will be able to know which sites to use to search for jobs and how to apply and make sure that their applications are tidy and in order.

Policy makers should invest in reducing high expectations in graduates and in promoting voluntarism among unemployed graduate youths. Unemployed graduate youths should value commitment, realistic opinions and working hard towards employment success when entering the labour market for the first time to avoid high expectations about work fields that have highpaying jobs. It is important that policy makers should value, promote and fasten the employment equity guidelines in industry, which will help to discourage race discrimination, since unemployed graduate youths stated that they were discriminated against in some institutions because of their race. Addressing this will help to create a good healthy environment that will encourage cultural diversity in unemployed graduate youths who are looking for employment in the labour market.

Since the private sector and the NGOs play major roles in gathering career related information for the youth and for jobs creation, policy makers should encourage the private sector and the NGOs to be the mediators between other stakeholders and the youth on the issue of unemployment, and support with finances skill programmes that are providing and promoting graduate youth job opportunities. Policy makers should also encourage the private sector and NGOs to form partnerships with the government to address the dilemma of graduate youth unemployment effectively. Therefore, this will result in job creation for unemployed graduate youths since, as we have seen in the findings in chapter 4, most of the unemployed graduate youths engaged in criminal activities and the abuse of alcohol and drugs as a result of finding themselves in desperate situations because of unemployment. Having the private sector, NGOs and other stakeholders working together to finance skills programmes as a way of addressing the issue of unemployment amongst unemployed graduate youths will create more jobs for the graduate youths.

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## **APPENDIX 1: INFORMATION SHEET FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH GRADUATES UNEMPLOYED YOUTH**

### **Introduction and background**

Good Day.

My name is Ramatshekgisa Malebo Gratitude. I am a student of the University of the Western Cape doing this study as the part fulfilment of the requirement of my Master of Arts in Development Studies.

The main goal of this study is to explore the experiences of young graduates who are unemployed, as well as the perceptions of the causes and consequences of unemployment amongst young graduates. The information obtained could be used to inform the policy makers in the province of Limpopo. I am inviting you to participate as a key informant in my study.

The interview will last for about one and half hours. If you agree to take part, I will ask you questions about the experiences, causes, consequences and solutions of unemployment among graduates. The questions are not a test, so there are no right or wrong answers. It is your opinions and experiences that are essential for the study. My role as an interviewer is to listen and to understand your point of view, but not to pass judgment. All the information provided will be dealt with confidentially, and the participants' safety is assured. The participants will only answer questions that they are comfortable with; participation in the study is entirely voluntary; this means you can choose to terminate your participation any time you wish to do so, with no consequences to you.

I would like to request your permission to audiotape the interview because it is not possible to write down all your answers quickly enough to capture all important information. The tapes, digital voice data and notes will remain confidential and your identity will not be disclosed. The tapes and digital data will be listened to only by the researcher who will interview you. The tapes and voice digital data files will be kept in a locked safe. As per the national requirements, the tapes and voice digital data will be destroyed two years after the publication of the research findings.



**APPENDIX 2: AUDIOTAPE-RECORDING INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

I have been given the Information Sheet on the project entitled: An investigation on the experiences, causes, and consequences of unemployment amongst graduate youths in the Limpopo province, Ga-Kgapane South Africa. I have read and understood the Information Sheet.

I understand that I can decide whether or not the interview should be tape-recorded and that there will be no consequences and penalties for me if I do not want the interview to be recorded.

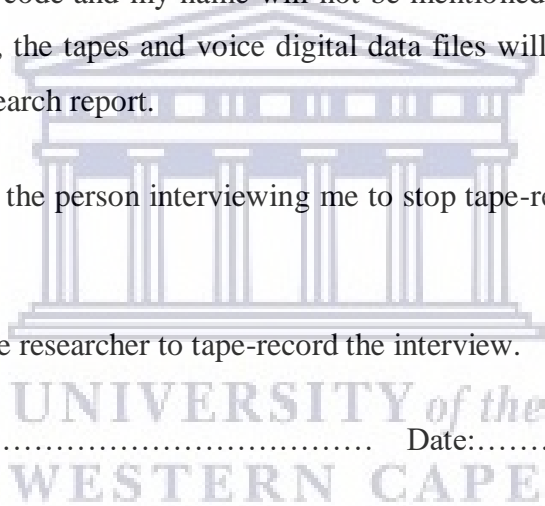
I understand that information from the tapes and digital voice recording will be transcribed and transcripts will be given a code and my name will not be mentioned. I understand that if the interview is tape-recorded, the tapes and voice digital data files will be destroyed two years after publication of the research report.

