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The Psychosocial Impact of unemployment on the youth of Mahikeng, North-West Province



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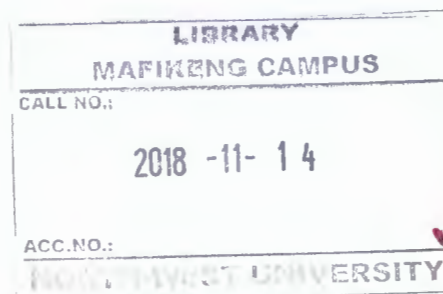


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i. LIST OF ACRONYMS

CHET	Centre for Higher Education Transformation
CWP	Community Works Programme
EPWP	Extended Public Works Programme
FET	Further Education and Training
IDC	Industrial Development Corporation
IFSW	International Federation of Social Workers
ILO	International Labour Organisation
NASW	National Association of Social Work
NEET	Not in Employment Education or Training
NREGA	National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
NWDC	North West Development Corporation
NYDA	National Youth Development Agency
NYS	National Youth Service
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
SALDRU	Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit
SEFA	Small Enterprise Finance Agency
TVET	Training and Vocational Education and Training
YEI	Youth Employment Index
WEF	World Economic Forum

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Youth unemployment rates seem to be increasing at unprecedented levels, nationally and globally. Unemployment is mostly defined by its economic impact, but it is argued here that it has a psychosocial impact on the lives of those who find themselves without work. Unemployment as a psychosocial problem is a major concern for many countries including South Africa. The focus on youth unemployment is enthused by the fact that young people are the most vulnerable group with regards to unemployment as they are the biggest group of job seekers.

This study focuses on whether or not there is a psychosocial impact on the youth due to unemployment. Unemployment in this regard may be voluntary or involuntary. The study also describes how the role that the youth play in the society is affected by unemployment. Ultimately the study reflects the viewpoint of the youth on how unemployment affects them and this could possibly help professionals, including social workers, in improving services to the youth.

This document consists of five chapters all of which focus on a different aspect of the research topic. This chapter specifically focuses on the background of the study, problem statement, research question, research aim and objectives, assumptions, definition of concepts that are relevant to the study, and the significance of the study.

1.2. BACKGROUND

Betcherman, Godfrey, Puerto, Rother and Stavreska (2007:1) have remarked that the youth unemployment rate as well as the ratio between youth and adult unemployment rates has generally been increasing.

It seems that not only low skilled youth with little or no experience are affected by unemployment but also graduates (Altbeker & Storme, 2013; 5). Unemployed youth stay at home without any promise of employment even after they have graduated from tertiary institutions. Therefore, unemployment may not necessarily be related to the level of education alone but could be influenced by other factors as well. Sometimes unemployment may lead the youth to “at risk behaviour,” for example they may turn to crime and drugs as means of survival.

In the third quarter of 2016 the overall unemployment rate in South Africa went up to 27.1% from 26.6% (Taborda, 2016:1). According to Taborda (2016:1), the participation rate (number of people actively

seeking employment) went up to 59.1% as more people joined the labour market. This means that more people applied for jobs which they were then appointed to, therefore creating more participation in the labour market. The youth unemployment rate in South Africa decreased in the third quarter of 2016 to 47.60% from 53.70% in the second quarter of 2016 (Trading economics, 2016(b): 1). According to Trading Economics (2016(b): 1) the youth unemployment rate in South Africa decreased in the fourth quarter of 2016 from 54.20% to 50.90%.

1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

South Africa is one of the top five countries with the highest youth unemployment rates in the world (Economics, 2017: 1). South Africa's unemployment rate currently stands at 52.6% (Worldatlas, 2017: 1).

According to the World Economic forum (WEF) global risk report of 2014, South Africa had the third highest unemployment rate in the world for people between the ages of 15 and 24 in the year 2014 (Fin24, 2014: 1). The International Labour Organisation (ILO) stated in 2013 that the "youth are three times more likely to be unemployed than adults and almost 73 million youth worldwide are looking for work" (International Labour Organisation, 2012: 3).

In the second quarter of 2017, the youth unemployment rate in South Africa increased to 55.90% from 54.30% in the first quarter (Trading Economics, 2017: 1). However, the youth unemployment rate in Spain decreased from 39% to 38.60% in July 2017 (Trading Economics, 2017: 1). According to Trading Economics (2017: 1), other countries such as Italy also had an increase in youth unemployment, which went up to 35.50% from 35.20% in July 2017. Japan also had an increase in youth unemployment from 4.60% in June 2017 4.90% in July 2017 (Trading Economics, 2017: 1).

According to Trading Economics (2017: 1), the general unemployment rate in South Africa was at 27.7% in the first quarter of 2017 and remained unchanged in the second quarter. There were 433 000 people who became unemployed, approximately 58% were young people 15-34 years of age, which caused an increase in the youth unemployment rate (Trading Economics, 2017: 1). The unemployment rate among graduates stayed at 7.3% while the unemployment rate among people with an education level of less than matric remained high at 33.1% and this is 5.4% higher than the national average (Trading Economics, 2017: 1). In some countries the unemployment rate dropped. For example, in Spain the unemployment rate dropped to 17.22% from 18.75% in the second quarter of 2017; Brazil was at 12.8% from 13.6% in the three months leading to April 2017 (Trading Economics, 2017: 1). Other countries however, experienced an increase in the unemployment rate, e.g. the unemployment rate in the United States had a slight increase from 4.3% to 4.4%; Italy also experienced a slight increase from 11.2% to 11.3% in July

2017. According to Statistics SA (2011: 1), the unemployment rate in Mahikeng is 35.7% and the youth unemployment rate is an alarming 47.1%.

In the 2013/2014 financial year, according to the Trading Economics (2013/2014; 1), Unemployment rates for all age groups across the world dropped from December 2013 to April 2014. For example, the unemployment rate dropped from 6.80% to 6.40% in Argentina, in Colombia the rate dropped from 10.68% to 9.73%, and in India the unemployment rate dropped from 9.40% to a low 3.80% (Trading Economics, 2013/2014: 1). However, in some countries the unemployment rate remained the same or even went up. For example, Germany remained the same at 5.10% from December 2013 to April 2014, Belgium also remained the same at 8.50%, Chile went up from 6.13% to 6.45% and Finland went up from 9.1% to 9.5% (Trading Economics 2013/2014: 1). According to Statistics SA (2013: 1), the unemployment rate in South Africa decreased to 24.10% in the fourth quarter from 24.50% in the third quarter of 2013 and the number of people without work went down to 4.66 million from 4.72 million from July 2013 to October 2013 (Tabora, 2014:1). According to Lehohla (2015, 1) employment has been fluctuating since 2011 and between the first and third quarters of 2015 and the unemployment rate in South Africa only decreased by 1.4% to 25%.

At risk youth may possibly be more affected by unemployment compared to the average youth because sometimes being at risk is a disadvantage on its own. At risk youth are usually identified by certain behaviours that they display in their childhood and adolescent years. This behaviour includes running away from their families or caregivers, poor school attendance, underage drinking, bullying, fighting, and engaging in risky sexual behaviour which may also lead to teenage pregnancy and vandalism (Moore: 2006; 12). According to National Centre for School Engagement (2014:3), these behaviours can contribute to dropping out of school, getting low paying jobs, unemployment and adult criminal behaviour. At risk youth may resort to acts of crime, alcohol and drug abuse, with some even attempting or committing suicide (Betcherman et al, 2007; 67).

Several policy documents in South Africa have focused on the youth at risk in their bid to address unemployment e.g. National Youth Development Plan and the White Paper on Social Welfare (1997: 1). The effects of the implementation of these policies have not been measured to date. One of the approaches of the White Paper on Social Welfare (1997: 65) is for “welfare departments to develop a strategy for co-operating with governmental and non-governmental organisations in community based development initiatives which seek to promote the needs of the youth.” The talents and skills of the youth are often not optimally utilised and they underperform, are unemployed and even involved in anti-social behaviour and criminal activities.

One of the professions that could assist the youth is social work. Social workers can link the youth to resources and help them realise their strengths and motivate them to build on those strengths.

The National Association of Social Work (NASW, 2012: 1) has formulated standards for the practice of social work that is also applicable to adolescents. Standard 6, which is one of the standards of the NASW states that “social workers shall strive to empower the youth” (NASW, 2012: 1), and this means that social workers should have the necessary knowledge and skills to help in the overall wellbeing of the youth. Standard 12 of the NASW, which falls under Standards for Administrators of Youth Services Agencies, states that “the administrators of youth services agencies shall advocate for the increased understanding of the needs of youths, policy changes and adequate resources to enable social workers to meet those needs...” (NASW, 2012: 1). It is therefore important for social workers to build good working relationships with Government Departments, NGO’s and all administrators of youth services in order to assist the youth in the best ways possible. Social workers can be brokers, mediators and enablers in helping the youth in their quest for employment.

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the psychosocial impact of unemployment on the youth of Mahikeng, in the North-West Province of South Africa?

1.5. RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1.5.1. General aim of the study

The aim of this study was to describe the psychosocial impact of unemployment on the youth in Mahikeng.

1.5.2. Specific objectives

In order to reach the aim of this research, the following objectives were set to:

- draw conclusions and describe the psychosocial impact of unemployment on the youth;
- identify the impact of unemployment on the functioning of the youth in the society;
- increase the knowledge of social workers about the role they can play in the improvement of employment of youth by describing what more they can do;
- identify which existing programmes are in place for social workers to assist the youth in their employment endeavours, and suggest possible interventions to alleviate youth unemployment.

1.6. ASSUMPTIONS

The high rate of youth unemployment influences the general wellbeing, social and psychological functioning of unemployed youth and the people around them. It is also assumed that the youth are unemployed because they lack knowledge on opportunities available in community services. Due to unemployment, the youth are unable to play an active role in society and may resort to delinquent behaviour.

1.7. DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

Key terms in this study are defined in the subsequent section:

At risk youth: Youth may be considered at risk if they are homeless, involved in drugs or alcohol, abused (sexually, emotionally or physically), mentally ill, neglected at home or live in stressful family environments, lacking social or emotional support, or involved with delinquent peers (Moore, 2006: 63).

Impact: A strong effect or impression (Oxford dictionary; 2015 301)

Social worker: Any “person who is registered as a social worker in terms of the Social Service Professions Act”, 1978 (Act No. 110 of 1978) (Bosman-Sadie & Corrie, 2010:13)

Psychosocial: For the purposes of this study, this means “the interaction between social and psychological factors” (Dictionary.com, 2010: 1).

Psychosocial intervention: “A psychological intervention aims to enhance functioning related to mental disorders and social problems by addressing the different psychological and social factors influencing the individual.” In this study the social problem is the unemployment of the youth (Forsman, Nordmyr, & Wahlbeck, 2011: 1). Psychosocial interventions include structured counselling, motivational enhancement, case management, care-coordination, psychotherapy and relapse prevention (Forsman et al., 2011: 1).

Psychosocial stress: A social threat in our lives (real or imagined) and it may require resources a person does not have (Scott, 2016: 1). With regards this study, the psychosocial stress may be as a result of unemployment. That is, the fact that one is unemployed may be seen as a threat to their social status, social esteem, respect and/or acceptance within a group, threat to self-worth, or threat that they feel they have no control over (Scott, 2016: 1).

Unemployment: There are two definitions of unemployment (strict definition and expanded definition) in South Africa. Both include the fact that a person has to be 15 years or older, unemployed but willing and available to work. The strict definitions entail that a person must have taken steps to find work for at least four weeks before a certain point (Du Toit, 2003: 6). The expanded definition includes people who have not taken active steps to find work (Du Toit, 2003: 6).

Youth: According to the National Youth Policy (2009 – 2014; 12), the youth are people between the ages of 14 – 35. For the purpose of this study, the youth are regarded as people between the ages of 18 – 30.

Youth development: “A process by which the youth develop the personal, social, academic and citizenship competencies necessary for adolescent and adult life, based on their capacities, strengths and formative needs” (Youth Work Central; 2014: 1).

1.8. SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

Several studies have addressed the issue of youth unemployment both internationally and nationally. However, these studies do not address the psychosocial impact of unemployment on the youth specifically. Some of the studies were done more than 10 years ago. For example, Schaufeli (1998: 253) did a study on unemployment and mental health in well- and poorly- educated school leavers in the Netherlands. Price (1995: 1) did a study on “Youth unemployment: effects on health and happiness” which explores how nurses could promote health (physically and mentally) since it is argued that unemployment is related to ill-health. The National Centre for School Engagement (2014; 1) refers to at risk youth from the viewpoint of the educational system. It has come to their attention that most youth (those at risk or not) are unemployed because they do not have formal education and training (National Centre for School Engagement, 2014:1). In their latest study, some of the youth did not even reach grade 12, while others did but could not study further due to lack of finances or other reasons (National Centre for School Engagement, 2014:1).

This study is significant because the focus is specifically on the unemployed youth and identifying how they are affected by unemployment in a psychosocial way. The study seeks to add to the knowledge about the problems that arise from the impact of unemployment and possible ways of dealing with them, with a narrow focus on Mafikeng. This study identifies ways in which social workers could apply their knowledge in extending the horizons of possibilities in the lives of the unemployed youth who may find themselves at risk. The study adds dimensions on how people would be exposed to the vast services that social workers could provide to them, specifically the unemployed youth in Mahikeng.

There are several youth employment programmes initiated in South Africa by both government and private companies. For example, “Tshepo 10000” is an initiative implemented in Pretoria to empower the youth and create entrepreneurship opportunities (City of Tshwane, 2013:1). The researcher is convinced that social workers could play a vital role in connecting the youth with such programmes. There are also internship and learnership programmes initiated by the government to help those who need work experience (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2012: 1).

This study therefore addresses the gaps in the policy related to legal, regulatory and administrative requirements for the employment of the youth in general since the standards are general and do not deal with specialised areas of expertise required for social work such as at risk youth.

Hollywood, Egdell and McQuaid (2012; 16-25) did a study on “Addressing the Issue of Disadvantaged Youth Seeking Work.” The main focus of their study was on disadvantaged young people, aged 16-25 years, making the move from unemployment to employment. However, the above mentioned study focuses on the UK (England), leaving the Mahikeng area as one that merits a similar scrutiny. The researcher has found no research that is similar to this one in South Africa or in Mahikeng to be more specific. This therefore, proves the provenance, importance and necessity of this study.

1.9. CONCLUSION

This chapter has outlined the background, problem statement, research question, aim and objectives, assumption as well as the limitations of this research project. Chapter 2 reviews some literature and provides a theoretical framework. Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology and the data is presented in Chapter 4. The findings as well as conclusions and recommendations are summatively discussed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the literature review as well as the theoretical framework that is privileged in this study. The literature review is based on data obtained from journals, books, and the internet on the subject of youth unemployment in the world, South Africa and Mahikeng; factors contributing to unemployment; influences of race and language, age, gender and education on unemployment; unemployment in rural and urban areas; expectations of employers and the unemployed youth; work experience; utilisation of resources to find employment; criminal activities, at risk behaviour and substance abuse by those who are unemployed; the psychosocial impact of unemployment on the individual, family, and community; physical, psychological, social and financial impact of unemployment; role of the social worker in ameliorating the circumstances of the unemployed; and documented strategies to address unemployment. The theoretical framework identifies theories that are critical in unpacking the intricacies of unemployment from a social work perspective and these are the strengths perspective and the ecological theory. These provide a systematic platform for the interrogation of the challenges of unemployment.

2.2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.2.1. Incidence of youth unemployment in the world, South Africa and Mahikeng

According to Worldatlas (2017: 1) Spain currently has the highest prevalence of unemployment in the world with 57.9% unemployment rate. Other countries with high unemployment rates are Bosnia and Herzegovina (57.5%), Greece (53.9%), South Africa (52.6%), Libya (48.9%) and Italy (44.1%).

