

**YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AS A DEVELOPMENTAL PROBLEM IN THE  
VHEMBE DISTRICT OF LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA**

**BY**

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## DECLARATION

I, **Gudani Janestercius Manenzhe**, student no **15011952**, hereby declare that this disseratation entitled “**YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AS A DEVELOPMENTAL PROBLEM IN THE VHEMBE DISTRICT OF LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA**” for the Masters of Administration Degree in Public Administration, submitted to the Department of Public and Development Administration at the University of Venda has not been submitted previously for any degree at this or another university. It is original in design and in execution, and all reference materials contained therein have been duly acknowledged.

.....*manenzhe gj*.....

.....**2025/04/01**.....

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study aimed to investigate youth unemployment as a developmental problem in the Vhembe District of Limpopo Province, South Africa. This study focused on the impacts of youth unemployment on development in the Vhembe District with the intention that addressing these challenges can lead to poverty reduction and promote development in the region. South Africa has been facing the problem of unemployment for so many years. The problem has escalated in the country due to various factors, such as - the emergence of Covid 19, lack of skills, limited access to education and training, and lack of job opportunities. Youth unemployment has amplified poverty levels and social disintegration, which, in turn, has had a significant impact on the country's economy as it has hindered the country's development. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended possible solutions to address unemployment in both the Vhembe region, and the country as a whole.

The study used a mixed research method, thus, a descriptive design (quantitative approach) and an explorative design (qualitative approach), which helped to compare and collaborate the research results. The research makes use of a pragmatic research paradigm to investigate youth unemployment in Vhembe District and utilises non-probability and purposive sampling for appropriate sample collection. The study used two methods of data collection, namely, questionnaires and interviews. In terms of data analysis, the study adopted descriptive analysis to analyse questionnaires using International Business Machinery (IBM): Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) version 28.0 and presents information using pictures, graphs, tables, and numbers. For the qualitative aspect, a thematic analysis was applied to the data collected through interviews and presentation of the results is in the form of words.

**KEY WORDS:** Youth, Unemployment, Poverty, Development, Employability, Inequality and Human Capital.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|        |                                                              |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| ASGISA | Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative For<br>South Africa |
| DLG    | Developmental Local Government                               |
| EPWP   | Expanded Public Works Programme                              |
| GEAR   | Growth Employment and Redistribution                         |
| IDP    | Integrated Development Planning                              |
| LED    | Local Economic Development                                   |
| MDGs   | Millennium Development Goals                                 |
| NDP    | National Development Plan                                    |
| NEET   | Youth not in Employment Education and Training               |
| NGP    | New Growth Path                                              |
| NYC    | National Youth Commission                                    |
| NYDA   | National Youth Development Agency                            |
| RDP    | Reconstruction and Development Programme                     |
| SA     | South Africa                                                 |
| SDGs   | Sustainable Development Goals                                |
| UN     | United Nations                                               |
| US     | United States                                                |
| WHO    | World Health Organization                                    |

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Youth unemployment is a global challenge that affects the entire world (Fergusson & Yeates, 2021), however, African countries are among those most affected by this problem. South Africa is one of the countries where the rate of youth unemployment is consistently high and poses serious socio-economic and political problems that impede the nation's development (Sharma, 2022; Babangida, 2023; Fadriran, 2023). The development of young people's capacity through employment provision is one of the essential factors in the transitional period of life - from dependency at a young age to independence in adulthood (Fox & Gandhi, 2021). The National Youth Policy (2020), asserts that the development of young people is a vital key to the long-term sustainable development of the nation and a long-term solution to unemployment, including other social aspects such as poverty and inequalities. Youth unemployment refers to the unemployment of young people, between the ages of 18 and 35, while an "unemployed person" refers to someone who does not have a job but is actively looking for one (Tshishonga, 2022).

According to Pikoko & Phiri (2018), South Africa has seen high unemployment rates since 1970, and they have lasted into the 1980s and 1990s, gradually rising with each decade. Consequently, the youth unemployment rate has significantly increased - in 2014, the youth unemployment rate was at 41.8 percent, climbed to 52.9 percent in 2018, and the first quarter of 2019 was at 55.2% (StatsSA, 2021). Mazorodze (2020:2) contends that South Africa's unemployment has had an impact on people of all ages, but young people have been the most affected. De Lannoy, Graham, Patel, and Leibbrandt (2020) argue that, despite tremendous investments made in a range of active labour market programmes across the government, commercial, and civil society sectors, South Africa continues to struggle with the challenge of youth unemployment. Adding to this, Choenyane (2022) asserts that youth unemployment is one of the major socio-economic challenges that affect development, as it results in crime, drug misuse, alcoholism, and Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) among these young people. The COVID-19 pandemic has also made it increasingly difficult for individuals to find work in South

Africa (Masenya, 2021:122). This study aims to investigate youth unemployment, as a developmental problem, in the Vhembe District of Limpopo Province, South Africa.

The study focuses on determining various factors contributing to youth unemployment and their impacts on sustainable development while exploring potential solutions and recommending strategies for addressing the problem of youth unemployment. This first chapter provides - an introduction, background to the study, a problem statement, the study aim and objectives, research questions, the significance of the study, delimitations of the study, and definitions of operational concepts. The chapter ends with an outline of the chapters as well as a brief summary of the structure of the entire paper.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Unemployment remains a critical issue in South Africa (World Bank, 2023; Democratic Alliance Limpopo, 2024). The rise in the unemployment rate was noticeable during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic when it increased to 32.6% in the first quarter of 2021. The unemployment rate has gotten worse, and during COVID-19, two out of every three citizens of the nation were reportedly unable to find employment at the time of the strict lockdowns (Rasnah, 2021; Stats SA, 2022). Over 10 million young people (15–24 age group) live in South Africa, yet only 2.5 million of them are in the labour force; the rest are jobless (Stats SA: 2022). The statistics of the first quarter of 2023 indicate that the total number of unemployed young people (15–34 years old) increased by 241,000 to 4.9 million, resulting in an increase in the youth unemployment rate by one percentage point to 46.5% in the first quarter of 2023 (Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS), 2023:2). Currently, youth individuals in South Africa continue to be susceptible in the labour market; the statistics for the first quarter of 2024 indicate that the overall number of jobless youth rose by 236,000 to 4.9 million, while the number of working youth decreased by 7,000 to 5.9 million. That increased the youth jobless rate by 1.3 percentage points, from 44.3% in Quarter 4, 2023, to 45.5% in Quarter 1, 2024 (Quarterly Labour Force Survey, 2024). According to BusinessTech (2024), the expanded unemployment rate in South Africa remained high at 46.5% in the fourth quarter of 2024, indicating a 0.2 percentage point increase from 46.3% in the third quarter of 2024. This shows the persistent difficulty in tackling

unemployment, particularly among discouraged job searchers and those not constantly pursuing work but yet eligible to do so (Statistics South Africa, 2024; Reuters, 2024).

The South African government is currently reforming the educational system so that learners in Grades R through to 4 will simply earn a free pass and they can drop out of school in Grade 9 after receiving a certificate (Agri Index, 2023). In South Africa, youth unemployment is tied to educational attainment; 40% of jobless youth do not have a matric certificate, compared to 37% of youth with a certificate, and graduates were at 13%, which was still 22% below the national average, resulting in employers focusing their attention on the elite class of matric graduates rather than those who dropped out or failed school early (Agri Index, 2023). According to the 2024 mid-year population estimates, Limpopo youth aged 15 to 34 constitute 15.4% of the province's total population of approximately 6,402,594; this represents about 10.2% of the national population. According to Limpopo Provincial Review (2024), the largest share of the population in Limpopo province are residents of former homelands. The level of educational attainment is not as high as in other provinces (Limpopo, Socio-Economic Review and Outlook, 2022–23). It was revealed that in 2020, there were 835 thousand persons who only matriculated, followed by 288 thousand who matriculated with certificates or diplomas, and the estimates are that 44.000 persons in Limpopo have completed their undergraduate and graduate degrees (IHS Markit-Regional Explorer, 2021). Youth unemployment in the Vhembe District is considerable, at 44.3% (Stats SA: 2020). Notably, Limpopo province continues to experience substantial labour market issues. In Q1 2024, it recorded the largest national rise in unemployment, with the official rate reaching up to 32.7%, up 2.4 percentage points from Q4 2023. The extended unemployment rate also increased to 47.8%. Out of a 2.2 million labour force, 728,000 individuals are unemployed, and 521,000 have given up looking for work. The province's official unemployment rate increased from 30.3% in Q4 2023 to 31.9% in Q4 2024, indicating persistent economic challenges. In the third quarter of 2024, Limpopo's official unemployment rate increased by 1.2 percentage points, from 31.4% in Q2 2024 to 32.6% in Q3 2024; this made it the only province in South Africa to have a worsening unemployment rate, indicating the region's particular issues (Statistics South Africa, 2024). Furthermore, there were 16,000 job losses from Q3 to

Q4 of 2024, demonstrating the region's ongoing labour market instability (Limpopo Provincial Government, 2024).

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

South Africa's unemployment rate is a challenge to development as it limits the earning potential of youth, stymies business growth, and threatens social cohesion, which in turn puts pressure on public resources (South Africa National Human Development Report, 2022). The creation of employment opportunities is perceived as a major challenge worldwide and currently, South Africa is facing this issue, directly (Hasan & Sabilirasyad, 2023:916). According to Cherly (2023), young people in South Africa are severely impacted by unemployment, hence, they are not actively engaged in the labour market. Carol and Serges (2020:52) contend that beginning from the new democratic era of 1994, South Africa's government has been successful in putting developmental policies into practice, such as - the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) (whose goals were to end inequality between the rich and the poor and to invest in the social needs of South Africans); the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA), (which aims to combat poverty and promote social change through economic growth); the Joint Initiative for Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA), as well as, the Growth, Employment, and Redistribution Policy (GEAR). Ansari (2021:3) claims that the goal of GEAR is to increase employment through investments made by the private sector while also enhancing infrastructure to raise community standards of living and boost economic potential. Abdulfatai (2023:44) states that recently, after the New Growth Plan (NGP) was discontinued in 2012 and the National Development Plan (NDP) was introduced to South Africa within the preceding year, the strategy for development still emphasised the need to address the issues of - unemployment, slow economic growth, poverty, and inequality within the state - nonetheless, the unemployment rate in the country continued to be concerning over the NDP period, standing at 28.8 percent in 2021, compared to the unemployment rate of 21.8 percent in 2012 (The World Bank, n.d.).

According to Stats SA (2023), Limpopo Province shows the three largest increases in unemployment by 1, 8 percentage points, followed by Mpumalanga by 2, 4 percentage points, and the Northern Cape by 4, 5 percentage points. This study's focus area, the

Vhembe district in Limpopo Province, is dealing with the effects of unemployment, with over half of the productive population and the youth unemployed (Integrated Development Plan, 2022; Van Zyl, 2021). While there is some evidence of the unemployment rate in the region, it remains unclear how the high unemployment rate is affecting the region's developmental potential and growth for despite the many governmental, municipal and interventions by other development players, the area still struggles with persistent challenge of unemployment. It is, therefore, imperative to investigate other suitable approaches that can be implemented to create employment and stimulate local growth; it is these problematic situation which forms the basis of the study.

In appropriately addressing and tackling youth unemployment, the country will simultaneously address poverty and income inequality since youth joblessness is not only economic but a development imperative (South Africa National Human Development Report, 2022).

#### **1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY**

The aim of this study is to investigate youth unemployment as a developmental problem in the Vhembe District of Limpopo Province in South Africa, with the purpose of recommending strategies to address the challenge in the District and beyond.

#### **1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The overall objective of the study is to investigate how youth unemployment has created a developmental problem in the Vhembe District Municipality. The specific objectives are:

- To determine the state of youth unemployment in the Vhembe District
- To ascertain the causes of youth unemployment in the Vhembe District
- To assess the effects of youth unemployment on development in the Vhembe District and
- To recommend possible solutions and mechanisms to address the youth unemployment problem in the District.

## **1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In order to achieve the stated objectives, the researcher was guided by the following research questions:

- What is the current state of youth unemployment in the Vhembe District?
- What are the causes of youth unemployment in the Vhembe district?
- To what extent does youth unemployment contribute to developmental challenges in the Vhembe District?
- What are possible solutions and mechanisms for addressing youth-unemployment challenge in the Vhembe District?
- 

## **1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Conducting a study on youth unemployment as a developmental issue provides critical insights into the fundamental economic challenges in the Vhembe District. Engaging with jobless youngsters will raise awareness of the problem's negative influence on development and suggest viable solutions. The investigation will also stress the relevance of immediate collaborative effort in the community to establish an atmosphere conducive to young people's employment. Policymakers can benefit from this study because the findings will provide concrete evidence to help them build focused, evidence-based policies. Furthermore, the study will add to the academic body of knowledge on the topic, thereby, making it a useful reference resource for future academics, researchers, and students.

## **1.8 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

Delimitations are the boundaries consciously set by the researcher as the limits of their work to ensure the achievement of aims and objectives; they are in the researcher's control and are not positive or negative but rather involve a detailed account of reasoning that informs the scope of the study's core interest (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2019:155). This study on youth unemployment as a developmental problem was delineated to the Vhembe region, nevertheless, doing so does not imply that research on the same topic is not needed in other areas. Vhembe District is one of the five districts found in Limpopo Province in South Africa and is comprised of four

local municipalities, namely, Makhado, Collins Chabane, Musina, and Thulamela. The study is delimited to the Vhembe District, in the Thohoyandou area.

## **1.9 DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS**

This section isolates and discusses essential terms that are applied in the discussion. The reason for defining these terms is to give them a clear meaning for readers.

### **Unemployment**

Unemployment refers to a situation where someone is actively seeking a job but is unsuccessful in doing so (Wayas, Selvadurai, & Awang, 2019:132). In addition, Chappelow (2020) identifies unemployment as a key economic indicator that shows the ability or inability of workers to readily obtain gainful work in order to contribute to the productive output of the economy. In this study, unemployment will be applied as a phenomenon when a person is available and ready for work but is unable to get it.

- Youth

Youth, as defined by the National Youth Policy (NYP, 2009, 2015, and 2030), refers to young people aged between 14 and 35 years, but regardless of the changes for young people due to the advent of democracy in 1994, the age limit of 35 years has not yet changed, in order to fully address historical imbalances in South Africa. Youth embraces various categories exposed to different socio-political and historical experiences, such as a 35-year-old person who lived during a period of heightened political conflicts and a 14-year-old youth who is growing up in a new reform environment where achievements are being realized (National Youth Commission Act, 1996; National Youth Policy, 2020:2). The above description of youth is congruent with the African Youth Charter's definition of people between the ages of 15 and 35 (African Union Commission, 2006). This study will use the definition of youth as being young people between the ages of 15 and 35, as adopted by Stats SA (2021, 2016, and 2015).

- Poverty

According to Durojaye & Mirugi-Mukundi (2020) poverty can be defined as a circumstance when a person lacks specific material goods or sums of money. Poverty is also defined as the denial of people's opportunity to live fulfilling lives, and it can also be understood as a lack of capabilities that prevent people from choosing among a range of activities (Greve, 2019). Poverty is described in different ways, from historically different points of view, however, it has always been related to income, which still remains the core of the concept today. The poverty concept has evolved from the 19th century idea about subsistence needs, which involves what a person needs to survive, to the mid-20th century conceptualization of lacking basic needs. This has tremendously extended the subsistence idea of poverty by also adding lack of basic facilities and services - healthcare, sanitation and education - to the late 20th century description of poverty. This modern definition is more inclusive as it embraces various aspects of deprivation, such as income and other resources, as well as lack in social benefits (Chambers: 2006). For the purpose of this study, poverty will be used as combining both income and living standard, hence, the state of having insufficient resources to meet basic social necessities.

- Development

Development is concerned with actual improvements in the quality of life and overall well-being of individuals (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development OECD, 2018). Development in its entirety entails a complicated series of changes in growth rates for individual output, in areas such as literacy, political engagement and economic well-being; significant changes in these areas depend on the occurrence of fundamental changes in the social structure of a community. In accordance with this study, development will pertain as the ability to afford basic needs - physical necessities such as food, shelter and public services, and the means to acquire these through employment and income per capital.

- Employability

Fleuren et al. (2020) explicate employability as a person's capability to obtain and sustain work, which is mostly driven by their abilities, characteristics, and ability to adapt to a changing labour market. Similarly, van der Klink et al. (2020) argue that employability includes the ability to acquire job-relevant skills and maintain long-term

work. In this study, employability will denote the ability of jobless adolescents in the Vhembe District to adjust their abilities and experiences to fulfil labour-market needs.

- Inequality

Inequality results from the unequal allocation of resources and opportunities across social groups, resulting in discrepancies in income, education, and employment (Piketty & Saez, 2021). From a different angle, the World Economic Forum (2023) and Stewart and Samman (2022) see inequality as structural obstacles restricting access to economic and social advantages, prolonging poverty and social exclusion. According to McKnight et al. (2021), income, education, and employment disparities are the primary manifestations of inequality, limiting social fairness and economic inclusion. This study explains inequality as the unequal distribution of resources and opportunities that consistently inhibits youth involvement in economic and developmental initiatives in the Vhembe District.

- Human Capital

According to Becker and Ohtake (2020), human capital, is a combination of knowledge, capabilities, and talents gained through education and training and is an essential component of personal and social economic progress. The OECD (2021) conceptualises human capital as an individual's knowledge, skills, abilities, and traits that contribute to their personal, social, and economic well-being; the Organisation emphasizes the essence of education, training, and experience in increasing productivity and promoting social progress and its role in supporting innovation and workforce competitiveness as part of human capital. This study will define human capital as the skills, knowledge, and experiences acquired by adolescents in the Vhembe District that impact their employability and economic contributions.

## **1.10 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY**

Chapter 1: Introduction and background of the study

This chapter contains the - introduction and background to the research, problem statement, aim of the study, specific objectives of the study, research questions,

significant of the study, delimitation of the study, primarily literature review, definition of operational concept and organization of the study.

## Chapter 2: Literature review

In this chapter is reviewed existing literature on youth unemployment as a developmental problem. It also provides a theoretical perspective that the study uses to explore the phenomenon.

## Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

The third chapter details the research design and methodology of the study. The discussions focus on, the research approaches, population of study, sampling and the data collection methods to be employed.

## Chapter 4: Data presentation, analysis and interpretation

Chapter Four focuses on data presentation and statistical analyses of the results. Data collected quantitatively and qualitatively during the research on youth unemployment will be presented, analyzed and interpreted.

## Chapter 5: Recommendations and conclusion

Chapter Five summarizes the key research findings and the conclusions drawn from them. Recommendations for further research will be made and, where applicable, future policy recommendations to address youth unemployment will be suggested to various stakeholders.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Youth unemployment is currently an urgent issue of concern that affects economies worldwide. To understand this challenge, it requires a beneficial framework that will provide an understanding of the diverse nature of the concern as well as crucial intervention in the situation. The following section contains pertinent literature and provides the theoretical framework applicable to the study of young unemployment.

#### 2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To better understand the intricacies of young unemployment as a developmental issue, this study will adopt or employ two theoretical frameworks. These theoretical frameworks will assist in identifying the crucial elements, connections, and mechanisms underlying and contributing to young unemployment, as well as their effects on development. The reason for using two theories in the study is to get an overview of the different perceptions of other scholars rather than focusing on a single perspective. An examination of the conceptual framework's applicability to the study on youth unemployment as a developmental issue is provided below.

##### 2.2.1 The capability approach

The capability approach, as put forth by economist and philosopher Sen (1999), underlines the need to increase opportunities and competencies for youth so they can find suitable jobs (Powell, 2021:91). According to this perspective, youth unemployment is not just caused by a lack of economic opportunities, however, it is due to the depletion of fundamental capabilities, such as education, skills, and social networks (Smith *et al.*, 2021:233). Belfield *et al.* (2016) advocate that quality education and vocational training have a positive impact on reducing unemployment, as such provisions of education and skills development for youth will help them prosper in the labour market. In line with this framework, interventions aimed at addressing youth unemployment include, prioritising investments in education system, skills-building programmes, development opportunities, and social support systems. These will ensure potential abilities for labour market entrance and succession by the youth, as

such a set of skills can open up a vast number of opportunities (Kuhumba 2018:137). According to Smith *et al.* (2021:323), social networks play a crucial role in the reduction of youth unemployment; individuals with diverse social networks are more likely to have better employment. It therefore becomes the responsibility of the government and educational institutions to ensure and support the development of social networks through the facilitation of programmes such as mentorship, internship, and community engagement. Egdell and Beck (2020:937) contend that providing young people with these resources and access to employment options is crucial, since such initiatives will have a favourable effect on their efforts to find fulfilling work.

The capability approach goes beyond the standard economic perspective in tackling young unemployment by also focusing on people in general; it prioritises a person's actual freedom of choice over potential alternatives in their lives (Sen, 1990:114). The terms “freedom” and “choice” are crucial in this theoretical perspective; this approach emphasises that every person must have the ability to select areas of life that they would cherish (Cosgrove & Curtis, 2021). The capability approach is related to the idea of human development and well-being, where individual should be viewed as active rather than mere recipients in the development of their own future, hence, the continued exclusion of young individuals from job opportunities might result in other forms of direct or indirect marginalisation, such as rising poverty levels (Kuhumba, 2018:139).

### **2.2.2 Structural-Functionalist Theory**

The structural-functional approach, as defined by Parsons (1902-79), is a sociological framework aimed at exploring how society's structures and functions have an impact on people and social institutions (Demir, 2021; Ochi & Mark; 2021:10). The structural-functional perspective relies on the idea that humanity is a complex system made up of compatible components that work together to preserve the social order. In addition, social institutions, such as the economic and educational systems, have a great impact on determining how opportunities for employment are distributed among individuals (Jones & Goyer, 2019:650). Smith (2020:123) asserts that in order to alleviate youth unemployment, variables like labour market structures and pressures of globalisation need to be understood and examined.

The structural-functional perspective is relevant to the study as it attempts to explain youth unemployment through the identification of structural elements contributing to phenomena, and interventions aim at their mitigation.

### **2.3 THE RELEVANCE OF THEORIES TO THE STUDY**

The primary aim of the present study is to investigate youth unemployment as a developmental problem in the Vhembe District of Limpopo Province, South Africa. The study's objective is to ascertain the causes and extent to which youth unemployment impacts sustainable development in the Vhembe District and recommend strategies that can be developed to address the issue. The capability approach focuses on expanding opportunities and capabilities of young people, so as to provide fulfilling jobs; the framework also evaluates social arrangements, designs policies, and prioritises individuals' opportunities, such as education, mobility, and social relationships with the intention of facilitating their well-being (Kuhumab, 2018:130). Those are significant aspects of addressing youth unemployment since they can enhance development. The National Youth Policy (NYP) for 2020–2030 also supports the idea that young people have potential human capital that needs to be used for society's overall well-being. The policy also highlights the necessity of key stakeholders' commitment to maintaining youth development as a top priority, in the public, business, and civil society sectors (SA News, 2021).

The structural-functional perspective identifies and assesses the underlying social and economic structures and components that have an impact on individuals within society (Ochi & Mark 2021:10). The framework provides an understanding of how systemic economic imbalances cause youth unemployment in the structural economy. By employing this approach, the study was able to focus on addressing structural barriers that contribute to youth unemployment and impede development in the Vhembe District. Some of these barriers are, limitations on job creation, uneven access to resources, and exclusionary employment practices.

The approach draws attention to government's efforts to reform institutions governing the labour market, promote inclusive growth, reduce socioeconomic disparities, and boost employment among young people.

## 2.4. UNEMPLOYMENT

Before the International Conference of Labour Statisticians recognised and defined the term “unemployment” in 1982, there was no agreed-upon definition of it (Blom *et al.*, 2023:53). This uncertainty existed, despite the fact that the term had evolved over time, however, the majority of academics and researchers used to define unemployment in terms of the state of the economy and the place in which it occurred. As stated by Chappelow (2020), unemployment occurs when a person tries to find a job but remains incapable of doing so; this can also serve as a proxy for a nation's economic stability.

There is widespread stigma associated with unemployment, and its most common adverse impact is on the economy (Nujum & Rahman, 2019). Chappelow (2020) asserts that a system of economic unemployment results in lower output; an excessive and continuous joblessness may indicate severe economic suffering, which may trigger social and political unrest, resulting in low economic production which then will trigger more unemployed workers than before. Safitri *et al.* (2023:281) made further reference to the fact that unemployment has a detrimental effect on the economy and, this in turn, has an impact on other factors, including, the level of income, productivity, inflation, saving, and expenditure.

As explained by Soylyu *et al.* (2018:94), certain conditions must be met in order for someone to be considered unemployed, such as not having a job but actively looking for one; an additional definition of unemployment is the situation where there are too many people available for employment but they are unable because there are insufficient jobs. From Blom *et al.* (2023:53), unemployment can also be synonymous with “joblessness”, which is a situation in which people lack employment yet are actively searching to offer their labour.

## 2.5 THE DEFINITIONS OF DEVELOPMENT

According to Sapkota (2018:44), the concept of development is ideological although it also has some metaphysical implications; its definitions vary from - simple to complex, traditional to modern/postmodern, and mainstream to alternative. These however are not different, rather, it is because the term is fundamentally

multidimensional and value-laden. Basically, development refers to the ability to prosper, learn more, accomplish more, be happy, and be valued. Development can also be seen as - growth, blossoming, advancing, extension, enlargement, enhancement, and transformation. This implies that, in general, development is the act of improving people's lives, which results in them in getting out of poverty and enabling them to live respectable, dignified lives.

Singh (2020) argues that the concept of development changes depending on which aspect of it is being studied; for example, a social anthropologist might describe development as the growth of a simple system into a more complex one in the context of nature or society. A natural scientist might measure development in terms of control over the environment, while an economist might typically explain the word in terms of improvements in gross domestic output. The author also argues that a political scientist would be content to define development in regards to social stability and the degree of citizen engagement in state affairs; a literary scholar might define it in terms of the harmony between social relations and nature.

In development discourse, Sen (2000 and 2011) has conceptualised various theoretical aspects, such as - entitlement, protective security, identity, political freedom, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees, and competence development. In other places, the author makes the case that growth might be understood as a process of increasing people's actual liberties. According to him, the purpose of development is the promotion and expansion of valuable capabilities, as stated in the first line of *Development as Freedom* (Sen, 2000 and 2011). Sen (2000:298) further maintains that freedom plays a crucial role in the growth process in order to evaluate the advancement and success of development. Ultimately, development is a remarkable interaction with the potential of freedom; hence, the capability approach serves as the foundation for the human development index (HDI), which measures development (Munyao, 2019:48; Robeyns, 2021:72).

Development is a multifaceted process of change that involves institutional, technical, and economic aspects, and there is a direct link existent between the various components of development, as such an institutional structure is a necessary but not sufficient condition for both the accumulation of capital and technological

advancement, Technological advancement and/or a shift from one stage of development to the next can also induce change in institutional structure (Dhesi, (2020:2; Hallin et al., 2020; Robert et al., 2022).

Dhesi (2020:2) further argues that, the process of development is characterised by change, which the process is inherently unstable and affects all significant facets of life, including social, cultural, political, and technical. It is a constant process in a society that is expanding and changing; development consists of two main components, institutional and technical change. Technical change is the application of natural laws to improve living conditions, while institutional changes are human-made devices that structure the environment, reduce uncertainty, and provide a framework for human interaction. The coordination of these two types of changes is essential to maximising a society's productive potential and any delay between these two, would hinder development (Sjöberg, 2021).

According to Munyao (2019:29) development is the process of creating or raising the population's standard of living and increasing local or regional income while protecting the environment. Development brings about growth, progress, positive change, or the addition or introduction of economic, social, physical, demographic, and social components. The author goes on to say that while progress may not always be apparent, it is nevertheless beneficial and leads to improvements in living quality as well as favourable circumstances for the continuance of those improvements.

## **2.6 DEVELOPMENT AND ITS VARIOUS FIELDS**

The notion of development is complex and multidimensional. It includes a range of dimensions, such as economic growth, social progress, political stability, and environmental sustainability (Sakalasooriya, 2020). According to Semasinghe (2020:53), the term “economic development” describes the transformations resulting from economic growth and development, which frequently complement one another. Constant growth boosts production capacity and modifies the structure of the economy, but it does not always translate into better living conditions for individuals.

According to a study conducted by Cassar (2023), a key component of development as a whole is economic advancement, which seeks to enhance a nation's economic

circumstances through boosting trade, encouraging innovation, and raising productivity; this in turn will raise income, create jobs, and make the market more competitive. Another aspect of development is social; according to Mohamed (2019), three fundamental components of social development are - creating jobs, reducing poverty, and promoting social harmony. Cassar (2023) also asserts that a vital component of overall development is social development, which aims to raise people's standards of living in relation to things like housing, healthcare, and education. This will break the cycle of poverty and foster social solidarity.

The main objective of political development is to create dependable democratic establishments and procedures that support accountability and human rights (Cassar, 2023). In addition to protecting citizens' rights, political development seeks to establish a democratic atmosphere; in this regard, governments are held responsible for their actions, while the rule of law is upheld by stable democratic institutions. These include free and fair elections, autonomous judicial systems, and open governance frameworks, which in turn result in everyone having equal possibilities in a more inclusive society.

