

**Investigating sustainable methods of alleviating
unemployment in rural communities of the
uMhlathuze municipality, KwaZulu-Natal**

SZ Mathenjwa

 **orcid.org/0000-0002-8933-6867**

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Supervisor: Dr AM van Wyk

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Student number: 37054384

PREFACE

I would like to thank uMvelinqangi, God the creator for the wonderful work he did in creating me as a complete human being that can live normally and also blessing me with a bright mind that allows me to interrogate different topics in this earth and be able to offer solutions wherever possible, I say Camagu!!!

My sincere gratitude and appreciation go to my supervisor, Dr Anton Van Wyk, who's been very supportive throughout the process. I will remember our online meetings where you guided me with patience and a higher level of intellect.

A special thanks goes to my family, especially my wife who steered the family ship when I was mostly occupied with books for a good two years. Thank you for your love and support. Thank you for understanding, home supervision on my studies and for those nice meals and cup of coffees you brought to the study room. To my kids Methembe and Lubanzi, yes Daddy will have more time with you now since you were honest and told me that I must finish studying so that we can do activities together. Thanks to my mother and grandmother for your prayers and for supporting me even as we are far apart.

Last but not least, my sincere gratitude goes to the City of uMhlathuze employees and the unemployed respondents who agreed to participate in the study. I hope this study may offer guidance and improve the employment situation.

ABSTRACT

Investigating sustainable methods of alleviating unemployment for rural communities of the uMhlathuze municipality, KwaZulu-Natal

Background: Unemployment has long been a problem facing the citizens of South Africa. Unemployment is a multidimensional social, political, and economic phenomenon. It is a complex concept to measure and define because it depends on the economy of areas, culture and education systems, and social settings. Furthermore, the problem of unemployment is seen to be more significant among the youth as opposed to the adult populations in both developing and developed countries. South Africa faces many socio-economic challenges, and unemployment is at the centre of most of these challenges. Therefore, it is essential to investigate some of the vulnerable parts of society, such as the rural areas which are most marginalized, to ascertain the type of government, business, and societal intervention required.

Purpose: The primary objective of this study was to investigate sustainable methods of alleviating unemployment in rural communities of the City of uMhlathuze Municipality in KwaZulu Natal (South Africa), as well as the effect that being unemployed has on the lives and livelihoods of the people living in the CoU municipality. Furthermore, the study aimed to investigate the impact of the July 2021 unrest/looting in KZN on unemployment-alleviating methods.

Research methodology: The study followed a qualitative research method and was underpinned by an inductive research approach. The study adopted a single case study. The data were collected via two interview schedules for the unemployed respondents and the other for the municipality employee respondents in the CoU.

Key findings: The key findings were that the municipality has programmes in place; however, the majority of the unemployed respondents were not aware of these programmes, and the minority that were aware were also not happy with how these programmes are run; the unemployed respondents are negatively affected emotionally with some indicating that they have lost hope and some indicating that they become too emotional sometimes. Their lives and livelihoods are

negatively impacted when they can't fulfil some basic needs such as building themselves houses and educating families and kids. Furthermore, both the unemployed and employee respondents agreed that the 2021 unrest/looting harmed employment opportunities. The unemployment alleviation methods, such as LED programmes, were also affected, where more people were getting assistance because of lost employment and are now taking part in the informal trading businesses.

Contribution: The study contributes to the literature on unemployment alleviation methods for municipalities and other levels of government. It adds to the body of knowledge by offering several managerial implications and recommendations that the municipalities may consider, especially those with rural areas as part of their communities.

Keywords: Unemployment, sustainable methods, alleviating Unemployment, rural communities, 2021 unrest/looting.