I understand that I can ask the person interviewing me to stop tape-recording, and to stop the interview at any time.

I consent voluntarily for the researcher to tape-record the interview.

Participant’s signature: ..... Date:.....

Interviewer’s signature: .....Date:.....



**APPENDIX 3: INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW WITH GRADUATE UNEMPLOYED YOUTHS**

I have been given the information sheet on the project entitled: An investigation on the experiences, causes, and consequences of unemployment amongst graduate youth in Limpopo province, Ga-Kgapane South Africa. I have read and understood the Information Sheet and all my questions have been answered satisfactorily.

Name of Participant:.....

Name of Researcher: Ramatshekgisa Malebo Gratitude

I understand that it is up to me whether or not I would like to participate in the interview and that there will be no negative consequences or penalties if I decide not to participate. I also understand that I do not have to answer any questions that I am not comfortable with and that I can stop the interview at any time.

I understand that the researcher involved in this project will make every effort to ensure confidentiality and that my name will not be used in the study reports and information I provide will be used for educational purposes. I consent voluntarily to participate in the interview for this study. I have been given telephone numbers that I may call if I have any questions or concerns about the research. I consent voluntarily to be interviewed by the researcher.

Participant’s signature:.....

Date:.....

Interviewer’s signature: .....

Date:.....

If you have any questions about participating in this study, you may contact me at 0760 288 485 or at 3608604@myuwc.ac.za. Or contact my supervisor, Prof Y Zembe at 021 959 4049 or at [yzembe@uwc.za](mailto:yzembe@uwc.za).

**ANNEXTURE A. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH GRADUATE UNEMPLOYED YOUTHS**

*NB: Please be as specific as possible in your answers.*

*Please tick wherever applicable.*

*NB: The information in this questionnaire will be treated confidentially*

**SECTION A. DEMOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION FOR GRADUATE UNEMPLOYED YOUTHS AND THE OFFICIALS**

Name		
Gender		
Please indicate your age	20 – 29	
	30 – 39	
	40 – 49	
	50 – 59	
Degree obtained	Certificate	
	Diploma	
	Bachelor’s degree	
	Masters degree	
Which higher education institution did you graduate from?		
Number of years since graduation		
Occupation		
Department		

## **SECTION B. EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS OF UNEMPLOYED GRADUATE**

### **YOUTHS**

#### **The experiences of unemployed graduate youths who are seeking employment**

Tell me about your experiences of searching for a job

- How long have you been searching for a job?
- What specific steps have you taken to find a job?
- How easy or difficult is it to look for work?
- What kind of resources do you need to have when looking for a job? Where do you get these resources from?
- What kinds of jobs have you applied for? Why?
- How many jobs have you applied for since you graduated?
- What happened with each of these applications?
- How have you coped with these experiences of applying for jobs and yet finding that you are not successful in securing any of them?

#### **The causes of graduates youth unemployment**

- In your experience, what do you think is needed from young graduates to secure a job in the labour market?
- What do you think are the reasons that have caused you to remain unemployed despite applying for jobs?
- What do you think are the causes of unemployment among all unemployed graduates besides you?
- I would like you to think about other young graduates that you know of who have managed to get a job:
- Why do you think these graduates were successful at getting a job?
- What do you think it would take for you to find a job as they have? **The consequences of graduates youth unemployment**

- How do you survive, given that you do not have an income of your own?
- In what ways has your unemployment status affected you financially, psychologically and socially?
- What do you think are the consequences of unemployment among other graduates besides you?

### **Ways to promote job creation in South Africa for young graduates**

- In your opinion, what is the government of South Africa in general and the provincial and local governments of Limpopo province specifically doing to address the issue of unemployment among graduate youths?
- What government programmes are you aware of that are aimed at assisting young graduates with employment opportunities?
- In your opinion how effective are these initiatives?
- What could make them more effective?
- What should be put in place that can promote unemployment amongst young graduates in Limpopo province, Ga-Kgapane province?
- Who should lead initiatives to improve graduate youth unemployment?
- What is the responsibility of government?
- What is the responsibility of higher education institutions?
- What is the responsibility of the private sector?
- What is the responsibility of graduates?

## **APPENDIX 4: INFORMATION SHEET FOR FACE TO FACE INTERVIEWS WITH THE OFFICIALS**

### **Introduction and background**

Good Day.

My name is Ramatshekgisa Malebo Gratitude. I am a student of the University of the Western Cape doing this study as the part fulfilment of the requirement of my Master of Arts in Development Studies.