These three aspects affect one another in complex ways and are interrelated; for instance, by raising income levels and generating jobs, economic expansion can contribute to increases in social welfare. In order to draw in foreign investment and accelerate economic growth, political stability is required, and by generating hostility among disadvantaged groups, social unrest might threaten political stability. As such, it is essential to comprehend the intricacies of development, as it aids in determining the underlying causes of developmental issues confronting our communities and to offer perspectives on how to bring about constructive transformation.

## **2.7 DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The continent of Africa and other developing nations are facing numerous socioeconomic and developmental obstacles; for example, unemployment is one of these problems in South Africa (Oguntona, 2023:45). Unemployment is usually connected to - a high crime rate, poverty, corruption, and other social ills - it is widespread, particularly, among the youth population (Corruption Watch, 2021;

Ngubane, 2024). Matyana & Thusi (2023) argue that since apartheid, there has been an increase in poverty and inequality in South Africa. Poverty is regarded as a condition that affects an individual's regular quality of livelihood, as it leads people to living opposite to their ideals because they cannot afford the basic essentials of life, such as clothing, food, and shelter. South Africa's inequalities have been made more evident and entrenched by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, where more than two million individuals lost their jobs (Stats SA, 2020).

Oguntona (2023:45) asserts that South Africa and other African nations are not immune to the knock-on effects of unemployment on the socio-economic standing of their populace, given that they are still recuperating from the harsh memories of the apartheid era. Endres (2024:21) notes that the economy of South Africa is severely challenged by poor investment, weak growth, high unemployment, large public debt, low corporate and consumer confidence, failing institutions, and crumbling infrastructure.

According to Endres (2024:8), by 2023, 7.9 million South Africans were unemployed due to the country's 32% unemployment rate, and 33% of young people did not have a job or an education, hence, they are especially susceptible. With new entrants accounting for 44.5% of the unemployed population, the labour force absorption rate dropped from 14.9% in 2009 to 10.7% in 2023. This challenge is a human tragedy and a waste of human resources, as the unemployed are dependent on other people's incomes rather than having the means to support their families and make a positive economic impact; for individuals who do not have work, this puts a significant burden on them (Endres, 2024:8).

The South African Police Service (SAPS, 2024) also reveals that South Africa is under attack by vicious criminals, therefore, the growing rates of poverty, unemployment, and frustration together pose a serious threat to the stability of the country. In addition, the growing crime rate is making it harder for the nation to draw in and keep talented workers. Bhorat et al. (2020) argue that, in spite of an average economic recovery, South Africa still has some of the world's greatest disparities, with high rates of poverty and inequality present in the nation's economy, particularly among the youth.

## **2.8 DEVELOPMENTAL INTERVENTIONS**

The creation of jobs through adequate economic growth is essential to addressing unemployment in general and youth unemployment in particular. Numerous Active Labour Market Programmes (ALMPs) are in place, despite this, there is a slow rate of economic expansion. These efforts encompass both supply-side and demand-side labour market interventions, with the ultimate goals of maintaining and increasing employment, as well as enhancing labour market efficiency (Graham & Mlatsheni, 2021:142).

### **2.8.1 State intervention**

In the modern world, employment is a significant concern and an area of policy. Today's societies rely primarily on paid labour, which is not only a source of income and social status but also a basic social value (Giugni, 2020). South Africa's President, Cyril Ramaphosa declared that youth unemployment is a national problem that has gotten worse due to the slow economic growth and a lack of support for youth-oriented initiatives (James, 2019, Mokonyane-Motha; De Jager, 2023:132). The following are government policies and initiatives for youth unemployment.

#### **2.8.1.1 Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP)**

According to Oguntona et al. (2023:46), Public Works' initiatives have been recognised as one of the ways governments around the world are able to lower the high rate of unemployment that was prevalent during the 1929–1933 Great Depression. The United States of America launched it as a programme to solve its socio-economic difficulties, and the nations that have adopted it include - South Africa, India, Ethiopia, Senegal, and Argentina. Sibanda (2023) claims that in South Africa, the Employment Policy and Work Programme (EPWP) was introduced in 1994 as a component of the policy agenda targeting employment development, and it emerged in 2004 as a joint project by the Public Works and Social Development Departments. In South Africa, the enlarged public works strategy is an essential instrument for combating unemployment and fostering local economic development (Mudau, 2021:26).

The results of a study conducted to evaluate the benefits of the EPWP to South African communities revealed that the programme offers training and job opportunities in a variety of fields, which enhances engagement with future employment opportunities, boosts local economies, and helps generate jobs (Mphanga et al., 2019; Oguntona *et al.*, 2023:51).

EPWP has faced criticism for - its poor implementation of training meant to equip participants with the skills necessary to secure better employment; for producing fewer opportunities for employment than anticipated; for functioning as an endless cycle - because majority of the same individuals return to EPWP, instead of using it as a platform to obtain other employment (Mazenda, 2022; Satumba, 2023).

Sibanda (2021:143) also affirms that the EPWP is an initiative aimed at providing women and young people with short-term jobless-relief, with the main goal of giving people money, skills, and jobs. Endres (2024:14) argues that notwithstanding efforts to improve employment, the government offers, on the EPWP an R110 daily temporal work stipend that is much less than the minimum wage. The effectiveness of this programme is hampered by financial constraints and issues with policy compliance, and the programmes' poor response to these groups' requests for skilling and reskilling has resulted in low participation and little improvement in employees' lives (Sibanda, 2021:143).

#### **2.8.1.2 Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)**

The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was created by the government in 1994 as one of several national public policies intended to promote socio-economic development. The findings of Pietersen (2023:470) on a study of the national development policies in South Africa since democracy, reveal that the RDP is praised for having a successful beginning because it has been able to identify requirements for socio-economic development and is also good at diagnosing challenges in communities. Unfortunately, its survival may not be sustainable because of a lack of funding from the new administration and perhaps a business sector that have not yet committed to social justice to end the effects of segregation.

### **2.8.1.3 Growth, Employment, and Redistribution (GEAR)**

Growth, Employment, and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR) in 1997 additionally verified that the GEAR programme was designed to achieve 6% annual growth and 400 000 jobs, regardless of aspects, such as impoverished public engagement, jobless growth, people abandoning the poor, class-society adoption, and lack of progress that reflect signs of inadequacy of GEAR's initiatives (Pietersen, 2023:470).

### **2.8.1.4 Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA)**

ASGISA's 2008 Annual Report noted that the organisation's goal was to raise growth to 6% by 2010 while simultaneously lowering poverty and unemployment rates. Studies on ASGISA mostly blame the initiative's goals inability to meet the objectives (Pietersen, 2023:470). According to Durokifa (2023), 2005 witnessed the end of the GEAR plan, which was a component of the government's macroeconomic stabilisation framework; this was the time that ASGISA was adopted with the goal of halving unemployment and reducing poverty by 2014. Unemployment and poverty, however, did not alter even in the face of GDP growth, skill development, and job creation, through the Extended Public Works Programme.

### **2.8.1.5 National Development Plan (2020)**

According to Pietersen (2023:469), the NDP was implemented in 2012, along with the National Growth Path (NGP). During that time, the Department of Economic Development was a supporter of the National Growth Plan (NGP), which was aiming to increase employment by promoting labour-intensive industries, like agriculture. The author explains that the NDP is currently the overarching and comprehensive national plan for South Africa. it focuses on a number of areas, including - employment and the economy, environmental sustainability, inclusive rural economies, international relations, human settlement transformation, education, training, and innovation, health care, social protection, building a capable and developing state, combating corruption, and nation-building for social cohesion.

The percentage of unemployed people was 32.5% in 2020, showing that the NDP had failed to meet its first aim of 14% by 2020 (StatsSA, 2020: Online). Currently, the primary objective is to cut unemployment by approximately 6% by 2030, and the fact that more than 60% of young people are unemployed creates doubt as to whether this will be achieved (April et al., 2019:6; Ngubane, 2024). From the Mbali International Conference Proceedings (2023), the National Development Plan's (NDP) 2030 goals would only need to be completed in ten more years. Mosala (2022) states that the Vision 2030 (NDP) was presented by South Africa as the National Development Plan, with the primary goals of eradicating poverty and inequality as well as lowering unemployment, which is considered essential to the communities as it would assist in creating 11 million jobs.

Zalk (2021) criticism of the National Development Plan, is based on the view that it has never put into practice any of its objectives and that the absence of consensus and consistency in policy is at least partially to blame for the lack of implementation. The NDP review reveals that South Africa's low GDP growth and inadequate poverty reduction policies have led to a 40% increase in poverty levels, while also making no progress in professionalising of the public sector (National Development Plan Review, 2022).

#### **2.8.1.6 National Youth Service (NYS)**

According to the National Treasury and the Department of Employment and Labour (DoL), a portion of the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) is allocated annually to programmes that assist turn-around strategies or businesses in distress, as well as to re-skilling initiatives, designed to ensure that workers of these companies can upskill in order to prevent job losses (National Treasury, 2019). The DoL also administers a public employment support programme through its labour centres. Duval & Shibata (2021) provide that one of the services offered is the Employment Service South Africa (ESA), which is a database that matches job seekers with suitable positions that are currently open. The authors add that, in accordance with the modifications to the Unemployment Insurance Act 30 of 2001 (UIA), this organisation registers all employers and workers in South Africa for unemployment insurance benefits.

The Department of Employment and Labour provides funding for job-creation initiatives, guaranteeing that women and young people receive 50% of available jobs, and through its Competitiveness Improvement Services, Productivity SA encourages job growth, initiates the South African Employment Services System, and provides support for the Pathway Management Network for youngsters without jobs (Department of Employment and Labour Annual Report 2022/23:2). Additionally, it controls the employment market to maintain stable conditions.

According to Graham & Mlatsheni (2021:142), the Temporary Employee Relief Scheme (TERS) was also implemented during the Covid pandemic in an effort to minimise job losses so as to support employment. These initiatives focused on current workers and keeping young people in jobs. The annual report from the Department of Employment and Labour (2022–2023) reveals that the Council for Conciliation, Mediation, and Arbitration (CCMA) oversees the Temporary Employee Relief Scheme (regular TERS), which continues to assist financially-troubled businesses looking to keep their staff.

Bhorat & Kohler (2020) and Endres (2024), explain that there is R350 social relief of distress (SRD) award, which was implemented during the COVID-19 shutdown, or a “social wage” in its broadest sense, which is complemented by things like providing, housing, work, transport, health, education, and local amenities. The last opening cycle of the COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress Grant received almost 6 million applications (Letsatsi, 2021). Endres (2024) further asserts that limited state payments are not a replacement for earned income, even though social assistance plays a significant role in reducing poverty. These payments also run the risk of becoming unsustainable and costly as governmental debt increases. According to Statista (2021), approximately 18 million South Africans rely on social grants in order to survive; this clearly shows the government is inadequate in promoting the development of the country. In the study conducted by Duval & Shibata (2021) on labour market reform options to boost employment in South Africa, it was found that unemployment benefits and subsidies are essential as they protect employees from the possibility of losing their jobs and they reduce poverty.

### **2.8.1.7 The Presidential Youth Employment Intervention (PYEI)**

The PYEI is an online platform, first launched in 2020 through SAYouth.mobi. PYEI aims to assist youth in successfully navigating opportunities. This online platform makes training and employment opportunities from public and private-sector service partners more visible and accessible to youth by enabling them to register, answer a few self-reporting questions, obtain pertinent information, and start receiving these opportunities.

## **2.9 Private sector Agencies to facilitate Labour Market Intermediation**

To address youth unemployment, a number of innovative agencies have developed in recent years. These organisations provide young people with the tools to create stronger resumes through an online system that matches them to open positions. One of them is the Harambe Youth Employment Accelerator; this is an initiative that addresses both intermediation and skill deficits in terms of It works by preparing youth for requirements from employers and conducting employer interviews. Based on research on skills-training programmes, it was discovered that programmes with an intermediation component had significantly greater hiring rates than those without; such innovative agencies include Lulaway, Giraffe and Jobjack (Graham et al., 2019).

## **2.10 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK INFLUENCING EMPLOYMENT**

### **2.10.1 Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998**

South Africa needs fair and equal representation, because of its diversity, in order to guarantee that each and every one of its residents may find work. The South African government introduced the Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998 in an effort to guarantee equitable representation for women and black South Africans in the employment market (Steenkamp, 2023:36). Its broad adoption however, raised concerns about its effect on the structure of the labour market, because of its contentious effects.

The value of the Employment Equity Act serves as its objective; it advocates that unemployment should be decreased through fair employment for formerly under-privileged workers (Utete, 2022:144). It advocates for companies to select the most

qualified applicants for available positions on the basis of merit rather than demography, when they provide fair and equitable access to the workforce, and recruit on the basis of merit which raises worker quality (Steenkamp, 2023:36). In addition, this will result in South African companies gaining credibility both domestically and abroad with a quality increase.

### **2.10.2 Skills Development Act 97 of 1998**

According to Yanta (2022:59), the Skills Development Act is an essential act for enhancing young people's ability to find employment or support themselves as entrepreneurs. The aim of this programme is to boost employment and production by broadening the knowledge and skills of the workforce. The most important goals of the Act include - enhancing the standard of living for employees, their employment opportunities, and labour mobility; boosting workplace productivity and employer competitiveness; raising the amount of money invested in education and training in the labour market and optimising the return on that investment; encouraging self-employment, as well as enhancing service delivery (Department of Social Development, 2021).

### **2.10.3 National Youth Development Agency Act 54 of 2008 (NYDA)**

The NYDA was created through the merger of the former Umsobomvu and the NYC, and its mission is to remove the deficiencies and constraints facing the youth development sector and to provide both financial and non-financial company development guidance (NYDA, 2008). The NYDA has established programmes to assist youth enterprises with funding, training, and market connections (National Youth Policy, 2020). It also encourages the adoption of a common strategy by all state agencies, private companies, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) on subjects pertaining to youth development. The Act requires the NYDA to create an integrated youth development strategy for South Africa to - set up, layout, plan, assess, and examine - all programmes aimed at integrating the youth into society as a whole and the economy at large (Yanta, 2022:54).

Greatest efforts were put in by the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), despite that, it came under criticism for failing to reduce young unemployment rates by half. A study conducted in Tsakane, Ekurhuleni Municipality, discovered that there is a dearth of knowledge on the goals of NYDA and active participation among the government, adults, and young people. The need for youth development and empowerment was badly impacted by the lack of communication between NYDA and the youth which made public accountability very difficult (Mazwi, 2020).

#### **2.10.4 National Youth Policy (2020-2030) (NYP)**

The National Youth Policy 2020-2030 (NYP 2030) is an inter-sectorial programme designed with all South African youth in consideration to improve youth development results, at the local, provincial, and national levels. The Policy also placed focus on the need to right historical wrongs as well as the unique issues and pressing demands that the nation's youth face today. The NYP comprised of five pillars – (i) high-quality education, skills and second opportunities, (ii) transformation of the economy, entrepreneurial activity, (iii) improvement of physical and mental health, (iv) unity in society, and (v) efficient youth development tools (Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities, WYPD, 2020). In addition, the Policy encourages youth to be informed about technological advancements since the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is a cross-cutting subject that poses a danger to jobs.

The Policy seeks to reinforce proud citizenship, inspire positive outcomes, support youth, guarantee responsiveness, impart quality services, integrate youth development into policies, programmes, and the national budget, as well as make it easier for young people to participate and become engaged with creating a better South Africa (Bathembu, 2023:28).

### **2.11 TYPES OF UNEMPLOYMENT**

#### **2.11.1 Frictional unemployment**

Frictional unemployment results from the regular turnover that takes place in a fluctuating economy. This kind of unemployment focuses more on rationalising the notion that, despite equilibrium between the skills required and employer demand,

unemployment cannot be entirely prevented. Furthermore, it benefits the economy by enabling workers to relocate to positions where their productivity can be higher (Amadeo et al., 2020). Frictional unemployment arises from alterations in market conditions; for instance, in the agricultural industry, supply conditions are contingent upon weather while demand conditions are contingent upon resource availability. This means a rise in either of these factors leads to a deviation from balance, leading to frictional unemployment (Anupam & Agrawal, 2023:87).

### **2.11.2 Cyclical unemployment**

Occasionally, when the overall demand rises, businesses are forced to expand their workforce and boost output, but when the business cycle is in contraction, employers lay off a lot of staff, during such recessions as a cost-cutting measure, hence, raising the unemployment rate (Saputra et al., 2023:433). Cyclical unemployment is the term used to describe this kind of joblessness that occurs as a result of uncertainty in the economy.

### **2.11.3 Structural unemployment**

According to Fergusson & Yeates (2021:10), structural joblessness is regarded as unemployment that results from a decrease in the market for the products or services that businesses or organisations produce or from the ability of businesses and organisations to minimise the number of employees in their staff due to technological advancements that have become less costly, effective, and beneficial.

Unemployment of this nature is linked to the nation's economic structure. The situation arises when the labour supply is above with the demand for work, which is triggered by rapid population growth and immobility, resulting in unemployment becoming an issue for the economy (Anupam & Agrawal, 2023:87). Dean et al. (2020) considered the structurally unemployed as those without work because they lack the expertise that employers value, because the workforce has moved away from the talents they do have, or perhaps they had not obtained any competencies at all.

#### **2.11.4 Political Unemployment**

Political unemployment is defined as joblessness arising from interventions that affect the prevailing labour and production organisation by the influential advocacy organisations. These could be groups, and governments that aim to change the work structures or processes for their own benefit or those of the individuals they symbolise or are in authority over. The two frequently accepted and applied definitions of political unemployment are “labour flexibilism” and “protectionism”, which are usually practiced by trade unions (Fergusson & Yeates, 2021:10).

Amadeo et al. (2020) point out that natural unemployment combined with two or three of the aforementioned types - frictional, cyclical, and structural - results in natural unemployment. This clarifies why, even in a thriving economy, there is bound to be a certain amount of joblessness. Employment is a constant, but occasionally people will quit their current positions before finding new ones, and the skills needed will always evolve.

#### **2.11.5 Seasonal Unemployment**

Seasonal unemployment occurs when labourers do not have jobs all year round; they have work during the height of certain activities, such as in agriculture and the fisheries sector, and lose their jobs when these activities end; it is caused by changes in demand, based on seasonal variations (Saputra *et al.*, 2023; 436). India is one of those countries associated with this type of unemployment, where jobs are only guaranteed for 7-8 months during that time of agriculture, and after that, people are jobless (Anupam & Agrawal, 2023:87). Individuals who work in organisations that are not manufacturing goods and services year-round may experience seasonal unemployment at specific seasons of the year.

### **2.12 YOUTH AND THE LABOUR MARKET: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE**

The global trend of youth unemployment and overall unemployment indicates that, during the past three decades, unemployment has been a significant issue in many industrial cultures (Axelrad et al., 2018; Yeung & Yang, 2020). Due to the financial crisis of 2008, unemployment has risen disproportionately worldwide, and young

individuals have been confronted with difficult job market conditions in both developed and developing nations (Sivadas, 2023). There have been numerous government initiatives to improve youth financial security, despite this, youth unemployment has not merely remained constant, but has also risen globally in developing as well as developed countries, posing serious social and economic challenges (Mkombe, Tufa, Alene, Manda, Feleke, Abdoulaye, & Manyong, 2021:863). This poses a major development issue for many African nations, particularly those with the most rapidly-expanding populations of young adults; this, if left unchecked, means the continent's high youth unemployment rate may lead to permanent poverty (Patel et al. 2020). The International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2017, 2020:13; Fergusson & Yeates, 2021:1) in its report, which directly related to the ongoing high rates of youth unemployment, declared that there is not merely a global increase in youth unemployment, but also majority of young adults worldwide face severe dangers of poverty and are more susceptible to irregular, less secure, and non-standard forms of jobs.

Numerous young people in developing economies, as well as the OECD countries, according to Axelrad et al. (2018), have long-standing structural barriers that hinder them from successfully transitioning from school to the workforce, hence, the steep increase in unemployment among those in the young adult stage. The authors further state that the challenges young adults encounter in finding fulfilling careers are not universal, and the degree of these challenges differs between nations. A core population of young people, however, faces a variety of challenges in every nation, including high and ongoing unemployment, low-quality employment when they do find it, and a significant risk of social marginalisation.

Giugni (2020) notes that, in comparison to other affluent economies, it seems that the natural rate of unemployment in the American economy is quite low. In several European economies, unemployment rates have been close to 10% or greater, since the 1970s, through both prosperous and poor economic times, and because of differences in labour supply and demand, unemployment rates are greater in Europe. Furthermore, with 1.7 million unemployed youth in Eastern Europe and 1.0 million in North, South, and Western Europe in 2017, the sheer quantity of young people in Europe is concerning.

Nearly 90% of young adults worldwide reside in developing nations, where many of them are impoverished. Their sole employment options are informal or under unfavourable working conditions; these young adults make up around half of the unemployed population (Raphuti, 2023). Sumberg et al. (2021:622) affirm that the absence of job opportunities has long been a major concern for African nations, and this job dilemma impacts all age groups of young people and their families. Van Niekerk (2020) adds that the increased unemployment in Africa highlights the need for better policy frameworks to improve labour market outcomes. Youth employment is crucial for poverty reduction, but many African nations lack inclusive economic growth, limiting its expansion due to insufficient attachment to the labour force.

A recent study conducted by Sivadas *et al.* (2023) focused on examining the global labour claim that the younger generation is facing a serious issue and has been severely impacted by the nationwide pandemic. In comparison to the adult categories, the young unemployment rate is twice as high; specifically, it stands at 8.7% and 3.7%, respectively. The International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2021) also proclaims that there is a significant correlation between youth employment and inactivity. COVID-19 has already made a dire state of youth unemployment worse, hence, the younger generation is leaving the labour force. Additionally, globally, COVID-19 has had a number of detrimental effects on the young population, including disruptions to education and work-based learning and challenges in funding

### **2.12.1 Youth unemployment: empirical evidence from South Africa**

According to several studies (De Lannoy et al., 2018; Flanagan, 2021), South Africa has had some of the highest unemployment rates on the entire continent. The excessive rate of youth unemployment in South Africa is an institutional issue that has afflicted the country's economy for over ten years. The COVID-19 pandemic only made matters worse for authorities, who were already having a difficult time dealing with the health issue (South Africa National Human Development Report, 2022:19, Habiyaemye *et al.*, 2022). The country's labour market is at the core of many of South Africa's most significant economic issues. It has been particularly noted that the low unemployment rate has been getting close to 30%, although, it has been above 20% for the last 25 years (StatsSA, 2019). Since apartheid ended, the rates of household

poverty have not significantly decreased due to the vast number of individuals who are unemployed and receive no money (Oqubay et al., 2021:673). About a quarter of the labour force is unemployed in South Africa due to a long-term structural problem with deep seated historical roots that are visible in the structure, pace, and natural course of economic growth (Graha & Mlatsheni, 2021:133).

Graha and Mlatsheni (2021:133) maintain that a great deal of the present problems about the nature of unemployment were noticeable even before the mid-1990s, after trustworthy market-data became accessible. The labour absorptive capacity of the South African economy varied over time, going from 90% in the 1960s to 15% in the 1970s and 1980s, and finally to a negative value between 1991 and 1993. Maskaeva & Msafiri (2021:3) contend that a rapid rate of unemployment has consistently existed for quite some time, detailing the state of the South African labour market since the African National Congress initially came to power after the country's first democratic elections in 1994. The authors add that another factor contributing to a rise in unemployment in South Africa is the financial and economic crises of 1997–1998, 2008–09, 2016, and 2018–19, when the increase in unemployment rate rose from 16.9% to 32.5% more than quadruple of its original levels.

While the rate of youth unemployment has been high for the previous 25 years, South Africa had nearly two million employment opportunities during the 2003–2008 period of economic growth, which averaged 4.9% rate of unemployment (De Lannoy et al., 2018). According to Oqubay et al. (2021:673), the impact of the 2008–09 worldwide financial crisis contributed to undoing any employment increases from a prior period of peak economic development. During this time, about 770 000 jobs were lost in the nation - 570 000 of those positions were lost by young individuals between the ages of 15 and 34, and those with only a secondary qualification or less saw the worst job losses (De Lannoy et al., 2018).

The study conducted by Graham et al. (2018) revealed data indicating that, since 2008, there has been a growing trend of young individuals giving up on finding employment, due to rising joblessness, where it took until 2013 for employment numbers to reach 2008 levels again. The entire unemployment rate has been steadily rising to about 25% due to the absence of significant economic development, and this

percentage went up to 37% in the first quarter of 2015. In the first quarter of 2018, 38.2% of the same age group were unemployed. According to Statistics South Africa (2019), this suggests that during the first quarter of 2018, over one-third of young people available in the labour force were unemployed. The Centre for Development and Enterprise (2019) reports that approximately 4 million young adults claimed they had searched for jobs but were unable to find them in the fourth quarter of 2018.

According to the broad definition, the jobless rate for youth aged 15 to 35 increased by 14 percentage points between 2008 and 2020, from 38% to 53%, and the increase was due to a general trend of excessive unemployment, with youth being the most affected (Oqubay et al., 2021: 692). In the year 2020, after the country was hit by COVID-19, the South African government enforced a statewide lockdown to protect its citizens; this had a significant negative impact on the country's economy and labour market. The International Labour Organisation (ILO), reported that young people's social and economic integration had been difficult before the COVID-19 crisis, and the crisis has had a major negative effect on their employment, with one in six of them quitting their positions, especially in clerical support services (Annual Performance Plan, 2023/24:28). Special tabulation results revealed that since the QLFS's launch in 2008, jobless rates have risen dramatically, reaching a record high of 34.9%. (Limpopo Socio-economic Review and Outlook, 2022-2023)

Projection indicates that over 14 million young people in South Africa between the ages of 15 and 29 are expected to exist in the next 20 years, and this population is expected to peak in 2021 at 15.1 million. This presents a great opportunity, although with a significant risk, considering that racial and age divisions are reflected in unemployment. It is argued that there is doubt among those young people who do not find formal employment by the age of 24 that they will do so in the future (National Development Plan, 2030:106). South Africa has one of the highest rates of youth unemployment in the entire globe, however, although rates in other places are lower, South Africa's rate is inclined to be above the rest by quite a few percent. This is a worrying aspect for South Africa's as the evidence presented earlier suggests a high rate of unemployment, is a sign of a country in crisis (Graha and Mlatsheni, 2021:133; Skosana, 2021).

The quarterly labour force survey (2023) shows that in the fourth quarter of 2023, the number of youth without jobs, climbed by 87,000 to 4,7 million, while the number of youth with jobs decreased by 97,000 to 5,9 million. As a result, the youth unemployment rate rose by 0.9 percentage points, from 43.4% in Q3 2023 to 4.4% in Q4 2023. This indicates that young people are still vulnerable in the labour market.

## **2.13 THE CAUSES OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT**

There are numerous factors that influence youth employment, including, the type and quantity of jobs available, the state of the economy, and the structure of the labour force. All of these issues contribute significantly to the likelihood of finding or losing a job.

### **2.13.1 Low economic growth rates**

According to Micheal & Geetha (2020:188), the joblessness situation continues to be perceived as an obstacle to growth in the economy, and their effects can be felt in the GDP, inflation, and foreign direct investment (FDI). The authors further claim that a one percentage point decrease in the number of unemployed may result in a two percentage point rise in GDP growth from job seekers, consequently, the situation will have a significant effect on the national economy, pulling down production and hurting the nation's workforce's ability to accumulate human resources.

It is thought that foreign investment boosts domestic investment and produces more jobs (Endres, 2024). Among the well-known instances is South Africa, with Kwazulu Natal's history of criminal activities, the nation's hopes of drawing in foreign investment have been severely damaged. The well-known looting spree in the Province has resulted in job losses since several malls and small companies were set on fire, and investors are hesitant to make investments in an insecure atmosphere. As a result, from 16.3 million in January and March 2020 to 14.9 million in April and June 2021, South Africa's employed population has significantly decreased (Limpopo Socio-economic Review and Outlook, 2022–2023).

Unemployment is a significant macro-economic indicator because it shows whether or not workers can find lucrative occupations readily and contribute significantly to

economic productivity. Prolonged and extreme unemployment might be a sign of serious financial difficulties, which can lead to disturbances and instability in society (Chappelow, 2020).

Rahman et al. (2020) also assert that actual gross domestic product experiences adverse effects during financial or economic downturns such as the COVID-19 pandemic, but the impact on youth unemployment is comparatively more severe than the overall rate of unemployment. Nattrass & Seekings (2019) maintain that low rates of economic growth may give rise to a decline in the demand for labour, raises in unemployment and hinders the development of new jobs. Considerable drop in unemployment rates necessitates substantial economic growth, assuming all else remains unchanged. The Southern Africa's region's economy, which is primarily geared towards the manufacturing of key commodities, has an impact on unemployment. The reason for this is because, the region, instead of developing companies that manufacture their own natural resources and generate essential jobs, both of the primary economic contributors—mining and farming—are primarily focused on export materials that are raw (Annual Performance Plan, 2023/24).

Alawad, Kreishan, & Selim (2020:153) reason that a high unemployment rate is a sign that a nation's economy is not making efficient use of its labour force. This, can be seen in the fact that, for example, although, unemployment is a global problem, the Middle Eastern countries are experiencing worsening conditions as a result of an imbalance between the rapid rate of population increase and the rate of economic expansion, which is driving up jobless rates.