Wooden (2014: 1), during Pope Francis' visit to the Southern Italian region of Molise on 5 July 2014, referred to job creation and respect for the environment by stating: "High youth unemployment rates are a defeat for society. We cannot resign ourselves to losing a whole generation of young people who don't have dignity for work." In his speech, Cyril Ramaphosa (News24, 2014: 1), the deputy president of South Africa, said "If we could effectively address youth unemployment, not only would we lift millions of South Africans out of poverty, but we would also place our economy on a path of sustainable, inclusive growth." The above quotations are evidence that leaders from around the world and in South Africa recognise that youth unemployment is a serious problem that calls for intervention and ultimate resolution.

It is on record that North West has one of the highest broad unemployment rates in the country, at an alarming 43, 2% (Statistics South Africa, 2015: 1). Close to half of the population are unemployed but are eligible to work. The majority of these unemployed have given up hope of finding any employment. According to South African National Census (2011: 1), the total population of Mahikeng is 291 527, with 33167 people unemployed, while 12 987 people are classified as discouraged work seekers. The youth unemployment rate for those aged 15-34 in Mahikeng is 47,1% (South African National Census, 2011: 1). According to the South African National Census (2011: 1), the dependency ratio in Mahikeng is 55.3%. That is “the number of people (aged 0-14 and 65plus) dependent on the working aged population expressed per 100 working aged persons. The South African National Census of 2011 was the third census conducted in the country. The first census was in 1996 followed by the census in 2001.

2.2.2. Factors contributing to youth unemployment

The youth are unemployed for various reasons. Below are some factors that have been found to be contributing to youth unemployment.

2.2.2.1. Race

Statistics South Africa (2015: 12) indicated that over 55% of the unemployed were amongst the coloured and black population. In general, the population of Mahikeng consists of 95.5% black, 2.3% coloured, 0.8% Indian/Asian and 1.3% white (Census South Africa 2011:1). Unemployment amongst the white youth was 18% compared to 41% among black and coloured South African youth in 2013 (SALDRU, 2013:1).

2.2.2.2. Language

According to Statistics South Africa (2011:1), 3.1% of the population in Mahikeng have Afrikaans as their first language, 4.5% have English as their first language, 1% IsiNdebele as their first language, 3.8% have IsiXhosa as their first language, 1.8% have IsiZulu as their first language, 0.5% have Sepedi as their first language, 3.4% have Sesotho as their first language, 76.9% have Setswana as their first language, 0.4% use Sign Language, 0.1% have SiSwati as their first language, 0.1% have Tshivenda as their first language, 0.3% have Xitsonga as their first language, and 2.1% use other languages as their first languages.

The primary language of communication in most employment agencies in South Africa is English and they expect employees to be able to read, write and speak in English. Language has an important effect on the earnings of Africans where evidence clearly shows that those competent in English are more likely to earn more than those who are not proficient in the English language (Cornwell & Inder, 2008: 1).

2.2.2.3. Occurrence of youth unemployment in rural and urban areas

Darity (2008: 405) states that a township can be legally defined as both residential and industrial sites. In South Africa, townships and locations often refer to underdeveloped urban living areas that black people occupied during the apartheid era (Darity: 2008: 405). According to Oxford dictionary (2015:1), a town is defined as “a thickly populated area, usually smaller than a city and larger than a village, having fixed boundaries and certain local powers of government.” In Mahikeng, there are suburbs such as Golfview and Riviera Park that are located in and around town. A village is a group of houses and associated buildings which are situated in a rural area (Oxford Dictionary: 2015: 1). Mahikeng is surrounded by rural areas but the central town consists of suburbs and villages with a recognisable variety in the quality and size of the housing.

According to SALDRU (2013:1), youth unemployment in rural areas is 82% as compared to 58% in urban areas. SALDRU (2013:1) suggests that the youth from rural areas are more likely to become discouraged in their search for employment. “The cost of searching and applying for employment creates a barrier to labour entry, particularly among the substantial numbers of poor rural youth living in remote and infrastructural backlogged areas” (Ardington et al, 2013:1; Burns et al, 2013:1; Woolard, 2013:1; Altman et al, 2012:1; Rankin et al, 2007:1).

Geographical unemployment occurs when workers live too far away from areas (usually cities) where employment is likely to be available and they are unable to travel to such sites. The money they earn is not enough for them to find accommodation closer to work or cover their daily travelling costs.

According to Pettinger (2012: 1) people in disadvantaged areas and those with a history of broken families, drug use or criminal records suffer most from the scourge of unemployment. These people also tend to be very pessimistic over job prospects.

2.2.2.4. Age and gender

Cassim and Oosthuizen (2014: 1) state that one third of those that are unemployed between the ages of 15 and 24 are referred to as NEET's (young people who are “Not in education, employment or training”). Of those about 30% are male and 36% female youth who are disconnected from both the labour market and opportunities that promote future employment (Cassim & Oosthuizen, 2014: 1).

According to the National Centre for Education Statistics USA (2016: 2), 75% of young adult males were in employment as compared to 68% of young adult females. According to Statistics South Africa the second quarter of 2015 (2015: 17) indicates that 27,3% females and 23,1% males were unemployed in South Africa's total population. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is a group of 34 member countries that “provides data on the structure, finances and performance of

education systems” on those countries, South Africa being one of these member countries (OECD, 2016: 1). According to OECD (2016: 1) there is a definite imbalance in employment rates based on gender in South Africa, meaning that more men are in employment as compared to females.

2.2.2.5. Education

One of the biggest challenges in South Africa is that school leavers do not leave the education system with the necessary skills required by the labour market (Cassim & Oosthuizen, 2014: 1).

According to the National Centre for Education Statistics (USA, 2016: 2), in 2015 there was a staggering 89% of young adults between the ages of 20-24 with a bachelor’s degree or higher who were employed as compared to 76% of those with some college education and training. There were 67% of young adults who had completed high school and 51% did not finish high school. There was a positive relationship between employment rates and educational attainment in the US (National Centre for Education Statistics, USA (2016: 2). “Employment rates and opportunities in South Africa increase with the level of educational attainment” (OECD, 2016: 1). This contradicts the information from Trading Economics, (2016: 1) which states that the youth unemployment rate in South Africa decreased in the third quarter of 2016. From 2014, it was found that 35% of 23-34 year olds had completed their high school education or post high school non-tertiary education as their highest level of education as compared to only 15% of their parents’ generation (55-64 year olds). Only 15% of South Africans aged 25-64 years attained a bachelor’s degree or equivalent level of education from 2014 as their highest level of attainment. This suggests that access to tertiary education has not had a significant impact on the availability of jobs and opportunities for employment among the younger generation.

Women are almost as highly educated and in some instances more so, than men in South Africa e.g. in 2013 61% of graduates from bachelor’s or equivalent, 49% at master’s level and 43% at Doctoral level were women (OECD, 2016: 2). But in reality, less women than men are employed in SA.

Education is linked to unemployment in the sense that in a country such as South Africa, work opportunities require a certain qualification. Lourens and Fourie-Malherbe (2016: 1) suggest that more focused support is required from both higher-education institutions and employers during the graduation transition into first time employment. From their study, Lourens and Fourie-Malherbe (2016: 1) found that in terms of labour market entry, “becoming an employable graduate involves not only obtaining a degree but rather a process of developing an augmented, versatile, well-rounded graduate identity in order to cope with the journey into employment.”

2.2.2.6. Expectations of employers and the unemployed youth

According to Heckers (2012: 1) many of the youth have an entitlement attitude where they want to be appreciated for doing their work. Some of the youth are unemployed as a result of being too dependent on their parents for all their needs e.g. young adults not living at home but parents pay for their rent, groceries and even fund their social life. In such instances the youth may not see the need to seek employment because they already receive money to pay for all their necessities.

Voluntary unemployment “is a situation when a person is unemployed because of not being able to find employment of their own choice” (The Economic Times, 2016: 1). “If unemployment were voluntary we would expect the unemployed to be as happy as the employed, and discouraged workers to be as happy as the searching unemployed” (Banerjee 2008:736; Kingdom & Knights 2004: 1).

Many of the youth tend to have unrealistic salary expectations as a start with little or no experience, especially those who have graduated (Heckers, 2012: 1). According to Heckers (2012:1) they do not understand the concept of earning a lower salary for a while in order to gain experience so that they can be worth the higher salary. Many people also tend to have unrealistic duty expectations i.e. they expect work to be fun, easy, and not challenging all the time (Heckers, 2012:1). When work becomes challenging and requires more from them such as working extra hours or generally leaving their comfort zones they then resign. It is unrealistic for companies to expect new graduates and young professionals to already have the experience they are looking for (Dube, 2017: 1).

2.2.2.7. Work Experience

The Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (2013:1) states that “the insufficiency of available jobs, the reluctance of employers to hire first-time job-seekers and a skills mismatch between the type of worker demanded by firms and what the labour pool can supply” are possible causes of unemployment (Perold, Cloete & Papier, 2012:1).

2.2.2.8. Utilisation of resources to find employment

Newspapers can be used for job-seeking. However, print newspaper advertising has a limited geographic reach (Castilo, 2016: 1). For example, if an advertisement is in the print of the *Mafikeng Mail* the readers of that issue are most likely to be in Mafikeng and surrounding areas. Online classifieds are an edition to print newspapers. The internet is one of the most important resources in job-hunting. People who use the internet have access to the widest selection of vacancies and company information. However, this should not be the only method one uses when job-hunting: networking and joining professional associations are tried and tested methods that also work in this regard.

Job seeking is when one looks for employment due to unemployment, underemployment, dissatisfaction with a current position, or yearning for a better position. People usually hope to get an interview first which may lead to getting hired.

According to Hansen (2016: 1) there are 15 myths and misconceptions about job hunting:

- **Registering at a number of internet job boards will result in numerous job offers** (Hansen, 2016: 1). This should be used as one method of job hunting but should not be viewed as having a higher success rate. Only about 5% of job seekers obtain jobs in this manner.
- **Most job postings represent the majority of jobs available** (Hansen, 2016: 1). Only about 15-20% of all available jobs are ever publicly advertised in any medium. There is a hidden and closed job market where the majority of job openings are. Networking or word-of-mouth has been identified as the most effective job searching tool people can use. Networking is all about “building relationships with people who can help you in your job search.”
- **Job-seekers who change jobs often (job-hoppers) are frowned upon by employers** (Hansen, 2016: 1). People should avoid working for less than a year with one employer, but otherwise should not be too concerned about moving around.
- **A cover letter is not as important as other job-hunting materials** (Hansen, 2016: 1). A cover letter specifically written for the position and company you are applying to is very important for every job application. The only exception is when the employer states that they do not require a cover letter.
- **A resume must show a logical progression of jobs and increased responsibility** (Hansen, 2016: 1). The most important part of the curriculum vitae is showing that you have skills, education/ training and experience that the employer requires.
- **As long as you are sending out cover letters and resumes, you will get interviews** (Hansen, 2016: 1). Job-seekers must be proactive in their job search. Follow-up every job lead, call employers and request an interview.
- **Lowering your salary demands will make you a more attractive job candidate** (Hansen, 2016: 1). Stick to your salary demands as long as they are within acceptable range for the vacancy you are applying for as well as the industry and location of the employer.
- **If you cannot schedule job interviews between 9am and 5pm you are out of luck** (Hansen, 2016: 1). Employers will find time after working hours to interview desirable job-seekers.
- **The most qualified job-seekers get the best jobs** (Hansen, 2016: 1). The job-seeker with the best mix of qualifications, interviewing skills and rapport with interviewer(s) might be considered over the most qualified.

- **Head-hunters and executive recruiters have your best interests at heart** (Hansen, 2016: 1). Recruiters try to fit job-seekers into distinct positions with companies that employ their services.
- **Changing careers is nearly impossible** (Hansen, 2016: 1). Switching careers is not easy but not impossible.
- **Job-seekers should not have to sell themselves to employers** (Hansen, 2016: 1). Job-seekers should see themselves as the product, and show the employer why you are the best product for the job.
- **If you are over 50, you will have a hard time finding a job** (Hansen, 2016: 1). Skills, education and experience that the employer seeks are the most critical despite the age.
- **It takes one month of job searching for every \$10, 000 of current salary** (Hansen, 2016: 1). Every job search is different. The search time may also be influenced by external factors such as the economy and demand for a particular set of skills and experiences.
- **When times are tough, take the first job offer you get** (Hansen, 2016: 1). People should only take the job if they are sure that the job and remuneration represent the right career move.

2.2.2.9. Criminal activities, at risk behaviour and substance abuse

According to Davis (2016: 1), a team of scientists have found that there is a link between smoking in general (cigarettes or drugs) and unemployment. This team has found “smokers to be younger, less educated and more likely to be unstably housed, in poorer health and to possess a criminal record than non-smokers” (Davis, 2016:1).

O'Higgins, (2007: 63) and Fougère, Kramarz, & Pouget (2009: 909) have found youth unemployment to be connected to alcohol, drug use and crime. This basically means that unemployment can lead to at risk behaviour in the youth and at risk youth are less likely to be educated and employed.

In a review of literature from 1990- 2010 by Henkel (2011: 1) on unemployment and substance abuse six main results were identified:

- 1) “Risky alcohol consumption is more common among the unemployed; they are also more likely to be smokers, to use illegal and prescription drugs and to have alcohol and drug disorders;
- 2) Problematic substance use increases the likelihood of unemployment and decreases the chances of finding and holding down a job;
- 3) Unemployment is a major risk factor for substance use and the subsequent development of substance use disorders;
- 4) Unemployment increases the risk of relapse after alcohol and drug addiction treatment;
- 5) Due to the mixed results observed in the literature review, the exact relationship between unemployment and the probability of one quitting smoking is unclear;

6) Drinking and smoking patterns appear to be pro-cyclical i.e. there is a decrease in both when the economy declines and the unemployment rate increases.”

It is therefore evident that alcohol and drug abuse may affect one’s chances of finding employment and also unemployment may lead to alcohol and drug abuse.

2.2.2.10. Other factors

Some reasons why people stay unemployed according to Mayhew (2013: 1) are:

- Work readiness which refers to whether the job seeker can complete an employment application, understands how to dress for work appropriately and is capable of using the designated language for an interview. Work-readiness skills include arriving at work on time, accepting directions from the supervisor and being a team player. People who lack these skills either have a series of unsuccessful attempts at keeping a job or they remain unemployed (Mayhew, 2013: 1).
- Some job-skills-related factors can cause long-term unemployment. That is, due to technological advancements, some occupations have become outdated, for example automatic call answering systems have replaced many receptionist and switchboard operators (Mayhew, 2013: 1). This phenomenon can be referred to as job polarisation.
- Criminal history can be a reason that deters people from seeking employment. “Some employers consider both arrests and convictions as part of an applicant’s criminal history, even when an arrest is not evidence that a crime was committed, nor indicative of criminal behaviour” (Mayhew, 2013: 1). That is, being convicted of a crime is not necessarily evidence of unsuitability for a job, unless certain convictions strictly disqualify the applicant.
- The more one applies for jobs, the better their chances are of getting one. Many people do not commit to any focused job search (Mayhew, 2013: 1). They submit one CV, get an interview and pray that one interview gets them the job. They eventually become discouraged and their job search stalls.
- Job-seekers are sometimes too nervous during the interview and do not sell themselves convincingly to the employer (Mayhew, 2013: 1).