The main goal of this study is to explore the experiences of young graduates who are unemployed, as well as the perceptions of the causes and consequences of unemployment amongst young graduates. The information obtained could be used to inform the policy makers in the province of Limpopo. I am inviting you to participate as a key informant in my study.

The interview will last for about one hour. If you agree to take part, I will ask you questions about the causes, your experiences and solutions of unemployment among graduates. The questions are not a test, so there are no right or wrong answers. It is your opinions and experiences that are essential for the study. My role as an interviewer is to listen and to understand your point of view, but not to pass judgment. All the information provided will be dealt with confidentially, and the participants' safety is assured. The participants will only answer questions that they are comfortable with; participation in the study is entirely voluntary; this means you can choose to terminate your participation any time you wish to do so, with no consequences to you.

I would like to request your permission to audiotape the interview because it is not possible to write down all your answers quickly enough to capture all important information. The tapes, digital voice data and notes will remain confidential and your identity will not be disclosed. The tapes and digital data will be listened to only by the researcher who will interview you. The tapes and voice digital data files will be kept in a locked safe. As per the national requirements, the tapes and voice digital data will be destroyed five years after the publication of the research findings.

**APPENDIX 5: INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR FACE TO FACE INTERVIEW WITH THE OFFICIALS**

I have been given the information sheet on the project entitled: An investigation on the experiences, causes, and consequences of unemployment amongst graduate youth in Limpopo province, Ga-Kgapane South Africa. I have read and understood the Information Sheet and all my questions have been answered satisfactorily.

Name of Participant:.....

Name of Researcher: Ramatshekgisa Malebo Gratitude

I understand that it is up to me whether or not I would like to participate in the interview and that there will be no negative consequences or penalties if I decide not to participate. I also understand that I do not have to answer any questions that I am not comfortable with and that I can stop the interview at any time.

I understand that the researcher involved in this project will make every effort to ensure confidentiality and that my name will not be used in the study reports and information I provide will be used for educational purposes. I consent voluntarily to participate in the interview for this study. I have been given telephone numbers that I may call if I have any questions or concerns about the research. I consent voluntarily to be interviewed by the researcher.

Participant's signature:.....

Date:.....

Interviewer's signature: .....

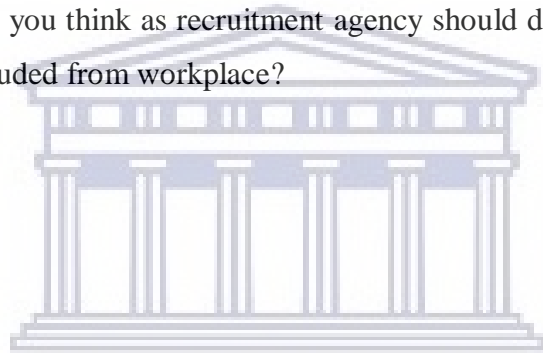
Date:.....

If you have any questions about participating in this study, you may contact me at 0760 288 485 or at 3608604@myuwc.ac.za. Or contact my supervisor, Prof Y Zembe at 021 959 4049 or at yzembe@uwc.za.

## **ANNEXURE B INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH RECRUITMENT AGENCY PERSONNEL**

### **Recruitment agency personnel's perception on graduates youth unemployment**

- What job attributes do you think young graduates value the most when they are searching for employment?
- What advantages do you think young grades have to use a recruitment agency?
- What do you think are the reasons behind the high rate of unemployment among graduate youths?
- What initiatives do you think as recruitment agency should do to ensure that graduate youths are not excluded from workplace?



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## **ANNEXURE C INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH THE POTENTIAL EMPLOYER**

### **Potential employer's perception on graduates youth unemployment**

- In your experience at your work, what do you think are the things which graduate youth lack which leads their application for job to be unsuccessful?
- When you are employing, what are you searching for on young graduates?
- In your experience in reviewing the applications, how did you see the young graduates' applications?
- What do you think should be your role in ensuring that young graduates are employed?
- What do you think should be done to improve the employability of young graduates?



## **ANNEXURE D INTERVIEW WITH THE POLICY MAKER**

### **Policy maker's perception on graduates youth unemployment**

- What are policies in place that you are aware of that promote graduates youth employment?
- To what extent has the initiated policies impacted graduate youth employment?
- What do you think are the reasons for the failure of the initiated policies to reduce graduate youth unemployment?
- What do you think should be done by recruitment agencies and labour brokers to reduce graduate youth unemployment?