### **2.13.2 Lack of quality education**

Education is one aspect that may have an impact on a young person's position in the employment market (Hvinden *et al.*, 2019:4). Studies of youth unemployment rates in nations that offer very little or no unemployment insurance for youth, generally find that youth unemployment is prone to be greater within better-educated groups of people, particularly recently-graduated students, yet low among individuals with little or no formal schooling (Fergusson & Yeates, 2021:7). Education is one of the key variables influencing the prevalence of unemployment among young people. Sari &

Rudi (2021) also agree that the productivity of the work force is influenced by a number of factors, including education, which has a direct impact on economic growth. This is due to the human capital factor of production, hence, poor education has a negative impact on citizen welfare, causing unemployment as well as poverty and income inequality (Mlachila & Moeletsi, 2019).

According to Oqubay et al. (2021:684), South Africa is also facing the dilemma of a lack of quality education, which appears to be the cause of youth unemployment. Since apartheid ended, the educational composition of the workforce has drastically changed, with profound effects on labour market outcomes (Duval & Shibata, 2021:6). Due to its free public education policy, South Africa now has some of the highest enrolment rates for its education levels (Mudimu & Mpisane, 2021:38). The standard education provided, however, has not kept up with the rise in enrolment, and one consequence of the higher enrolment is a decline in the return on investment for a high school education in comparison with various qualification levels (Oqubay et al., 2021:684).

As pointed out by Spaull (2019) and the South Africa National Human Development Report (2022:71), numerous factors, including - insufficient funding for schools, differences in educational quality, improperly qualified teachers, obsolete curricula, the inability of the country to produce the scientific, engineering, and math abilities necessary for the technological transformation of the nation, and restricted computer access - are impeding the nation's capacity to develop and create more jobs. Lack and inadequate education, therefore, are contributing to South African youth's disadvantage in the labour market.

Zwane, Radebe, & Mlambo (2021:18) argue that South African people lack employment because they only have a basic education, as some may not have had access to higher education or training. More concerningly, there are those who attended higher education institutions and graduated yet are still having trouble finding employment. Mlachila & Moeletsi (2019) also assert that South Africa has poor educational quality despite relatively high public spending levels; on average, the nation devotes more than 6% of its GDP to education, which is comparable to several OECD nations. Graha & Mlatsheni (2021:139) indicate that there is consistent, as well

as abundant evidence showing that the quality of education continues to be a major challenge, with the majority of youth dropping out of secondary school, hence, unable to pursue post-secondary education, or to undergo training that would enable them to find employment. Speaking at a nationwide teaching conference on October 6, 2021, President Ramaphosa stated that a large portion of the younger job-seekers lacked formal education and that the nation's educational system would need to change in order to better generate individuals with the abilities required for the nation (Tech, 2021).

### **2.13.3 Skills Mismatch**

Asai *et al.* (2020:16) assert that there are two possible sources of skill mismatches. Primarily, it is often the result of a mismatch in the labour market between the employer and the employee; a discrepancy between supply and demand can also lead to a mismatch in skills. This occurs, for instance, when the kinds of talents that companies want to hire people with, will probably change rapidly due to technological advancement, while individuals' capabilities might not grow and adapt at a similar rate.

In the context of employment policy discussions among middle-income and low-income nations, the skills mismatch constitutes one of the biggest contemporary challenges (ILO, International Labour Organisation, 2019). According to Sumberg, Fox, Flynn, Mader, & Oosterom (2021:622), African youth today face a severe shortage of quality work prospects, which is frequently due to a variety of reasons. Policies and society at large may cause youth employment through a variety of dominant narratives. Most of these are developed in light of a restricted set of justifications, one of which includes a difference between young people's level of knowledge and their set of skills for employment. Sumberg *et al.* (2021:622) further argue that young people in African economies have restricted career chances because they lack the skills that firms in such economies demand. Habiyaemye *et al.* (2022) also assert that this failure to find work is explained by the mismatch between the talents that companies are looking for and the skills that the youth bring to the workforce. Young people are essentially shown as missing the human capital necessary to interact with the more productive segments of the economy.

Finding appropriate employment may be challenging when there is a skills mismatch between the abilities held by job seekers and the talents businesses require. This problem of skills mismatch also exists in the South African economy (Duval & Shibata, 2021:6; Oguntona, 2023:46). Meaning that the skills in demand and the skill sets of the unemployed are not aligned; this skills' deficit may result from the structure of growth rather than being a cause of it (Oqubay et al., 2021). Furthermore, there seems to be an indication that the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions' provision of skill training is not up to par with industry standards and does not adequately address workforce demands (Msibi, 2021; Spaull, 2019). Young people with low skill levels and little experience are far less probable to be employed compared with their more experienced and skilled peers, implying that skills mismatches constitute a big part in unemployment (De Lannoy et al., 2018; Statistics South Africa, 2021; World Bank, 2021). Hvinden et al. (2019:5) contend that the youth are especially impacted since they lack expertise and are not legally entitled to redundancy payments, making it simpler for businesses to dismiss them.

Rahman et al. (2020), reiterate that one of the main reasons why young people are unemployed is a mismatch in their skill set. Their report also recommends that the nation adapt its educational system to meet the nation's expanding skills' needs. Jubane (2020:4) also contend that over time, the number of job seekers has increased, which has an impact on the labour supply. This applies to the population of South Africa, which is youthful, meaning that a greater proportion of people reach working age, than there are open positions in the labour market.

#### **2.13.4 Demographics trends**

Demographic factors, such as migratory patterns and population ageing, can also have an impact on the dynamics of the labour market, influencing the availability and demand for labour. Ndagijimana et al. (2018) used the multinomial logit model to gain insight into the factors influencing young people's job status in Rwanda, another country in Africa. Following a review of the data, the study concluded that geographic location, gender, and age all had an impact on youth employment in Rwanda. It then offered policy recommendations to support youth employment in light of these conclusions.

Racial and gender differences in employment opportunities are deeply ingrained in the South African labour market. Black African youth between the ages of 15 and 34 have the highest unemployment rate compared to other racial groups, at 57%; they are followed by coloured youth at 41%, Indian youth at 27%, and white youth at 15% (Statistics South Africa, 2020). These statistics further show that the unemployment rate for young women is higher at 57%, compared to 49% for young males. This disparity is primarily caused by black African women's comparatively poor labour market outcomes (Graha & Mlatsheni, 2021:133).

In the study on youth unemployment, NEETs, and structural inequality in Spain, Rodriguez-Modroño's (2019) discovered that when it came to tackling young people's unemployment in Spain, policy debates have overlooked gender and other potential structural disparities, and this has potentially resulted in the existence of certain inequities, such as high unemployment among young people and gender disparities.

Kreishan, Selim, & Alawad (2020:162) revealed in their investigation in Jordan that gender-related variations remain significant in labour market participation, even if there is no gender gap in the country's education levels. When it comes to employment, however, male youth have a higher likelihood than female youth of being unemployed. The results of the study also show that a young person's marital status was a significant determinant factor, increasing the likelihood that a married young person would have employment.

Leibbrandt *et al.*, (2019:12) contend that the percentage of young people who lack connectivity is high, where one out of every four youngsters who lack employability light their homes mostly with candles and paraffin or do not use any power at all. In South Africa's rural communities, electrification appears to assist job seekers in landing a job, however, the high cost of data in South Africa makes job hunting even more expensive, thus aggravating poverty among low-income households. Young people are expected to have undergone digital transformation, however, the majority of them (63.7%) do not have access to the internet from home using a computer or a mobile device; the number rises to 81.5% among youth without employment opportunities (Porter et al. 2018). Few young people live in homes without cell phones, although the rates of electricity deprivation above suggest that many

households would still own cell phones in the absence of electricity. This highlights the necessity and existence of additional points for connection to the electrical power grid, such as for phone charging.

### **2.13.5 Innovation and technological upgrading**

Khang (2023) defines technology as any concept or body of knowledge that can be used to find or develop new products and services for the manufacturing industry or other production-related endeavours. With the use of technology, resources can be used more effectively, productively, and efficiently. The author adds that enhancing creativity and invention leads to the development of new products and services that meet human needs and increase the security of livelihoods.

It is believed that technological advancement and innovation are essential for long-term economic vitality and growth, as well as for productivity and competitiveness, in order to avoid falling into the middle-class trap. Andreoni & Tregenna (2020:324) maintain that the Fourth Industrial Revolution's growing adoption of robotization and digitalization technology presents both opportunities and problems for creating jobs and bridging the digital and development divide in developing nations. One of the unavoidable developments that has decreased the likelihood of getting a job in the formal sector is the arrival of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, which is replacing manual labour with machines and robots (Guliwe, 2019; Annual Performance Plan, 2023–24).

The National Human Development Report for South Africa (2022:73) supports the same view that young people, in particular, are susceptible to threats associated with the digital economy and technology change, and failure to acquire the skills required to keep up with the rapid progress of technology, could result in millions of youths falling behind.

Asai's (2023) report examines education, skills, and skills' mismatch, along with some fresh data derived from the PIAAC survey, and discloses that changes in technology have had an impact on the kind of jobs and their need for labour. It is reported that the demands for low-skill non-routine tasks, high-skill non-routine jobs, and routine chores, have changed, hence, there may now be a discrepancy between the skills

held by workers and the talents that employers truly require. Consequently joblessness may primarily affect both highly-skilled and lowly-skilled people who have specialised in non-routine work. The study findings of Tregenna et al. (2021:9) indicate that, with regard to manufacturing technology intensity, South Africa is second to Botswana, which is detrimental to the nation's prospects for future development, economic sustainability, and competitiveness. This indicates that more funding is required for both technological advancement and various sorts of innovation.

#### **2.13.6 Spatial Inequalities**

Graha & Mlatsheni (2021:138) assert that youth unemployment stems from structural dynamics caused by spatial inequality. They further argue that in countries such as South Africa, where little has been done since the end of apartheid, many of the poorest households continue to live far from employment opportunities, which results in high costs associated with looking for work. As stated earlier, spatial planning from the apartheid era still limits young people's access to the job market, thus, a young person's geographical closeness to possibilities is not necessarily a reliable measure for employment benefits (Duval & Shibata, 2021:10).

The absence of inexpensive and dependable transport hinders young people in their pursuit of employment and significantly lowers their take-home pay when they do find work (Mlatsheni and Ranchhod, 2017). Sometimes, even when public transport is available, it may not be used because of safety concerns, especially for young women. As such, over 90% of adolescents lack employability, and the vast majority of all young do not own a car at home, necessitating the utilisation of alternative forms of transportation (Gillian and Kgomo 2019).

Population density and employment distribution are the two main cornerstones of spatial development. At enormous expense to individuals, families, and communities, the governments of the colonial and apartheid periods tended to exclude black people from economic endeavours. There is still a divide between densely-populated areas and concentrated employment and resource areas, some 20 years after the end of apartheid. Those who live in the periphery suffer from increased costs associated with

their movement and unemployment is a result (Mudiriza, Storme, De Boeck, Leibbrandt, & De Lannoy, 2019:12).

### **2.13.7 Labour market flexibility and inefficiencies**

According to Hvinden et al. (2019:4) and Oguntona (2023:46), employment patterns and prospects for workers can be shaped by labour market flexibility, which includes laws governing how employers evaluate the resources of young jobseekers and the risks involved with their hiring, firing, and setting wages. Alawad, Kreishan, & Selim (2020:153) view the inability of the public and private sectors to accept newly-hired workers, due to aspects such as discrimination and other hiring practices, makes it more difficult for young people to access the labour market and find fulfilling jobs.

Abel et al. (2017) maintain that, because so many people are looking for work, it takes time for employers to advertise job openings and locate the ideal fit. Another disadvantage is employers frequently asking for job experience from the employees as evidence of candidate aptitude and dedication as this practice closes many doors for young people. The authors argue that job searchers frequently lack knowledge about the kinds of positions they are qualified for and how to submit applications in a way that highlights their eligibility to employers. In addition, job seekers may also apply for positions for which they are unqualified out of desperation, as a result, employers are forced to use a variety of techniques to filter applications due to the considerable inefficiencies this causes in the labour market (Graham & Mlatsheni, 2021:139).

Hvinden et al. (2019:7) concurs with the view that young people are less successful in the job seeking because they have lower social capital, less effective job hunting techniques, and are more likely to fall victim to the experience trap - a situation in which potential employers reject applicants due to a lack of prior work experience. An indicator of social network access to the labour market is the presence of an employed member in the household, but approximately half of the youth who are unemployed, educated, or training (NEET) come from households with no employed member. This results in these youth viewing the labour market as unjust and believing their chances of finding work have been stacked against them from the start (Graham et al., 2019; Mudiriza and De Lannoy, 2020).

This indicates that the youth who enter the workforce during a period of job constraints are more likely to experience short-term joblessness and poor-quality employment in desperation as a substitute for unemployment (Mussa & Rwela, 2023:4).

## **2.14 THE MULTIDIMENSIONALITY OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT**

Being unemployed, especially when it persists for a long time, can be extremely stressful due to the importance of paid work in modern society. For persons who are unemployed for an extended period of time, this could have significant, unfavourable effects on a number of areas of their lives (Giugni, Lorenzini, Cinalli, Lahusen, & Baglioni, 2020). During the youth stage of life, individuals shift from reliance to being self-sufficient while continuing to learn new skills, abilities, and information (Mpofu, 2020). Gaining experience and money are essential components of that change. Younger people usually have fewer life and job experiences, fewer opportunities for useful assets like property and land, and fewer, networking opportunities for their line of work (Sumberg, Oosterom, Mader, Flynn, & Fox, 2021:634). All of the above factors may have an impact on young people's entry into the workforce and the results of their employment. The majority of emerging nations now face serious risks of youth unemployment, which impacts countries on all fronts - politically, economically, and socially (Demissie, 2021). The most significant risk to the nation is indicated by the resultant unemployment rates, which are higher within younger generations than among the population as a whole (Michael & Geetha, 2020:183).

### **2.14.1 Economic inclusion**

According to Michael & Geetha (2020:188), unemployment is an essential gauge of a country's economic performance because it reflects the inability of workers to obtain gainful employment and contribute towards the economy's productive capacity.

Given the most engaged and productive age group that may contribute significantly to a nation's economy, youth unemployment is a major burden on any nation. Studies have demonstrated that high rates of youth unemployment are a sign of low productivity and earnings; it reflects potential lost income in the form of lost tax revenue and purchasing power, hence, the cost of not hiring young people is consequently an opportunity cost for economic progress (Mukosa, Katebe, Sakyi, Mweemba, Mbewe,

& Sikazwe, 2020:84). As a result of the greater population's unemployment and participation in non-tax-paying activities, this poses a burden on development.

A study by Chen, Yang, Yang, & Wang (2022:2) found that a nation's economy is typically characterised by fluctuations in the economy – a competitive measure that reflects the economic cycle of a nation. They further argue that an economic downturn will, therefore, have an impact on how many employees businesses are able to recruit and how much they are able to compensate. Demissie (2021) contends that when the situation occurs, consumer spending, which is one of the main engines of economic growth, will decline, which, if unchecked, can result in a recession or even a crisis. These issues lower demand, consumption, and purchasing power, which lowers firm earnings and necessitates staff and budget cuts. Furthermore, it starts an endless loop that is challenging to break without outside help (Chen, Yang, Yang, & Wang, 2022:2).

Michael & Geetha (2020:186) point out that the number of unemployed people is regarded as low in emerging economies like the United States and Europe. It occurs as a result of the large number of self-employed workers in the agriculture industry. When output falls short of average, unemployment will have a detrimental effect on the national economy. The impact on current employees is that as the economy deteriorates due to the unemployment problem, it creates uncertainty among them, which lowers their purchasing power due to unpredictability or anxiety at work. As a result of the drop in worker productivity and the decreased consumption of goods and services, governments in those nations are forced to take on more liabilities while unemployment rates rise. The same applies in South Africa, for the unemployment rate may be cut in half if it were to equal the rate of self-employment among employers' counterparts (Baluku *et al.*, 2020; World Bank, 2021; Alawad, 2020:153). Mpofu (2020) further implies that youth unemployment has a negative impact on the economy in the form of creating fluctuation in the labour market, raising living expenses, eroding the tax base, and resulting in partially-utilised investments.

#### **2.14.2 Subjective well-being and social inclusion**

Giugni *et al.* (2020) are of the view that young adults who experience prolonged unemployment suffer severe personal and social repercussions, including social

exclusion and isolation. According to Mpofu (2020), the issue of youth unemployment is critical since it affects not merely those without employment but the entire population. People who are unemployed face financial difficulties, which have an effect on their families, relationships, and communities. Numerous studies have demonstrated that unemployment permanently damages the lives of young people and others around them by causing them to lack income and interfering with their ascent to financial security (Fergusson & Yeates, 2021:1). It is further argued that when people are unable to meet their financial obligations on time, unemployment puts the family in financial difficulties, causes tragedy, and breeds hatred among family members (South Africa National Human Development Report 2022:19, Fenta, 2024).

Alawad et al. (2020:153) state that most young people anticipate finding work, particularly after graduation. If they are unable to find work, their human capital will decline, their employment chances will worsen, and they will become socially excluded.

There have been extensive studies investigating the implications of joblessness on general well-being, particularly in the fields of clinical psychology, psychological science, and sociology. An innovative study conducted on jobless individuals in an Australian community, revealed that psychological structure becomes unbalanced over time due to prolonged unemployment and the person shows apathy (Giugni et al., 2020). People who are unemployed have psychological difficulties, reduced levels of trust and confidence, a diminished sense of their own value, a lack of consent, a lack of employment opportunities, and most commonly suffer from long-term wage losses and complicated psychological problems thereafter. In addition, people's low self-esteem and self-actualization were mentioned as some of the consequences of unemployment (Demissie, 2021:2, Ahmed Abdel-Al Ibrahim et al., 2022).

According to all of the participants in Hossain's (2022) micro-level study, unemployment has a negative effect on people's psychological well-being; this includes feelings of uncertainty, identity crises or loss of identification, despair, embarrassing incidents, and a lack of motivation or desire to rearrange one's life. Alawad et al. (2020:153) contend that Malaysia has faced danger from youth

unemployment since it can have a long-term detrimental impact on young job seekers' lifetime income and well-being.

Giugni (2020) also argues that long-term unemployment raises the risk of losing close relationships because young individuals are less likely to expand their informal networks outside their family and peers due to an absence of resources, cooperative activities, or embarrassment. From the results of the study by Winkelmann (2024), having more social capital might mitigate the negative effects of unemployment on well-being, since there is substantial evidence linking it to enhanced well-being.

### **2.14.3 Health Challenge**

Gebel & Unt (2021:296) report that one of the main negative effects of youth unemployment is a lack of personal income, which directly translates into a worsening of the financial situation as well as material deprivation. According to Ferguson and Yeates (2021:1), unemployment may have a negative impact on one's health, and the main argument made is that people lack the resources needed to support themselves financially if they do not have a job to rely on. This deficiency results in inability to eat healthily, which could have an impact on their normal behaviours or nutrition and possibly deteriorate their health (Pieters & Rawlings, 2020).

Anxiety over one's mental and physical well-being may result from joblessness (Artawan & Suarta, 2022:90). According to Abdel-Al Ibrahim (2022), anxiety was originally considered to be a purely psychological aspect of human behaviour, however, it is now understood to be related to the personal feelings of tension, worries, discomfort, and fears associated with stimulation within the neural nervous system and is widely acknowledged as one of the most obvious psychological factors. Anxiety is a common emotion that can be felt in a variety of social contexts and is linked to feelings of anticipation and concern.

Aydin, Mehmet & Mucahit (2023:3) proclaim that financial advancements are recognised to have both beneficial and negative effects on human health; the same holds true for unemployment. Lower income and expenditure levels can lead people to choose less expensive but unhealthy diets. It is anticipated that the increased accessibility of unhealthy fast food will, hence, have a detrimental impact on jobless

individuals with less purchasing power. The authors add that both psychological and economic factors can be used to explain how unemployment affects obesity and that a person's diet quality will decline in tandem with a fall in income.

#### **2.14.4 Discouragement from the labour market**

Youth unemployment poses a serious challenge as it erodes the resources that individuals and society devote to education and skill enhancement, asserts Ferguson and Yeates (2021:1) and Fenta, (2024). Graham & Mlatsheni, (2021:140) and Oqubay et al. (2021:693) suggest that the length of unemployment increases the impact on young people, as a result, a prolonged period of unemployment may discourage people to the point where they stop participating in the labour market, nullifying their education.

Smith (2018) posits that social inequality arises when young individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds endeavour to pursue prospects for social mobility. Based on psychological analysis, the majority of young people without jobs typically have low expectations for their ability to find work in the future, low life satisfaction, career dissatisfaction, low self-esteem, and high levels of anxiety, depression, and psychological distress (Akgun & Ciarrocca, 2021).

The same view shared by Oqubay et al. (2021:673) is that a person experiencing long-term unemployment may start to - worry, despair, feel worthless, become too reliant on others, lose their personal and professional identities, and lack confidence in the likelihood that an employer will hire them.

Wange et al. (2021) argue that long-lasting joblessness can have some positive consequences, such as fostering a sense of community and a commitment to serving the greater good, but it usually have negative impacts such as humiliation and despair in those who have been out of the workforce for an extended period of time.

#### **2.14.5 Criminality among the youth**

Unemployment for young people is a difficult scenario. It is also believed that a large number of the youth engage in illicit activities due to a shortage of employment. If

these young people are unable to find work, they may turn to criminal activity as a means of surviving (Mukosa et al., 2020:82). Mazorodze (2020) supports the idea that there is an evident rise in crime and poverty in many communities in South Africa, and studies have connected South Africa's high youth unemployment rates to drug abuse, suicide, and other social ills, like rape and robbery. It is also revealed that men between the ages of 16 and 30 are the ones who commit homicides in South Africa (Blom et al., 2023:57; National Development Plan, 2030:106). The linkage between unemployment and crime is also evident in a wealth of research from developed countries like the US and France that have shown that, as crime rates rise, the probability of being imprisoned also rises with unemployment (Oqubay et al., 2021:673). This is because criminal behaviour is often the result of a lack of good options.

In Chen et al.'s study (2022), an empirical survey was done between 2000 and 2019 utilising the panel smooth transition regression model to investigate the dynamic link between the rates of crime, suicide, and unemployment under the supposition of economic growth. The statistical findings revealed that there were nonlinear correlations between the unemployment rate, crime rate, and suicide rate, and that these rates had dynamic effects on suicide rates. Ultimately, when the rate of change in the economic growth rate exceeded the dynamic value, there was a substantial correlation between suicide rates, crime rates, and unemployment rates.

Young individuals usually depend on their parents for financial support and have fewer financial responsibilities (Hvinden et al. (2019:7). Fergusson & Yeates (2021:1) point out that youth unemployment is likely to cause tension in the home of the unemployed individual and also increase the risk of suicide. At this stage, a crucial element is the availability of family support to help young people, financially, when they are unable to find or keep a job. In certain middle-income nations, such as Cambodia, Egypt, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, graduates have relied on their relatively wealthy families' financial support to get them through extended periods of time spent looking for professional work. In contrast, young people without any formal education or training end up being vulnerable family members (Fergusson & Yeates, 2021:7).

#### **2.14.6 Alcohol and drug addiction**

According to scientific definitions, addiction is a behavioural condition in which a person becomes dependent on a substance (Prasad et al., 2023:30). Usual substances with a tendency to be addictive include, alcohol, narcotics, and tobacco. Addiction of this kind, which is typically chronic and recurring, is more common in youth.

The Nolte-Troha (2023) study concluded that, in terms of alcohol use, unemployed people showed a significantly higher frequency in their use of alcohol than employed people. Unemployed people had a significantly higher prevalence of smoking and vaping and used cannabis more frequently than employed people. In South Africa, this has translated into social disorder and increased crime (National Development Plan, 2030:106, South Africa National Human Development Report 2022:19).

#### **2.14.7 Political effects**

A strong argument was made by Fergusson and Yeates (2021) on the view that widespread youth unemployment can be seen as a serious injustice to society. According to the National Development Plan (2020:107), a high rate of unemployment among young people with education can potentially spark widespread political discontent, turmoil, and conflict. Giugni et al. (2020) further assert that young people's political lives may be impacted by the job market, which could encourage them to either give up on politics or, conversely, get even more involved in protest-related activities when the circumstances are right. According to Alawad (2020:152), unemployment is a boundary zone - where lines separating right from wrong, appropriate from inappropriate, and legal from unlawful are frequently unclear. In that regard, many academic studies contend that political instability and international wars are mostly caused by youth unemployment.

Young individuals are obliged to make decisions at their youth age, and such decisions are supposed to be acknowledged as the correct ones by the policy environment and society at large - this is extremely challenging for young people. Michael & Geetha (2020:186) assert that people who are unemployed usually get weary of the leadership and the government, which in turn leads to political instability. Looking at South Africa's

context, even after apartheid, the youth still face social exclusion, despite a number of national and local initiatives aimed at addressing this issue; this explains their participation in protests and movements meant to bring about change (Mudimu & Mpisane, 2021:46).

In light of the above evidence (Statistics South Africa, 2018, 2020; Baldry et al., 2019, National Development Plan, 2030:106, South Africa National Human Development Report 2022:19), assert that when youth have no other options except to live in poverty and unemployment, they are more likely to rebel, which might cause a social disorder.

Alawad (2020:152) states that young people learn more about existing inequities and their own marginalisation through participation in civil activity and protest movements, hence, protests are considered a means by which youth gradually claim their right to be acknowledged and heard. The most recent wave of disruptions that took place in South Africa in July of 2021 serves as evidence that, in the absence of an established strategy for structural transformation, a high percentage of youth unemployment combined with the precarious nature of work in the low-skilled job market fosters significant risks of political instability (Nkamisa, 2021). Demissie (2021:2) maintains that all nations, irrespective of their economic conditions, are supposed to contribute to this worldwide burden of unemployment, however, because it exacerbates injustices and breeds resentment, which can result in violence and related behavioural issues, the proportion for poorer nations may really be worse.

### **2.15 Challenge in addressing youth unemployment in South Africa**

De Lannoy, Graham, Patel, and Leibbrandt (2018:5) assert that the situation of youth unemployment in South Africa is not attributable to a lack of funding, effort, or research on the part of different stakeholders into the causes of youth unemployment and into remedies for the issue. According to Chiloane (2020:53), a number of government programmes and policies have been implemented since 1990 in an effort to combat youth unemployment. These include – the Employment Tax Incentive (ETI), which attempts to stimulate demand for young labourers; the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), which has high youth targets as well as a variety of training programmes run by the private sector and civil society members that inexorably aim

to place young people in jobs. It seems, however, that the results of these significant cooperative endeavour have only been mediocre at best (De Lannoy *et al.*, 2018:5).

According to Bardly, Graham, and De Lannoy (2019), strategies intended to support youth development have had little to no change, which highlights their ineffectiveness. Addressing youth unemployment is important to achieving sustainable development in a country. Dan (2022:441) states that resource mobilisation continues to be a major obstacle to the implementation of effective initiatives and programmes to alleviate youth unemployment in Africa. De Lannoy and Langa (2021) claim that the majority of South Africa's plans and strategies for young people advocate for the development of education programmes and youth entrepreneurship to combat the issue of youth unemployment.

Youth entrepreneurship is recognised as an inevitable remedy and a significant strategy for tackling the difficulties of youth employment. It is crucial for young people, therefore, to participate in entrepreneurial activities in order to combat poverty and youth unemployment (Ogamba 2019; Abdullah & Othnam 2021; Adelowatan 2021). Researchers Radebe and Vezi-Magigaba (2021:12) argue that lack of consistency in the system of entrepreneurship education curricula and society's attitude towards entrepreneurship are two of the major obstacles preventing the growth of young people's involvement in entrepreneurial activities.

Furthermore, the National Development Plan (2030:107) made a note that the lack of coordination and accountability in various national and provincial governments, has led to - poor educational outcomes, a poorly coordinated further education system, a lack of sustained economic growth, a limited understanding of employer hiring preferences, inefficient matching, and persistent barriers such as work-seeking costs and limited social capital - further impediments in the country's development.

## **2.16 CONCLUSION**

This chapter provides a detailed evaluation of youth unemployment as a developmental concern in the Vhembe District, based on the capabilities approach and structural-functional viewpoint. State interventions, considering key initiatives, such as the Expanded Public Works Program and the National Development Plan,

were examined alongside legislative frameworks, such as the Employment Equity Act. Furthermore, global and national perspectives on youth and the labour market, the causes and multidimensionality of young unemployment, and the obstacles associated with tackling such challenges, were critically examined. These findings contextualize the research and indicate crucial gaps, laying the groundwork for future chapters investigating causes, consequences, and potential remedies for the challenge.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Research is defined as a process of seeking answers to particular questions that so far have not been answered; it is a way of arriving at a worthwhile solution to a certain problem through planned systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data (Parul, 2021:11). According to Mishra & Alok (2022:1), methodology refers to the scientific strategy used to undertake a study, encompassing the social and organizational background, philosophical presumptions, ethical principles, and political implications of new knowledge gained from the research activity. Research methodology is regarded as a way of systematically solving a research problem; it is a science of studying how to do the research in a scientific manner, and it also involves the logic behind the chosen methods in the study (Patel & Patel, 2019:48).