2.2.3. Psychosocial impact of unemployment on the youth (individual), family and community

Psychosocial is understood as the psychological development of the individual in relation to his/her environment (Wiley & Sons, 2010: 1). Psychosocial development and psychosocial health i.e. internal (self-efficacy and self-esteem) and external (the family, the environment, etc.) impact of unemployment on the youth are explained below. Furthermore, other factors such as the physical, psychological, social and financial impacts of unemployment on the youth, their family and the community are discussed.

2.2.3.1. Psychosocial development

Erick Erickson developed an eight (8) step theory about psychosocial development that all humans are expected to go through (Heffner, 2017:1). During each of these stages a person goes through a psychosocial crisis which, if they overcome successfully, then the outcome for personality development will be positive and if unsuccessful (failure) then the outcome will be negative. However, the stages can be resolved successfully at a later time. The stages are:

- **Trust versus mistrust – Infancy (From birth to 18 months) – Stage 1**
Success: Care, affection and reliability from caregivers help children develop a sense of trust.
Failure: A lack of care, affection and reliability will result in mistrust.
- **Autonomy versus shame and doubt – Early childhood (2 to 3 years) – Stage 2**
Children need to develop a sense of personal control over physical skills and a sense of independence.
Success: Feelings of autonomy
Failure: Feeling of shame and doubt
- **Initiative versus guilt – Pre-school (3 to 5 years) – Stage 3**
By planning activities, completing tasks and facing challenges children then begin to claim control over their environment.
Success: Sense of purpose
Failure: Dismissal or discouraging of initiative through control or criticism will lead to a sense of guilt.
- **Industry versus inferiority – School age (6 to 11 years) – Stage 4**
The child's self-esteem is greatly influenced by the child's interaction with peers. New learning and social demands are what the child is coping with at this stage.
Success: Sense of competence
Failure: Feelings of inferiority
- **Identity versus role confusion – Adolescence (12 – 18 years) – Stage 5**
Teenagers may find themselves experimenting with different activities, roles and behaviours in order to explore who they are as individuals. According to Erickson, this process is crucial for "forming a strong identity and developing a sense of direction in life" (Heffner, 2017:1).
Success: An ability to stay true to oneself
Failure: Role confusion and weak sense of self

With regards this study, it can be hypothesised that if the stage is not successfully completed on time, then the person may have a weak self-image and therefore lack life planning including motivation to attend school and be employed.

- **Intimacy versus isolation – Young Adulthood (19 – 40 years) – Stage 6**

The biggest conflict of this stage is forming intimate, loving relationships with others.

Success: Strong relationships

Failure: Loneliness and isolation

In this stage it can be hypothesised that the lack of strong relationships leads the young people into isolation therefore affecting networking skills and confidence to approach people to seek employment.

- **Generosity versus stagnation – Middle adulthood (40 to 65 years) – Stage 7**

Having children or creating positive changes that benefit others are some of the things that adults do at this stage as a way of feeding their need to create or nurture things that will outlast them.

Success: Feelings of usefulness and accomplishment

Failure: Shallow involvement in the world

Working can be seen as one of the things that adults do in order to secure a future for their children and families which can give them a sense of purpose. Unemployment can leave these adults feeling like they have no worth.

- **Ego integrity versus despair – Maturity (65 to death) – Stage 8**

This is when the older adults look back on life with a feeling of fulfilment.

Success: Feelings of wisdom

Failure: Regret, bitterness, and despair

For the purposes of this study the researcher focuses on the 5th, 6th and 7th stages which are discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

2.2.3.2. Psychosocial health

Cheprasov (2017: 1) stated that psychosocial health refers to “a state of mental, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being.” According to Ware (2011: 1) psychosocially healthy people are set apart from those who are not by the way they view themselves and how they deal with stressful situations. Cheprasov (2017: 1) states that these people are characterised by liking themselves, accepting their mistakes, taking care of themselves, having empathy for others, being optimistic, being able to work alone and with others equally well, and being able to control their anger, hate, tension, and anxiety.

Psychosocial dysfunction refers to the “problems that occur in one’s psychosocial functioning” (Cheprasov (2017: 11). Therefore, the mental, emotional, social and spiritual aspects of psychosocial health are connected and any disturbances to any part can lead to an unhealthy psychosocial being/dysfunction.

- **Mental health**

Mental health has to do with the thinking part of psychosocial health. According to Ware (2011: 1) mentally healthy people are constructive in the way they handle life’s challenges; and mentally unhealthy people are usually irrational in their thinking.

- **Emotional health**

Emotional health describes feelings related to psychosocial health i.e. love, hate, anger, happiness, etc. According to Cheprasov (2017: 1) Emotional intelligence (EI) is “the ability to understand and manage your emotions and those of others.” Emotionally unhealthy people respond to situations in a manner that is uncontrollable, out of proportion and extreme (Cheprasov, 2017, 1).

- **Social health**

Social health has to do with relationships and interactions with others. It is “the ability to create and maintain healthy relationships with others” (Ware, 2011: 1). According to Cheprasov (2011: 1) people with good social health recognise that no man is an island; are able to support their friends in a time of need and ask for their help when they need it themselves; are not biased, prejudiced, racist, or sexist; and they listen to others well, express their feelings just as well, and act in a responsible manner around others.

- **Spiritual health**

Spiritual health is the inner quest for well-being or “a belief in a force that gives meaning to life.” For some it is a religious force – God, and for others it is nature or something else that is bigger than themselves (Cheprasov (2017: 1).

2.2.3.2.1. Factors influencing psychosocial health

In this sub-section we look at factors that influence the psychosocial health of an individual. Unlike Erickson’s stages of development this looks at factors that affect an individual’s psychosocial health externally e.g. the family and the environment, and internally e.g. self-efficacy and self-esteem, learned helplessness versus learned optimism and personality. These factors are discussed below.

- **The family**

According to Ware (2011: 1) if a child grows up in a dysfunctional family they run the risk of increased psychosocial problems and they may also find it hard to adapt to life.

- **The environment**

Environmental factors that one has no control over also play a role in increased risk of psychosocial problems (Ware, 2011: 1). These factors include drugs, crime, and threats to safety, failure in school, unemployment, financial problems and natural disasters.

- **Self-efficacy and self-esteem**

Self-efficacy is the “belief in one’s ability to perform a task successfully” (Bandura, 1994: 1), while self-esteem is the sense of self-respect or self-worth (Psychology Today, 2017: 1).

- **Learned helplessness versus. learned optimism**

Learned helplessness is when one gives up because of repeated past failure. Learned optimism is when one teaches oneself to be optimistic by staying positive in any situation.

- **Personality**

According to Ware (2011: 1) in general extroversion, agreeableness, openness to experience, emotional stability, conscientiousness and resilience are personality traits that are associated with psychosocially healthy people.

2.2.3.3. Physical, psychological, social and financial impact of unemployment

A study conducted by Hanisch (1999:188) divides individual impact of unemployment into physical and psychological. The physical impact includes “an increase in headaches, stomach aches and sleep problems, lack of energy, hypertension, heart disease and kidney disease.” The psychological impact includes “increased hostility, depression, anxiety, stress, anger, fear, despair, loneliness and social isolation, and decreased self-esteem, life satisfaction, aspiration levels, concentration and personal identity” (Hanisch, 1999:188).

Unemployment unfortunately does not only affect the individual but also has negative effects on the family. Hanisch (1999: 189) identified family impact of unemployment as “an increase in spousal abuse, marital friction, spousal depression, family conflict, and child abuse and a decrease in family cohesion and the well-being of children”.

Another impact of youth unemployment on the family is that the unemployed youth cannot assist financially and find themselves depending on their parents/guardians, grandparents or whoever they stay with. According to Statistics South Africa (2011, 1), the dependency ratio in Mahikeng is 55.3%. That is “the number of people (aged 0-14 and 65 plus) dependent on the working aged population expressed per 100 working aged persons.”

Unemployment has several negative impacts on the community as well. People may become psychologically and socially isolated from their peers, which can lead them to deviant and negative activities. This can then lead to a decrease in the level of community safety i.e. high crime rates. A reduction in the quality and availability of housing and schools may occur and limitations in the variety and availability of jobs.

2.2.4. The role of social workers

According to Briar (2015: 898), the social work profession seems to be somewhat detached from issues that are related to unemployment. The fact that the profession might need to focus much of their attention on economic and political structures that allow unemployment to persist might be a factor for their little involvement (Briar, 2015:898). According to a study by Fahs-Beck (Cited by Briar; 2015:1), when clients went to a social work agency with issues related to income, unemployment and housing the social workers spent less time interviewing them as compared to clients that came with issues related to children, family, home management and personality adjustment of an adult.

According to Vaux (2009: 1), there is a need for social workers to understand the welfare system in order to help the unemployed. In his article, he states that social workers and social work departments need to ask themselves certain questions that would help them be effective, knowledgeable and aware when helping the unemployed client (Vaux, 2009: 1). One of the questions as suggested by Vaux (2009:1) is “Are you equipped with enough basic knowledge of benefits and debt matters to at least point people in the right direction for more specialist help – or ideally offer a bit of help yourself?” If the answer is ‘No’ then he further states that social workers as well as social work departments need to introduce training in benefits and debts (Vaux, 2009:1).

According to the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) (2012: 3), in the past social workers used approaches such as consultation and involvement, planning and execution of measures and projects aimed at lifting individuals, families and population groups in poverty, out of poverty and extreme poverty, and assist them to gain self-confidence. According to the IFSW (2009: 1), social workers/social

work departments need to increase their focus on community development, which requires skills in community analysis, social planning, community organising and social action. Social workers can help people to discover their own resources and ability to create influence and positive change.

2.2.5. Documented strategies to address unemployment

At the youth employment agencies in Germany (Freitag, 2013: 1), professionals from various government departments like career advisors, social workers, psychologists and school board staff work as a team together. They all work together but each person gives input based on their expert knowledge. Team members are able to help young people better and faster (Freitag, 2013: 1).

There are different initiatives that have been put in place to assist in the battle against youth unemployment in South Africa. These initiatives include the International Labour Office, National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), the Youth Employment Index (YEI), and the National Youth Service Framework to name a few (About Government Programmes, 2014: 1). Locally there is a draft of the North West provincial integrated youth development strategy (Draft North West Integrated Youth Development Strategy, 2005 – 2009: 1). The draft has not been implemented. All these initiatives are aimed at finding ways and strategies to help increase youth employment and develop the youth in general.

NYDA has a “Jobs Programme” which is an online database for unemployed youth who are seeking employment (National Youth Development Agency; 2014: 1). The aim is to link unemployed youth to employment and other skills development related opportunities (National Youth Development Agency, 2014: 1). The National Youth Development Agency uses the National Youth Development Plan as its guidelines to assist the youth in their employment endeavours. NYDA has, though to a limited extent, implemented public deployment programmes which target the youth and the unskilled (Cassim & Oosthuizen, 2014: 4). The programme runs for 12 months and young people are trained in fields where there is a labour demand such as construction or enterprise development. Once the 12 months of training is done the young people are placed in different organisations where they can put their skills to practice. In October 2013 the NYDA, Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), and Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA) collaborated on a R3.1 –billion initiative aimed at “providing funding opportunities to businesses owned by young entrepreneurs, 35 years old or younger (South African Government, 2014: 1).

The Youth Employment Index is also an online index where people can “register their businesses and actively contribute to the employment of young South African talent” (Youth Employment Index, 2014: 1). Its main focus is raising awareness on the importance of youth development as well as developing the youth. The National Youth Service Policy Framework (2012: 7) is a government initiative which seeks to

contribute to the enhancement of youth as present and future social capital. NYS can be defined as “involvement of young people in activities which provide benefits to the community whilst developing the abilities of young people through service and learning” (National Youth Commission, 2012: 3). All these are initiatives by government and the private sector to help raise awareness and find ways of helping the youth develop and eventually find employment. Social workers can also start an initiative which focuses on helping the youth find appropriate employment.

The Department of Social Development is currently funding projects at Youth Development Centres which are managed by NGOs. In the centres different skills and training courses are offered to the youth e.g. life skills, computer courses, welding, flower arranging etc. (Brand South Africa, 2012: 1). In some of the centres there are internal social workers, while other centres only have social workers who are employed by the Department of Social Development to render services when requested. In Mafikeng, youth development programmes are offered at the Bosasa youth care centre which is a juvenile facility for youth in conflict with the law. Social workers can, for example, work with the youth while in the centre and empower these with certain work skills like teaching them how to write a CV and where to look for jobs, for when they are reintegrated with society. Another initiative in Mahikeng is the Mafikeng Innovation Hub which is aimed at “fostering and promoting youth entrepreneurship and innovation in the North West Province” (Amaphiko, 2016: 1). The North West Development Corporation (NWDC) is another initiative which has fully aligned its dealings with the objectives of the North West Provincial Government, as outlined in the Provincial Growth and development strategy (The Provincial Government Handbook, 2015: 1). According to the Provincial Government Handbook (2015: 1) the aim of the NWDC is to “stimulate economic growth and sustainable development that will result in job creation and wealth.”

In South Africa, there are Further Education and Training (FET) colleges, which are known in other parts of the world as Technical and Vocational Education and Training institutions (TVET). Some skills and training programmes have been funded in these institutions in order to facilitate entry into the labour market (Cassim & Oosthuizen, 2014: 3). According to Cassim and Oosthuizen (2014: 3), these institutions have several downfalls such as the fact that they have been unable to provide training that is required by the economy. Financial assistance is also not as easily accessible as in tertiary institutions, and FET institutions do not have strong partnerships with potential employers. In Mahikeng there is Taletso College and there are two other campuses in Lichtenburg and Lehurutshe and the campuses are about 80km from each other (Taletso FET College, 2016: 1). There are currently 1609 students in all three campuses. Other colleges in Mahikeng are Mmabatho College of Nursing, Mokgojwa College of Emergency Care, Prestige Business College, Mafikeng College, Kingsbridge College, DC Dynamic

College. According to an article in the *City Press* (2012: 1), the partnerships between FET Colleges and Industry have declined over the years and are difficult to replace. According to the Human Sciences Research Council (2016: 1) only 18 out of 50 FET Colleges in South Africa keep records of where their graduates find work opportunities, which makes the reports on the employability of FET college graduates unreliable. A report by the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET) states that “FET Colleges have a poor image with employers and therefore only a minority of their graduates, aggregated across all fields, find employment” (*City Press*, 2012: 1). Higher Education Minister Blade Nzimande said there were 437 060 students enrolled in the 50 FET colleges in South Africa; he had set a target of 1 million by 2014 (*City Press*, 2012:1). Three new colleges were expected to open in 2017, one in Limpopo and two in KwaZulu-Natal (*City Press*, 2017: 1). According to *City Press* (2017: 1) FET colleges will have 207 510 for new entrants. A further 65 026 places will be available across 19 programmes for the national certificate which provides theory and practical experience in a range of vocational fields (*City Press*, 2017: 1). The president has now signed the FET Colleges Amendment Act, which effectively moves administration of the colleges from provinces to the national department of higher education.

Because the South African labour market prefers skilled workers, the government implemented several publicly funded programmes (Cassim & Oosthuizen, 2014: 3). These programmes offer “employment in the provision of essential basic services to vulnerable South Africans and; deployment in programmes that can provide income while additional skills are developed, thereby improving future employability”. Some of these programmes include The Community Works Programme (CWP) which is similar to India’s Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) programme. The CWP was extended to the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP). According to Abrahams (2017: 1) at a progress report meeting on the EPWP programme there is a cumulative five-year target for EPWP Phase 3 which is 6 million work opportunities, while the cumulative three-year target is 3.5 million work opportunities (April 2014 – March 2017). The programme managed to achieve 2.3 million work opportunities against the five-year target and which is 36.7% against the 6 million target and 67% against the three-year target (Abrahams, 2017: 1). The programme will have to create 1.1 million work opportunities in the fourth quarter of the current financial year in order to achieve the three-year target of 3.5 million work opportunities (Abrahams, 2017: 1). According to Cassim and Oosthuizen (2014: 3) these programmes have been found to be less appealing to the youth because they do not meet their aspirations and the jobs offered do not lead to better paying jobs in the labour market. In September 2010 the National Rural Youth Service Corps was implemented and it was aimed at rural youth (Cassim & Oosthuizen, 2014: 3).