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List of Abbreviations

- AfCFTA:** The African Continental Free Trade Area
- CHIETA:** The Chemical Industries and Education & Training Authority
- CoU:** City of uMhlatuze
- CRDP:** Comprehensive Rural Development Programme
- DTI:** Department of Trade and Industry
- ILO:** International Labour Organisation
- ISRDS:** Integrated and Sustainable Rural Development Strategy
- KCDM:** King Cetshwayo District Municipality
- KZN:** KwaZulu Natal
- LED:** Local economic development
- LFPR:** Labour Force Participation Rate
- MTSF:** Medium-Term Strategic Framework
- NSFAS:** National Student Financial Aid Scheme
- PGDS:** Provincial Growth and Development Strategy
- QLFS:** Quarterly Labour Force Survey
- RBIDZ:** Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone
- RIDS:** Regional Industrial Development Strategy
- SA:** South Africa
- SDGs:** Sustainable Development Goals
- SRG Grant:** Social Relief of Distress Grant
- StatsSA:** Statistics South Africa

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and background

Unemployment has long been a problem facing the citizens of South Africa. According to Msigwa and Kipesha (2013:68), unemployment is a multidimensional social, political, and economic phenomenon. It is a complex concept to measure and define because it depends on the economy of areas, culture and education systems, and social settings. Furthermore, the problem of unemployment is more significant among the youth as opposed to the adult populations in both developing and developed countries (Msigwa & Kipesha, 2013).

Youth unemployment in South Africa recorded the highest rates in the second quarter of 2022, with ages 15-24 and ages 25-34 recording 61.4% and 41.2% (narrow unemployment definition), respectively (StatsSA, 2022b:26). South Africa's persistently high levels of unemployment are well documented. According to StatsSA (2022b:9), South Africa recorded 33.9% (narrow) and 44.1% (expanded) unemployment levels, while KwaZulu Natal (KZN) recorded an unemployment level of 32.7% (narrow) and 49.4% (expanded) in the second quarter of 2022, the evidence indicates that unemployment stays a pressing problem in South Africa.

South Africa faces many socio-economic challenges, and unemployment is at the centre of most challenges (Manda & Ben Dhaou, 2019:244). With the assistance of governments and businesses, unemployment can be alleviated to some extent, which must be done in South Africa.

When people lack employment opportunities, they have higher chances of poverty and committing criminal activities to survive, contributing to inequality (Mazorodze, 2020:14). This statement is supported by a study done by Mazorodze (2020:14), where a positive and significant correlation between youth unemployment and higher murder crimes in KwaZulu Natal was found. Covid-19 has also not helped the unemployment situation in South Africa and the City of uMhlatuze. Therefore, the study will aim to address the following problem stated below.

1.2 Problem statement

According to Oluwajodu *et al.* (2015), South Africa has been experiencing rising unemployment for many years, with the rates well documented by Statistics South Africa. According to Kingdon and Knight (2007:10), in South Africa, there is evidence from a job-search logit model which indicates that job search is negatively affected by other factors such as poverty, high costs of job-search from isolated rural areas (which makes it a special area of attention in South Africa which is one of the countries where there is higher rural unemployment than urban).

Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) publishes statistics for both the broad and the narrow approaches to unemployment. The Department of Labour, the South African Reserve Bank, and others focus on the narrow measure in their official communications and reports. The unemployment level (narrow measure) decreased by -0.6 percentage point to 33.9% in the second quarter of 2022 compared to the first quarter of 2022 (34.5%), of which both are better than the fourth quarter of 2021's (35.3%) that was the highest since the start of the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) in 2008 (StatsSA, 2022b:22).

Klasen and Woolard (2009:2-5) argued that rural areas are experiencing higher levels of unemployment than urban areas and supporting the unemployed by employed family members drags many households into deep poverty. This further necessitates an inclusive approach from all community stakeholders, including the business community, government, and general society, to urgently explore sustainable ways of alleviating unemployment in rural communities in South Africa.

According to Visagie and Turok (2021:56), the Covid-19 pandemic amplified the labour market inequalities between rural and urban areas (rural areas reporting higher unemployment rates than urban areas). The rate of unemployment gap between metros and rural areas widened from 10 to 18 percentage points when comparing pre and post-lockdown.