This chapter aims to discuss the approach that was used in order to achieve the stated research objectives of the topic on youth unemployment as a developmental problem. These discussions focus on - the method, study area, population of the study, sampling method, sampling size, tools and techniques to be employed in the research, and the procedures of data analysis and ethical consideration. The chapter hence, outlines the whole plan of the study in detail.

#### 3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design, according to Parul (2021), is the overarching plan or programme for the study. It is, therefore – a blueprint for data collection, measurement, and analysis; it is a plan based on the research question; it offers a framework for describing the relationship between variables and it specifies the procedures for each research activity. The current study used a convergent research design, which is a form of mixed-methods that combine qualitative and quantitative approaches. Similarly, Creswell & Hirose (2019:2) and Fischler (2019), explain convergent research design as a mixed-methods strategy in which a researcher collects both quantitative and qualitative data, analyses them separately, and compares the results to determine whether the findings confirm or disprove each other. The aim of using convergent

design is to obtain a complete understanding of both forms of databases while comparing and collaborating on the results. In this study, descriptive design (quantitative approach) and explorative design (qualitative approach) were applied in the form of merging quantitative and qualitative data, to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research phenomenon. This design allowed the collection of data in both forms, roughly at the same time, thereafter, integrating the information and interpreting the overall results about the challenge of youth unemployment in the study. Furthermore, contradictions or incongruent findings are explained or further probed in this design (Bostley, 2019).

A descriptive design is a form of theory-based method where the researcher is primarily interested in describing the topic that is the subject of the research (Jovancic, 2020). According to Mertler (2018), the purpose of descriptive design is to describe and interpret the current status of events, individuals, or conditions. Its use helps to better understand and obtain information concerning the current status of a phenomenon, in this case, the problem of youth unemployment, which also help others to better understand the need for research in the study area. Asenahabi (2019:86) explains that explorative design is an approach that involves two phases: the collection of qualitative data and the building up of a database, followed by a second phase of quantitative data collection and analysis. Babbie (2020:95) states that explorative design is mostly appropriate for phenomena that are persistent; similar to the phenomenon of youth unemployment in this study, hence, its appropriateness for this study.

### **3.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM**

According to Reisch (2019:255), paradigms are the practical foundation for the majority of scientific professions. Kuhn (1974:459), explicates that the words “paradigm” and “scientific community” are placed in close proximity, both physically and logically, thus, a paradigm is regarded as something that only the individuals who make up a scientific community share. Fishre (2018:11) contends that paradigms serve as a structure that helps frame what should be studied with an understanding of what is seen and an interpretation of what is understood. The term “paradigm” is used to describe the detailed segment of philosophical presumptions or fundamental set of

beliefs applied for a research study and how these worldviews shape the study (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019:255).

Perera (2018) also views paradigm as a communal way of thinking by a body of scientists in solving problems in their discipline. It influences the way of studying and interpreting particular knowledge; it is the general viewpoints or ideologies. Paradigm is a set of similar beliefs and agreements shared by scientists regarding how to understand and address a problem. As such, paradigms involve a means by which scientists respond to three basic questions of - ontology, epistemology, and methodology (Kumatongo & Muzata, 2021:16). The current study used a pragmatic research paradigm. Pragmatism as a research paradigm allows the use of both quantitative and qualitative designs. It is appropriate to be applied in settings that are comprised of complex social phenomena, making it the most common paradigm in mixed research methods and in social science studies (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Pragmatism, therefore, was selected to be applied in this study as it allows the use of mixed-research design to provide a better understanding of the phenomena under study.

### **3.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES**

Thomas (2021:94) defines research methodology as specific approaches or guidelines for conducting a study, encompassing the science and philosophy behind the research methods. It involves a systematic study of the research process from planning to reporting, encompassing strategies used in the planning, implementation, and reporting stages. Kumatongo & Muzata (2021:16) explain that research methodology is a way to describe several aspects of a study - the design, procedures of data collection, methods of data analysis, selection of subjects, details of the specific treatments, as well as the research report's format. Research methods comprise only a part of the wider field of research methodology and are more necessary during the implementation stage of the research investigation (Thomas, 2021). The current study used mixed-methods research.

### 3.4.1 Mixed Method

A mixed-methods is an approach in which the researcher blends various types of data, such as numbers and text. The analysis of the data is also done in different ways, but using a single study (Bazeley, 2018). It incorporates both elements of qualitative and quantitative data and focuses on techniques of collecting data in a single research project using a distinct design that may entail rational supposition and theoretical belief (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The application of mixed methods in this study allows for the integration of quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis, which assisted in proving the best understanding of the current research problem.

The use of a quantitative approach in this study helped to quantify the problem of youth unemployment, while the qualitative approach helped to understand thoughts, concepts, and experiences of participants. This assisted in investigating and exploring unique utterances of individuals and assessing opinions, behaviours, attitudes, affections, and panoramas through different individuals' involvement. The combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches in the current study allowed for the exchange of information during the course of data collection, which enabled in-depth knowledge of the subject topic of youth unemployment in Vhembe District. Data and prior results from different sources and methods of collection was combined together in the analysis stage, hence, the final results and conclusion were inferred from both quantitative and qualitative methods.

#### 3.4.1.1 Quantitative research methods

Grey & Josephus (2021) and Creswell & Creswell (2017) refer to quantitative research as a method of inquiry that involves processes of collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting of results about a study. It relates to aspects such as population identification, sampling, a particular type of design, data collection, analysis, presentation, interpretation, and writing research in a consistent manner. The method is a form of descriptive statistics that is based on measurements or numbers to summarise or describe data collected via organised research instruments like questionnaires. The results are dependent on large sample sizes that serve as representatives of the entire population under investigation (Cameron, 2022). The quantitative approach is the descriptive, correlational, and experimental methodology

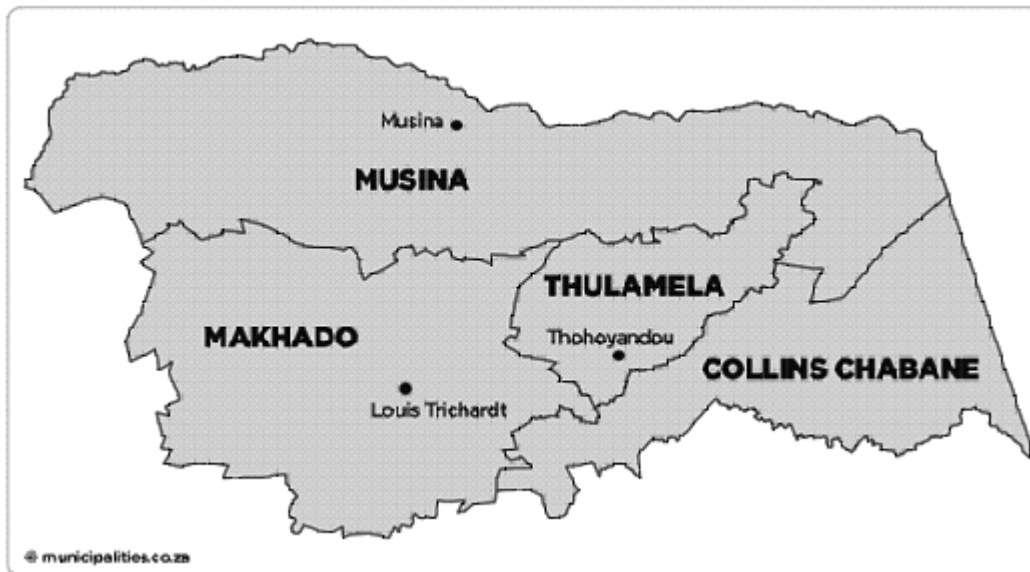
that employs characteristics such as measuring variables, testing hypotheses, and explaining relationships, through utilising data in the form of numbers and categories. It also emphasises values of objectivity, deductive reasoning, representation, and generalisation of the results (Scharrer & Ramasubramanian, 2021:383). In the current study, a quantitative research approach was used to examine the relationship between various variables through the collection and analysis of numerical data that was expressed in terms of numbers or scores.

#### 3.4.1.2 Qualitative Research Method

Qualitative research embodies the essential processes of collecting, analysing, and interpreting non-numerical data, including text, videos, or audio recordings, and details interviews. Qualitative research is mostly used to learn how a person subjectively perceives and interprets their social environment (Mutinda, 2022). According to Ashley (2019:302), qualitative research refers to the structure of revealing meaning that forms people's actions and their relationships within each other; it is associated with the gathering and interpretation of non-numerical data with the aim of understanding human and social environments. Mohajan (2018: 23) and Mkandawire (2019: 143) also view qualitative research as a subjective method and a form of social action that constitutes how people interpret and make sense of their experiences to understand their social interactions as individuals. The use of a qualitative research approach helped to focus on exploring individuals' experiences with the situation of youth unemployment by collecting and analysing narrative or text data, which is expressed in words and images.

### 3.5 STUDY AREA

The study was conducted in the Vhembe District. The Vhembe District is located at the North-western tip of South Africa in the Limpopo Province, bordered by Zimbabwe to the north and Botswana to the northwest. The Limpopo River valley forms the border between the District and its international neighbours. Through Kruger National Park, the Vhembe District also borders Mozambique on its Eastern border, the Kruger National Park to the east, the Mopani District to the Southeast, and the Capricorn District to the Southwest borders the Vhembe District. The seat of Vhembe is Thohoyandou.



**Figure. 1** Map of Vhembe District (DC34) in Limpopo Province, South Africa

### 3.6 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

According to Majid (2018:3), the population refers to the target population that is intended to study. It is a set or group of people or individuals that consists of all the units that possess variable characteristics under study and for which the findings of research can be generalised and applied (Shukla, 2020:109). A study's population have characteristics that the researcher is interested in and intends to conclude on, and the target population has to be exclusive enough in order to avoid interaction with participants who do not represent the study needs and will misrepresent the population of interest. The population of the study has to be a complete subset, described by the geographical boundaries of the population of interest (Casteel & Bridler, 2021:339). In this research, the study population was drawn from specific members who met the criteria of the research investigation. The units from which the sample was chosen were the youth population between the ages of 15 and 34, focused in the Makhado, Musina, Thulamela, and Collins Chabane municipalities in the Vhembe District of Limpopo Province. According to the Vhembe District municipality's IDP 2022/2023 review, the youth population in the Vhembe District is 533 868 of ages 15-34.\

### 3.7 SAMPLING

As contended by Thomas (2021:131), sampling is the process by which a researcher selects a portion of a population for a study, with that portion representing the larger population. In this research, data was collected from a sample of youth, both those who are employed and those who are not employed. Halberstadt *et al.* (2023:183) assert that sampling involves making decisions about which people, settings, events, or behaviours to include in the study; this requires clarifying individuals, groups, or objects that will be part of the investigation. The sample set for this research consisted of the following respondents: unemployed youth, employees from the Department of Social Development, Vhembe District municipal officials, the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), community members, and the Community Service Centre (CSC). The sample set for this research consisted of the following respondents: unemployed youth, employees from the Department of Social Development, Vhembe District municipal officials, the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), community members, and the Community Service Centre (CSC). The study selected unemployed youth to recount personal experiences; officials from the Department of Social Development and Vhembe District Municipality were able to offer perspectives on policies and solutions. The NYDA offered insights on youth employment initiatives, community members emphasized social effects, and the Community Service Centre (CSC) presented insights on job assistance services. The selection of participants in the study offered a broad grasp of young unemployment from both individual and institutional aspects.

#### 3.7.1 SAMPLING METHODS

The sample methods in this study were non-probability samples, which are methods in which individuals are selected based on non-random criteria, therefore, not every individual has a chance of being included. These methods are less objective type of sampling, which does not provide for each member of a target population to participate in a study but only those selected by the researcher; it is also regarded as “purposive sampling” (Berndt, 2020:224). According to Nikolopoulou (2023), purposive sampling is referred to as “judgmental”, “selective”, or “subjective”. It represents a group of different non-probability sampling techniques, and in purposive sampling, the selection

of units, cases, organisations, events, and pieces of data to be studied is made by the judgement of the researcher. Purposive sampling is one of the most cost-effective and time-effective sampling methods for it allows the researcher to decide on the purpose that the informants must serve (McDevitt & Fitzpatrick, 2020:86). The use of purposeful sampling in this study helped to maintain focus on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest in the study, which made it possible to answer the research questions and achieve objectives under the phenomenon of youth unemployment in the Vhembe District.

### **3.7.2 SAMPLE SIZE**

Verma (2020:89) notes sample size as based on the purpose of the study, and determining a sampling size in research is necessary for statistical purposes as well as ethical, financial, and human resource considerations. The sample size of this study was 50 respondents, categorised as follows: 30 unemployed youth, 5 employees from the Department of Social Development, 3 Vhembe District Municipal officials, 5 National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), 5 community members, and 2 Community Service Centres (CSC). The sample size was structured to emphasize the experiences of jobless youth since they constitute the principal demographic impacted by the issue. The Department of Social Development participants, local authorities, NYDA, community members, and CSC were chosen to offer varied and concentrated perspectives on the causes, effects, and possible remedies for youth unemployment to fully comprehend the study problem.

### **3.8 PILOT STUDY**

Smith et al. (2023) describe a pilot study as an early-phase, small-scale study designed to determine the viability of bigger research undertakings. It assists in identifying logistical issues, such as data-gathering techniques and recruiting procedures. Johnson and Lee (2022) define a pilot study as a trial run that assesses the dependability of research instruments and procedures prior to the full-scale study's implementation. This study included a pilot phase to evaluate the research instruments and enhance the data collection methodologies employed to examine youth unemployment as a developmental issue in the Vhembe District. A limited sample of participants, including two jobless youths, one district official, and one community

member, enabled the researcher to evaluate the questions' clarity, the survey design's practicality, and the interview procedure's efficacy. Consistent replies from diverse groups showed the trustworthiness of the data collecting tools and highlighted the need for small changes in question clarity. Key themes such as a lack of skills, work experience, and restricted career options revealed. The findings helped improve the research instruments and the overall approach before full-scale data collection.

### **3.9 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES**

The data collection methods are a set of guidelines, techniques, or procedures planned for the specific purpose of collating a specific type and number of data sources that will be applied to address a research question. A data source is comprised of who or what provides the information, and the data that has been collected from individuals or sources who have experienced the topic of the study more directly is called first-hand or primarily data, while second-hand or secondary data is concerned with a more indirect account of a phenomenon, usually information from previous researchers (Mukherjee, 2019:189). The study adopted a mixed-methods data collection, which involved the gathering of both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study, using more than one method of data collection (Abbas, Burke, & Charles, 2020:83).

For quantitative data, the researcher utilised questionnaires with the selected 30 unemployed youth. This is a strategy where participants self-report their attitude, belief, feelings, and behaviours towards the phenomenon in the study through answering the set questions. It is important to ensure that the questionnaires are clear and that participants can complete them (Johnson & Christiansen, 2020). Pandey & Pandey (2021:59) argue that the use of questionnaires has the advantages of being a very cost-effective and time-saving approach while covering a wide range of participants; it is appropriate for specific types of responses, and most reliable in special cases.

The researcher conduct interviews with 5 employees from the Department of Social Development, 3 Vhembe District Municipal officials, 5 National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), 5 community members, and 2 Community Service Centres (CSC) for the purpose of collecting qualitative data. An interview is a method of data collection in which the interviewer asks questions of the interviewee. The questions in this study

done face-to-face, telephonically, via the internet, for example, via Zoom, Skype, High Five, Google Hangouts, Adobe Connect.

Open-ended interviews formed a necessary part of data collection in this study because they allowed one-on-one interaction between the researcher and the interviewees, which in turn provided clarity of answers and in-depth information on youth unemployment in Vhembe District. The study used qualitative interviews to produce quantitative data, and a quantitative questionnaire has been used to produce qualitative data. In combining these two approaches, the study produced detailed and complex mixed data.

### **3.10 DATA ANALYSIS METHODS**

According to Jung (2021:15), data analysis involves the process of categorising and interpreting visual and non-visual material to produce statements regarding direct and indirect dimensions of information. It also involves interconnected procedures such as data reduction, data display, conclusion formulation, and verification. Data analysis encompasses processes such as, coding, editing, tabulating, and statistical analysis in order to reduce the mass of the acquired data to a manageable amount (Gupta, 2022:15).

#### **3.10.1 Statistical analysis**

Tiffany (2018:10) believes that descriptive analysis is an important first step for quantitative data. Descriptive analysis helps by gaining great insight into the features of a sample before generalizing them to a population. It provides an overall understanding of the characteristics of the sample data by uncovering all the values in the data. International Business Machinery (IBM): Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) version 28.0 was used to analyze the questionnaires. Descriptive analysis provides a representation of data using pictures, graphs, tables, and numbers designed to summarise specific characteristics of a variable or measurement (Cooksey, 2020:61). The use of statistical procedures is designed to display specific patterns and data trends that have helped to interpret and summarise the characteristics of the phenomenon of youth unemployment in Vhembe District.

### 3.10.2 Narrative analysis

For the qualitative data, the study adopted thematic analysis of the data collected through interviews. Thematic analysis refers to a technique of developing, analysing, and interpreting patterns across qualitative datasets. It is a systematic method of coding data to formulate themes, and the use of thematic analysis provided a tool set of organised main ideas or concepts, procedures, practices, and directions to arrange, cross-examine, and interpret a dataset (Braun & Clarke 2021:4). The combination of words and numbers helped to provide a credible understanding of the complex real world around youth unemployment in the Vhembe District.

## 3.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics refers to acting in accordance with moral sense in recognition of what is right and wrong and sensitivity towards the rights of others, Acting ethically requires mindful consideration and regular attention in any practice of a profession (Brandenburg & McDonough, 2019:1). The following are the standards set in social research to regulate behaviour and distinguish what is admissible and allowable.

### 3.11.1 Permission to conduct a study

Before conducting the study, the University of Venda provided the researcher with the letter to apply for approval to carry out a study in the Vhembe District. A letter requesting permission for the researcher to conduct the study at the Vhembe District was provided by the University of Venda and was submitted to the Vhembe District. The letter from the researcher asking for permission to gather data for a study from the University of Venda is part of the annexures.

### 3.11.2 Informed consent

Dag (2023:163) states that it is always essential to ensure that individuals invited to participate in research are first asked for their consent to participate in the research. Participants were fully informed about the project and the feasible effects of participating in the research. Informed consent commonly informs participants on elements including - names and affiliations of the researcher, research aim and

objective, rights to receive or be informed about the results if interested, and others (Bos *et al.*, 2020:154).

### 3.11.3 Anonymity and confidentiality

Anonymity refers to the way in which a researcher protects participants from the negative effects that may arise as a result of disclosing information. This is considered an essential part of securing confidentiality, and in most cases, the promise of anonymity to participants is the key factor in them deciding what to disclose, when, and whether to take part in research or not (Wilson & Darling, 2020:43). Confidentiality obliges a researcher to ensure that the use of information gathered or provided by an individual is in accordance with the dignity and autonomy of the participant and does not contravene the individual's or community's interests (Bos, 2020:153). In order for participants to be free when providing information in the study, they were informed that their identity will remain strictly confidential and that their personal information will remain unknown except by the researcher.

### 3.11.4 Voluntary Participation

Participants must be fully aware that participation is voluntary in the research, and a researcher should inform the participants that they have the right to withdraw from the research for any or no reason and at any time (British Educational Research Association (BERA), 2018). Ensuring no coercion or deception, participants were not forced to participate in this study.

### 3.11.5 Protection from harm

According to the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2018), it is the duty of the researcher to protect and safeguard the wellbeing of participants involved in research, hence, the researcher must not cause harm to the participants. From the stage of design and planning, the researcher must anticipate the maximum possible benefits and the minimum possible harm to the participants. The researcher protected participants from physical, psychological, emotional, and social harm in the study.

### 3.11.6 Privacy

According to Denscombe (2021:22), researchers are supposed to respect participants' right to privacy and refrain from using approaches that are overly intrusive or that unjustifiably invade people's personal space. Participants were not harassed with calls at odd hours; there was consideration for people's emotions, and the research did not investigate too deeply into participants' private lives to the point that it caused participants' discomfort.

## 3.12 CONCLUSION

The study focused on youth unemployment as a development problem in the Vhembe District Municipality. The first chapter presented the - introduction, the background of the study that informs the research problem, the research aim and objectives, the research questions, the significance of the study, the delimitation of the study, relevant terms, and their application in the study. Finally, the chapter presented the research outline and summarised the contents of all chapters in the study. This second chapter explored the literature relating to youth unemployment and its effects on development in the South African context. The theories underlying unemployment and youth unemployment in general, as well as their applicability to the study, were revealed.

The study adopted a pragmatic research paradigm and employed a mix of methods. Vhembe District is the study's primary area of interest and the researcher used non-probability sampling, in which individuals were chosen based on the qualities needed for the investigation. Data collection for the study involved the use of questionnaires and interviews. Inferential statistics and thematic analysis were used to analyse the information gathered from the questionnaires and interviews. The data from the interview is presented as a narrative, whereas the data from the questionnaire is displayed as graphical frequency and percentage data. In order to assure participants of the security of their contributions to the study, in this chapter was detailed the ethical considerations adhered to; these were safeguarding participants' interests, inflicting no harm, ensuring voluntary participation, and basing participation on informed consent.

## CHAPTER 4

### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter is presented the findings, interpretations, and analyses of the data. The research data for this study comprises the fact-based, impartial views and opinions of participants and respondents, who were - unemployed youth, employees from the Department of Social Development, officials from the National Youth Development Agency, Vhembe District Municipal officials, community members and non-governmental organizations. Information and data concerning youth unemployment as a developmental problem in the Vhembe District of Limpopo Province were gathered through mixed methods, which involved quantitative and qualitative analyses.

This section is divided into two sub-sections, Section A and Section B. The researcher categorized each subsection into four (4) topics derived from the study's primary objective, which are - the state of youth unemployment in the Vhembe District, the causes of youth unemployment in the Vhembe District, the effects of youth unemployment in the Vhembe District, and the possible solutions and recommendations to address these youth unemployment problems, specifically in the Vhembe District.

Section A presents the biographical information of the respondents and a graphical analysis of the data collected through the research questionnaires on youth unemployment as a developmental problem in the Vhembe District of Limpopo Province. The total targeted sample size of the respondents was 30 unemployed youth, and a 100 percent response was achieved. The participants returned all thirty (30) surveys, to which they did their best to respond to the questions asked. The researcher's commitment to thoroughness is evident in the comprehensive review, examination, and analysis of all survey responses. The data gathered by questionnaires is presented using tables, frequencies, and percentages, with a detailed discussion of the results following each table.

Section B presents information obtained using interview questions the researcher asked of the participants; these were semi-structured interviews and the results are

displayed in a narrative style. Twenty (20) respondents were interviewed - employees from the Department of Social Development, officials from the National Youth Development Agency, Vhembe district municipal officials, community members, and non-governmental organizations. The results, however, will be presented by combining the opinions of all the participants; there were no correct or incorrect responses.

## **4.2 SECTION A**

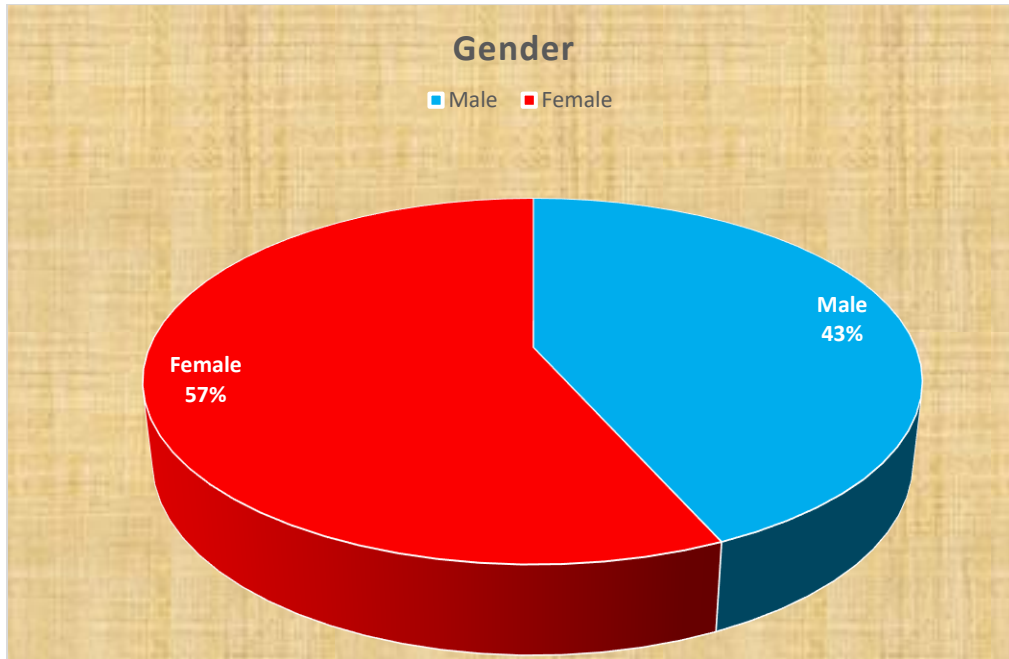
The findings from the questionnaires revealed biographical details of the respondents, the state of youth unemployment in the Vhembe district, the percentage of youth unemployment, the main reasons for youth unemployment, the impact of youth unemployment on development, and also the remedies to youth unemployment.

### **4.2.1 Biographical details of the respondents**

As indicated above, the study intends to compile the respondents' biographical data concerning their age, gender, education status, and municipality. The information in this subsection is presented in a tabular format, and the findings are briefly explained after the table.

#### **Figure 2: Gender of respondents**

Gender is a critical variable in understanding youth unemployment as a developmental issue within the Vhembe District. It provides insights into the gender-specific challenges and disparities that may influence unemployment rates and economic participation among the youth in the region. The figure below illustrates the gender distribution of the respondents.



The study involved 30 respondents, of which 43.3% ( $n = 13$ ) were male and 56.7% ( $n = 17$ ) were female. This indicates a balanced, proportional representation of both male and female respondents. It can be concluded that it was a fair selection of respondents, irrespective of the fact that females were the majority. The higher representation of female respondents in the study also suggest that more women were either available or willing to participate in the research.

The gender disparity in the sample is essential to consider when analysing youth unemployment in the Vhembe District, as it may reflect broader social dynamics. According to existing literature, gender plays a significant role in employment patterns, with women facing different challenges and opportunities to men in the labour market (Statistics from South Africa (2020)). The findings relating to youth unemployment may, therefore, be influenced by the gender composition of the respondents, and it is crucial to interpret them within this context. This understanding can help develop gender-sensitive strategies to address unemployment in the region.

**Figure 3: Age of respondents**

Determining the age of respondents is critical in the research, as it ensures that respondents fall within the specified age range that are impacted by unemployment.