2.3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The researcher will make use of the ecological perspective as well as the strengths perspective in this study. Combining these perspectives will bring about a viewpoint of the different strengths people have and how they can use them to interact with their environment in Mafikeng.

The combination of these two theories will ensure that the best possible ways of assisting the youth. It is important for one to acknowledge and respect the strengths of individuals as well as be able to build on them. The combination of these two theories suggests that the youth and their environment (the Mafikeng area) have the potential to improve. However, their strengths have to be realised first and built on before further action can be taken.

With regards to this study, the researcher will record the strengths and weaknesses of the youth as well as various policies which can be used in order to assist the youth find employment or even create their own employment.

2.3.1. Strengths perspective

The strengths perspective suggests that everybody has strengths and/or the potential to learn new strengths (Zastrow, 2009; 89). With regards to the study, the social worker can help the unemployed youth realise their strengths. Once the youth have realised their strengths they can then find means and ways to use those strengths to their advantage. For example, a youth who is 21 years of age and has no formal education, but can create ornaments using wire and sell them and perhaps eventually start a business. The youth can be creative and can even become business owners.

According to Rapp, Saleebey and Sullivan (2008: 1) there are six standards for judging what constitutes a strengths-based approach.

- **Goal orientation:** The central and most crucial element of any approach is the extent to which people themselves set goals they would like to achieve in their lives. For the purpose of this study the unemployed youth can be empowered to set realistic goals for themselves with regards to finding work.
- **Strengths assessment:** The primary focus is not on problems or deficits, and the individual is supported to recognise the essential resources they have at their disposal which they can use to counteract any difficulty or condition (Rapp et al, 2008: 1). The unemployed youth in this regard would have to look at the resources they have such as newspapers or the internet and use them to search for internships, learnerships, or permanent employment.

- **Resources from the environment:** Strengths advocates believe that in every environment there are individuals, associations, groups and institutions that have something to give, that others may find useful, and that it may be the practitioner's role to enable links to these resources (Rapp et al, 2008: 1).
- **Explicit methods are used for identifying client and environmental strengths for goal attainment:** instruments such as a strengths assessment can be utilised to identify strengths for goal attainment (Rapp et al, 2008: 1)
- **The relationship is hope-inducing:** A strengths-based approach aims to increase the hopefulness of the client (Manthey, Knowles, Asher, & Wahab: 2011; 131). Further, hope can be realised through strengthened relationships with people, communities and cultures (Rapp, Saleebey and Sullivan: 2008; 1).
- **Meaningful choice:** Strengths proponents highlight a collaborative stance where people are experts in their own lives and the practitioner's role is to increase and explain choices and encourage people to make their own decisions and informed choices (Manthey, Knowles, Asher, & Wahab: 2011; 131).

2.3.2. The ecological perspective

The ecological perspective focuses on people and their environments, how the two interact with each other. In social work practice, applying the ecological approach can be best understood as looking at people, families, cultures, communities and policies to identify and intervene upon strengths and weaknesses in the transactional processes between these systems (Sands, 2001;4). This is the same with regards to this study.

The ecological perspective has four levels that explain how individual or family processes are influenced by hierarchical environmental systems in which they function. The first system is the micro system which is the most basic system and it is about an individual's most immediate environment. Next is the meso system which is more generalised and it refers to the interactional processes between multiple micro systems. Third is the exo system which is also on a more generalised level and it indirectly affects the micro and meso levels. Lastly is the macro system which is the most generalised and affects individuals and family functioning.

On the individual level, personal history and biological factors influence how individuals behave and increase their likelihood of becoming victims of their circumstances. With regards to this study this refers to how the unemployed individual's personality traits affect those around him/her. On the meso level or personal relationship level, family, friends, intimate partners and peers may influence the unemployed youth either in a positive or negative way. The positive influence may be that they will offer support to

the unemployed youth in his/her employment endeavours and negative in the sense that they may be judgemental. The exo- or community level is the context in which social relationships are formed and the fact that the youth is unemployed may be a risk factor. Lastly the macro- or societal level has to do with economic and social policies that influence unemployment.

2.4. CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined youth unemployment problem from an international, national and even local (Mahikeng) stance. The chapter also provided information on documented strategies for employment by the South African government. Two theoretical perspectives and frameworks were also discussed, the strengths perspective and the ecological framework. Based on the above, it can be concluded that youth unemployment is a psychosocial problem.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the research methodology including type of research, research approach, research design, data collection methods, pilot study, data analysis, ethical aspects. Attention was placed on the mixed method approach for the purposes of this study.

3.2. RESEARCH APPROACH

In order to answer the research question on the psychosocial impact of unemployment on the youth, a mixed method research approach was utilised. Mixed method research focuses on both how people (individuals or groups) perceive or understand the world and make meanings out of their experiences and on numerical data e.g. percentages of people who have been recorded to meet a phenomenon (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2011: 286).

The researcher utilised an interview schedule that consisted of quantitative and qualitative questions. The explanatory research design (Miller et al, 2003: 28) was used to guide the research process and gain knowledge about the psychosocial factors related to youth unemployment. The explanatory design uses qualitative data to provide more details about the quantitative data. Some key results that was followed up on from the quantitative data was statistically significant results, statistically nonsignificant results, key significant predictors, variables that distinguish between groups, distinguishing demographic characteristics or simply individuals that volunteer to participate in interviews. The data obtained was compared to documented knowledge extant in the literature on youth unemployment.

The focus of this study is on practical problems experienced by participants and a practical solution is sought. For the purposes of this study, the problem is that a high percentage of the youth is unemployed and the researcher sought to establish a practical solution to this problem.

3.3. POPULATION

The research focuses on the unemployed youth (both male and female between the ages of 18 and 30) of Mahikeng, the capital of the North West Province.

3.4. SAMPLING

The researcher made use of criterion sampling. In criterion sampling, the researcher decides on the typical characteristics of the participants to be selected as well as how many participants to include in the ultimate sample (De Vos et al, 2011: 349)). For the purposes of this study, the criteria included age, a specific geographic location, and the fact that the participant must be unemployed at the time of the research. The researcher visited police stations, churches and community centres where the unemployed youth of Mahikeng were found. The researcher also purposively selected some of the participants in residential areas and other places where the researcher had access to unemployed youth in Mahikeng. The same sample (participants) were used for both the quantitative and qualitative data collection, this made it easier for the data to be compared. One hundred participants who met the following criteria were included in the sample.

- The participants were residents of Mahikeng
- The participants were between the ages of 18 and 30, both males and females, with no focus on the language spoken by the participants, as long as the language was amongst those officially recognised in South Africa
- The participants were unemployed for a minimum of two months
- The participants gave voluntary consent to participate in the research.

3.5. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The researcher applied the interview schedule to collect data (Addenda – A). The interview schedule included structured and unstructured or open ended questions to collect data from the criterion-selected participants. According to Miller et al (2003; 37), a structured interview schedule involves a list of questions on the focus areas which the researcher wants to cover. The first part of the interview schedule consists of close-ended questions and the second part consisted of open-ended questions. The first part of the questionnaire was analysed using the SPSS program. The researcher had face-to-face interviews with the participants to discuss the topic in detail for better understanding of the participant's subjective experiences (De Vos et al, 2011:351). Face-to-face interviews were used in the study and the researcher was able to monitor the process and make it easier for any respondents with a low literacy rate.

The concurrent triangulation research design was used to guide the research. As described by Creswell (2009:213), in concurrent triangulation both quantitative and qualitative data were collected at the same time. The researcher wanted to understand and describe the psychosocial impact of unemployment on the

youth of Mahikeng. By using the concurrent triangulation approach, the researcher was able to transform the data from qualitative to quantitative and vice versa so that she could compare the data (De Vos et al, 2011:442).

3.6. PROCEDURES

After identifying the research topic and compiling a literature review the proposal was approved by the Higher Degrees Committee, and ethical clearance was obtained from the ethics committee at the North-West University (Mafikeng Campus). The data collection methods were tested and refined during the pilot study (see 3.7). Participants were both criterion and purposively selected based on the criteria stated earlier and informed consent was obtained prior to the interview. The interviews were analysed, coded and themes deduced from available statistics and literature as part of the triangulation process. The researcher obtained permission from the university, various agencies, community leaders, and participants.

3.7. PILOT STUDY

For the purposes of this study, a pilot study was conducted as soon as an interview schedule had been drawn up. A pilot study is a small experiment which is intended to test and gather information prior to a larger study, in order to improve the quality and efficiency of the study (Lancaster, Dodd, & Williamson, 2004: 1).

The pilot study was conducted by the researcher in Mahikeng. Ten participants were included in the pilot study and these initial respondents were not included in the final research. Although the pilot study only provided limited information on the sources and magnitude of variation of response measures, it provided vital information on the severity of unemployment, including the proposed procedures or treatments as suggested by Lancaster et al (2004: 1). The information obtained from the pilot study was not included in the study data that is presented and discussed in Chapter 4: it only honed the research instruments. After the pilot study was done, the researcher did not make any changes to the interview schedule because it met all the requirements.

3.8. ETHICAL ASPECTS

The following ethical requirements were met in the study

Voluntary participation

Participants took part in the research on their own free will, their participation was voluntary.

Informed consent

The participants' informed consent was attained by means of a consent form, stating what the research is about and their role in the research.

Confidentiality

The participants needed to know that the information will be kept confidential and made aware of who will have access to the information.

Compensation

It was important to make it clear that the participants would not be compensated for their participation in this study.

Honesty and transparency

The researcher was honest throughout the process and did not withhold any information or give false information.

Although professional help was available had a participant reacted negatively to any unintentional triggers, none of the participants reacted negatively to the questions.

3.9. DATA ANALYSIS

For this study, mixed method data design was used. In this instance an interview schedule was drawn up as means of gathering the data. The numerical data and the opinions of the participants were grouped according to themes. As stated above, the interviews were coded by the researcher. According to De Vos et al (2011:412), coding is when the researcher reads the transcripts several times with the aim of ultimately extracting themes. The researcher used a computerised programme called SPSS for the statistical procedures. The data is captured on a spread sheet and then uploaded in the computerised system to be analysed. The data has been analysed, findings have been discussed, recommendations made and a detailed conclusion given in this dissertation.

3.10. LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

There are several limitations that were experienced while conducting the research. One was that this study is limited to Mahikeng, the capital city of the North West Province, and the information obtained cannot be generalised to other sections of the broader South African community.

Because youth unemployment is linked to emotions and feelings of incompetency, the participants strayed away from the questions that were asked during the research and avoided discussing issues that were too personal. Oftentimes, the researcher had to repeat the question and remind participants about the objectives of the study.

The interview schedule was only conducted in English, therefore in some instances there was a language barrier but because the researcher was conducting the interviews she managed to explain some of the questions as required by the participants in Setswana. While most of the participants did not have a problem revealing their personal information, others thought that the interview schedule was a way of getting them employment.

3.11. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the mixed method research approach was described with reference to the research design, population group, measuring instrument, and steps followed in the statistical data analysis. In the following chapter the results of the research are reported.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF DATA

4.1. INTRODUCTION

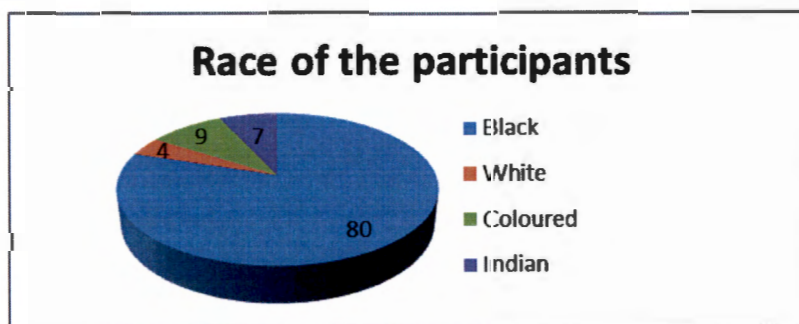
In this chapter, data analysis on the feelings and opinions of the participants is presented and compared to documented studies on the impact of unemployment on both a national and provincial scale. The qualitative and quantitative data are presented concurrently. Tables and figures are used to depict the quantitative data which is also explained. The numerical data consists mainly of the biographical information of the participants, perceived causes of unemployment, and the qualitative data on the psychosocial impact of unemployment on the youth follows.

4.2. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS AND FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO UNEMPLOYMENT

In this study, 100 unemployed participants were interviewed concerning their views on youth unemployment in Mahikeng. Fifty males and fifty females were part of the study. The ages of the participants varied from 18 to 30, with most of the participants being between the ages of 19 and 25 (refer to 4.2.4).

4.2.1. Race of participants

Figure 1 – Race of the participants



The total population of Mahikeng consists of 95.5% black, 2.3% coloured, 0.8% Indian/Asian and 1.3% white inhabitants (Statistics South Africa 2011:1). Unemployment amongst the white youth in South Africa is 18% compared to 41% among African youth in South Africa (SALDRU, 2013:1). In this study, 80% of the people interviewed were black, 9% was coloured, 7% was Indian, and 4% white (figure 1, Page 39). This study confirms what is found in literature in the sense that there are more unemployed

African citizens than there are white citizens even though the study was done on a smaller scale and does not necessarily reflect what is happening in South Africa in general.

4.2.2. Home language of the participants

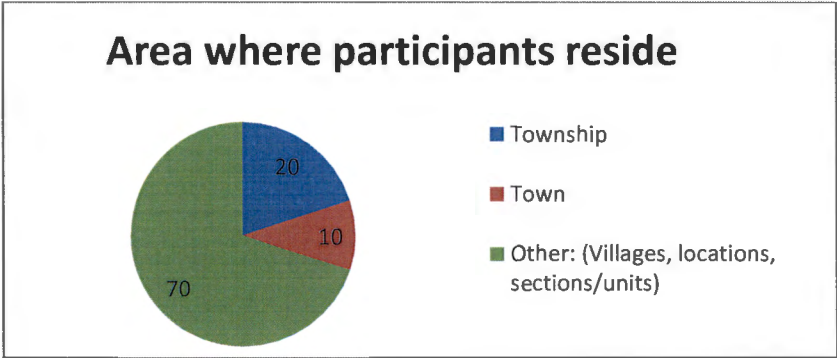
Table 1 – Home language of the participants

Language	Number of participants	Percent %
English	20	20
Setswana	77	77
Xhosa	1	1
Zulu	2	2
Total	100	100

According to Statistics South Africa (2011:1), the most spoken language in Mahikeng is Setswana with 76.6% of the population speaking the language. In this study it was found that 77% of the participants were Setswana speaking. The languages of the participants are in accordance with the national statistics and patterns across languages of the total population of Mahikeng as reflected by Statistics South Africa (2011:1)

4.2.3. Area where participants reside and active participation of participants in seeking employment

Figure 2 – Area where participants reside



According to Darity (2008: 405), a township can be legally defined as both residential and industrial site. In South Africa, townships and locations refer to often underdeveloped urban living areas that black people occupied during the apartheid era (Darity: 2008: 405). According to Oxford dictionary (2015:1), a town is defined as “a thickly populated area, usually smaller than a city and larger than a village, having fixed boundaries and certain local powers of government.”