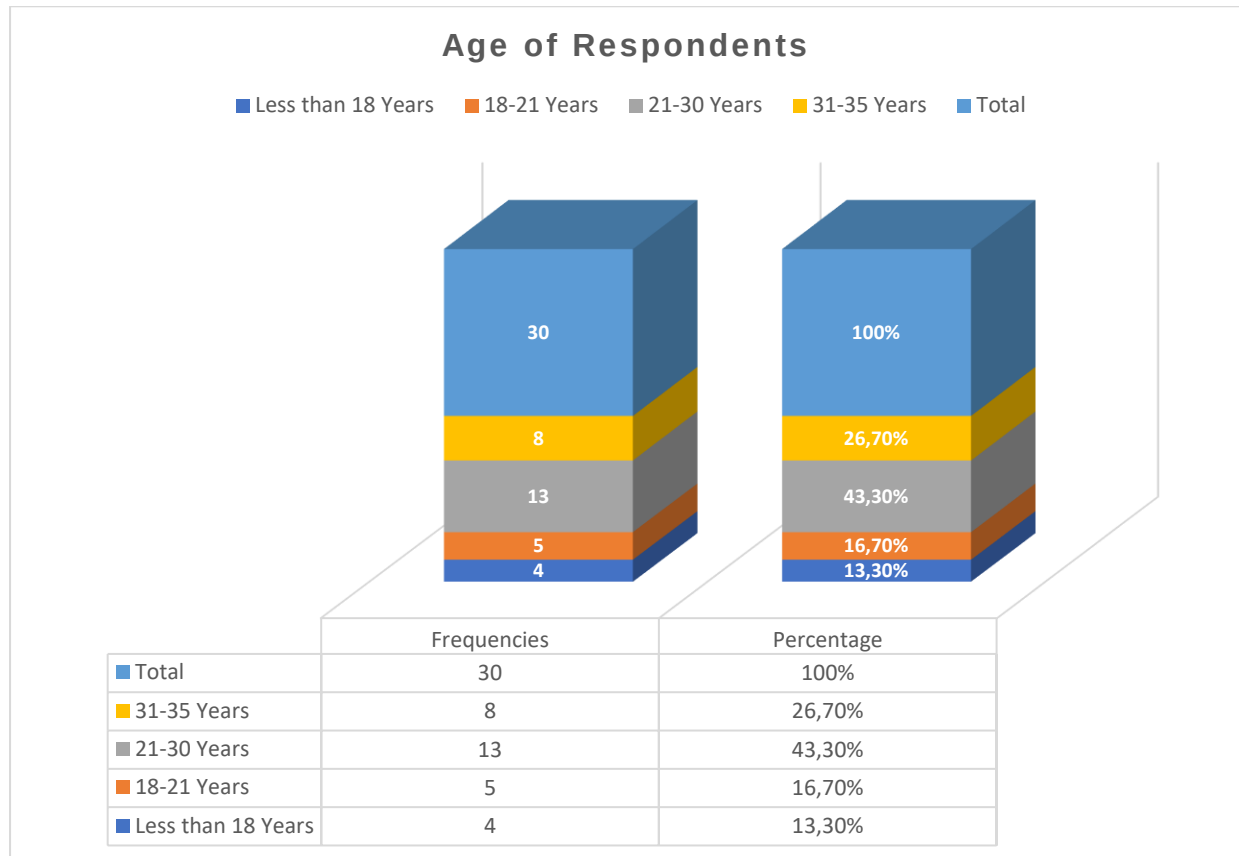


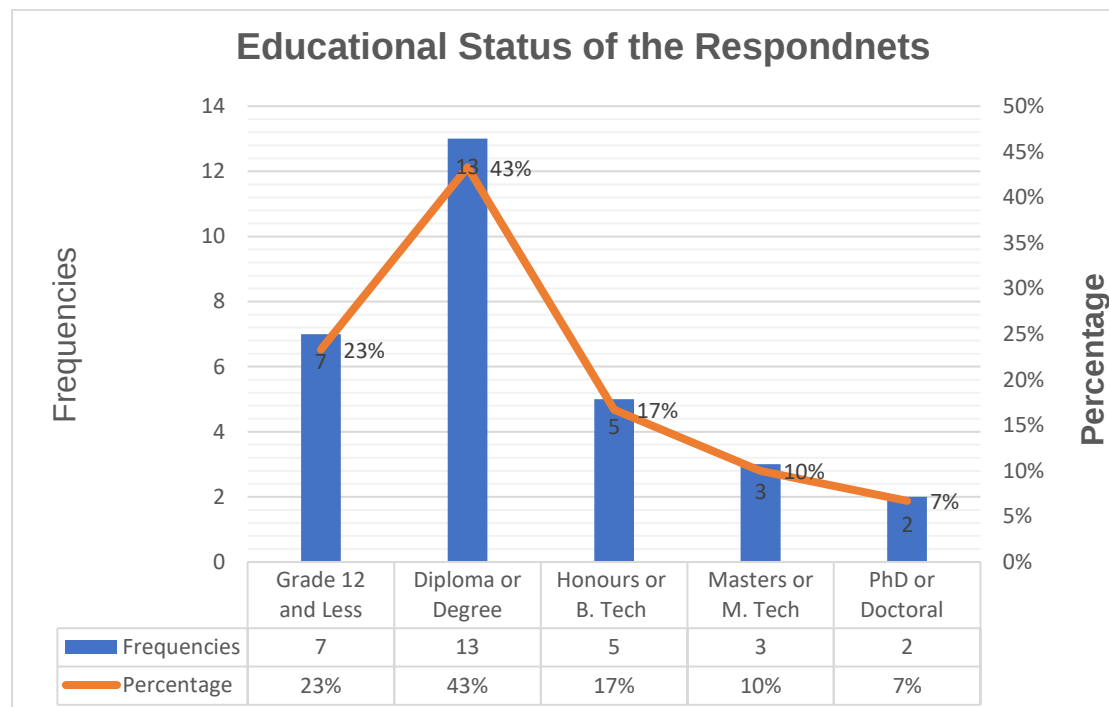
Figure 3 shows that the largest proportion, 43.3% ( $n = 13$ ), falls within the 21-30 age group. This is followed by 26.7% ( $n = 8$ ) in the 31-35 year group, 16.7% ( $n = 5$ ) in the 18-21 year group, and 13.3% ( $n = 4$ ) who are under 18 years.

This distribution suggests that the majority of respondents are in their early to late twenties, an age range that is typically associated with active participation in the labour market or transitioning from education to employment. The high percentage of respondents in the 21-30 years category could indicate that youth unemployment is particularly pressing among individuals in this age bracket, as they are most likely seeking employment or facing challenges in securing stable jobs.

Research indicates that young adults, especially those in their twenties, often encounter significant barriers to employment, including a lack of experience, skills mismatch, and economic factors. The representation of the 31-35 year group at 26.7% also highlights that unemployment issues extend beyond the younger segment of the youth population, affecting those who might have more experience but still face challenges in securing employment. The smaller percentages in the under-18 and 18-21 age groups suggest that while unemployment is an issue, it might be less pressing in these younger categories, possibly due to ongoing education or other factors delaying entry into the job market.

**Figure 4: Educational Status**

Understanding the educational status of unemployed youth helps assess their ability to contribute to development, as education is a major contributing factor in economic growth. The figure below illustrates the educational status of the respondents.



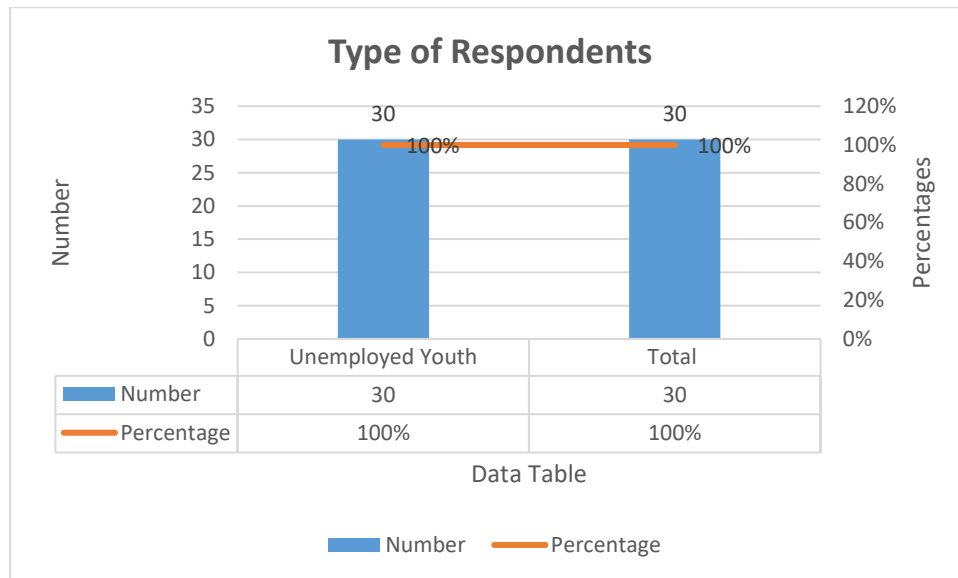
According to the data shown in figure 3, 23.3% ( $n = 7$ ) of the 30 respondents have Grade 12 or lower, followed by the largest 43.3% ( $n = 13$ ) who have a diploma or degree, 16.7% ( $n = 5$ ) have an honours or B.Tech degree, 10% ( $n = 3$ ) have a Master's or M.Tech degree, and 6.7% ( $n = 2$ ) have a PhD or doctoral qualification.

The results of this study demonstrate that youth unemployment in the Vhembe District affects people of all educational backgrounds. Many young unemployed people in the Vhembe District only have a Grade 12 education or less (23.3%); individuals in this category are less likely to have specific expertise or certificates, which significantly reduces their employment options, hence, it is tough for them to find permanent work, pushing many people into temporary positions with little or no stability (Graham & Mlatsheni (2021:139). The survey reveals that 43.3% of the youth in the Vhembe District have diplomas or degrees yet need help to find work; this indicates a disconnect between academic and labour market requirements and a lack of employment options, regardless of high education.

In the Vhembe District, 16.7% of residents with postgraduate degrees (honours or B.Tech.) are unemployed. The situation is more concerning, with 10% holding Master's degrees (M.Tech.) and 6.7% with PhDs or doctorates, highlighting severe underutilisation of human capital (Zwane, Radebe, & Mlambo, 2021:18). This data indicates that high levels of education do not guarantee employment in the District. The presence of such highly-educated individuals among the unemployed raises concerns about job market alignment and the support for graduates entering the workforce for despite substantial investments in education, these individuals struggle to find employment. This suggests deeper structural issues within the local economy, where opportunities for highly-qualified professionals are scarce or non-existent, highlighting a systemic inability for them to effectively utilise their qualifications. This under-representation further implies that higher education is no guarantee for employment, because even highly-qualified youth have difficulty finding employment that fits their needs. The shortage of opportunities suggests that the District is losing out on the potential for innovation, research, and development.

**Figure 5: Type of Respondent**

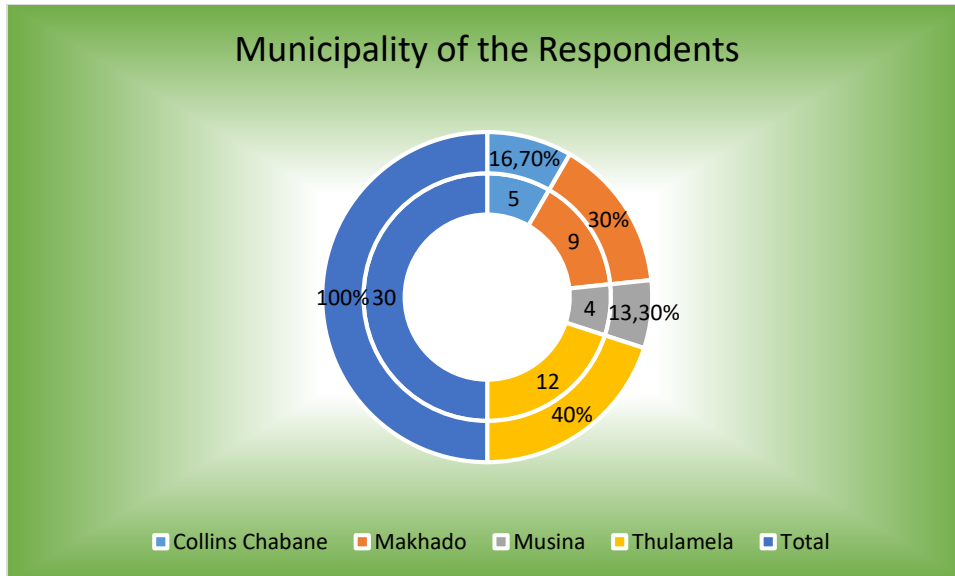
This method of questionnaires was unique in that the study's sole respondents are unemployed youth since they are the ones who deal with unemployment head-on and can offer significant insight into the study of youth unemployment.



The above data show that 30 unemployed respondents took part, making up 100%. The respondents were able to offer their direct viewpoints on their struggles and experiences. The involvement of 30 unemployed respondents in the study shows the seriousness of youth unemployment and the need for practical solutions. Their participation indicates how urgent the problem is and how crucial it is to include their viewpoints.

**Figure 6: Municipalities of the respondents**

The localities of the study participants are significant as they offer details on local variation in possibilities for work and the geographic distribution of joblessness.



The above chart shows that among the 30 respondents, 16.7% ( $n = 5$ ) are from Collins Chabane, and the largest group, 40% ( $n = 12$ ), is from Thulamela. 30% of the respondents ( $n = 9$ ) come from Makhado, and 13% ( $n = 4$ ) are from Musina. The frequency shows that the respondents are primarily from urban municipalities such as Thulamela and Makhado, with a smaller presence from remote regions such as Collins Chabane and Musina.

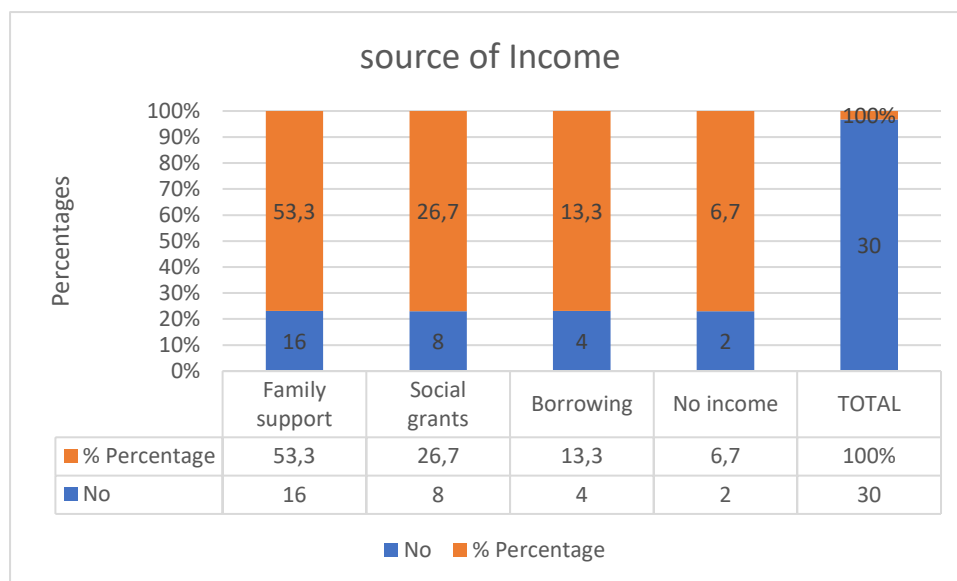
The above results indicate that youth unemployment is a problem that affects the entire Vhembe District. The findings show that Thulamela (40%) and Makhado (30%) have the largest percentage of respondents, whereas Collins Chabane (16.7%) and Musina (13.3%) have the lowest percentages. This distribution aligns with the reality that Collins Chabane and Musina are more rural, offering fewer economic prospects and lower industrial or commercial growth levels. This indicates that these places have fewer industries, enterprises, and facilities, which may make it harder for the youth there to find employment. Many young people may relocate to towns like Thulamela or Makhado in pursuit of greater job possibilities. This relocation further indicates difficulties in those municipalities, such as overcrowding and job competitiveness, increasing youth unemployment, and economic distress.

## 4.2.2. The current state of youth unemployment in the Vhembe District

### 4.2.2.1 Source of income

The information about the main source of income from unemployed youth in the Vhembe District points to a common reliance on outside financing. The majority rely on support from their families, and many rely on social grants or loans, while a smaller percentage of young people do not have a consistent source of income. Due to their dependency on informal sources of support, they are more economically vulnerable, showing their possible burden on social assistance and personal networks. This demonstrates the financial predicament that many young people in the area without jobs confront. The graph below demonstrates the key sources of income for unemployed youths.

**Figure 7: Source of income**



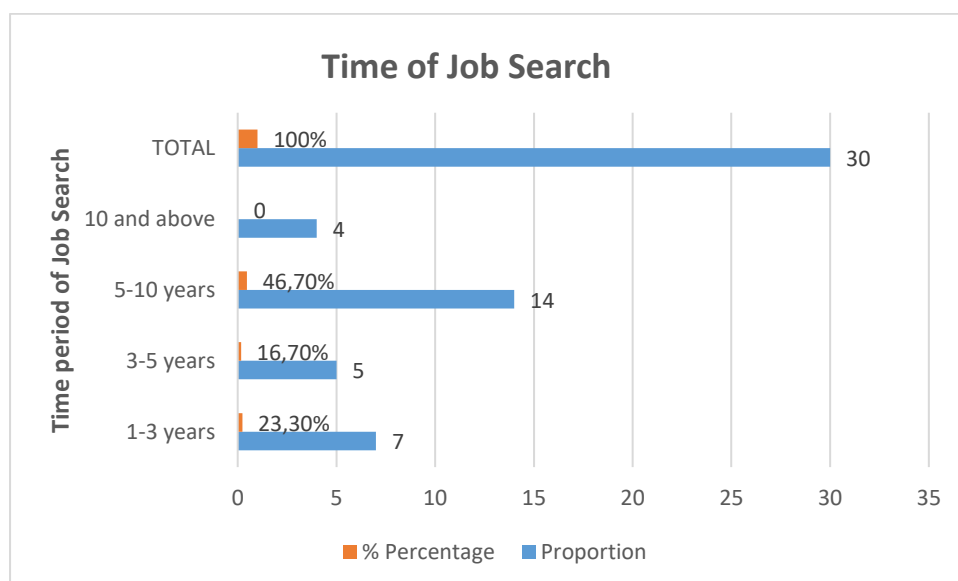
The findings demonstrate that more than half (53.3%) of young people without jobs rely on household help for financial stability, suggesting a deficiency in self-sufficient finances. The dominant reliance on family support indicates significant social and financial stress, the possibility of conflicts, strained and imbalanced relationships, pressure from the financial provider, and bitterness or feelings of dependence among unemployed youth as they do not make household contributions (Endres, 2024:8).

More than a quarter (26.7%) of participants rely on social grants. This highlights the lack of self-sufficient earnings and reliance on government assistance to cover their fundamental necessities, however, the grants do not cover all costs and have further challenges of delays and approval challenges. A smaller group (13.3%) of participants use borrowing as a last resort to fulfil their financial demands in the short term. The borrowing activities of jobless people indicate the danger of debt buildup, ruined credit, lawsuits, and diminished future loan and job security because of inadequate funds to pay back loans; 6.7% of respondents reported no income, indicating that a minority of youth in the region endure considerable economic hardship, rendering them more prone to poverty and social marginalisation. The overall data points to a precarious economic situation, limited capacity, and resources accessible to young people who are not employed; this shows the potential risk of extreme deprivation among the unemployed youth in the Vhembe region.

#### 4.2.2.2 Duration of job search

The data shows that most young people without jobs in the Vhembe District had been looking for work for several years, with some people experiencing unemployment for over ten years. This extended job search indicates the ongoing difficulties in finding work in the area. The figure below presents data about the duration of the job search.

**Figure 8: Time of Job search**

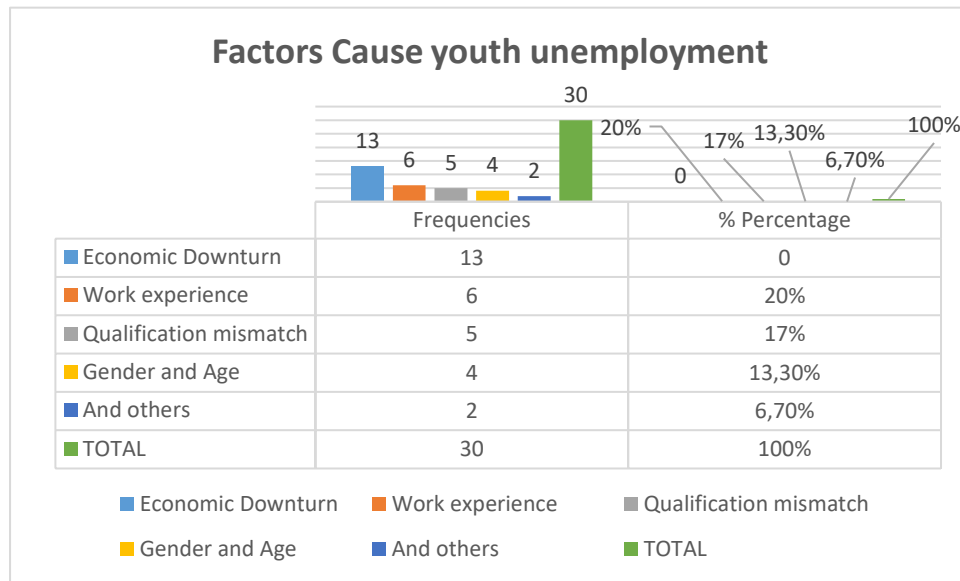


Nearly a quarter (23.3%) of respondents have been looking for work for one to three years, indicating that regardless of the initial stages of their career pursuit, they still encounter major barriers to employment. A significantly lower proportion (16.7%) has been looking for work for three to five years. This suggests that these people are going beyond short-term unemployment and are encountering longer-term difficulty in finding work. This indicates that the struggle is ongoing and spans a variety of time frames. Almost half of all respondents (46.7%) have been looking for work for five to ten years. This extended quest for employment suggests that young people in the Vhembe District encounter various challenges and problems in obtaining work. This underlines the structural problems preventing the establishment of jobs and employment prospects and further serious obstacles, such as skill degradation, for young people who want to enter the workforce. A lower percentage (13.3%) of respondents have been looking for employment for over a decade, indicating extreme long-term unemployment among the youth. This highlights their continuous difficulties in adjusting to the changing needs of the job market, which impedes their chances of finding steady employment. The overall data highlight that the length of job searches among the unemployed youth is longer than expected. This suggests that those who have been looking for work for years are no closer to securing work, and entrants to the workforce are joining the unemployed ranks quite swiftly. This indicates that youth unemployment is not a once-off issue but a long-term burden in the region. This indicates a chronic condition of youth unemployment in the Vhembe District (Limpopo Socio-economic Review and Outlook, 2022-2023).

#### **4.2.3 The causes of youth unemployment in the Vhembe District**

The findings demonstrate that most respondents indicated that several key factors influence youth unemployment in the Vhembe District. These factors are diverse and range from broader economic challenges to issues related to individual qualifications, work experience, and demographic characteristics. These factors collectively contribute significantly to the high unemployment rate among youth in the region. The Table 8 below presents data on these factors contributing to youth unemployment in the Vhembe District.

**Figure 9: Contributing Factors to Youth Unemployment**



Factor 1: The information provided in figure 9 illustrates significant factors that result in youth joblessness in the Vhembe District. The most common cause of youth unemployment, stated by the majority (43.3%) of respondents, is the economic slump, reflecting a larger economic challenge that hinders employment growth and prospects for youth. This indicates that the Vhembe District's economy is insufficient to support the youthful workers, thus, the high unemployment rates. This also points to intense competition for getting a job among the youth, as employment is scarce in the District, making it more difficult for young people to find work - further increasing the rate of youth unemployment. This suggests a failure due to inadequate funding for workforce development initiatives as well as insufficient coordination between several departments and economic strategies.

Factor 2: The second factor cited by 20% of respondents, is lack of work experience, suggesting that a majority of youths in the district lack the practical knowledge required to get employment, which is an obstacle to entering the workforce, maybe due to a lack of internship or entry-level job prospects. Sumberg et al. (2021:622) support this from the literature review. This also highlights that young people in the Vhembe District have qualifications and they are looking forward to work, yet the District does not value

or acknowledge their ability to advance their education and skills, as at some point unemployed youth take jobs that are less fulfilling and which do not utilise their skills.

Factor 3: The study shows that 16.7% of respondents identified qualification mismatch as another factor causing youth unemployment in the region. This suggests that many youths are entering the workforce lacking the appropriate qualifications or abilities employers desire, making it very challenging to find employment. This qualification mismatch implies that the educational system is not effectively connected with industrial requirements, leading to a discrepancy between what young people are studying and what is needed in the labour market. These findings are consistent with revelations from the literature review in Chapter 2 (South Africa National Human Development Report, 2022:71).

Factor 4: The respondents (13.3%) indicate that age and gender-related demographic issues continue to be significant factors in the District's high rate of young unemployment, implying that certain populations are encountering further job impediments, such as age-specific or gender-based discrimination. The literature revealed similar concerns (Statistics South Africa, 2020). This suggests that cultural and traditional values affect hiring procedures, restricting opportunities for particular genders in Districts where young women may face constrained employment possibilities in sectors that men usually occupy. The same applies to specific age groups; job seekers may struggle with employers' lack of trust or confidence regarding their maturity to take on particular roles. This suggests prolonged durations without a job, higher levels of unemployment among this generation, and the possibility of further exacerbating wider social injustices.

Other factors: The findings indicate that 6.7% of respondents identified additional causes of youth unemployment, such as discrimination and the effect of corrupt practices in the area. This implies that some unemployed young people in the local area are disadvantaged because of favoritism or bribery rather than a lack of qualifications or capacity. Alawad, Kreishan, and Selim (2020:153) affirm this viewpoint in the literature. This action indicates poor performance, errors, and inefficiencies in service delivery, diminishing the quality of service provision in the

region since employment is not offered to the most competent youth but rather to those who can afford bribes or have connections to influential people.

The same number of respondents (6.7%) added that constraint on transportation, technology, and internet access is another factor adversely affecting youth's employment prospects in remote locations. This reflects the widened divide between urban and rural areas in the Vhembe District. They further revealed that the youth in rural areas are more likely to stay in low-income groups, resulting in denied job opportunities, training, and education. Graha & Mlatsheni (2021:138) shared the same view in the literature. This implies a lack of technology and qualified teachers to offer instruction in digital literacy in remote area schools, leave young people unprepared for jobs in the digital economy. This suggests that the government is not doing enough to guarantee equal accessibility to the means required for youth's active engagement in the economy, further undermining employment possibilities and economic growth in rural regions. The overall data suggest constraints concerning the facilitation of youth development and workforce integration, which further constitute an atmosphere of continuous youth unemployment in the District.

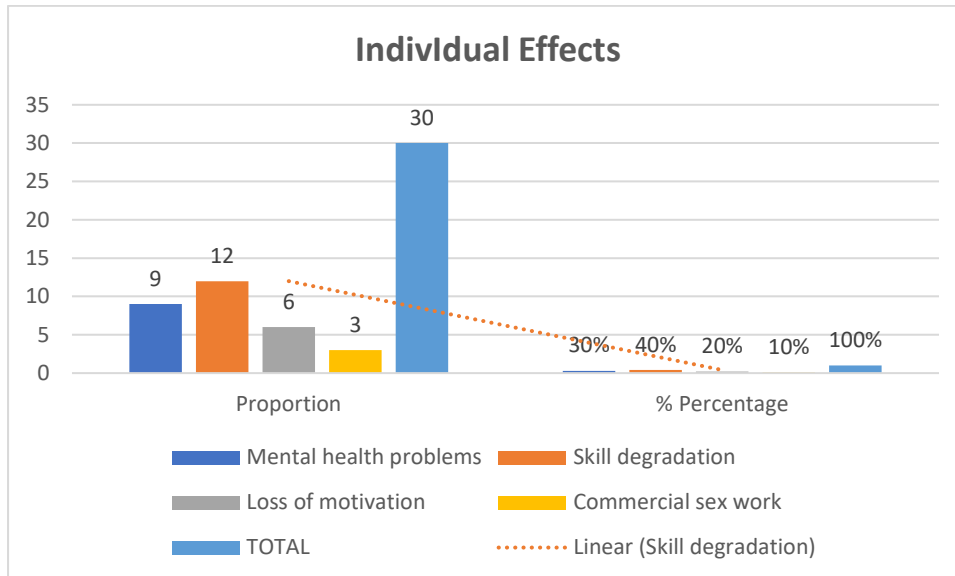
#### **4.2.4 The effects of youth unemployment on development in the Vhembe District**

The results indicate that youth unemployment poses a serious development concern in the Vhembe District; this is presented by a complex set of challenges that extend across individual, economic, social, and political spheres. These interrelated effects create a cycle that severely hampers development efforts in the Vhembe District.

##### **4.2.4.1 The personal effects**

The study found that youth unemployment has serious negative effects on individuals, which further limit the Vhembe District's development. Based on the data, a large number of young people without jobs claimed that they are stuck in a cycle of inactivity since they are unable to advance their careers, develop personally, or find work in the future. Youth also brought attention to issues related to mental health and the rise of survival strategies, including commercial sex work, as a result of youth unemployment.

**Figure 10: Effects of youth unemployment on individual well-Being**



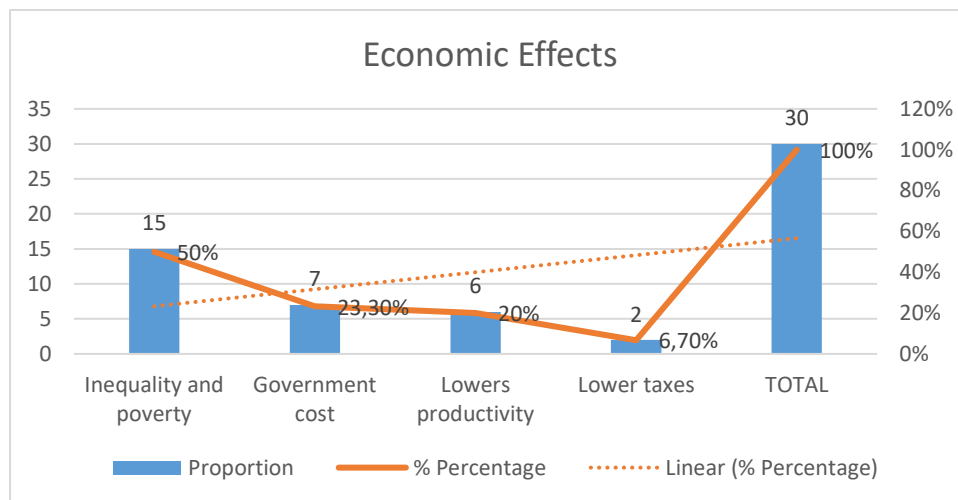
The data reveal that youth unemployment affects individual growth in various facets of life. The largest percentage of responses (40%) implies that youth who experience prolonged unemployment suffer from skill degradation, which adversely affect their development as individuals. This points to a weaker regional economy and reduced human capital in the area. More than a quarter (30%) of respondent assert that the negative effects include a deterioration in mental health, as a result of psychological issues, such as higher rates of anxiety, depression, despair, loneliness, and low self-esteem, indicating a possible elevated risk of suicidal thoughts. This also suggests a lack of social disengagement, fewer possibilities for networking, and a weaker sense of community involvement, all of which are detrimental to one's ability to find employment and advance personally. It further aligns with the point made by Fergusson & Yeates (2021:1) in the literature review on the effects of youth unemployment. Approximately 20% of respondents identified a loss of motivation as a significant effect of unemployment. This creates difficulty in identifying life goals and professional aspirations due to demotivation among unemployed youth. The least percentage (10%) of respondents affirm that some of the unemployed youth resort to commercial sex work as a means for survival. This activity encourages illness transmission, leads to dangerous and unethical survival techniques, and weakens

society's moral and cultural foundations. The overall data suggest a pervasive problem that compromises individual and community development as a whole.