Figure 2 indicates that 20% of the participants live in townships, 10% live in town and 70% live in other areas such as villages, locations and sections/units, and none of the participants were identified to be living on farms. According to SALDRU (2013:1), youth unemployment in rural areas is 82% as compared to 58% in urban formal areas when using the expanded definition of unemployment. This agrees with what is found in literature. That is, most of the unemployed youth come from rural areas (see page 17, 2.2.2.3).

According to South African Census (2011: 1), the total population of Mahikeng is 291 527, with 33 167 people unemployed in Mahikeng, while 12 987 people are classified as discouraged work seekers. SALDRU (2013:1) suggests that the youth from rural areas are more likely to become discouraged in their job searches based on the strict definition of unemployment which gives us 33% of unemployed youth in rural areas and 44% in urban areas. The strict definition of unemployment states that a person must have taken steps to find work for at least four weeks before a certain point (Du Toit, 2003: 6) which then means that only a few of the youth in rural areas actively seek employment until a certain point.

The participants summarised this reality by stating that *“The area I live in is isolated and there are not so many job opportunities. Many people here go to Gauteng and Pretoria to find work and some come back with nothing.”*

“I only apply for work outside of Mahikeng because I hardly ever come across any posts here at home.”

“There are no opportunities especially for those of us who live in rural parts of Mahikeng, and when we do find work it is usually in town and the salary is very little, most of it is spent on transport.”

“I stopped looking for work because I was discouraged. There is no development in my area of residence and therefore no job opportunities”

“I used to apply for any and all vacancies that I came across but I never received any feedback for my application and so I lost hope”

According to Pettinger (2012: 1) people in disadvantaged areas suffer most from unemployment. This may be seen as geographical unemployment which occurs when workers live too far from areas (usually cities) where employment is available and they are unable to travel.

4.2.4. Age of participants

Table 2 – Age of the participants

Age (Years)	Number of participants	Percent%
18	4	4
19	9	9
20	6	6
21	20	20
22	5	5
23	18	18
24	5	5
25	15	15
26	10	10
29	5	5
30	3	3
Total	100	100

For the purposes of this study it was decided that the participants would range from the age of 18 – 30. Table 2 indicates the ages of the participants. 20% of the participants were 21 years old, 18% were 23, and 15% were 25 years. 3% of the participants were 30 years old, 4% were 18 years old.

4.2.5. Gender of the participants

The researcher purposefully selected 50 males and 50 females as participants.

4.2.6. Education of participants

Getting an education goes a long way towards decreasing one's chances of being unemployed. Making informed decisions about education can benefit you for your entire life. Below we look at the highest qualification of the participants, educational attainment of the unemployed participants by gender, education level of participants – most at risk by gender, and education level of participants – least at risk by gender.

Table 3 – Highest qualification of the participants

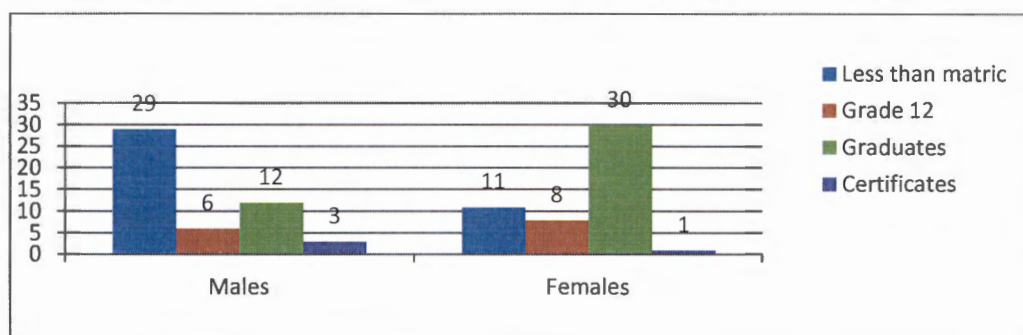
Grade	Number of participants	Percent %
Grade 8	28	28
Grade 10	12	12
Grade 12	14	14
Diploma	19	19
Degree	23	23
Other(certificates)	4	4
Total	100	100

The participants agreed that graduates, though currently unemployed, have a better chance of finding work. The participants also largely concurred that both males and females with qualifications less than Grade 12 were most at risk of struggling to find any form of work.

About 10% of the participants who have less than Matric dropped out of school due to teenage pregnancy or a lack of interest in school and these are some of the contributing factors for having little or no education. Other causes identified by the participants for limited education included a life of crime, little or no opportunities available to further their studies and alcohol and drug abuse of the participants or their relatives.

40% (28+12) of participants did not obtain Matric. Fifty-four percent (28+12+14) of the participants did not obtain specialised further training after leaving school. Even though 46% (19+23+4) of the participants have post Matric qualification, they are still unemployed.

Figure 3 – Educational attainment of the unemployed participants by gender



According to Figure 3, more female participants have a Matric qualification and are graduates as compared to their male counterparts. 8% of female participants have Matric compared to 6% of males. 30% of the female participants are graduates with either diplomas or degrees compared to a low 12% of the male participants. In this study, several of the participants stated that they believe that *“little or no education have a big influence on one’s employment status”*.

According to Statistics South Africa (2011:1), 26% of those aged 20 years and older in Mahikeng have Grade 12, a little over 12.4% have higher education and 30.6% obtained secondary education, 4.6% have finished their primary education and 10.3% have no education. In this study as seen in Table 3 some of the participants have a qualification after Grade 12 with 20% having attained diplomas, 23% with degrees and 4% as other which represents certificates. Post Matric certificates are often obtained from colleges or FET institutions where people can study to obtain a certain skill. Certificates can be obtained in beauty courses, IT, hospitality and administration to name a few.

In this study both men and women believed that men are most at risk of being unemployed. According to one participant, *“The reason I say men are most at risk is because nowadays there are many women empowerment initiatives that promote the importance of women in employment. Whereas in the past women were discouraged from work and were expected to be “home makers” or to work in female dominated occupations e.g. teaching or nursing.”*

Other participants stated that *“Females are generally working harder by doing jobs that were initially reserved for males.”*

“Times have changed and there are now gender equality movements which also translate into the workplace. Women are therefore now finding themselves and working hard to get work.”

“There are generally more work opportunities for women everywhere then there are for men nowadays.”

According to the participants, those who have graduated have a better chance of being employed with 93% of the participants agreeing that females who are graduates are least at risk and only 6% saying that those with Matric are least at risk. 86% of the participants said that males who are graduates are least at risk.

The participants were asked how educational levels affect gender specifically (Figure 4 and 5). According to 77% of the participants, males with little or no education are most at risk of being unemployed, the remaining 23% believed that males with Matric were most at risk. 83% of the participants believed that females with little or no education were most at risk.

Figure 4 – Education level of participants – most at risk by gender

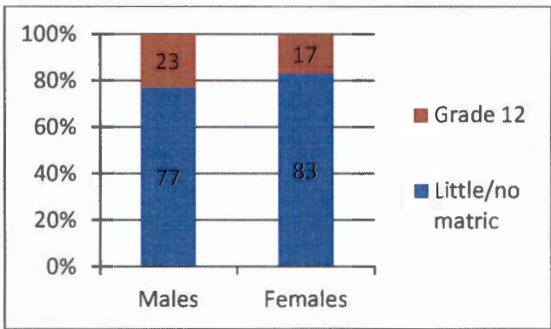
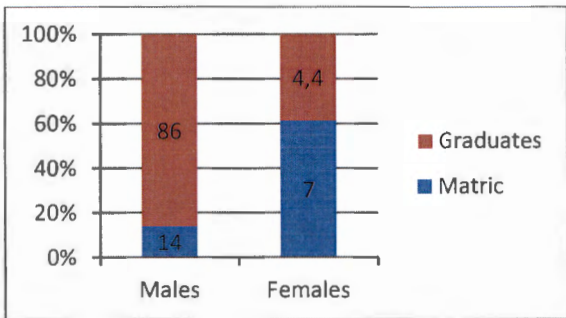


Figure 5 - Education level of participants – least at risk by gender



4.2.7. Expectations of employers and the participants

Most of the participants argued that a lack of job opportunities was one of the main causes of unemployment. According to The Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (2013:1), the insufficiency of available jobs is a possible cause of unemployment (Perold, Cloete & Papier, 2012: 1).

The participants said *“We have all these qualifications but when we get to the workplace we are expected to do other stuff that we did not study for.”*

“Most of what we learn in tertiary does not fully prepare us for the workplace because we go there with our own expectations only to be overwhelmed.”

“Vocational work or volunteer work while one is still in school helps a lot in the sense that at least one can know what to expect when they start working, instead of just learning the theory and being surprised by what one finds in the workplace.”

According to Heckers (2012: 1) many people tend to have unrealistic duty expectations i.e. they expect work to be fun, easy, and not challenging all the time, when work becomes challenging and requires more from them such as working extra hours or generally leaving their comfort zones they then leave. This may be a reason why some of the participants left their employer. The South African Labour and Development Unit (2013: 1) confirmed that a skills mismatch between the type of worker demanded by firms and what the labour pool can supply may be one of the possible reasons for unemployment.

4.2.8. Work experience of the participants

The South African labour market prefers skilled and experienced workers and one of the biggest challenges in South Africa is that school graduates leave the education system without the necessary skills required by the labour market (Cassim & Oosthuizen, 2014: 1). Some graduates find themselves at home mainly because they do not have the necessary experience to perform tasks that would be required of them in the work place. In some instances, people with limited qualifications are promoted because of the experience they have.

Table 4 – Work experience of the participants

Work experience	Number of participants	Percent %	Years of experience	Number of participants	Percent %
Yes	34	34	1-3	28	28
			4-6	6	6
No	66	66	0	66	66
Total	100	100		100	100

Table 4 indicates that the data collected confirms what is found in literature where 66% of the participants who were interviewed did not have any job experience whereas the labour market prefers people with some element of work experience in order for them to be employable (Du Toit, 2003; 6). Table 4 reflects that from the 34% of the participants who have some experience, 28% of them have experience of between 1 to 3 years and the remaining 6% has 4 to 6 years of work experience. Even with this experience, most of them were still struggling to find work at the time of this study.

Table 5 – Reasons for unemployment of previously employed participants

Reasons that lead to unemployment	Number of participants	%	Possible reasons for still being unemployed	Number of participants	%
Left work for school	5	5	Still in school	4	4
Retrenchment	6	6	Struggling to find work	21	21
Unpleasant working conditions	6	6	Don't want to work	9	9
Stopped enjoying work	17	17			

With regard to reasons that lead to unemployment, the participants said *"I left work so that I can further my studies."*

"After being retrenched from my previous work I felt that I do not want to work anymore. I am looking at starting my own thing"

"Things at work became so bad, I was not getting along with my colleagues and management always seemed to have unrealistic expectations so eventually I left."

"I started going to work only because I had to. I stopped being productive and even had an "I do not care attitude". So I finally made a decision to resign. I am still looking for other opportunities"

With regards to possible reasons for still being unemployed, the participants said:

"I am studying and therefore have not been looking for work until I am done"

"I had to leave work so I could focus on my studies."

"Finding a job has been such a challenge even though I apply often."

"I have not been successful in all my applications for work"

"I do not want to work because I would rather be my own boss"

"I would like to start my own company but in order for me to do that I need a job for the capital."

"I found the work environment to be so stressful for me and have therefore decided that it is not for me."

As reasons for being unemployed, 5 of the 34 participants (with work experience – see table 4) said that they left work to focus on their studies, 6 were retrenched, 6 were in unpleasant working conditions, and 17 said they had altogether stopped enjoying work. As possible reasons for not being able to find work in the present, 4 said they were still in school furthering their studies but could not afford and so they needed the job to enable them pay for fees, 21 are struggling to find work and the remaining 9 said they do not want to work.

4.2.8.1. Work applications and interviews participants have been to

The strict definition of unemployment a person must have taken steps to find work for at least four weeks before a certain point (Du Toit, 2003: 6). Below we look at the last time participants applied for work and participants who have been called for an interview(s).

Figure 6 – Last time participants applied for work

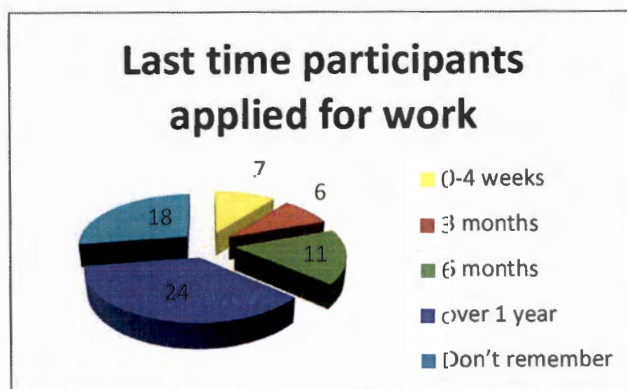
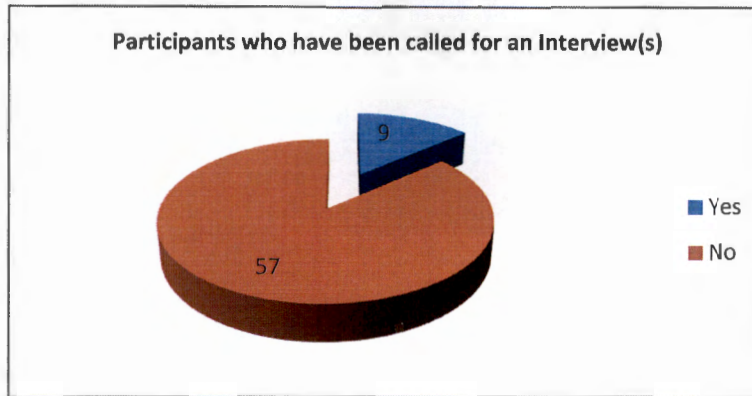


Figure 7 – Participants who have been called for an interview(s)



Of those 66 participants who did not have any work experience, 25 said they had applied for jobs in the past six months and 41 had not. It was found that 18 participants out of the 41 did not even remember the last time they had applied for a job because they had literally given up (Figure 6). This means that this group would be defined by the expanded definition of unemployment which states that a person has to be 15 years or older, unemployed but willing and available to work but has not taken active steps to find work (Du Toit, 2003: 6). Figure 6 also shows that seven participants stated that they had applied for work within the previous four weeks prior to this interview; six had applied in the past three months, 11 in the past six months and 24 participants last applied over a year ago. Figure 7 endorses the findings in showing that only 9 had been called for interviews

4.2.9. Utilisation of resources to find employment by the participants

Table 6 – Information on resources utilised for knowledge on vacancies by the participants

Information on vacancies	Number of participants	Percent
Not looking for work	66	66
Internet	11	11
Newspapers	11	11
Other	12	12
Total	100	100

One participant said: *"I still use newspapers to find information on available jobs."*

Other participants said: *"I use the internet on my phone, get information from other people (word of mouth), and also newspapers to find information on jobs."*

"The Jobmail newspaper used to be so big and now it is only a few pages long and it is expensive. So, I usually only use the internet now."

"I have registered with several online job portals for my job hunting"

"I visit different sites on the internet to look for work. This takes time but there are more opportunities."

"I usually get info from friends who know about new shops that have just opened and we go there to market ourselves" (Word of mouth)

"Whenever there is any construction work that takes place in areas around where I stay I have people that call me or I call them others when I am the one with the info and we usually get to work for a certain period." (Word of mouth)

"I have friends who are working so every time there are any vacancies at their departments or if they have any other information about vacancies I can apply for they let me know." (Word of mouth)

Table 6 indicates that 11% of the participants use the internet to find information on job vacancies, another 11% use newspapers and the remaining 12% (other) use the internet, newspapers as well as word of mouth concurrently to get information on job vacancies. This leaves a shocking 66% of the participants who are not looking for work because of fatigue and acute despondency.