#### 4.2.4.2 The economic effects

The study shows that youth unemployment does not affect only individuals but also fuels economic challenges. The results show that the Vhembe District economy is greatly impacted by youth unemployment, which is causing inequality and poverty. The results further indicate that it is difficult for young people to achieve their fundamental necessities, widening the socio-economic gap and delaying equitable development. Furthermore, a cycle of stagnation is created in the District as a result of rising welfare expenses, which puts a burden on public resources and lower production and tax revenues. All these limit the District's economic potential, hindering growth and development.

**Figure 11: Economic effects of youth unemployment**



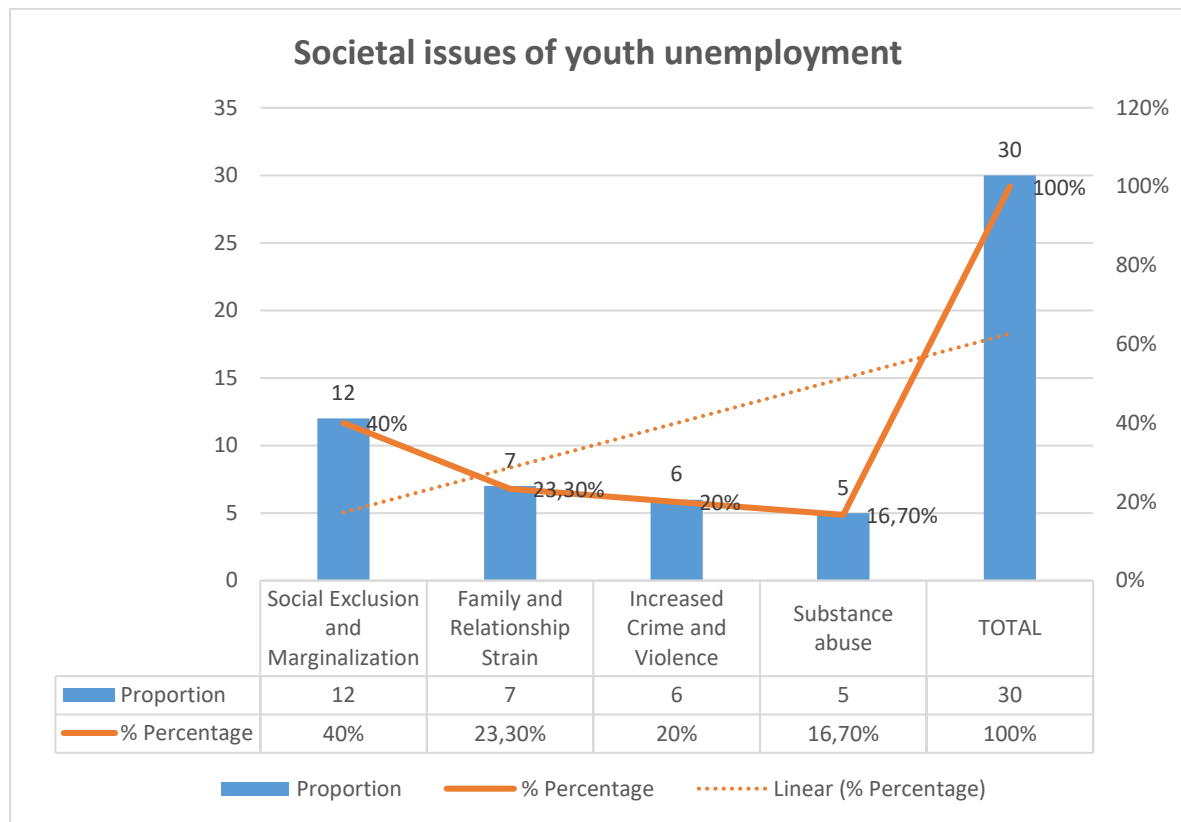
Majority or half of the respondents (50%) indicated that youth joblessness has a major impact on poverty and inequality, hindering national progress. The youth revealed that unemployment impedes them from fulfilling their fundamental requirements and exacerbates poverty and inequality. This highlights a struggle among the unemployed youth to sustain themselves, and the presence of barriers that prevent them from improving their situations as they are restricted in terms of their capacity to pay for the education or the training they need, to enhance their employment prospects due to joblessness. This further indicates a growing divide between the wealthy and the poor,

reducing efforts to achieve inclusive development in the Vhembe District. The most significant effect of youth unemployment, according to (23.3%) of respondents, is the increase in government expenses, indicating that more funds are allocated to welfare programs, which puts more pressure on the government. About (20%) respondents revealed that youth unemployment has a major impact on the Vhembe District economy as it lowers productivity. This indicates that many businesses are not operating in the Vhembe District as there is low demand and fewer commodities and services are offered because unemployed youth tend to spend less on consumer goods, resulting in lower production and possible layoffs. The lowest percentage (6.7%) of respondent cited less taxation money as a result of youth unemployment. This suggests that less money is generated in the Vhembe District from consumer spending and income tax as many youths are unemployed. The combined data indicate why the government is spending less on public services, such as development infrastructure and growth initiatives that can help reduce unemployment. This points to a vicious cycle of stagnant economic growth in the District.

#### **4.2.4.3 The social effects**

The results reveal that youth unemployment was identified as a significant contributor to societal issues such as exclusion, marginalisation, isolation, strain on family ties, and substance misuse. This further deteriorates family ties and reduces employment opportunities. Youth unemployment has also been indicated as making young people more susceptible to detrimental behaviours such as crime, which destabilise communities. The study revealed that unemployed youth tend to engage in substance misuse as a coping strategy; this further disintegrates communities and perpetuates the joblessness cycle, limiting District development.

**Figure 12: Societal issues of youth unemployment**



The majority of respondents (40%) highlighted social exclusion and marginalisation as the most significant social consequences of youth unemployment. The respondents declared that the effects of youth unemployment include social withdrawal among unemployed youth, where it is difficult for them to connect with peers, especially those working and pursuing careers, and this leads to isolation. This points to a lack of social engagement, fewer possibilities for networking, and a weaker sense of community, all of which are detrimental to one's ability to find employment. The second group of respondents (23,3%) asserts that strain on relationships and families is a social effect, indicating the need of providing resources for the unemployed youth. The situation further creates possible tensions, financial pressure, conflicts, and divide in interpersonal relationships. The (20%) of respondent added that the shortage of structured activities related to work contributes to negative peer influence, where young people without jobs drift towards harmful social behaviours such as criminal activities. This implies an increased rate of stealing and robbery, as well as other related criminal activities, significantly impaired unemployed youths' ability to

contribute to the social and community development of the Vhembe region. Four respondents (16.7%) reported substance misuse as a societal consequence of unemployment. This indicates that unemployed youth have trouble coping with stress issues related to their situation. In general, the data suggests a diminished general quality of life and increased environmental insecurity, for the unemployed further impeding regional development.

#### 4.2.4.4 The Political effects

The study found that youth unemployment affected not just the financial situation of the area but also the political climate and governmental structures of the region. According to the research, many young people without jobs become less involved in politics and have lost faith in the government as a result of their unemployment. The district's capacity to uphold political unity and undertake democratic development projects is hampered by this disengagement, which also reduces political accountability and undermines democratic processes, further impeding district development.

**Table 1: Political effects of youth unemployment**

|   | Political Effects              | Proportion | % Percentage |
|---|--------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| 1 | Lower Political Participation  | 16         | 53,3%        |
| 2 | Political Instability          | 9          | 30%          |
| 3 | Erosion of Trust in Government | 5          | 16,7         |
|   | <b>TOTAL</b>                   | <b>30</b>  | <b>100 %</b> |

The results indicate that a proportion of 16 out of 30 respondents cited lower political participation as the most significant political effect of youth unemployment. More than half (53.3%) of Vhembe's unemployed youth consider themselves estranged from the political process. This reflects a widespread sense of disenfranchisement or discontent with the efficacy of political institutions. A decrease in political involvement suggests

poor democratic governance, which undermines the authority of institutions, further reducing political responsibility and minimising responsibility of elected authorities. Nearly a third of respondents (30%) affirm youth unemployment contributes to political instability in the Vhembe District. This highlights possibilities of violent protests, participation in civil disobedience, and movements against the established order in the District. This also points to social unrest, which impairs the sense of collaboration and solidarity within society, further complicating administration and hindering the government's ability to exercise authority, implement programs, and deliver services in the Vhembe District which in turn deters development. Furthermore, a small percentage (16.7%) of respondents claim that youth unemployment lowers public trust in the government. This suggests a lack of contentment with the government's ability to manage the District's economy and create jobs. It also raises the possibility of opposition parties receiving more support, hence, suggesting less cooperation between the populace and political elites, which is detrimental to the District's development.

#### **4.2.5 Recommended mechanisms to address youth unemployment**

Respondents made a variety of suggestions to combat youth unemployment in the Vhembe District. The most often recommended tactic focused on the urgency of government support for small businesses and the creation of jobs, highlighting the vital role that these businesses fulfil in local job prospects and economic development. Making sure that youths obtain long-term employment following training programs is a further vital suggestion, given that this will assist in bridging the gap between education and job stability. Participants further asserted the value of aligning educational curricula with market requirements to prepare youths with the competencies desired by employers. In addition, they suggested the need for assisting people who are marginalised; these include people from deprived communities and those who reside in rural regions, as well as those suffering systemic challenges such as disadvantage or limited access to excellent education. Some of the young people emphasised the necessity for greater efforts to combat corruption, stating that eliminating corruption in government institutions will enhance the equity and openness of hiring processes. These suggestions demonstrate the need for an integrated, all-encompassing strategy to address youth unemployment.

**Table 2: Strategies to address youth unemployment**

| No | Response                               | Proportion | % Percentage |
|----|----------------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| 1  | Investment in Job Creation             | 11         | 36,7%        |
| 2  | Permanent jobs post-training           | 7          | 23,3%        |
| 3  | Align educational curricula            | 6          | 20%          |
| 4  | Support for marginalized groups        | 4          | 13,3%        |
| 5  | Strengthen anti-corruption initiatives | 2          | 6,7%         |
|    | <b>TOTAL</b>                           | <b>30</b>  | <b>100 %</b> |

The first strategy that the respondents suggested was investment in job creation. This approach garnered the most significant frequency of responses (11) at 36.7%, suggesting that many participants believe that job development is essential to reducing youth unemployment. This requires a reduction in the costs of entrepreneurial operations through tax refunds or grants, which will then encourage firms to invest in the District and generate new job possibilities for youth. The investment in enterprises may expand the workforce and further sustain economic growth. This approach highlights the broad understanding of the need for boosting the economy to reduce youth unemployment.

The second most widely suggested approach, represented by 23.3% of respondents, centres on making sure young people have permanent jobs after finishing training programs. This remark underscores the need for efficient transitional processes that will allow young people to go from school or training to steady employment. The respondents' concern for work security indicates a focus on training programs' accessibility and the requirement for measurable employment results that foster long-term professional development.

A substantial number of responders at (20%) stressed the significance of matching curriculum in schools to marketplace requirements. This approach proposes

acknowledging the existing skills gap and the necessity for educational institutions to suitably equip young people for employment prospects. Curricula can be modified to better suit industrial demands, giving young people more employable skills. This indicates the need for frequent discussions with employers and leaders in the field that may help to ensure curriculum updates to take into account future and present changes in the labour market

The results showed that few respondents (13,3%) point out the need for prioritising equality through support for marginalised groups. This indicates awareness of the particular difficulties that people from underprivileged origins encounter while trying to find work, such as persons from rural areas, low-income households, women, persons with disabilities, and members of ethnic minorities. These individuals frequently face systemic issues such as social exclusion, discrimination, and limited access to high-quality education. This suggests efforts such as inclusive job training programs, financial support, mentorship, and affirming-action policies that guarantee fair distribution of resources and employment opportunities necessary to alleviate youth joblessness among these demographics. This focus on equality highlights the necessity for solutions that are holistic, which consider the needs of young people in general, including those who are most at-risk for joblessness, in an effort to improve levels of opportunity, encourage inclusion throughout the job market, and build an inclusive economy where no one is left behind because of their current status or history. This further suggests a consciousness of social justice and the significance of fair distribution of resources and assistance networks.

The research reports that a small percentage (6,7%) of young people in the Vhembe District understand that the government must act more forcefully to combat employment process misconduct. This may be due to the fact that activists who reveal corrupt activities frequently confront risks of retaliation, which deters individuals from coming forward and permits corrupt practices to remain unresolved. This further implies that corruption is deeply rooted in government institutions, hence, it is difficult to eradicate and enact changes because of resistance from people and organisations that stand to gain from the status quo. This necessitates an extensive and ongoing approach to address these issues and increase youth employment in the Vhembe

District; this remedy requires public participation, capacity building, legal reforms, and capable political leadership.

#### **4.2.6 CONCLUSION**

The results of the study on youth unemployment in the Vhembe District reflect a multidimensional phenomenon that has a significant influence on people's lives and the larger societal environment. The statistics show a strong reliance on outside financial help, with more than half of unemployed individuals receiving family assistance and social resources, highlighting the severe economic circumstances endured by this group of people. Additionally, the length of time the youth had spent looking for work, range for many of them, for longer than five years, thus, highlighting structural impediments to employment that sustain a vicious cycle of financial instability. These difficulties are made worse by a number of underlying variables, which involve economic slumps, a lack of job experience, qualification discrepancies, and demographic inequality, which have negative personal, financial, and societal implications in the long run. Joblessness among young people has far-reaching consequences, stifling development, exacerbating poverty, and putting a strain on government funds. To promote sustainable development and lessen the negative consequences of youth unemployment in the Vhembe region, it is essential to tackle the underlying causes and put specific measures into place.

#### **4.3 SECTION B**

This section entails the results from interviews with diverse participants. The responses below offer a detailed insight into the District's youth unemployment challenge. The interview data is constructed to answer the main study question: What is the present condition of young unemployment in the Vhembe District, what causes it, how does it affect development, and what remedies are available? Data is displayed in a narrative style; responses are thematically categorized under each inquiry and thoroughly classified based on respondents' common perceptions. Groups are labelled alphabetically (A, B, C, etc.) to ensure clarity and consistency throughout the analysis, regardless of the number of groups necessary for each topic. This strategy allows for flexibility while emphasizing repeating trends, unique ideas,

and the participants' collective perspective of young people's joblessness in the region.

#### **4.3.1 Question 1: What is the current state of youth unemployment in the Vhembe District?**

The first inquiry sought to determine the current extent of young people's unemployment picture in the Vhembe District. The participants' results reflect a common perception of the urgent status of youth unemployment in the Vhembe District. They revealed views on the issue's enduring character, pointing out the high unemployment rates among young people. The respondents also indicated that regardless of the execution of different efforts and programs, significant youth unemployment problems remain widespread, suggesting that many youths in the District are still unemployed. Responses revealed that the District confronts considerable obstacles in job development, and numerous youth still have trouble getting employment, highlighting the persistent severity of youthful unemployment in the area.

##### **Group A Participants**

*Participants: A1, A2, A3*

Group A participants regard youth unemployment as a persistent and widespread issue in the Vhembe District. The respondents indicated that many young individuals, especially those in rural regions, struggle to find work regardless of their commitment and credentials. Officials stated that although certain young people are constantly seeking work, many have become disillusioned and may have given up searching given the absence of suitable options. This illustrates the substantial youth joblessness rate; hence, the numerous individuals striving to enter the job field in the Vhembe District.

##### **Group B Participants**

*Participants: B4, B5, B6, B7*

The participants revealed that youth unemployment is a significant socio-economic

problem in the District, where most of the youngsters are either unemployed or not involved in constructive activities. The respondents further claimed that the District's current job market is associated with few job openings and stiff competition. The persistently high youth unemployment rate indicates the apparent career disparity, especially among those with less education and training.

### **Group C Participants**

*Participants: C8, C9, C10*

The participants in this group stated that youth unemployment continues to rise, making it difficult for many young people in the region to find permanent work. The Vhembe district officials affirm that through their dedication to enhancing young people's living standards, they have created several projects to boost young people's involvement in the local economy during the last five fiscal years. These initiatives are - Local Economic Development (LED) programs, the Youth Employment Service, Vhembe District Municipality's Youth Empowerment programs, and the Expanded Public Works Program - which aim to generate youth employment through collaborations with local companies using internships and apprenticeships. The Vhembe District's youth unemployment rate, however, is still rising, which suggests that these existing initiatives might not sufficiently address the underlying reasons for the problem. This indicates that present initiatives might not be enough to close the gap between the requirements of the youth population and the possibilities that are now accessible. The persistently high youth unemployment rates may further indicate a lack of interaction with local companies to generate long-term work prospects.

### **Group D Participants**

*Participants: D11, D12, D13, D14*

Group D participants revealed that many young individuals in the District still face unemployment, highlighting the persistent challenge of youth unemployment. Officials at the Department of Social Development stated that there are measures in place to assist with employment provision among the unemployed in the region. These include programs such as - the Youth Development Programme, Youth Employment Support

Programme, Social Relief of Distress, and National Youth Service. These initiatives offer vital support and instruction to promote youth employability; nevertheless, youth unemployment continues to rise despite these initiatives. The persistent high youth unemployment rates suggest that many young people still do not have access to the networks and information needed to successfully navigate the job market, implying that structural obstacles keep young people from finding steady work in the region.

### **Group E Participants**

*Participants: E15, E16, E17*

According to participants in group E at the NYDA, youth unemployment is an ongoing challenge in the Vhembe district. Participants also mentioned that they have developed several programs, such as the Youth Entrepreneurship Program and skill-development projects, to promote youth employment and development. Many of the youth, however, continue to struggle to get sustainable jobs, implying that the youth unemployment rate is still rising despite these initiatives. This suggests the limited efficacy of current initiatives and programs developed to promote youth employment. The growing number of young people without sufficient employment possibilities suggests that their programs alone might not address the root causes of the region's unemployment problems.

### **Group F Participants**

*Participants: F18, F19, F20*

According to group F respondents, the unemployment rate among youth in Vhembe District has not declined in recent years, indicating a persistent difficulty. The respondents said specific young unemployed individuals take advantage of the aid measures to combat youth unemployment, while others are unaware of the initiatives. This shows that existing outreach efforts are insufficient, resulting in low engagement with available resources. Furthermore, the inadequate resources allotted to these programs worsen the problem, resulting in a lack of comprehensive support for the youth in the District. Despite these assistance efforts, youths remain unemployed, and

the rate in the Vhembe District continues to rise, demonstrating a disconnect between available support and the actual needs of the youth population.

Group A, B, D, E, and F participants expressed similar concerns about youth unemployment in the Vhembe District. They all agreed that, regardless of numerous attempts to resolve that problem, youth joblessness remains high. Participants in group A emphasized the issues that rural youngsters experience in finding work, while participants in B noted that job prospects are rare and very competitive. Respondents in class D pointed out the difficulties youth experience in obtaining job networks and resources. In addition, respondents in group E stated that programs such as the Youth Entrepreneurship Program have not considerably eased the problem. Participants in F underscored the scarcity of resources and outreach, suggesting that many young adults lack knowledge about potential support measures.

Participants in groups A, C, D, and E agreed that present youth unemployment-reduction strategies are ineffective. Participants in A talked about how youths, regardless of their degrees, struggle to obtain jobs, especially in rural communities. Participants in group C noted that initiatives, such as Local Economic Development (LED) programs and the Youth Employment Service, have been ineffective in reducing unemployment. Group D participants reported a lack of resources for accessing key employment networks. Participants in category E added that initiatives have not proved adequate to address the needs of the expanding number of young unemployed, demonstrating a mismatch between program offers and job market expectations.

Participants in groups B, C, and F highlighted the difficulties brought on by insufficient resources and job prospects. Participants in group C pointed out that joblessness is still rising despite current efforts, while group B noted the intense demand for the small number of limited available jobs. Participants in category F stated that insufficient funding has made it more difficult for initiatives to assist young people in finding work, although numerous young individuals lack knowledge of existing assistance measures, contributing to the district's persistent unemployment problem.

#### **4.3.2. Question 2: What causes youth unemployment in the Vhembe district?**

The second inquiry aimed to determine the causes of youth unemployment in the Vhembe district. The study data indicated that interrelated factors contribute to youth unemployment in the Vhembe District. Respondents highlighted that economic stagnation and limited growth in the District have hindered job creation, exacerbated by a lack of investment in infrastructure and businesses. Another notable problem participants identified is the discrepancy between young individuals' competencies and businesses' requirements, suggesting that educational and training systems are misaligned with the market's requirements. Moreover, inadequate educational quality, obsolete curricula, and insufficient resources exacerbate the issue, rendering many young people unqualified for the job market. Participants also highlighted the District's inadequacy in fostering innovation and technical progress, constraining employment prospects in emerging areas. Furthermore, the absence of funding for young business owners limits their options for working for themselves. The spatial differences between rural and urban areas make youth unemployment even worse because rural populations have fewer job opportunities and more obstacles to employment.

#### **Group A Participants**

*Participants: A1, A2, A3*

In answering question two, the participants pointed out that Vhembe District is facing economic stagnation. There has not been any steady growth in the local economy, which hinders the establishment of new work prospects. Elements, including the lack of investment in regional infrastructure and firms, further exacerbated the situation. The participants reveal that the Vhembe District's lack of ongoing economic development and stagnation affect businesses' ability to develop or recruit more workers, which raises the unemployment rate and reduces job possibilities. The Vhembe District's economic stagnation highlights obsolete economic models and deficiencies in policy formulation, which makes it difficult for the area to value creativity and adjust to changing market conditions. This results in the decline of the District's overall competitiveness and a high unemployment rate.

## **Group B Participants**

*Participants: B4, B5, B6*

Participants in group B responded that one of the significant causes of youth unemployment in the Vhembe District is the problem of skills mismatch. The disconnect arises when job seekers' skills are incompatible with the competencies employers require, ultimately resulting in high unemployment rates. This disconnection indicates a systemic failure to deliver pertinent and practical skills that are in demand, resulting in an excess of young adults who are enthusiastic to work yet lack the requisite qualifications to obtain jobs.

## **Group C Participants**

*Participants: C7, C8, C9,*

The respondents stated that the youth have insufficient knowledge of employer hiring preferences. They assert that most youth applying for employment do not adequately comprehend the qualities and abilities that businesses value. The disparity between the expectations of employers and the impressions provided by job searchers contributes to the difficulty for youths in finding work. This indicates insufficient professional coaching and mentoring programs in schools and communities, which do not adequately inform youth about the skills and traits valued by employers. This also highlights insufficient exposure to the workplace via internships and work-related learning, leaving young individuals lacking a comprehensive understanding of the working environment.

## **Group D Participants**

*Participants: D10, D11, D12*

The participants in group D responded to the second question. They revealed that educational standards in the Vhembe District are a severe challenge because schools and training facilities frequently lack the resources and appropriate curricula necessary to deliver relevant contemporary learning, leading to a generation that is inadequately equipped for the workforce. Inadequate educational quality in the

Vhembe District highlights a number of interconnected systemic, economic, and social issues. Key challenges include limited funding for schools, which results in a shortage of supplies and skilled educators; furthermore, poverty limits community investment in education and hinders advocacy for needed reforms. Ineffective governance complicates the situation by resulting in a lack of support from local government to improve educational quality. Together, these factors perpetuate inadequate education and limit young people's future prospects regarding employment in the District.

### **Group E Participants**

*Participants: E13, E14*

Group E participants responded to the second question and stated that the District's lack of effort to promote creativity and technological development significantly contributes to youth unemployment. In today's environment, technical advancement and innovation are critical to economic success. This suggests that the Vhembe region continues to be largely reliant on conventional industries that are not growing sufficiently rapidly to cater for its growing youth population. The District, therefore, is underprepared for success in job-creating sectors that are expanding worldwide, resulting in high rates of youth unemployment in the area.

### **Group G Participants**

*Participants: G15, G16, G17*

Respondents viewed the lack of financial assistance for youth to start small businesses as restricting young people's ability to work for themselves, thereby resulting in high unemployment in the District. This increases the risk of losing creative business ideas that may promote District economic growth. They further assert that the lack of uniformity and efficacy in entrepreneurship education makes it very difficult for young people to get the guidance and assistance they need to launch and grow their businesses. This suggests a deficiency among youth in the Vhembe District in terms of knowledge, capabilities, and certainty that are needed for business management. This contributes to high rates of youth unemployment in the area.

## Group F Participants

*Participants: F18, F19, F20*

Participants in group F answered that youth employment prospects are limited by geographic disparities within the District. Rural communities have fewer job options, particularly when contrasted with urban areas, exacerbating the rate of youth unemployment in the area. Many young individuals from rural areas cannot access job prospects due to low social capital and high job-seeking expenses. Such challenges are tough to overcome in rural and impoverished communities; this indicates a lack of funding for rural development. The inability to provide equal job possibilities reflects ongoing neglect of rural individuals and insufficient support for rural youth. This results in an increased rate of youth unemployment.

Groups of participants in A, B, C, D, and E expressed similar concerns about the influence of education and skills on youth unemployment in the Vhembe District. They all agreed that the District had a substantial skills' mismatch, which means that employment seekers' qualifications and competencies are inconsistent with what companies demand. Participants in B stated that many young individuals do not have the essential abilities needed to secure job opportunities; in addition, participants in C remarked that the youthful people have little information about employer requirements, which impedes their job-search efforts. Additionally, participants in D talked about the low quality of education, noting insufficient resources and outmoded curricula that render individuals' qualifications unfit for the job market. Participants in E reiterated this sentiment, stating that a lack of emphasis in school on innovation and technological advancement limits young people's opportunities in a fast-changing employment environment. Their findings highlight the critical need for comprehensive educational changes and improved skills-training programs to better equip youngsters for employment prospects.

Participants in A, E, F, and G brought attention to the economic issues that underpin youth unemployment in the Vhembe District. They voiced concerns about the lack of capital in emerging sectors; this has hampered the development of jobs and caused the region's economic stagnation. Participants in F made a comment that young

entrepreneurs' capacity to launch small enterprises is hampered by the lack of financial support, which consequently reduces the number of job prospects. Participants in G highlighted the geographical differences in the District, pointing out that fewer employment opportunities exist in rural areas than in urban ones, which exacerbates these youth unemployment rates. Furthermore, Participants A and E stated that the region's dependence on out-of-date economic frameworks and conventional sectors limits its ability to compete and adapt in a constantly shifting marketplace.

Participants in the C, D, and F groups indicated concern regarding the shortage of assistance and resources available to youth in the Vhembe District, which plays a considerable role in high unemployment rates. Participants in C highlighted that finding a job is more difficult for young individuals because they frequently lack information on the abilities and characteristics that employers value. Participants in D brought attention to the poor quality of education, pointing out that many training facilities and institutions lack the resources needed to deliver efficient instruction, leaving graduates ill-prepared for the workforce. Participants in F further highlighted that young people have difficulty finding prospects for self-employment in the absence of sufficient financial support for business. Combining their observations shows how urgently better educational materials, mentorship initiatives, and funding are needed to support young people as they pursue careers.

#### **4.3.3 Question 3: How does youth unemployment affect development in the Vhembe District?**

The study's results indicate various socio-economic effects of youth unemployment on development in the Vhembe District. Participants reported significant issues such as intergenerational poverty, economic instability, and decreased regional resource generation. Respondents point out that lack of technology skills among those without employment, deters investment, and impairs local service delivery. They indicated that development is further hampered by the migration of skilled workers, rising income inequality, and reliance on welfare programs by the unemployed youth. Participants added that youth unemployment has severe implications, such as increased birth rates, decreased tourism, and social estrangement, all contributing to the region's complicated developmental issues.

## **Group A Participants**

*Participants: A1, A2*

According to category A participants, youth unemployment results in economic instability, which creates an atmosphere that discourages both domestic and international investment in the District and suppresses regional economic growth. This indicates that investors prefer markets that are secure with a trained workforce and solid economic conditions, and the widespread youth joblessness in the region points to possible dangers and challenges. This deficiency in funding suggests that companies will be struggling to grow, develop, and create job opportunities. As a result, the continued trend of unemployment impedes the community's overall growth and development in the Vhembe District.

## **Group B Participants**

*Participants: B3, B4*

Participants believed that the primary cause of youth unemployment in the Vhembe District is the cycle of intergenerational poverty, which impedes the place's development. They indicated that youths who do not find work have a lower chance of escaping poverty, thereby creating an inherent possibility of hardship for their children. The continuation of poverty among successive generations suggests their inability to pay for necessities, including food, housing, healthcare, and education. This restricts the region's development because future generations are underprivileged and unable to contribute meaningfully to the District's economic and social growth.

## **Group C Participants**

*Participants: C5, C6*

Participants claimed that youth unemployment significantly impacts revenue-generating strategies, such as service fees and levies, and this ultimately affects the Vhembe region's general development. The decrease in revenue earned from these facilities results in limitations on the municipality's capacity to provide and sustain vital

amenities, such as water and power distribution, which have a negative impact on the general standard of living in the Vhembe District.

### **Group D Participants**

*Participants: D7, D8*

Respondents point out that one of the effects of youth unemployment is migration. This occurs when educated and talented youth leave their region in search of better chances elsewhere. This suggests a brain drain in the District and a loss of future leaders and business owners who may advance local development and the economy. Migration impairs the Vhembe District's economic growth and development by weakening the local workforce and lowering productivity and innovation.

### **Group E Participants**

*Participants: E9, E10*

Responding to the third question, participants assert that youth unemployment in Vhembe commonly results in despair and a decrease in participation in social and communal projects. This suggests a weakened relationship between society and the local administration, making it difficult to unite the community for initiatives aimed at improving the area. This affects the District's capacity for growth and hinders progress.

### **Group F Participants**

*Participants: F11, F12*

Respondents classified in the F group affirm that young individuals who are unemployed may find it difficult to use technology. In the absence of employment prospects, young people lose the opportunity to learn critical digital skills, which are becoming more and more crucial in the contemporary workforce. This technological disparity limits their employability and the District's ability to recruit firms that demand skilled workers, impeding economic growth and development.

## **Group G Participants**

*Participants: G13, G14, G15*

Participants in the G group state that there is a substantial correlation between youth unemployment and income inequality in local areas. The disparity in wealth among the employed and the unemployed grows as young people encounter difficulties finding steady work. This implies that whereas jobless young people regularly continue to be stuck in a cycle of financial instability, those who have work are able to build wealth, acquire resources, and make investments in their future. This discrepancy results in an unfair competitive space, as those who are working enjoy stable salaries and career growth prospects, while their peers who are unemployed encounter mounting difficulties that restrict their ability to move up the economic ladder. In addition to extending unemployed youth's financial hardships, this circumstance serves to further entrench larger structural disparities that impede the region's development.

## **Group H Participants**

*Participants: H16, H17, H18*

Participants revealed that young people without jobs often date older people to obtain financial support, leading to an increase in unintended pregnancies, especially for women. This circumstance results in a high dependence on child support subsidies and creates a cycle of vulnerability for many young people. The participants also point out that there is a diversion of revenues from essential programs, such as education and skills development, to welfare services; as a result, the District experiences economic stagnation. This reliance highlights constraints on the possibility for personal and societal improvement, stifling overall development progress in the Vhembe District.

## **Group I Participants**

*Participants: I19, I20*

Participants reported that youth unemployment in the Vhembe region adversely impacts tourism, hence constraining the district's development. They clarified that

unemployed youth lack the financial means to participate in or promote local tourism activities, which leads to a decline in the district's tourism market. Furthermore, a large number of these youths resort to illicit activities, which breed insecurity and deter tourists from visiting the region. This confluence of elements seriously impairs the District's prospects for tourism-driven economic growth. As tourism declines, there may be fewer job openings in the District's retail, hotel, and other associated industries. Furthermore, the tourist slowdown suggests a reduction in investment in infrastructure improvements, as tourism is an important engine for improving public facilities and attractions. As a result, the region's general tourism loss further impedes social and economic advancement.

Participants in groups A, B, C, E, G, and H said that societal issues in the Vhembe District, such as intergenerational poverty, social disengagement, and growing income inequality, are greatly exacerbated by youth unemployment. Participants in class A observed that youth unemployment results in volatility, discouraging domestic and foreign investment and hindering economic development. Participants in group B underscored that young people without jobs frequently encounter a cycle of poverty, constraining their capacity to transcend adversity and enhance their future opportunities. Group C articulated that unemployment impairs the District's capacity to earn income for vital services. The participants in category E noted that joblessness among young people engenders despair and diminishes engagement in community initiatives, whereas participants in G pointed out that income inequality widens as the unemployed struggle to move up the economic ladder, while those who are employed enjoy more significant wealth accumulation. Additionally, participants at H pointed out the increasing reliance on financial assistance from older partners, culminating in unintended pregnancies and further dependence on welfare.

Participants in groups A, C, D, G, and I explained the economic effects of youth joblessness, focusing on how it affects infrastructure and local development. According to group A participants, lack of employment leads to economic instability, which discourages investors from raising money and growing their companies. Group C participants related youth unemployment to a decrease in local revenue from service fees, which restricts the capacity of local governments to sustain basic

infrastructure that includes water and electricity amenities. Participants in the D group emphasized the brain-drain problem, whereby talented young people leave the district to pursue better prospects, affecting the local economy and its effectiveness. Respondents in the G category emphasized that rising earnings gaps between young people who are employed and those who are unemployed contribute to inequality in the economy; furthermore, participants in I pointed out that the fall in tourism caused by youth unemployment and insecurity further diminishes prospects for economic expansion in industries like retailing and hospitality in the District.

Participants in groups D and F concentrated on the skills and technology gap that impedes the District's development due to youth unemployment. For example, participants at D highlighted that the District loses expertise due to talented workers' migration, which diminishes the possibility of stimulating creativity and local economic growth. Additionally, participants in F raised the concern that young people without jobs lose out on chances to acquire digital skills, which are becoming increasingly crucial in today's workforce, further lowering their employability in the future and limiting local development.

#### **4.3.4 Question 4: What are the possible solutions and mechanisms for addressing the youth unemployment challenge in the Vhembe District?**

The fourth inquiry aimed to determine possible solutions and mechanisms for addressing the youth unemployment challenge in the Vhembe District. Participants suggested many strategies to deal with youth unemployment in the District. Common essential recommendations include - infrastructure improvement, technological advancement, innovation spending, industry competitiveness through vocational education, and proactive policy formulation. Respondents further pointed out the necessity of inclusive methods that promote entrepreneurship, engage local organizations and individuals, increase access to resources, including energy, capital, and technology. The participant also recognized that mentoring services, improving education, and promoting sustainable practices are essential to helping unemployed youth succeed in the job market.

## **Group A Participants**

*Participants: A1, A2*

Participants revealed that to successfully address joblessness among youth in the Vhembe District, it is essential to set up a strategy for responsive policymaking that periodically evaluates and modifies policies in light of shifting market conditions and youth needs. This implies involving local youth, residents, entrepreneurs, and civil groups in policymaking. This group of people's participation will help establish more inclusive and prosperous plans that directly address the youth unemployment problem, ultimately fostering sustainable economic growth and enhancing employment chances for the young people.

## **Group B Participants**

*Participants: B3, B4*

In response to the question, participants state that increasing competitiveness in the community is vital for addressing young unemployment in the Vhembe District. They further assert that setting up vocational training facilities that concentrate on developing expertise according to the unique requirements of regional sectors is an essential approach. This implies providing training programs in modern production methods and agricultural practices among the unemployed youth in the region. Furthermore, working with local enterprises to develop apprenticeship programs will provide young people with practical experience that guarantees they pick up applicable, marketable skills. The strategy may foster the expansion and competitiveness of regional companies and result in the creation of jobs and the growth of the local economy.

## **Group C Participants**

*Participants: C5, C6*

Participants in the interview assert that increasing expenditure on infrastructure is necessary for tackling youth unemployment in the Vhembe District. Investing capital into the construction and operation of essential facilities, including transport systems, may boost local economies and draw in new companies. This suggests a reliance on

improving supply chain efficacy in order to assist regional industry operations. This will eventually result in more job possibilities for young people and promote growth in the economy.

### **Group D Participants**

*Participants: D7, D8*

Participants maintained that certain infrastructure and business-related efforts that draw in both public and private investment are necessary to reduce youth unemployment in the Vhembe District. This highlights the necessity of laws that promote creativity and entrepreneurial activity to foster an atmosphere that is conducive to economic expansion. Furthermore, encouraging and supporting local businesses can help them grow and generate new employment possibilities for young people. These are essential for ending the jobless cycle among youth and promoting sustained growth in the area.

### **Group E Participants**

*Participants: E9, E10*

According to group E participants, workshops, seminars, and mentorship programs are crucial for filling up knowledge gaps around youth employment. Attending workshops means youth will be offered helpful advice on interview techniques, job application procedures, and company expectations to better match their abilities with market demands. Mentoring programs will improve employability by matching young people with seasoned professionals who offer one-on-one support, insightful information about employment requirements, and crucial career guidance. These tactics will help youth increase their potential for employment.

### **Group F Participants**

*Participants: F11, F12*

Participants in group F argued that it is critical to improve teacher preparation, increase school resources, and supply the required educational materials. This suggests

increasing funding for schools to purchase modern texts, equipment, and facilities that improve the learning environment. Additionally, it suggests spending money on training teachers to guarantee that they have the most recent tools and expertise, which will eventually boost student learning outcomes. This all-encompassing strategy will establish the groundwork for long-term educational advancements that will increase young people's employability in the District.

### **Group G Participants**

*Participants: G13, G14*

Group G participants suggested that solving youth unemployment in the region necessitates innovation and technological investment. They suggested the creation of innovation centres to inspire young people to pursue business and technology developments while also providing areas for cooperation and creativity. This highlights the necessity of tech-training programs that concentrate on digital skills, coding, and other technology-related skills. The District can reduce youth unemployment by giving young people these in-demand skills, which will open up new job opportunities and prepare its workforce to compete in global areas.

### **Group H Participants**

*Participants: H15, H16*

Participants in the H category stressed the urgency of increasing the availability and accessibility of finances for young entrepreneurs as a critical strategy for combating joblessness among young people in the Vhembe District. This entails growing microfinance initiatives that can provide grants and modest funds tailored to potential young business owners, allowing them to establish their ventures successfully. This will help the area's economy and create jobs, ultimately reducing youth unemployment.

### **Group I Participants**

*Participants: I17, I18*

Participants revealed the necessity of establishing viable energy systems to eradicate youth unemployment in rural Vhembe. They suggest that generating consistent and

efficient energy will assist in supplying electricity to nearby households and businesses. This entails renewable energies such as wind, solar, and biomass, which are well-suited for the rural communities. By expanding access to reasonably-priced and environmentally-friendly energy, local companies may run more effectively, improving competitiveness. This will boost economic growth in the area and give young people more employment options.

### **Group J participants**

*Participants: J19, J20*

Participants in J class highlighted the necessity for rural enhancement to promote youth employment. They underscored that increasing internet access in remote areas is crucial to improving communication among the unemployable youth. It will encourage participation in the global job market, which does not require being physically present and may open up the potential for remote employment. This means youth can work in different fields, including technology, customer service, data entry, and content production. As a result, this will further foster economic growth, improve job opportunities for unemployed youth, and reduce youth unemployment in the region.

The respondents' findings reveal several strategies for combating unemployment among the youth in the Vhembe District. The results show that participants in the A, B, F, and G groups highlighted the significance of learning and the acquisition of skills. Group A participants identified regional actors as vital in legislation to ensure skill development meets the needs of the work market. Participants in group B indicated the significance of vocational training in local industries such as agriculture and contemporary production in improving job preparedness. Participants in category F support enhancing education through bettering school resources and teacher preparation, while participants in category G advocate funding technology training and innovation to increase youth global employability.

Participants in the C, D, and I groups argued that infrastructure spending is essential to promote employment and the growth of the District economy. They highlight the necessity for sustainable energy initiatives, improved transportation networks, and

structures for businesses. Respondents in the I group, for example, support renewable energy technologies to enhance rural enterprises' activities and increase job possibilities. Respondents in the H and F categories indicated concern about financial support for venture capital, arguing that increasing opportunities for finance and other funding is critical for assisting youths in starting small firms. They say that this would result in jobs and improve regional economic growth.

Participants group E and H support workshops, seminars, and mentorship programs as essential techniques to give young people the job-search expertise and professional assistance they need. Participants at J class highlighted the challenge of technological availability and emphasized the need to increase accessibility to the web in rural regions to ensure young people can participate in virtual occupations and access overseas employment opportunities.

#### **4.4 CONCLUSION**

The research results reveal that unemployment among young people in the Vhembe District is a chronic and multidimensional problem, as participants identified factors such as - economic stagnation, skill mismatches, insufficient education, and geographical inequities - as fundamental contributing causes. There exists multiple programs and initiatives targeted at improving young job prospects, despite these, many people believe that those attempts have failed to effectively tackle the primary causes of this issue, resulting in increasing unemployment. Participants also emphasized that high rates of young unemployment had significant demographic consequences, prolonging cycles of poverty, slowing local economic progress, and growing social concerns in the local area. To address these challenges, participants emphasized the urgency of broad initiatives that improve education quality, encourage entrepreneurship, improve infrastructure, and strengthen collaboration between local businesses and youth, resulting in long-term career possibilities and overall area development.

## CHAPTER 5

### FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided an overview of the context of the research findings by analysing, presenting, and interpreting data collected from the participants' responses on the issue of youth unemployment as a developmental problem in the Vhembe District of the Province of Limpopo, South Africa. This chapter presents a summary of the research findings, recommendations, and a framework for possible solutions and mechanisms to address the issue of youth unemployment in the Vhembe District. Recommendations for further study on a comparable issue have also been provided.

#### 5.2 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to investigate youth unemployment as a developmental problem in the Vhembe District of Limpopo Province in South Africa and to recommend strategies to address the challenge. The research found that youth joblessness in the Vhembe District is a significant developmental concern, slowing economic growth, reducing productivity, and exacerbating social difficulties, further limiting the region's possibilities for long-term prosperity and sustainable development.

**The study intended to achieve the following objectives:**

- To determine the state of youth unemployment in the Vhembe District
- To ascertain the causes of youth unemployment in the Vhembe District
- To assess the effects of youth unemployment on development in the Vhembe District and
- To suggest possible solutions and recommend mechanisms to address the youth unemployment problem

**The study was guided by the following research questions:**

- What is the current state of youth unemployment in the Vhembe District?
- What are the causes of youth unemployment in the Vhembe district?

- To what extent does youth unemployment hinder development in the Vhembe District?
- What are the possible solutions and mechanisms for addressing youth unemployment challenge in the Vhembe District?

The researcher has successfully achieved the study objective of investigating youth unemployment as a developmental problem in the Vhembe District, by thoroughly analysing the present circumstances, the causes, effects, and possible solutions to this challenge.

### **5.3 SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS**

In this section, the study presents the researchers' key findings from the study, which focused specifically on achieving the outlined study aim and objectives, namely - the state of youth unemployment in the Vhembe District; the causes of youth unemployment in the Vhembe District; the effects of youth unemployment in the Vhembe District, and the possible solutions and recommendations for mechanisms to address youth unemployment problems, specifically in the Vhembe District.0

#### **5.3.1 The current state of youth unemployment**

The study found that youth unemployment in the Vhembe district constitutes a significant challenge, demonstrated by financial dependency and extended periods of unemployment. Fergusson & Yeates (2021:1) point out the same viewpoint in the literature review. The results revealed that a substantial majority of young people without jobs (80%) depend predominantly on external sources of finance, including familial assistance (53.3%) and social grants (26.7%), while a few resort to borrowing (13.3%) or lack any income (6.7%). This dependence on informal or precarious financial help highlights these youths' economic fragility and restricted self-sufficiency. Furthermore, the data indicates that young people find it challenging to attain work, considering a sizable percentage (76.7%) have been looking for a job for more than three years, many for five to 10 years, and some for even longer. This extended period of unemployment points to systemic obstacles to job opportunities in the area, perpetuating a persistent state of unemployment. The results indicate severe social and economic challenges, with young people experiencing prolonged joblessness and

dependency, which increases their susceptibility to low socio-economic status and restricts their potential to become financially independent.

The current context regarding youthful unemployment in the Vhembe District remains an enduring and severe issue. The interview results show that youth joblessness in the Vhembe region represents a widespread issue that affects the District's socio-economic structure. The results further demonstrate that youth unemployment is a serious problem, especially in rural areas, where many young people struggle to find employment despite having the competencies and continuously seeking possibilities. This underlines the severity of the problem, as many young people grow dissatisfied and abandon their job search attempts because of the absence of viable possibilities. The study further found that youth unemployment is compounded by limited work possibilities and fierce rivalry for the few vacant jobs. This position is especially difficult for people with less education and training, resulting in a glaring discrepancy in career opportunities. This demonstrates the seriousness of the problem, considering that a lack of appropriate possibilities causes disillusion among the youth.

The research results also demonstrate that youth unemployment in the Vhembe District continues to be a substantial and escalating problem, notwithstanding the execution of numerous governmental and local programs designed to provide work opportunities for youth. The study found that initiatives, such as Local Economic Development (LED) projects, the Expanded Public Works Program (EPWP), young empowerment programs, and skill development training, have been implemented to enhance youth engagement in the economy, yet, the unemployment rate persists in its upward trajectory, indicating the ineffectiveness of these initiatives. This reflects that these programs benefit certain young people, but they do not address the entire extent of the issue, as such, youth unemployment remains a considerable challenge in the District. Endres (2024:14) assert the same view on the literature review under developmental interventions. The study revealed that there are initiatives developed recently by the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), such as the Youth Entrepreneurship Program, that are designed to foster self-employment and entrepreneurship as options to reduce youth unemployment. Still, the findings indicate that youth unemployment in the Vhembe District has not ameliorated in recent years, presenting a chronic and severe challenge. Although aid measures are in place, many

of the youth remain oblivious to these initiatives, underscoring inadequate outreach and limited engagement attempts. The youth unemployment rate is still rising. This indicates that most young individuals still face difficulties starting long-lasting businesses. This reflects a significant problem with entrepreneurship support, which further restricts the initiatives' ability to address unemployment among the youth in the District. The overall findings indicate that although attempts have been made to resolve the issue of youth unemployment, they are not adequately addressing the root causes, resulting in several young individuals remaining unable to secure permanent employment. The present condition of youth unemployment in the district is dire, with institutional obstacles and insufficient support mechanisms intensifying the issue.

### **5.3.2 The causes of youth unemployment**

Using both quantitative questionnaires and qualitative interviews, the study identified a number of important factors contributing to young unemployment in the Vhembe District. These results highlight the complexity of the Vhembe region's youth unemployment problem, which is largely influenced by institutional, social, and economic variables.

The study data revealed several causes of youth unemployment in the Vhembe District. The results show that 80% of respondents cited the economic downturn, a lack of actual work experience, and the issue of disparity across educational qualifications and open positions as the main reasons for unemployment. The same view was also shared by Endres (2024:8) in the literature. The researcher discovered that the absence of suitable job expertise is a substantial obstacle for many young people who need jobs. This is supported by the capacity approach, which emphasises that youth struggle to find work as a result of a lack of the necessary abilities (Kuhumba, 2018:137). The study discovered that it is more difficult for young people to find long-term employment because of economic stagnation, which restricts job creation and increases rivalry among job searchers. The study found that many young people felt discontent by their failure to find entry-level jobs or internships, which are crucial for accumulating the experience required to improve employability. This indicates that the general state of the economy significantly limits employment options and creates a gap between training and market demands.

The researcher discovered that 20% of respondents affirmed that demographic aspects substantially affect youth unemployment in the Vhembe District. These results pointed out that age and gender discrimination have significant impediments to jobs for youths. This aligns with the point made by Alawad, Kreishan, & Selim (2020:153) on the literature review on the causes of youth unemployment. The findings also point out that cultural and traditional beliefs frequently impact recruiting methods, resulting in limited chances for certain groups, particularly young women and those in specific age ranges. This demographic-based disparity underlines the persistent difficulties some ethnic groups have in obtaining employment prospects, further aggravating the area's youthful joblessness dilemma. This is consistent with the capacity approach, which emphasises choice in work prospects (Sen, 1990:114). However, the findings show that many young people in the Vhembe District do not have the freedom to pursue careers that match their interests due to structural barriers.

The researcher discovered serious worries about hiring procedures that involve bias and corruption. Among the respondents, 6.7% agreed that these issues are the primary root cause of youth joblessness. This demonstrates that corruption is a significant obstacle in recruitment, which impedes equitable access to work prospects among youth. The study found that the same 6.7% of respondents agreed that there are other challenges to job opportunities among the youth, including rural communities' physical isolation and their lack of access to technology, the internet, and transportation. The research reveals that young people find it more challenging to find employment when they live in remote places. Graha & Mlatsheni (2021:138) also shared the same view in the literature. The Structural-Functionalist Theory as defined by Parsons (1902-79), supports that all these systemic economic imbalances cause youth unemployment in the structural economy (Jones & Goyer, 2019:650).

The interview data identified multiple significant elements that contribute to youth unemployment in the Vhembe District. The economy's overall condition is one of the critical issues, with its slow growth hindering job opportunities. The Annual Performance Plan (2023/24) supports this view. The study discovered that the declining trend in the economy is exacerbated by a lack of investment in infrastructure and local businesses, stifling the region's economic progress and further impeding youth employment creation. Furthermore, findings demonstrate a significant mismatch

between the talents of young job seekers and corporate expectations, indicating a systemic failure to align educational and training programs with market demands, hence, many young people want to work but lack the necessary certifications, resulting in a high youth unemployment rate in the District. Oguntona, (2023:46) affirmed this point in the literature review under the causes of youth unemployment.

Furthermore, the study discovered that the District's educational quality is a significant source of worry. The South Africa National Human Development Report (2022:71) affirmed this viewpoint in the literature review. The economist and philosopher Sen (1999), shared this view in the capability approach (Belfield et al., 2016). The results point out that insufficient resources, outmoded curricula, and a shortage of skilled instructors combine to produce a workforce that is unprepared for the demands of the job market. They pointed out that the absence of modern standards in the District's educational institutions leaves individuals unprepared for the job market of today. The findings also show a lack of support for innovation and technology, which limits job options for young people in a fast-changing market. The researcher found that financial hurdles prohibit many young individuals from beginning their firms, suffocating creativity and economic growth. Finally, the study's findings reveal that geographic variations between urban and rural areas provide additional challenges, with youth in rural towns facing limited work opportunities and larger barriers to employment.

### **5.3.3 The effects of youth unemployment on development in the Vhembe District.**

The data collected from young individuals indicated that joblessness among young people significantly influences their development as individuals, with 90% of respondents indicating negative repercussions; 40% identified skill degradation as the most critical concern, stifling personal development and decreasing employability over time, this confirmed by Alawad et al. (2020:153) in the literature review. Furthermore, 30% of respondents cited mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem as a result of extended joblessness; Hossain's (2022) Supported the view in the literature. This mental stress exacerbates emotions of loneliness and despair. Additionally, 20% reported feeling less motivated, which is indicative of a lack of focus

and a decreased desire to achieve personal or professional objectives. A lesser but noteworthy 10% of respondents turned to dangerous survival techniques, such as commercial sex work, demonstrating the extreme lengths some people would go to when faced with financial difficulties. Together, these impacts produce a vicious cycle of stagnation that impeded their social and individual progress, undermining the District's sustainable development prospects and human capital.

The study revealed an evident connection between unemployment and poverty. Based on the research, youth unemployment has been reported to exacerbate poverty considerably. The capability approach also supports the view that youth unemployment contributes to the growing poverty level, affecting the country's development (Kuhumba, 2018:139). The research findings revealed that youth unemployment has economic consequences, with half of the participants emphasizing that it hinders inclusive economic growth in the Vhembe District (Demissie, 2021). The study shows that 20% cited a resultant decreased production, while 23.3% emphasized the rising government expenses needed for assistance programs. Further implies In addition, 6.7% of those surveyed reported a drop in tax receipts, aligns with the point made by Mpofu (2020) in the literature review. These interrelated economic factors hinder long-term growth and limit the District's resources for development projects, which results in a stagnated economy.

The researcher made significant discoveries concerning youth unemployment; that they causes serious social problems such as family relationship pressure and societal marginalization, thereby eroding community ties and making it more difficult to promote social cohesion, this aligns with the report from South Africa National Human Development (2022:19). The findings revealed that youths are driven to criminal activity by the discontent and fury they experience due to unemployment, presenting a severe threat to the Vhembe District's development. The findings indicate that these problems provide significant challenges to the District's development initiatives. The study also discovered that joblessness among young people has political implications in the district; this includes decreased political engagement and a rise in disenchantment with the local government. The study further points out that this disengagement from political institutions has made it harder to implement successful development initiatives, raising the possibility of instability. Furthermore, the Vhembe

district's progress is hampered, and the general political disengagement compromises regional governance.

The interview data in the research revealed how youth unemployment in the Vhembe District is negatively affecting several development aspects. The investigation discovered that the Vhembe District's severe economic instability is primarily caused by joblessness among young people. Joblessness deters foreign and domestic investment, which subsequently, impedes corporate development and limits overall local economic progress. The research findings additionally determined that youth joblessness reduces the region's capacity to raise income for fundamental necessities, including water and power, Matyana & Thusi (2023) also assert this in the literature review. This decrease in revenue hinders the District's ability to maintain certain critical public amenities, resulting in an overall decrease in the quality of service. The data additionally showed that this phenomenon lowers the entire standard of living in the Vhembe District, stifling development attempts. Young people's joblessness in the Vhembe District had caused brain drain, as educated and competent youth leave in quest of greater prospects in another location. This movement leads to a major decrease in talent, reducing the workforce and impeding local economic growth, creativity, and leadership possibilities. Added to that, joblessness among the youth adds to social disengagement since unemployed people refrain from engaging in social and communal programs. This lack of involvement hinders society and local government collaboration, jeopardizing community-driven development projects and impeding the District's advancement.

Youth unemployment in Vhembe District adds to the technological divide by limiting economic growth and reducing employability due to a lack of digital skills and the shortage of job prospects for young people significantly contributes to income inequality in the Vhembe region (Stats SA, 2020). The research revealed that individuals with jobs may acquire wealth and resources, while those without employment face financial insecurity, expanding the socio-economic divide. This increasing wealth disparity suppresses regional growth. Youth unemployment considerably affects reliance on welfare programs, especially among young women who rely on financial assistance from elderly spouses. This financial dependence frequently results in unplanned pregnancies and an increasing demand for child

support assistance. These circumstances divert critical resources from educational and skill development programs, resulting in a lack of growth in the Vhembe District

#### **5.3.4 Possible solutions and mechanisms for addressing the youth unemployment challenge in the Vhembe District.**

Participants made varied suggestions for tackling young people's joblessness. The most popular recommendation, endorsed by 36.7% of participants, emphasises the need for funding employment creation. This strategy is considered vital for promoting economic expansion and creating new work opportunities, both of which are critical for reducing youth unemployment. The region can promote the creation of new firms by providing tax breaks or subsidies to companies; this will strengthen the local economy and provide employment opportunities for young people.

In addition to employment creation, 23.3% of respondents emphasized the necessity of securing permanent job placements after training programs. This underscores the need for organized transitional networks to help young adults obtain steady employment, post-training. Some 20% of participants emphasized aligning educational curricula with market demands, indicating that bridging the expertise imbalance is essential. By guaranteeing that learning facilities would provide graduates with appropriate abilities, youngsters would be more equipped for the work market requirements, resulting in enhanced job opportunities. The findings support the capabilities approach, which promotes curriculum alignment with market demands, infrastructure development, and entrepreneurial help to improve young person skills and job possibilities (Sen, 1999; Belfield et al., 2016). Additionally, 13.3% of respondents recognized the significance of aiding marginalized groups in obtaining employment opportunities, indicating an understanding of the obstacles encountered by disadvantaged populations and the necessity for tailored approaches that ensure equal access to training and employment. Finally, 6.7% prioritized boosting anti-corruption actions; this reveals a severe underlying issue that can interfere with young job creation efforts.

The interview results of the study of the phenomenon of youth unemployment in the Vhembe District demonstrate that comprehensive and varied strategies are crucial for effectively addressing this urgent problem. Participants offered significant insights into

numerous approaches that could improve employment prospects for the youth in the community. The study underscores the need for a dynamic policymaking framework incorporating local youth, residents, businesses, and civil society organizations to tackle youth unemployment, while fostering sustainable economic growth and improving job prospects.

The findings revealed that increasing industry competitiveness and setting up resources for vocational training in the Vhembe District are essential for lowering youth unemployment. Establishing apprenticeship programs in partnership with nearby companies will give young people real-world experience and employable skills; this can also help promote economic growth. The findings are consistent with Sen's (1999) capability approach, which emphasises the importance of expanding opportunities and competencies for young people to improve their employability (Powell, 2021:91). Furthermore, the findings revealed that Infrastructure spending must be increased to alleviate youth unemployment in the Vhembe District as investing in critical infrastructure and transport systems can improve local economies and attract new enterprises, increasing employment possibilities for the youth. The structural-functional approach also sees tackling economic barriers to employment as a critical option for maintaining labour market structures and ensuring functioning economic systems (Parsons, 1977; Jones & Goyer, 2019).

## 5.4 SYNTHESIS OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The key findings in this study are summarised below.

**The current state of youth unemployment in Vhembe District** show that:

- Youth unemployment is a continuous issue, particularly in rural regions, due to limited work opportunities and access.
- Many youngsters have been unemployed for a long time, while others have been looking for work for almost five years.
- Economic stagnation and lack of infrastructural investment have worsened the situation.
- Existing youth employment efforts are ineffective and have failed to tackle district youth unemployment.