According to Hansen (2016: 1), networking means “developing a broad list of contacts (people you have met through social and business functions) and using them to your advantage when looking for a job.” Figler (2013: 89) states that employers prefer to contact and attract job candidates through informal sources. This then shows that networking is important and that the participants do not know how to fully utilize the networking skill.

In this study the data collected strongly confirms what has been found in literature.

4.2.10. Criminal activity, at risk behaviour and substance abuse of the participants

At risk behaviour can contribute to unemployment and, in turn, unemployment can contribute to the manifestation of at risk behaviour. There were 10 participants who have been in conflict with the law: some had jobs before they were imprisoned while others did not. They felt that having a criminal record left them at a big disadvantage of being unemployable and they all seemed hopeless. Table 7 indicates that there were 6 male participants and 4 female participants who hold criminal records.

Table 7 – Participants with criminal records

			Yes	No	Total
Gender	Male	Number of participants	6	44	50
		% within Gender	12%	88%	100%
		% within Criminal	60%	48.9%	50%
		% of Total	6%	44%	50%
	Female	Number of participants	4	46	50
		% within Gender	8%	92%	100%
		% within Criminal	40%	51.1%	50%
		% of Total	4%	46%	50%
Total		Number of participants	10	90	100
		% within Gender	10%	90%	100%
		% within Criminal	100%	100%	100%
		% of Total	10%	90%	100%

O'Higgins, (2007: 63) and Fougère, Kramarz, & Pouget (2009: 909) have found youth unemployment to be connected to drug use and crime. This basically means that unemployment can lead to at risk behaviour in the youth. In O'Higgins (2007: 63), most of the youth with criminal records felt that even social workers could not assist them.

According to Davis (2016: 1), a team of scientists have found that there is a link between smoking and unemployment. This team found “smokers to be younger, less educated and more likely to be unstably housed, in poorer health and to possess a criminal record than non-smokers” (Davis, 2016: 1).

In this study, the youth agreed that being unemployed has led them to sometimes thinking about committing crime in order to sustain their livelihood, especially feeding the family. The participants admitted that they have thought about stealing as a means of getting food for their households. Ten participants have been in conflict with the law (either while they were employed or unemployed), four were female and six were male, five of whom have dependents and are now struggling to find work and make ends meet.

Most of the participants (93%) said they think that unemployment can lead to delinquent behaviour such as crime especially if one is unemployed for a long duration.

"Sometimes we go hungry for days with no money or food in the house. This makes us desperate and can lead us to making wrong choices like stealing food so we can eat," said one participant.

Other participants said: *"I once stole food so that my siblings and I could eat. I got caught and had to spend a few days in a holding cell. I am not a thief but my family was hungry and I felt like it was my last and only option."*

"You get to a point where you feel bad for asking neighbours and other family for help, so yes you end up thinking about stealing from others just so you can have your next meal"

"Desperate times can sometimes lead one to doing things they wouldn't normally do when all is well like stealing or robbing a random person on the street"

The 7% who disagreed with the notion said: *"I do not think being unemployed is an excuse to steal, I go around door to door with my CV trying to get a job."*

"One should never have to resort to stealing no matter how desperate they are to find a job. We have family and friends who can assist us when in need"

"If we turn to stealing then we teach our children that it is okay to steal when you do not have something and that is wrong"

"I believe that God is the answer and he always provides for his children, so delinquent behaviour will never be an option"

"The bible teaches us that stealing is a sin, it is one of the commandments. No matter how bad the situation gets at home when one is unemployed, doing bad things to others like stealing from them should never be an option"

"People need to possess problem solving skills, being unemployed is not a good enough reason for one to become a delinquent. Start your own food garden, sell what you harvest and keep some for your family, use the skills you have like fixing appliances, doing other people's hair etc."

"Some people don't even make an effort to apply for work and then when they turn to crime they say that it is because they couldn't find work. They are lying. You have to put in the work"

This therefore concludes that the findings of the study agree with what is found in literature.

4.2.11. Perceived causes of unemployment by the participants

Table 8: Perceived causes of unemployment by the participants

<u>Perceived causes of unemployment</u>
Laziness
Criminal history
Little or no networks
Little or no education
Little or no work experience
Lack of job opportunities
Leaving work (voluntary unemployment)

Table 8 highlights perceptions that were extracted from statements made by the participants. Some of the responses from the participants were:

“The youth generation tend to be lazy and expect opportunities to fall on their laps instead of going out there to find these opportunities” - Laziness

“I would say that laziness is one of the causes of unemployment and wanting to have fancy jobs” - Laziness

“I only went to school until grade 11, so for me the problem is that I am not educated enough” – Education

“In order for me to get a good paying job, I must have at least a degree and I am still a long way before I can get it” – Education

“There are no jobs in Mahikeng. People leave here to find work in places like Joburg” - Job opportunities

“I live in a rural area where there is no development and therefore no job opportunities” – Job opportunities

“Some people get jobs because they know someone who knows someone” – Networks

“Sometimes having the right connection helps because when any opportunities arise the people can let you know and make you a priority” - Networks

“I have studied until honours level, however, I have never worked so that counts against me” - Work experiences

“Having little or no experience of the work environment is a disadvantage because most employers want people who already know the work” – Work Experience

"I have a criminal record and that makes it hard for me to find any kind of job" - Criminal history.

"I had to leave work due to ill health" – Leaving work

"I was in the process of starting my own business and therefore decided to quit my job" _ Leaving work

4.3. PSYCHOSOCIAL IMPACT OF UNEMPLOYMENT ON THE INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

Several themes were extracted from the survey on the psychosocial impact of unemployment on the youth. These themes include mainly family impact, physical impact, psychological and social impact and financial impact on the individual, family and society.

According to Banerjee (2008:736) and Kingdom & Knights (2004: 1) there is no such thing as voluntary unemployment because that would mean that the unemployed would not be frustrated because they are not working but rather exhibit contentment like their employed counterparts.

4.3.1. Physical, psychological, social, and financial impact of unemployment on the participants

An article in the Economic Times (2016: 1) defines Voluntary Unemployment as "a situation when a person is unemployed because of not being able to find employment of his/her own choice."

According to Erik Erickson's 7th stage of psychosocial development, generosity versus stagnation, failure to complete this stage successfully results in feelings of uselessness and therefore leads to stagnation. With regards to this study, it means that if for example a participant applies for various jobs but is never successful (not called for interviews or eventually finding work) there are chances that they will give up their search and become stagnant.

Table 9 – Participants’ view on the impact of unemployment and difference employment will bring

<u>Feelings regarding unemployment</u>	
Useless	
Hopeless	
Stressed	
Depressed	
Low self-esteem	
Happy	
Relieved	
Low-personal identity	
<u>Effects of unemployment</u>	<u>Difference employment will bring</u>
Marital problems	Financial stability
Neglecting children	Happiness
Not being able to provide for family	Independence
Encourages entrepreneurship	Sense of belonging
Health problems	

Table 9 indicates all the responses from the participants regarding how they feel about being unemployed, impact of unemployment and the differences being employed would bring to their lives. About 71% of the unemployed participants reported that they felt useless because they are dependent on their families and cannot provide any financial assistance to their relatives. 18% of the participants expressed feelings of hopelessness as a result of being unemployed. 9% of the participants however expressed feelings of content about not being employed.

4.3.1.1. Physical impact related to unemployment of the participants

A study conducted by Hanisch (1999: 188) found that there is a physiological impact related to unemployment “an increase in headaches, stomach aches, and sleep problems, lack of energy, hypertension, heart disease and kidney disease”.

None of the participants in this study reported any physiological impact.

4.3.1.2. Psychological impact related to unemployment of the participants

According to Hanisch (1999: 188) there are also an array of psychological impact related to unemployment, which include “increased hostility, depression, anxiety, stress, anger, fear, despair, loneliness and social isolation, and decreased self-esteem, life satisfaction, aspiration levels, concentration and personal identity.”

In a study done over 20 years ago by Price (1995) it was not clear whether or not unemployment led to ill health. He found that the level of stress regarding unemployment experienced by the youth varied due to demographic issues rather than employment issues (Price, 1995: 895). This can then be referred back to

the issue on the contextual and geographic area where participants reside and their active participation (see section 4.2.3.) in the sense that there might be negative psychological effects (stress) associated with living in a rural area before we even consider unemployment as a factor. However, those living in urban areas may also suffer from stress due to being unemployed.

According to Hanisch (1999: 188) some of the psychological effects of unemployment are depression, low levels of life satisfaction and aspiration levels. *"Getting a job would mean a lot to me because it will give me a chance to better my life,"* said one participant.

"I left my job because I was no longer happy, so being unemployed is not an issue for me. I am now working on starting my own business. It has its challenges but I answer to myself," said one participant.

Another said: *"I would be able to save up for school so that I can have a qualification to better my future."*

According to these participants, most of their high stress levels resulted from the fact that they are unemployed, especially those with dependents.

One participant said: *"Not having a job is very stressful. I was once admitted in hospital due to stress related issues, I don't know what to do."* This finding relates more to the study by Hanish (1999: 188) in the sense that the participant reported having psychological effects due to not being employed.

According to Hanisch (1999: 188) decreased self-esteem and personal identity are some of the effects of unemployment.

4.3.1.3. Social impact related to unemployment of the participants

According to Hanisch (1999:188), some of the impacts of unemployment are social isolation, fear, despair and anger.

One participant said: *"I hardly ever socialise. I am always indoors because I don't want to inconvenience anybody family or friends"*, while another said *"I have reached a point where I am scared to ask for help."*

"Our home is no longer a happy home, I feel like I am neglecting and abusing my children because sometimes I scream and shout at them for no reason," said one participant.

According to Hanisch (1999) child abuse and a decrease in family cohesion are sources of the negative impact of unemployment on family bonds. The participants gave various responses to how their social life in terms of family and friends is affected, and their responses confirm what was found in literature.

“Employment will help me a lot because I will stop relying on family for help,” said one participant while another stated: *“I would be myself again by that I mean I would be able to go out with my friends and visit my family often if I got a job.”*

On the meso level, some of the participants argued that they lack familial support but instead they feel pressure to get jobs even though opportunities are limited. Very few of the participants said that their families understand that employment opportunities are limited.

According to one of the participants, *“People tend to have little faith in those that are unemployed and staying at home even without understanding their circumstances.”*

Table 10 indicates all themes extracted from the responses of the participants with regards social and community roles.

Table 10 – Impact on social life and changes employment will bring to social life of the participants

<u>Impact on social life (relationship with family and friends)</u>	<u>Changes employment will bring to social status</u>
Social isolation	Positive self-esteem
Child abuse	Independence
Decreased family cohesion	High personal identity
Financial effects	Helping others find jobs
	Positive relationships

According to Erik Erickson’s 6th stage of psychosocial development, intimacy versus isolation, forming strong positive relationships is very important. On the exo-level, many of the youth find themselves without work and they form positive friendships where friends uplift and grow together. That is, if one person hears about a vacancy they tell the others and create a snowball effect. They may not all get employed but whenever there is any information they spread it to their friends. This is a sign that the 6th psychosocial stage was successful for these youth. If it were successful they would be employed.

Table 11 –Impact on community role of the participants and changes employment will bring to community role

<u>Impact on community role</u>	<u>Changes employment will bring to community role</u>
Bad example to younger generations	Leadership Helping others find jobs Positive relationships
Isolation	Positive influence on others

People may become psychologically and socially isolated from their peers, which could lead them to deviant and negative activities. This could then lead to a decrease in the level of community safety i.e. high crime rates. The isolation from peers may be seen as a failure in the 6th psychosocial stage with regards to these participants.

Some participants said: *"We cannot even talk to the younger children in the community to advise them on certain matters because of our unemployment status."*

"Our siblings and their peers look up to us and if we are employed because we get to achieve certain things and they can somehow measure their future success"

"I prefer to be alone because every time I come across people they ask me about where I am in life and what I'm doing, so I avoid the questions and stay indoors"

4.3.1.4. Financial impact of unemployment on the participants

Youth unemployment has an impact mainly due to the financial crises that arise from it. The youth seem to be concerned by the financial impact unemployment has on their lives. One of the financial restrictions is that the unemployed cannot venture into costly further education and training. Some of the participants seemed discouraged because they want jobs so that they can be able to pay for continued training.

The participants reported that unemployment has affected them negatively in that they sometimes even struggle to meet their basic needs. *"I often feel depressed because I don't know what to do anymore. I have applied for jobs everywhere, even cleaning jobs,"* said one participant.

"I am always thinking about where the next meal will come from. This is very stressful for me and it's not good for the children as well," added another.

"I do not have any money to buy newspapers or airtime for internet to apply for jobs," was the response from one of the participants.

Another participant said: *“Unemployment has affected me negatively because I never have money to do the things I need for myself or the children.”*

According to SALDRU (2013: 1), a labour entry barrier is created by the cost of searching and applying for employment, especially among the poor youth living in rural areas that are remote with limited infrastructure.

One participant stated *“The only source of income we have is our children’s grants,”* while another said *“we are staying with our grandparents and we rely on the pension money.”*

According to Statistics South Africa (2011: 1), the dependency ratio in Mahikeng is 55.3%. That is “the number of people (aged 0-14 and 65 plus) dependent on the working aged population expressed per 100 working aged persons.

The participants who do not have dependents are dependents themselves and rely on family or neighbors for food and money.

“I am currently living with my aunt who took me in because I have no way of taking care of myself, financially or otherwise. My aunt has children of her own and I feel like I’m adding to her problems,” said one participant.

According to Klasen and Woolard (2009: 2), “the unemployed tend to join households of relatives who will share pension income with them.” In this instance the data collected partially agrees with what has been found because some of the participants have said that they live with family members some of whom do receive some form of government grant.

Table 12 – Financial implications and changes employment will bring to the participants

<u>Financial implications</u>	<u>Changes employment will bring</u>
Not meeting basic needs	Providing basic needs
Debt	No debt
Dependence	Independence
No freedom to do what one wants (going out with family/friends)	Stability
No money to meet other needs e.g. applying for jobs (internet, buying newspapers)	Happiness
	Will be able to assist family/friends

Table 12 reflects all the themes that were extracted from the responses of the participants regarding the financial implications of unemployment as well as the changes employment would bring to their lives. Over half of the participants complained that, due to not having any form of income or relying on social grants for those that receive the grants, they sometimes cannot afford to go to internet cafes to search for vacancies, or even send applications by post for the vacancies they find in newspapers. In this study, the participants who have dependents were faced with stress because they cannot provide for their children. This agrees with Hanisch (1999: 189) in that a decrease in family cohesion and the well-being of children can occur as an effect to the family due to unemployment.

Table 13 – Dependents of the participants

			Dependents		
			Yes	No	Total
Gender	Male	Number of participants	14	36	50
		% within Gender	28.0	72.0	100.0
		% within Dependents	38.9	56.3	50.0
		% of Total	14.0	36.0	50.0
	Female	Number of participants	22	28	50
		% within Gender	44.0	56.0	100.0
		% within Dependents	61.1	43.8	50.0
		% of Total	22.0	28.0	50.0
Total		Number of participants	36	64	100
		% within Gender	36.0	64.0	100.0
		% within Dependents	100.0	100.0	100.0
		% of Total	36.0	64.0	100.0

Table 13 reflects the percentage of those unemployed youth who have dependents and struggle to make ends meet in order to take care of their children.

According to one of the participants, *"Sometimes this can lead to crime especially when the unemployed youth is desperate and has gone days without food for the children."*

Table 13 indicates that of the 100 unemployed participants who completed the survey, 36% have dependents. The participants with dependents are mostly female (22%), some of whom are taking care of their siblings after losing their parents.

One participant said: *“I don’t have children of my own but I am taking care of my siblings since our parents passed away.”*

There are 14% of males who have dependents compared to 22 females who have dependents.

4.3.2. Community resources to address youth unemployment

There are different government and individually driven initiatives to help eradicate unemployment. However, the youth do not seem to know much about these initiatives and they seem to expect to receive the information instead of seeking out the information so as to be able to find employment. The table below indicates who the participants think should be responsible for finding them employment.

Table 14 – Participants perception about responsibility to find employment

Responsibility	Number of participants	Percent%
Youth	7	7
Parents	4	4
Municipality	17	17
Government	54	54
Social workers	18	18
Total	100	100

Table 14 reflects that, 54% of the participants felt that government is responsible for helping the youth find jobs. Participants emphasized that they are not lazy but there are limited job opportunities in Mahikeng especially for those with low education levels or little job experience. Only 7% of the youth felt offered that it is the youth’s responsibility to find employment. It is evident that in one way or another the youth seem to have the mentality of perfect entitlement where they do not take any responsibility for their lives and circumstances.

Table 15 – Participants’ knowledge of employment plans

Employment plans	Number of participants	Percent%
National Youth Development agency	51	51
Youth Employment Index	0	0
None of the above	49	49
Other: Specify	0	0
Total	100	100

The participants do not have much information on employment plans that are available in South Africa. Table 15 indicates that 51% of the participants only know of the National Youth Unemployment Agency. The remaining 49% do not know about the Youth Employment Index or any other plans.

Some of the participants however said they know of services that help the unemployed, and as one participant said, *“I know people that worked in the EPWP”* while another said, *“I know about people who were given money by government to start their businesses, but I do not know how they applied and so on.”*

4.4. THE PERCEPTIONS OF PARTICIPANTS ON THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN ADDRESSING UNEMPLOYMENT

All the participants reported that they do not know of any social work services that assist in issues related to unemployment.

All the participants agreed that they think that social workers could play a role in helping the youth find employment.

“I think that social workers can help us by sending us to people they know,” one participant said.

According to Zastrow (2009: 1) one of the roles of social workers is brokering, which entails linking clients with certain resources.

Other participants said: *"Social workers can speak on our behalf regarding employment if we go to them for help."*

"Social workers can help by influencing policy on youth employment"

"Social workers can advise on the options that are there that one can choose from"

Standard 12 of the NASW (NASW, 2012: 1), which falls under Standards for Administrators of Youth Services Agencies, states that "the administrators of youth services agencies shall advocate for the increased understanding of the needs of youths, policy changes and adequate resources to enable social workers to meet those needs..." The data collected in this study confirms what is in literature in that the participants believed that social workers could influence their chances of finding work.

Table 14 indicates that 18 of the participants believe that Social Workers should be responsible for helping the youth in their employment endeavours.

The participants that answered no said, *"I did not know that social workers can help with finding jobs so I have not gone to one for assistance in this regard."*

"The thought never even crossed my mind that social workers would be able to assist in finding work"

"I have been to see a social worker for personal issues and we touched on my unemployment status and how it affects me but nothing about how they could assist me with finding employment"

"I know social workers to be professionals that help people with their personal problems such as marital problems or drug abuse for example"

"I am not sure what social workers do so I have not considered going to one"

This shows that there is a real gap in the services provided by social workers to the public in general especially when it comes to helping with unemployment issues.

Table 16 – Participants seeking assistance from social workers

Have you ever been to a social worker for assistance in finding a job	Yes		No	
	%	Number of participants	%	Number of participants
	28%	28	72%	72

Only 28% (Table 16) of the participants contacted a social worker for assistance in finding a job while most of them did not even know that they could approach a social worker.

One participant said: *"Yes, I have been to a social worker to ask for help with employment. She told me that she could not give me a job but she helped me with my CV and gave me a few places I can go to for submitting."*

Other participants stated, *"The social worker I went to see said to me that she could not help me find a job and dismissed me."*

"The social worker I met was quite helpful, she advised me to find somewhere to volunteer my services. She told me that by so doing I will at least be gaining experience and not being stagnant"

"I approached a social work office once to hand in my CV for when they have vacancies, the lady told me about another organisation she knew that was hiring and I went there"

The participants admitted to knowing that social workers are there to assist with most of their social ills but they had not heard of any services that specifically came to play in connection with job employment that is run by social work services.

"I know that social workers help us with the problems that we face such as domestic violence and child abuse but I don't know about employment services."

According to a study by Fahs-Beck (Cited by Briar; 2015:1), when clients went to a social work agency with issues related to income, unemployment and housing, the social workers spent less time interviewing them as compared to clients that came with issues related to children, family, home management, and personality adjustment of an adult.

The participants unanimously agreed that social workers could be of service to them in their employment endeavours.

One participant said: *"Maybe a guideline can be made where social workers can know how to go about helping us find work."*

Other participants indicated, *"Social workers can help by going into the communities and finding those that are unemployed and then connect them with other people that can help."*

"Social workers help with so many of our problems they should be equipped to also assist the youth with finding work"

"Maybe social workers can help with skills development of the youth as well"

"Social development can link with department of labour where the social workers can have info on available vacancies and advice the clients that go to them"

According to Briar (2015: 898) the social work profession seems to be somewhat detached from issues relating to unemployment. The youth feel that social workers are not doing much to assist them in their employment endeavours.

4.5. CONCLUSION

The results of this study established that unemployment has a negative psychosocial impact on the youth as well as their families. Some were found to be suffering from stress due to being unemployed while most of them suffered financial implications. It seems the problems that most of the participants' face are largely due to the financial implications that come with being unemployed.

It is apparent that the female participants in this study completed their high school education, and others went for higher education and training where they obtained diplomas and/or degrees as compared to the males in this study. Some of the gender issues that came up were that the participants believed men to be most at risk of being unemployed.

The results of this study showed that the youth do not know about the many government employment initiatives that exist. This is seen in their response that *"it is government's responsibility to ensure that we find work."* The biggest problem is the youth's lack of knowledge about the many programmes that can assist them. The youth do not know about these strengths that they have at their disposal. The study also revealed that the youth do not know that they can seek assistance from social workers.

Based on the information obtained from the theoretical perspectives, the study confirmed that the youth do not know their strengths and therefore cannot use them to their advantage even if it means creating their own job opportunities. No strengths assessment was used for the purposes of this research.

The participants seem to know that social workers are there to assist in interrogating and resolving their social ills but the same results suggest that these unemployed youths do not seem sure that they would receive the necessary help in seeking employment.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This study answers the research question: “What is the psychosocial impact of unemployment on the youth?” It has been confirmed from the results of this study that unemployment has implications on the youth, on individual, relationship, community and societal levels. The youth who are unemployed end up feeling that they cannot make a difference in their lives and in the lives of others to whom they are connected.

This chapter reviews, evaluates and discusses the findings of the study as reported in the previous chapter. Focus is also given to the conclusions reached in this chapter and submits recommendations based on the inferences gleaned from the sum total of the findings. After the discussion on some findings there will be a recommendation i.e. area where participants live, education level of the participants, work experience, utilisation of resources to find employment by the participants, physical, psychological, social, and financial impact of unemployment, community resources, and the role of the social worker.

5.2. FINDINGS

The findings are based on quantitative and qualitative information of 100 unemployed youth residing in Mafikeng, in the North-West province of South Africa.

5.2.1. Biographical information and factors contributing to unemployment of the participants

5.2.1.1. Race of the participants

The participants included black, coloured, Indian and white unemployed youth. The information obtained from the participants cannot be generalised in terms of race distribution in Mahikeng or South Africa.

5.2.1.2. Home language of the participants

77% of the participants in this study were Setswana speaking which is the indigenous language of the area. For all these participants English is their second or third language. English is regarded as the official communication language by most employers and this could disadvantage these youth in terms of the opportunities for the employment and how they could access jobs when they have limited competency in

the language. There have been studies on how language affects unemployment opportunities even though there has not been established a quantified figure in terms of the correlation between the two variables.

5.2.1.3. Area where participants reside and active participation

All the participants were selected from urban and rural areas in and around Mahikeng, the capital city of the North-West Province. The physical and social environment could possibly influence the ability of unemployed youth to find work opportunities. That is, the areas where some of the participants live are far away from where they could possibly work (usually rural areas where there is no industrialisation). It was also found that geographical unemployment which occurs when workers live too far from areas (usually cities) where employment is available and they are unable to travel may be a contributing factor to the large numbers of unemployed youth identified in Chapter 4 of this study.

It was found that the youth in rural areas are more likely to be discouraged when seeking employment than those in urban areas. This is due to the fact that resources are very limited in rural areas and also because there are generally little or no employment opportunities as compared to urban areas.

Recommendation

Government should look into creating incentive programmes focusing on new companies locating themselves in areas where unemployment is high (specifically rural areas). That is, funding companies and encouraging them to open branches in rural areas could open up opportunities for rural youth in terms of employment. This can increase the active participation of those living in rural areas, in seeking employment and it would also move resources closer to the people living in those areas. There was a suggestion for policy development with regards to the ways in which social workers can assist.

5.2.1.4. Age of the participants

The participants who were unemployed youth ranged between 18 and 30, with most of them between 18 and 25. People between these ages are usually entering the labour market for the first time following the completion of basic education. Those that are older are more mature and may work harder towards finding employment as compared to their younger counterparts who lack experience.

5.2.1.5. Gender of the participants

The researcher purposefully selected the participants from both genders equally such that there was equal representation in the profiles of the unemployed youth.

5.2.1.6. Education level of the participants

Little or no education is seen as a red flag for unemployment because that means the person has little or no skills required in the labour market. Those with at least a Grade 12 Certificate are better off and then those with a tertiary educational qualification are deemed to hold the most important card for employment opportunities.

Educational factors such as little or no education also play a role in the unemployment of the youth. It has been found that access to tertiary education has not had a significant increase among the younger generation as 47% have attained tertiary education and those who have still find themselves unemployed and struggling to find work.

Some of the reasons for little or no education as found in this study were dropping out of school due to teenage pregnancy, a lack of interest in school, a life of crime, little or no opportunities available to further studies and alcohol and drug abuse. These can then be seen as psychosocial dysfunctions in the sense that a part of these youths' psychosocial functioning was underdeveloped and at times interrupted.

In this study it was found that more females have a high school qualification of up to Grade 12 and others a tertiary education as compared to males. It could be inferred that women are working harder to better their chances of getting employed as compared to the past where they were expected to stay home or work in predominantly feminised environments.

Recommendations

There are many factors that can be considered in order to assist in the employment of the youth. For one, many of the youth in Mahikeng may have several talents e.g. some are musical, some are handy, while others are poets. It is recommended that a skills development awareness campaign be organised throughout Mahikeng by social workers to help those that do not have access to enabling resources for their self-employment. This is perceived as helping empower people and informing them about the importance of having some skill or education in order to be employable. The researcher is convinced that knowledge is the key to success and that people make a difference in their lives with some information and assistance. People can be taught different skills such as starting a garden or bead work through the campaign which are skills they can use to create jobs for themselves and possibly others. Networking skills are also a very important asset that the youth need to acquire should they focus on income generating projects that privilege self-reliance.

Another recommendation is for social workers' intervention to optimise education opportunities. That is, social workers can be appointed in the school system where teachers can refer children if they identify any issues with regards the children instead of having to wait for an external social worker who has a caseload of work in her office. In this sense the children can receive help in a timeous and efficient manner, i.e. when a teacher refers a child to a social worker who is already in the school system then the social worker is able to assist the child immediately as that would be context-specific problem-solving instead of waiting for an external social worker.

5.2.1.7. Work experience of the participants

One of the biggest challenges in South Africa is that school leavers leave the education system without the necessary skills required by the labour market. That is, people find themselves being unemployable because they have little or no work experience even with all the accolades of a tertiary education.

In this study it was found that participants with limited work experience invariably became discouraged job seekers because they struggled to find work.

Recommendations

With regards work experience, it is recommended that young people be encouraged to take on odd jobs while still in school, especially at the tertiary level, even if the job is not related to what they are studying for. This can show potential employers that the young person is a hard worker and is willing to learn. Another suggestion is for the youth to be encouraged and taught about the importance of volunteering their services while still in school. This way they gain some relevant experience in the field they are studying for while still in school. This would count in their favour when seeking employment because then they would have the academic qualification and the work-related experience.

Learnerships with or without compensation are options that work seekers can look into, especially to gain some work experience. Incentives for employers who appoint inexperienced workers can be something the government can do in order to decrease unemployment.

Another recommendation is for practical experience or work integrated learning to be added to education or training like in technical schools where people can learn the theory as well as being able to practically apply the knowledge they have gained e.g. woodwork, hospitality, sewing. In normal schools, practical work can be added to the syllabus where there can be a period specially reserved for practical work or the learners being required to volunteer during weekends and school holidays.

5.2.1.8. Participants utilisation of resources to find employment

Most of the participants focused on their problems rather than the resources that are available to them. These resources include, for example, newspapers, government departments and word of mouth. It was found that only 11% of the participants use newspapers to identify available vacancies, and another 11% uses the internet. A staggering 66% of the participants were not even looking for employment in any way, not even through word of mouth. Most of the participants argued that “getting a job in Mahikeng was rather challenging” because, according to them, those with power and the authority to make appointments hire “people they know” who are not necessarily qualified for the posts they are assigned. In a sense, this may be seen as networking, perhaps in the ‘disconnected’ sense that those who wield power and authority are prone to selectively appointing their ‘kith and kin’ or those who would return the favour in some unstated ways. Some of the participants are not equipped with networking skills or they simply do not know how to fully utilize the networking skill. That is, they are not able to approach ‘powerful’ people and build relationships that could assist with getting information on vacancies, be it around Mafikeng or even in other provinces.

From the interviews conducted in this study, the ecological influence was evident in the sense that on the individual level most of the participants were demotivated as most of them already come from disadvantaged backgrounds. They believe that their path is also already set and that they can never find work no matter what they do. Lastly, on the macro-level, from the literature study above, we know that government has come up with many initiatives and policies as means of reducing poverty. These initiatives and policies include the National Youth Development Agency, The Community Works Programme (CWP) and the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP). However, the participants did not have any knowledge on most of these programmes and therefore did not utilise them. Even in the rare instances that the youth participated in programmes such as EPWP, there were reservations that this was public ploy that paid a pittance for labour, and often the programme is used also as a political gimmick to lure voters for the ruling party.

Recommendations

Networking skills can be used to assist the youth in their employment endeavours. Training on networking while in school would also be beneficial to the youth.

Although the government initiated policies and programmes on macro level, the participants were not aware of nor utilising these programmes. It is therefore recommended that Government creates more

awareness and provide more information with regards the different employment initiatives that they have created.

In recent days most young people have phones that can connect to and access the internet. Perhaps they could be assisted by teaching them how to use their phones to search the net and find employment that way.

5.2.1.9. Criminal activity, at risk behaviour, and substance abuse of the participants

In this study some participants were found to have criminal records. Some committed crimes while employed and others were not in employment at the time of their arrest, however all the participants with criminal records struggle to find employment. It has been found that unemployment can lead to thoughts of delinquent behaviour which can eventually lead to criminal behaviour.

Substance abuse can lead to unemployment as one may not be able to fulfil their duties while under the influence. Unemployment can however, also lead to substance abuse due to the stress of not being able to find work.