## **Causes of Youth Unemployment in the Vhembe District**

- Factors contributing to youth unemployment include inadequate skills, insufficient work experience, and outmoded education systems.
- Access to career prospects in rural regions is limited due to geographical and economic differences and a lack of financial and technological resources.
- Hiring prejudices, corruption, and conventional attitudes further decrease youth employment.

## **The effects of youth unemployment on development in the Vhembe District**

- Long-term joblessness causes poverty, competence degradation, and decreased drive among the young, hindering regional growth.
- Social difficulties, including substance misuse, criminality, and strained family relationships, may both strengthen and damage communal cohesiveness.
- Economic implications include decreased tax income, poorer productivity, and reliance on social subsidies, which limit regional progress.
- The discontent with employment growth attempts has led to increased political disengagement and distrust of governance.

## **Proposed solutions and mechanisms for youth unemployment in the Vhembe District**

- Integrate curriculum and instruction with market demands for improved employability.
- Invest in infrastructure, technology, and local businesses to provide employment possibilities.
- Address structural impediments by implementing anti-corruption programs and equal employment processes.
- Encourage young entrepreneurship through financial support and mentoring initiatives.
- Expand public-private collaborations to increase job opportunities.
- Improve digital literacy and remote work capabilities for more employment accessibility.

- Implement sustainable energy projects and enhance rural transit to technology to attract enterprises.

## **5.5 RECOMMENDATION FROM THE STUDY**

This section makes specific recommendations based on the investigation into youth unemployment as a developmental concern in the Vhembe District. The research focused on - setting goals; investigating the existing condition of youth unemployment in the Vhembe region; determining the causes of youth unemployment in the region, assessing its impact on local development, and identifying potential solutions to the problem. Considering the key obstacles identified, the recommendations seek to offer concrete measures for enhancing youth employment prospects, increase economic participation, and support long-term development in the area. Through targeting these challenges, these suggested initiatives hope to develop a more equitable economy, provide job opportunities, and drive development in the Vhembe District.

### **5.5.1 Responding to the state of youth unemployment**

According to the study results, the majority of unemployed young people in Vhembe are economically vulnerable and financially dependent. The study, hence, recommends improvement in social initiatives; this suggests expanding local economic support initiatives by providing stipends for youth to meet basic expenses rather than relying entirely on relatives or borrowing. Financial literacy workshops should be held for youth; this implies delivering public finance-education initiatives that emphasize budgeting and managing limited finances with the aim to reduce debt risks among unemployed youth.

Roughly half of jobless youngsters have been actively searching for employment for between five and 10 years, with others looking for work for more than a decade. The research recommends the provision of skills through revitalization programs among these youth; these could include the formation of continual skills-development courses or certificates aimed at persons who have been unemployed for more than five years in order to counteract skill erosion. There could be career posting initiatives among young people, therefore, the researcher is advising that the government cooperate with local firms to arrange internship or apprenticeship placements aimed at long-term

career seekers, providing them with appropriate experience and immediate exposure to the marketplace.

Present initiatives have not properly addressed the specific requirements of youth looking for employment, so there could advocacy for monitoring and reviewing existing programs, The process would involve conducting extensive assessments of program outcomes on a regular basis to modify techniques and eliminate gaps that impede children from obtaining long-term employment. There is a lack of understanding of accessible programs, thus, increasing outreach awareness and comprehension efforts, especially in remote regions, would guarantee that the youth are informed of available initiatives and understand how to access services. This suggests creating a strong outreach campaign that uses social media, local radio, and community gatherings to educate young people about job opportunities. This may increase inclusion and minimize disparities in access to employment assistant services.

### **5.5.2 Addressing major causes for Youth Unemployment**

According to the findings, one of the obstacles to unemployment for young people in the Vhembe District is their lack of work experience. The study advocates for the creation of an interactive paid internship initiative. This would involve connecting educational institutions and local businesses with current sectors such as agriculture, construction, and others. This will allow young people to acquire practical training and shift effectively to permanent employment. The study also advocates for the transformation of internship programs to a mandatory requirement; this will enable learners to get hands-on expertise while employers profit from driven recruits. The promotion of corporate engagement through financial incentives such as pay subsidies and tax breaks for firms that offer internships could be undertaken. This method may provide young people with the essential skills, increase their employability, and contribute to a greater regional economy.

To address the economic crisis that is impeding job growth, the district could form collaborations with both the commercial and non-profit industries to develop additional revenue flow for young people, such as community-based agricultural projects, sustainable tourism, and local manufacturing. The study also advocates for local

economic resilience to be strengthened by investing in small company facilities that give young entrepreneurs tools, training, and microfinance; this can reduce dependency on restricted work opportunities. The researcher proposes developing frequent curriculum evaluation committees, which will be made up of instructors, business experts, lawmakers, and community leaders responsible for analyzing and adjusting school and education instruction, on a regular basis. This can help to integrate educational outcomes with changing workforce requirements while ensuring that young people obtain necessary instruction and valued skills. It is advocated for the instituting of fair employment practices through training programs that address age, gender, and societal prejudices, as well as transparency in recruiting procedures, to prevent discrimination and corruption.

The researcher recommends that regional governments establish youth entrepreneurship funds by cooperating with businesses, civic associations, and financial institutions to develop specialized funding schemes that provide grants, low-interest finance alternatives, and mentorship for emerging enterprises. This initiative ought to match grant candidates with expert coaches and provide educational workshops to strengthen essential entrepreneurial skills and accelerate business development. The study recommends the establishment of technical facilities in community centres or schools to facilitate access to high-speed internet, computers, and skill-development applications; this will enable job postings for both local and remote jobs. Furthermore, providing teenagers with training sessions on how to effectively use these platforms can boost their job search strategies. Subsidised transport programs could be established in partnership with local governments and commercial firms to lower youth transportation expenditures. Furthermore, in creating community transit systems that connect rural youth to urban job areas during the day will increase their employment opportunities.

### **5.5.3 Minimizing the effects of youth unemployment in the Vhembe district**

The study argues that it is vital to provide mental-health help through collaboration with local healthcare providers and non-governmental organizations. This entails establishing community counselling centres and online support groups that will provide readily available mental health therapies to young people without jobs. It is also vital

to organise partnerships with nearby training facilities, educational institutions, and non-governmental organisations to focus on practical skills such as digital literacy, entrepreneurship, and vocational skills. There is a need to create mentorship networks with business executives and established professionals that will ensure that young people receive career guidance, assistance, and continual encouragement to remain motivated while looking for work. Community organizations are also important to develop awareness campaigns and educational workshops to assist young people in researching for sustainable career opportunities and to avoid exploitative job environments.

It is recommended that targeted job opportunities be provided that will allow young people to find steady employment, resulting in increased income and economic independence and eliminating the cycle of poverty linked with unemployment. Youth unemployment causes social effects such as social marginalization, family conflict, increased crime, and substance misuse. To mitigate these consequences, there is a need to undertake community inclusion and youth engagement programs, such as family support services, substance addiction awareness programs, and District crime prevention measures. These initiatives will give financial management support among families, reduce the economic and emotional stress connected to joblessness, and minimize the use of maladaptive coping methods. This suggests collaboration with health and social departments to increase community well-being. Such engagement efforts may minimize youth unemployment disparities by involving youth in local governance and cultural activities; this will promote social integration, community solidarity, and collective developmental goals. There is a belief that youth unemployment is a contributing factor to youth isolation from the political system, therefore, it is recommended for the District to establish advisory councils and structured forums in which youth individuals can have a discussion about employment issues with local leaders. This could motivate young population to stay actively involved in local governance and employment initiatives by fostering a transparent dialogue. This will increase their employability, foster positive youth integration into political systems, and increase public confidence in the government.

The Vhembe District ought to engage youth in infrastructure initiatives to mitigate youth unemployment, through enhancements in water and electricity systems. This

would elevate local services and attract new enterprises, fostering long-term economic stability. The study suggests that by moving from passive welfare to active labor programs for young people, the district can reduce its dependence on social services. By engaging youth in community-beneficial initiatives such as repair, enhancement, and educational outreach, this will enable them to contribute significantly, lessen welfare assistance, and foster long-term growth. According to the findings, youth unemployment deters tourists, therefore, it is necessary to teach young people hospitality and tourism skills in order to boost local tourism and draw in more tourists and money. In addition to supporting complementary enterprises in retail, cuisine, and culture, this effort will aid with economic stabilisation and improve youth employability.

It is very helpful for the District to perform a needs assessment and obtain data ahead of budget to identify high-priority youth entrepreneurship projects. By doing so, the District can better allocate resources. This method not only promotes job creation and skill development, but it also makes funding more accessible to young entrepreneurs by establishing explicit goals. This suggests that the local government engage in co-financing and collaborations to gain more resources, increase overall funding impact, and extend chances for young businesses' formation in the community.

#### **5.5.4 Specific mechanisms for addressing the youth unemployment challenge in the Vhembe District**

To enhance youth employability in the Vhembe region, the District must accelerate economic growth by focusing on work-centric approaches. This necessitates leveraging areas like agriculture, which can employ a large number of youths. Considering that the Vhembe region is largely agricultural, investing in large-scale farming projects and modernizing agricultural processes have the potential to generate a substantial number of new jobs while also sustaining environmental conservation measures significant to the District's development. The study also advocates for the augmentation of employment prospects via public employment by instituting government-led job initiatives designed to involve young individuals in substantive work. The local governing body may initiate public works' initiatives targeting infrastructure projects such as road maintenance and community development. Rising infrastructure and development activities would result in more work opportunities.

These projects can provide immediate work opportunities for jobless youth in the region while simultaneously teaching them valuable skills in construction, administration, and project management. To achieve these, the researcher advises the implementation of skills development programs that match with industry demands. This will ensure that young unemployed individuals acquire adequate knowledge, enabling them to effectively contribute to and benefit from the District's economic growth.

To eliminate youth joblessness in the Vhembe District, an environment that encourages entrepreneurship must be established. This may be accomplished by expanding access to finance for startups, particularly for young and small enterprises, using grants, low-interest loans, and business development programs. The study recommends creating a youth-enterprise development fund to give startup funding and financial assistance to young entrepreneurs. This fund can be established by coordination among government, business sector partners, and financial institutions, to coordinate resources and assure access and long-term support. By providing non-repayable subsidies, young people may begin their entrepreneurial enterprises debt-free, generating work opportunities for other young people and improving economic growth.

The researcher also recommends developing rural business development funds for youth who wish to start firms in rural regions. These funds would give financial assistance to boost economic development outside of urban areas, promoting company growth and job creation in underrepresented communities. This effort, by investing in youth-led rural firms, may boost local economies, minimize regional inequities, and give long-term prospects for young people in rural communities. The research also suggests implementing business development programs, which would include comprehensive training sessions concentrating on essential competencies such as business planning, financial management, marketing, and strategic growth, as well as instructors who provide direction, share helpful knowledge, and provide opportunities for connections. These seminars may provide young business owners with the necessary skills for their businesses to succeed, as well as contribute to the reduction of youth unemployment in the Vhembe region.

To minimise youth joblessness in Vhembe district, the system of education must be significantly reformed by including vocational skills development in the general education curriculum at both the secondary and tertiary levels to better line with workforce demands. Schools and colleges should provide specialised programs that target technical skills in highly-competitive sectors like technology, renewable energy, and healthcare, thereby, ensuring that students obtain the necessary hands-on instruction. This might include developing alliances with industries and corporations to provide apprenticeship programs, internships, and on-the-job training opportunities. Furthermore, the government may encourage public-private partnerships to create focused curriculum that are matched with business demands, ensuring that students gain the skills that are most pertinent to the marketplace for employment.

Career counselling should be implemented early in the educational system, beginning in the early stages of elementary school and continuing through high school. Schools should offer career counselling, workshops, career fairs, and mentoring programs to assist students in exploring various career pathways, understanding market trends, and identifying the necessary skills. This initial intervention will support students in making informed decisions with regard to their prospects for education and career options, better equipping them to enter work life and improving their employability, while enhancing cooperation among schools, universities, and businesses, thereby creating pathways for job placement and immediate access to employment opportunities.

## **5.6 RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE STUDIES**

Considering the research's concentration on the Vhembe District, future research might broaden its focus to include comparative analyses among various districts or provinces in South Africa. This might help with understanding regional variations and similarities regarding youth unemployment trends, causes, and effective solutions. Findings from these studies will offer districts' officials a more comprehensive understanding of the structural challenges and possibilities associated with youth unemployment, allowing districts to build better and more sustainable policies to address this issue at the national level. The study suggests that communities and

district authorities be encouraged to offer precise and complete information to future researchers, thereby assisting efforts to develop individualised strategies for improving youth employment in the district. Selected participants should be encouraged to provide comprehensive insights and recommendations to researchers who will conduct these future studies. Future researchers, therefore, must preserve the confidentiality of all respondents while adhering to ethical research guidelines.

## **5.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The researcher encountered various obstacles, which hampered the research schedule. Some questionnaires were completed in respondents' native language, hence, needing translation before data processing, resulting in considerable delays. Some of the individuals were slow to return their completed questionnaires, which prolonged data gathering. Furthermore, acquiring authorization to perform the study at specific departments was complex and time-consuming, adding to the delays and making it impossible to finish the data-gathering procedure within the planned period.

## **5.8 CONCLUSION**

The research investigated youth unemployment as a developmental issue in the Vhembe District of Limpopo Province. This final chapter outlines the findings, recommendations, and conclusion derived from data gathered from questionnaires and interviews. The results and recommendations outline the current state of youth unemployment, its causes and effects on development, as well as measures for reducing this issue in the Vhembe District.

The report commenced with - an introduction, background details, problem statement, purpose, objectives, research questions, terminology definitions and study's organization. The goals were - to determine the state of youth unemployment, ascertain its causes, assess its developmental effects, and recommend possible solutions and mechanisms to the problem. The study was undertaken to assist the Vhembe District, by offering valuable insights into the challenges of youth unemployment and practical recommendations for their resolution.

Chapter 2 provides a theoretical framework highlighting the significance of youth employment in promoting economic growth and social stability. The study investigated how legislative frameworks and policies, along with education and labor market factors, determine unemployment. The chapter comprehensively analyzes the causes and implications of youth unemployment, including education job mismatches, lack of experience, and socio-economic restrictions.

Chapter three discussed the study design and methodology, a mixed-methods approach. Quantitative data was collected using questionnaires sent to jobless adolescents, while qualitative data was gained through interviews with municipal officials, community members, and other stakeholders. Ethical issues, sample selection procedures, and the reasoning for the chosen data-gathering approaches were all detailed.

Chapter four of the report presented the results of both the quantitative and qualitative data-gathering methodologies. The first component of the report comprised biographical information about the 30 questionnaire respondents, shown in tables, graphs, frequencies, and percentages, followed by data analyses. The second segment included findings from the interviews with ten other participants using open-ended questions. The qualitative data were narratively analyzed, providing further context for the findings. In the final sections, the researcher integrated the findings of both approaches to meet the study's aims.

Chapter five summarised the research findings, based on data from both quantitative and qualitative sources. Key results focused on - institutional impediments to work, the socio-economic consequences of long-term unemployment, and the role of gender, age, and rural remoteness in restricting employment prospects. The research also demonstrated that youth unemployment causes increase in poverty and social instability and reduces regional production. Suggestions, such as closing the skills-gap, encouraging public-private collaborations, and strengthening anti-corruption measures in recruiting were also explored.

Finally, the research concluded that youthful joblessness is a significant development concern in the Vhembe District, impeding economic growth and social cohesion. Future research, hence, should investigate new techniques to boost youth employability, how to link education with market demands, and foster sustainable local economic growth. This study contributes to the discussion regarding youth joblessness and its impact on development, thereby, intending to influence policy and practice in tackling this critical issue.

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## Annexure A: WORK PLAN

A provisional time table will look as follows:

| ACTIVITY                                   | TIME                | YEAR |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------|------|
| CHAPTER1 (PROPOSAL)                        | MAY- NOVEMBER       | 2023 |
| CHAPTER 2 (LITERATURE REVIEW)              | JANUARY - MARCH     | 2024 |
| CHAPTER 3 (RESEARCH METHODOLOGY)           | APRIL - MAY         | 2024 |
| CHAPTER 4 (DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS) | JUNE - JULY         | 2024 |
| CHAPTER 5 (RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION)  | AUGUST              | 2024 |
| DISSERTATION SYNTHESIS                     | NOVEMBER - DECEMBER | 2024 |

## Annexure B: Proposed budget

| ITEM                    | DESCRIPTION                                                                      | AMOUNT | MOTIVATION                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Research Assistance     | 1 Research Assistant                                                             | 20 000 | Collect data & transcriptions                                                                                |
| Travelling expenses     | To municipalities<br>Collins Chabane<br>Makhado<br>Mosina<br>Thulamela<br>Vhembe | 15 000 | Permission to conducting research<br>Questionnaires distribution<br>Conducting interviews<br>Collecting data |
| Travelling to libraries | And to businesses and residential areas                                          |        | Confirming data                                                                                              |
| Editing                 | Proposal and dissertation                                                        | 10 000 | Clarity, credibility and professionalism                                                                     |
| Printing                | Questionnaires<br>Consent forms<br>Proposal<br>Final document                    | 10 000 | 50 questionnaires and 50 consent forms for the participants                                                  |
| Binding                 | Spiral binding and hard copy binding                                             | 8 000  | Proposal copies for the school<br>5 copies spirals<br>5 copies hard                                          |
| Consumables             | Contact respondents                                                              | 2 000  | Contact respondents                                                                                          |
| Phone (data/airtime)    |                                                                                  |        |                                                                                                              |
| TOTAL                   |                                                                                  | 65 000 |                                                                                                              |

### Annexure C: Letter to respondents

*Enquiry: Manenzhe GJ*

P.O. Box 641

*Cell: 0764645589*

Dzanani

*Email: [gudanijanestercius@gmail.com](mailto:gudanijanestercius@gmail.com)*

0955

10 April 2024

Dear Sir or Madam

I, Manenzhe Gudani Janestercius, am a student at the University of Venda, registered for the Masters of Administration (MSMMA), at the Department of Public and Development Administration, Faculty of Management, Commerce, and Law. I am conducting research on **“Youth Unemployment as a Developmental Problem in the Vhembe District of Limpopo Province, South Africa.**

I sincerely request that you contribute to the study by sharing your comprehension of the above-mentioned research topic. Your provided information will only be utilised for the purpose of this research.

Thank you in anticipation.

Sincerely

.....

Manenzhe G.J

Student no 15011952



## Annexure D: Consent form

### SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

#### Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

In terms of the ethical requirements of the University of Venda, I invite you to complete this form as an indication of your permission to voluntarily participate in this study.

I \_\_\_\_\_, hereby confirm that I have been informed about the purpose, procedures, and activities of the study. I have also received, read, and understood the written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study. I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report. In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerized system by the researcher. I was given full opportunity to ask any questions and I understand that participants can withdraw from the study at any stage and time, without giving any reasons. I understand that significant new findings developed during this research, which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

I therefore hereby freely give/do not give my consent to voluntarily take part in the study as outlined.

Full name of participant .....

Signature

Date

Time

.....

.....

.....

Full Name of Researcher .....

Signature: .....

Date: .....

## Annexure E: Questionnaire

### YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AS A DEVELOPMENTAL PROBLEM IN THE VHEMBE DISTRICT OF LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA

This study investigate Youth Unemployment as a Developmental Problem in the Vhembe District of Limpopo Province, South Africa. I am requesting you to be part of the study by giving your perspective about the youth unemployment. Note that there is no right or wrong answer. Please put a (x) where you feel it is appropriate and answer the questions that follows:

#### SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF RESPONDENT

##### 1. Gender

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| Male   |  |
| Female |  |

##### 2. Age

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Less than 18 Years |  |
| 18-21 Years        |  |
| 21-30 Years        |  |
| 31-35 Years        |  |

##### 3. Marital Status

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| Single   |  |
| Married  |  |
| Divorced |  |

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Widow/Widower |  |
| Other         |  |

#### 4. Educational Status

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Not Schooled     |  |
| Pre-School       |  |
| Primary School   |  |
| Secondary School |  |
| Tertiary School  |  |

#### 6. Income Class

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| High Income   |  |
| Middle Income |  |
| Low Income    |  |

#### 7. Municipality

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Collins Chabane |  |
| Makhado         |  |
| Musina          |  |
| Thulamela       |  |

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| Vhembe |  |
|--------|--|

### 9. Ward Name/Ward Number

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

### SECTION B

1. What is 'youth unemployment, in your own understanding?

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2. Presently, do you have a job? Yes ☐ No ☐

3. Are you pursuing additional schooling at this time? Yes ☐ No ☐

4. What is the impact of unemployment on you and your family?

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5. How does being unemployed impact your ability to develop your potential?

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6. What is the duration of your job search?

1-3 years ☐ 3–5 years ☐ 5–10 years ☐ 10 and above.

7. Which challenges do you encounter when looking for work?

Lack of experience ☐ age ☐ gender ☐ qualifications ☐ other, please indicate...

8. What's your primary source of income?

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9. Who and how frequently do you interact with most?

Employed friend ☐ Unemployed friends ☐ provide the reason why.

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10. Do you currently have any affiliations or connections to the following?

Political association or organisation Yes ☐ No ☐

Cultural association or organisation Yes ☐ No ☐

Welfare association or organisation Yes ☐ No ☐

Sports association or organisation Yes ☐ No ☐

11. Please provide a brief description of the level of commitment.

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12. Do you consider the government is doing enough to address youth unemployment?

Yes ☐ no ☐

13. What do you think should be done in order to combat youth unemployment?

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**THANK YOU**

## Annexure E: INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT

### YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AS A DEVELOPMENTAL PROBLEM IN THE VHEMBE DISTRICT OF LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA

This study investigate Youth Unemployment as a Developmental Problem in the Vhembe District of Limpopo Province, South Africa. I am requesting you to be part of the study by giving your perspective about the youth unemployment. Note that there is no right or wrong answer. Please put a (x) where you feel it is appropriate and answer the questions that follows:

#### SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF RESPONDENT

##### 1. Gender

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| Male   |  |
| Female |  |

##### 2. Age

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Less than 18 Years |  |
| 18-21 Years        |  |
| 21-30 Years        |  |
| 31-35 Years        |  |

##### 3. Marital Status

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| Single  |  |
| Married |  |

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Divorced      |  |
| Widow/Widower |  |
| Other         |  |

#### 4. Educational Status

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Not Schooled     |  |
| Pre-School       |  |
| Primary School   |  |
| Secondary School |  |
| Tertiary School  |  |

#### 5. Income Class

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| High Income   |  |
| Middle Income |  |
| Low Income    |  |

#### 6. Employment Status

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Employed      |  |
| Self employed |  |

## 7. Type of Respondent

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Department of Social Development   |  |
| National youth development agency  |  |
| Vhembe district municipal official |  |
| Community Members                  |  |
| Community service Centres          |  |

## 8. Municipality

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Collins Chabane |  |
| Makhado         |  |
| Musina          |  |
| Thulamela       |  |
| Vhembe          |  |

## 9. Ward Name/Ward Number

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

## SECTION B

1. What is your understanding of youth unemployment?

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2. What do you think are the causes of youth unemployment in the Vhembe District?

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3. What are the effects of youth unemployment in your society?

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4. How does youth unemployment affect country development?

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5. What programmes and initiatives are available to support and aid in the development and employment of youth within five financial years?

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6. Do you consider the existing programmes, initiatives, and policies to be effective?  
Please provide more context for your response.

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7. In your own opinion, do you believe that young people are utilising the aid measures implemented to address youth unemployment?

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8. What are other opportunities that unemployed youth can explore besides finding employment?

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9. What can you recommend to the government in relation to the strategies that can assist youth in gaining employment opportunities?

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.....

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THANK YOU

Manenzhe Guckini  
076 464 5589



University of Venda  
Creating Future Leaders

FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT, COMMERCE & LAW

Department of Public and Development Administration

Prof N. J. Vermaak

[Jaco.vermaak@univen.ac.za](mailto:Jaco.vermaak@univen.ac.za)

The Municipal Manager

Vhembe District Municipality

Thohoyandou

**APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: MANENZHE GJ  
15011952**

1. This is an application to undertake research study at your District Municipality by Ms GJ Manenzhe for the purpose of completion of a Master of Public Administration degree at the University of Venda.
2. Ms Manenzhe of student number 15011952 is a registered student at the University of Venda currently doing a master's degree in Public Administration.
3. The topic of the study is "Youth unemployment as a developmental problem in the Vhembe district of Limpopo province, South Africa".
4. The data she will collect from officials and communities within the Vhembe District Municipality through documentation, interviews and questionnaires is only for the purpose of use in this research study and for academic reasons.

Regards,

Prof. N.J. Vermaak



29 May 2024

Dept. of Public & Development Administration

Date

Email: [Jaco.vermaak@univen.ac.za](mailto:Jaco.vermaak@univen.ac.za)

ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

**LIMPOPO PROVINCE  
VHEMBE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY**

**RECEIVED**

**20 JUN 2024**

**REGISTRY**

P/BAG X5006 THOHoyANDOU, 0950  
TEL: 015 960 2000 FAX: 015 962 1017

NAME OF RESEARCHER/INVESTIGATOR:  
**Ms GJ Manenzhe**

STUDENT NO:  
**15011952**

PROJECT TITLE: **Youth Unemployment as a Developmental Problem  
In The Vhembe District of Limpopo Province, South Africa.**

ETHICAL CLEARANCE NO: **FMCL/24/PDN/06/2405**

SUPERVISORS/ CO-RESEARCHERS/ CO-INVESTIGATORS

| NAME            | INSTITUTION & DEPARTMENT                      | ROLE                   |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Prof NJ Vermaak | UNIVEN, Public and Development Administration | Supervisor             |
| Mr HH Takalani  | UNIVEN, Public and Development Administration | Co-supervisor          |
| Ms GJ Manenzhe  | UNIVEN, Public and Development Administration | Investigator – Student |

Type: **Masters Research**

Risk: **Minimal risk to humans, animals, or environment (Category 2)**

Approval Period: **May 2024 – May 2025**

The Research Ethics Social Sciences Committee (RESSC) hereby approves your project as indicated above.

**General Conditions**

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following:

- The project leader (principal investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the REC:
  - Annually (or as otherwise requested) on the progress of the project, and upon completion of the project.
  - Within 48hrs in case of any adverse event (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the project.
  - Annually a number of projects may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Would any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the course of the project, the project leader must apply for approval of these changes at the REC. Would there be deviation from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Would the project have to continue after the expiry date; a new application must be made to the REC and new approval received before or on the expiry date.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility, the REC retains the right to:
  - Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project,
  - To ask further questions; Seek additional information; Require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process.
  - withdraw or postpone approval if:
    - Any unethical principles or practices of the project are revealed or suspected.
    - It becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the REC or that information has been false or misrepresented.
    - The required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately.
  - New institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions A it necessary

ISSUED BY:

UNIVERSITY OF VENDA, RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Date Considered: **May 2024**

Name of the RESSC Chairperson of the Committee: **Prof TS Mashau**

Signature

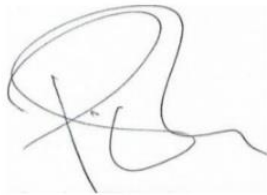



PRIVATE BAG X5050 THOHoyANDOU 0950, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA  
TELEPHONE: 015 962 2000/331 FAX: 015 962 1017  
"A quality driven financially sustainable, rural-based Comprehensive University"

## **PROOF OF EDITING**

**7 December, 2024**

This is to certify that I, Dr P Kaburise, have proofread the dissertation titled - **YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AS A DEVELOPMENTAL PROBLEM IN THE VHEMBE DISTRICT OF LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA** - by Gudani Janestercius Manenzhe (student number: **15011952**). I have indicated some amendments which the student has undertaken to effect before the final dissertation is submitted.



**Dr P Kaburise (0794927451/ 0637348805; email: [phyllis.kaburise@gmail.com](mailto:phyllis.kaburise@gmail.com))**

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**Dr P Kaburise: BA (Hons) University of Ghana (Legon, Ghana); MEd University of East Anglia (Cambridge/East Anglia, United Kingdom); Cert. Teaching English as a Foreign Language (Cambridge University, United Kingdom); Cert. English Second Language Teaching, (Wellington, New Zealand); PhD University of Pretoria (South Africa).**

## VHEMBE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

PRIVATE BAG X5006, THOHOYANDOU, 0950

TEL: 015 960 2000, FAX: 015 962 1017

Website: [www.vhembe.gov.za](http://www.vhembe.gov.za)



Ref: 4/2/1

Enq: Mphaphuli T.K

Date: 26 June 2024

**Attention: Manenzhe Gudani, student no: 15011952**

### RE: APPLICATION TO CONDUCT ACADEMIC RESEARCH: YOURSELF

1. Your application dated 29 May 2024.
2. It is with pleasure to inform you that your application to conduct research on "YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AS A DEVELOPMENTAL PROBLEM IN THE VHEMBE DISTRICT OF LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA" within the Vhembe District Municipality is hereby granted to you.
3. Please contact Deputy Manager: Special Programme at 015 960 2080 in order to arrange the starting date.
4. Should there be anything you need clarity on, feel free to call our office at 015 964 4610/015 964 4627

Kind Regards

MUNICIPAL MANAGER  
KUTAMA Z.N

01/07/2024

DATE