5.2.2. Psychosocial impact of unemployment on the participants

5.2.2.1. Physical, psychological, social, and financial impact of unemployment on the participants

It was found in this study that there are physical and psychological effects that have an impact on the unemployed. The physical effects include “an increase in headaches, stomach aches, and sleep problems, lack of energy, hypertension, heart disease and kidney disease.” The psychological effects include “increased hostility, depression, anxiety, stress, anger, fear, despair, loneliness and social isolation, and decreased self-esteem, life satisfaction, aspiration levels, concentration and personal identity.” The psychological effects that stood out from the study ranged between mainly stress and depression. One participant said that it was so bad that she was admitted to hospital due to stress that she attributed to her failure to secure employment.

It has been found that unemployment does have a negative psychosocial impact on the individual, family and society. On the individual level, this manifests in the sense that a person’s self-esteem may be affected; the person may not see themselves as worthy anymore because they are not making a contribution to the economy or the lives of others to whom they are close. An effect in the family system comes when parents neglect their children. Alcohol abuse by one parent may also be an issue, and just the cohesion in the family is torn asunder and is no longer there. On the community level, people find

themselves not being able to positively influence or assist others in their community because they are struggling themselves.

Voluntary unemployment has been cited as a reason for the acute levels of unemployment in Mafikeng. However, there are many divergent views when it comes to this topic. Others believe that there is no such thing because if unemployment was voluntary then the unemployed would be happy. In this study some participants said they were not working because they intentionally left their jobs for several reasons such as being unhappy with working conditions (6%), stopped enjoying work (17%), or that they wanted to start a personal business (9%). This may be seen as voluntary unemployment but these people are not happy and are now seeking formal employment.

All of the participants argued that there are several financial implications that are linked to unemployment such as not being able to meet basic and other needs, debt, dependence on others, lack of freedom to do what they want. All these reasons compound to exacerbate the psychological effects that they experience.

The family system is also affected by the unemployment status of some of their members. As they are unemployed, they cannot help out financially and invariably find themselves depending on their parents, guardians, grandparents or whoever they stay with and sometimes even neighbors.

It was found that the youth believed that that would be happy, independent and have stable lives, being able to meet most needs and without debt if they found employment.

Recommendation

In order to enhance psychosocial health, it is recommended that the youth create a support group, complete required tasks, form realistic expectations, make time for themselves, maintain physical health through exercise, examine problems and seek help if needed, in addition to getting adequate sleep.

5.2.3. Community resources

51% of the participants only know of the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA). The participants do not know much about the other different initiatives created by government specifically to reduce unemployment. When asked the question “Whose responsibility is it to ensure that the youth get jobs?” 54% of the youth felt that government was solely responsible.

Recommendation

The recommendation is that the NYDA and government should create more awareness and provide more information with regards the different services they offer to the youth.

General recommendations

The strengths perspective is very crucial to this study because it has become evident that the youth do know their strengths or the power that they wield as individuals.

With regards goal orientation, most of the youth who were interviewed had goals concerning their future and their employment endeavours. That is, some were hopeful about finding work, furthering their studies, starting their own businesses. A few blamed others for the conundrum they found themselves in or the situation in which they were brought up. Of those that did not have any goals, they were empowered and encouraged by the researcher to set realistic goals that could help them carve a way forward and search for employment opportunities that suited them.

5.2.4. The role of the social worker

Some of the participants did not even know that they could approach social workers for assistance with employment issues. Therefore, they do not do things such as actively seeking for suitable jobs to the fullest because of doubts and a clear absence of the networks that are available through social workers.

Recommendations

Social workers are change agents and could play a significant role in assisting the youth with regards their psychosocial problems. Social workers could make a difference at individual, group and community level and they could even influence policy or embark on action research on psychosocial problems. Social workers can play the role of an educator, for instance, where they teach the youth about different initiatives for the youth that exist, initiatives such as the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), the Youth Employment Index, the National Youth Development Service Council and other government initiatives were briefly described in the second chapter of this dissertation.

It is impossible for social workers to know of all unemployed youth in Mafikeng, and it is therefore recommended that they initiate a community awareness campaign. The police could help link social workers with the youth who find themselves in conflict with the law and need to make a change in their lives through employment. The church elders could also link unemployed youth in the churches with social workers. School staff could help with learners especially those in Grade 12. They could help identify those that may not afford to go to university or may have trouble getting bursaries and linking them with the relevant resources; or by linking them with social workers so as to get employment. Career advisors can also assist the youth by helping them identify their strengths when coming to career choice and linking them with social workers for further assistance.

By initiating programmes where social workers meet with the youth to form relationships, the youth could be assisted in realising their strengths and seeking out opportunities best suited for them. Social workers could also play a role of a broker where they link the youth with resources such as NYDA, YEI or advise them to hand deliver their CVs at prospective employment offices. It is evident that social workers need to market themselves better so that the youth know and can feel free to approach them not just regarding domestic issues or for counselling.

It is evident from the information presented above that youth unemployment is very rife in the North West province of South Africa. According to Freitag, (2013: 1) the youth employment agency, in Germany, employees from various government departments like career advisors, social workers and school board staff work together. They all work together but each person gives input based on their expert knowledge. The best thing about this is that they are now able to help young people better and faster (Freitag, 2013: 1). In essence, it is recommended that the South African Government specifically the Social Development and Labour Departments do some research and explore the feasibility of this idea. That is, these formations should seek to create an initiative where different specialists, social workers, career advisors, police, churches and school staff work together in one organisation to help the youth. With all these different departments coming together a bigger and better solution could be reached.

The strengths perspective applies to this study in that it could be used as a guideline for social workers to help the youth who are unemployed and yet do not know that they have strengths which can be used to their advantage when seeking employment and or creating their own employment. Social workers can use the strengths perspective to empower the youth not just for their wellbeing but for the overall productivity of Mafikeng.

Social work policies related to helping the youth find/create employment needs to be established and then implemented. More research needs to be done regarding youth unemployment to help with the establishment of these policies.

5.3. FUTURE STUDIES

With regards future studies, researchers may consider analysing the NYDA programme and its effectiveness since its establishment. Researcher could also consider doing a document study where they would provide guidelines for social workers to assist the youth in their employment endeavours.

5.4. CONCLUSION

In this research the question was “What is the psychosocial impact of unemployment on the youth in Mahikeng, North West Province?” The assumption thereof was that “the high rate of youth unemployment influences the general wellbeing, social and psychological functioning of the unemployed youth and the people around them. It is also assumed that the youth are unemployed because of the lack of knowledge on available community services. Due to unemployment the youth may not be able to play an active role in society and may resort to delinquent behaviour.”

The researcher interviewed 100 unemployed youth (both male and female) who reside in Mafikeng. The findings were discussed and recommendations made. The researcher found that youth unemployment does influence the psychosocial well-being of the participants. Some had psychosocial dysfunction. Psychosocial health is “a state of mental, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being” and the dysfunction is when problems occur in one’s psychosocial functioning e.g. stress related to unemployment. The factors that influence the psychosocial well-being of a person are the family, the environment (drugs, crime), self-efficacy and self-esteem, learned helplessness versus learned optimism, and personality. All these were discussed in detail in the various chapters of the dissertation.

Two theories were discussed and applied to the study, i.e. strengths perspective and the ecological perspective. The researcher found that, based on the strengths perspective, most of the youth do not realise the full potential of their strengths and therefore do not live to their fullest. With regards the ecosystems theory, the youth are affected by unemployment on all four levels that is the micro, meso, exo, and macro levels of functioning. The ecological perspective was evident in the sense that on the individual level most of the participants were demotivated because most of them already come from disadvantaged backgrounds. They believe that their path is also already set and that they can never find work no matter what they do. Those from rural areas are also limited by their environment in that there are few or no job opportunities, which means they have to leave home and find work in urban areas. The disadvantage is that most of the time these young people have to travel long distances to get to work because they cannot afford to stay there. Transport costs are also sometimes high. All these factors lead to discouraged job seekers because getting a job also creates a lot of expenses that end up not benefiting the young person and his/her family. On the meso-level, some of the participants argued that they do not have their families support but instead they feel pressure to get jobs even though opportunities are limited. Only a few participants said that their families understand that opportunities are limited when coming to looking for jobs. On the exo-level, many of the youth find themselves without work and they form friendships where others build each other and others wallow together. Lastly on the macro-level, we know

that government has come up with many initiatives/policies as means of reducing poverty, although the youth do not seem

From the findings it is evident that unemployment has a negative psychosocial impact on the youth, their peers, family, community and society. It is also evident that there is a gap with regards to the role of social workers and if/how they can assist unemployed youth not just with their psychosocial ills but in finding employment. Researchers should look into doing applied research. The researcher is looking at doing a follow up study and perhaps starting a foundation that mainly focuses on empowering, enabling and encouraging the youth with the ultimate goal of finding employment or creating employment for themselves and others.

Although most of the participants sounded discouraged and mortified, they all had dreams for a bright future. This sense of discouragement has led some of the youth being less interested in actively seeking employment. The youth however, are the future of the country, with the right educational background and support from those around them.

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ADDENDA A1
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE 2015
PSYCHOSOCIAL IMPACT OF UNEMPLOYMENT ON THE YOUTH

NOTES TO PARTICIPANT:

1. All information will be treated as confidential
2. The interview schedule can be completed by any person between the ages of 18 and 30 who is currently unemployed and residing in Mafikeng
3. The aim of the project is to explore the psychosocial impact of unemployment on the youth
4. The results of the interview schedule will assist the researcher to compile a report which will form part of her Masters dissertation and may be used to help the youth in their employment endeavours.
5. The researcher will read the questions and optional answers to you (and if needed, translate the meaning into your first language). There is no right or wrong answers. Please choose the answer which best represents your opinions.
6. If additional information is needed to be filled in, the back of the interview schedule can be utilized.
7. Thank you for your time. Your participation will contribute to making a difference.

SECTION A

BIOGRAPHICAL (background) INFORMATION

The researcher is aware of the sensitivity of the questions in this section; however, the information will allow her to compare the answers from different groups of participants. Once again, the researcher assures you that your response will be treated as confidential. Your co-operation is appreciated.

Participant number:		Date:
Area in Mafikeng where the participant resides (stays/lives)		

Please tick the appropriate box.

1. Gender

Male	1
Female	2

2. Race

African	1
White	2
Coloured	3
Indian	4
Other:	5

3. How would you describe the area in which you are residing?

Township	1
Farm	2
City/Town	3
Other:	4

4. How old are you?

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5. Have you ever been in conflict with the law? (Do you have a criminal record?)

Yes	1
No	2

6. Home language

English	1
Afrikaans	2
Setswana	3
Pedi	4
Venda	5
Tsonga	6
Ndebele	7
Xhosa	8
Zulu	9
Swati	10
Sesotho	11
Other: specify	12

7. Do you have any dependents?

Yes	1
No	2

8. Are you currently unemployed?

Yes	1
No	2

9. How long have you been unemployed? (in months and years)

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10. What is your highest educational qualification?

Primary School	1
High school (Grade 8)	2
Grade 9	3
Grade 10	4
Grade 11	5
Matric (Grade 12)	6
Diploma	7
Degree	8
Other: Specify	9

11. Do you have any work experience?

Yes	1
No	2

11.1. If you answered **NO** to the above question, please answer the following questions

11.1.1. a. Are you/have you applied for a job in the past six month months?

Yes	1
No	2

b. When last did you apply for a job?

Between 0 – 4 weeks ago	1
3 months ago	2
6 months ago	3
Over a year ago	4
I don't remember	5
Other: Specify	6

11.1.2. Have you been to any interviews/ work application in the last six months?

Yes	1
No	2

11.2. If you answered **YES** on question 8 above, please answer the following questions.

11.2.1. How much work experience do you have?

No experience	1
1 – 3 years	2
4 – 6 years	3
7 – 10 years	4
Other: specify	5

11.2.2. What was the reason for being unemployment?

Left work to go back to school	1
I was asked to leave	2
Retrenchment	3
Unpleasant working conditions	4
Stopped enjoying work	5
Other	6

11.2.3. What is the reason for not being employed now?

Still in school	1
Struggling to find work	2
Don't want to work	3
Other	4

11.2.4. Where do you usually go to find information about job vacancies?

Internet	1
Newspapers	2
Word of mouth	3
Other	4

SECTION B

PERCIEVED CAUSES OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

There is no right or wrong answers. This section of the questionnaire explores what the youth's perceptions and opinions are with regards to youth unemployment.

Please tick the appropriate box.

12. Which gender do you think is most at risk of being unemployed?

Male	1
Female	2

13. Which group (education level) do you think is most at risk of being unemployed?

Males		Females	
Little or no education	1	Little or no education	1
Grade 12	2	Grade 12	2
Graduate	3	Graduate	3
Other: specify	4	Other: specify	4

14. Which group (education level) do you think is least at risk of being unemployed?

Males		Females	
Little or no education	1	Little or no education	1
Grade 12	2	Grade 12	2
Graduate	3	Graduate	3
Other: specify	4	Other: specify	4

15. Whose responsibility is it to ensure that the youth get jobs?

The youth	1
Parents	2
Municipalities (counsellors) community	3
Government (Politicians)	4
Social workers	5
Other: specify	6

16. Which of the following employment plans do you know about?

National Youth Development Agency	1
Youth Employment Index	2
None of the above	3
Other: Specify	4

SECTION C
PSYCHOSOCIAL IMPACT

This section has to do with the psychosocial impact of unemployment as experienced by the youth of Mafikeng.

17. What in your opinion are the main causes of youth unemployment in Mafikeng?

18. How do you feel about not being employed?

19. How has unemployment affected you?

20. What would being employed mean to you? What difference will it make in your life?

21. What financial implications have you suffered due to unemployment?

22. What difference would being employed make to your financial status?

23. How has being unemployed affected your social life? Friends, family, etc.

24. How would being employed change your current social status?

25. How has being unemployed affected the role that you play within your community?

26. How would being employed change this?

27. Have you ever been to a social worker for assistance in finding a job?

Yes	1
No	2

27.1. If YES, how was your experience? Did you receive any kind of assistance or information?

28. Have you ever heard/read about any social work services that help with employment?

Yes	1
No	2

28.1. If YES, what are/were these programmes?

28.2. Do you think Social workers can play a role in helping the youth find employment?

Yes	1
No	2

28.3. Do you know of anybody who has benefitted from any programmes to alleviate unemployment?

28.4. How do you think social workers can help unemployed youth?

29. Do you think that youth unemployment can lead to delinquent behaviour such as crime? If yes, how so?

COMMENTS

ADDENDA A2
INFORMED CONSENT
INFORMATION SHEET

This informed consent form is for the Unemployed Youth (people between the ages of 18 and 30) of Mafikeng who are invited to take part in this study, titled “The psychosocial impact of unemployment on the youth”.

Psychosocial: for the purposes of this study, psychosocial will be understood to be the psychological development of the individual in relation to his/her social environment (Wiley & Sons, 2010: 1). In simpler terms this means “the interaction between social and psychological factors” (Dictionary.com, 2010: 1).

Notes to the participant:

1. All information will be treated as confidential
2. The participants must be residents of Mahikeng
3. The participants must be between the ages of 18 and 30
4. The participants must be unemployed for a minimum of two months
5. The aim of the project is to explore the psychosocial impact of unemployment on the youth
6. The participants must give voluntary consent to participate in the research and will not be forced to take part
7. The participants will not be compensated for their involvement in the research
8. The results of the interview schedule will assist the researcher to compile a report which will form part of her Masters dissertation and may be used to help the youth in their employment endeavours in the long run. This does not mean however, that participants will get employment opportunities from assisting in this study.

ADDENDA A3

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Statement by the participant

I _____ have read the information/it has been read to me. I had the opportunity to ask questions about it and they have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

Statement by the researcher

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant, and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant understands what will be done. I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER

DATE