According to Jili and Nzimakwe (2019:5), the sustainability of the existing local economic development initiatives in the King Cetshwayo District Municipality (KCDM) was the major outstanding challenge, giving more reasons for this kind of study. Furthermore, the Covid-19 pandemic has not assisted the unemployment situation in South Africa and the City of uMhlathuze. According to StatsSA (2022a:22), 15.8% fewer people were expected to work during the Covid-19-related lockdown, which required citizens to social distance and stay at home to avoid exposure to the virus. According to Harding (2021), the July 2021 unrest in KZN and some parts of Gauteng were claimed to result from the people's unhappiness about poverty and unemployment and only worsened the unemployment situation in South Africa and within these provinces.

All these mentioned factors would have impacted the unemployment alleviations methods in the country at large, and more specifically, in the rural communities of the City of uMhlathuze (CoU), as supported by a study on the impact of Covid-19 in South Africa by Schotte and Zizzamia (2021:2) which confirmed Covid-19's exacerbation of existing inequalities and hamper to people's income generating activities.

This, therefore, warrants further exploration of this phenomenon to understand it better and formulate informed methods to deal with it, with the key driver for the study being the sustainability of the methods being investigated and implemented.

1.3 Primary and secondary objectives

1.3.1 The primary objective

The primary objective of this study is to investigate sustainable methods of alleviating unemployment in rural communities of the City of uMhlathuze Municipality in KwaZulu Natal (South Africa), as well as the effect that being unemployed has on the lives and livelihoods of the people living in the CoU municipality.

This main objective is meant to address the research question of whether the City of uMhlathuze Municipality does have sustainable methods of unemployment alleviation for rural communities?

1.3.2 Secondary objectives

The secondary objectives of this study are:

- To investigate and recommend different sustainable unemployment alleviation methods for rural communities of the CoU.
- To investigate unemployment's effect on the lives and livelihoods of individuals in rural communities of the CoU at the time of interviews being conducted.
- To investigate the effect of the 2021 unrest on the unemployment alleviation methods in the CoU.

These secondary objectives are meant to answer secondary research questions which are: what unemployment alleviations methods can be recommended to the municipality? what is the impact of unemployment of the lives and livelihoods of individuals of the City of uMhlathuze; and what impact did the July 2021 unrest have on the unemployment alleviation methods of the municipality?

1.4 Research design and method

In every study, a suitable research design should be chosen and followed for a researcher to collect relevant data required to fulfil the study's objectives. Research methodology displays and spells out the procedural approach and must ensure a close connection with the research objectives (Saunders, 2018:224). Table 1-1 below summarises the research methodology to be followed in this study.

Table 1.1: Research methodology summary

Research paradigm	Interpretive
Research approach	Inductive
Methodological choice	Qualitative

Research strategy	Single case study
Sampling technique	Non-probability sampling
Data analysis	MS Excel
Data collection technique	Semi-structured interviews

Source: Compiled by author

A wide range of sources will be read and properly referenced to ensure a literature review considering a broad spectrum of scholarly knowledge. These sources will comprise textbooks on the subjects, published peer-reviewed articles and scientific journals. To find relevant literature, keywords relevant to the subject area will be used. These will include keywords such as unemployment, City of uMhlathuze, the impact of unemployment, and South Africa, amongst others. Well-known databases that provide reliable articles from accredited sources will be consulted.

This study will follow a qualitative research approach using semi-structured interviews. Due to the nature of the study, a qualitative design will be chosen as it enhances the text data in words (Saunders, 2018:182). This will enable the researcher to understand rural communities' experiences and the impact of unemployment alleviation methods. From the literature review, structured interview questions will be identified. The researcher will embark on fieldwork where in-person interviews will be conducted with possible participants. The data gathered from the interviews will be analysed using the Microsoft package, i.e., MS Excel tables and graphs.

Five fundamental paradigms exist in business and management research: interpretivism, realism (critical), positivism, postmodernism, and pragmatism (Saunders, 2018:107-111). The nature of this study directs the researcher to follow an interpretive paradigm, a subjective approach suitable for studying social phenomena in their natural environment (Saunders, 2018:109).

The reasons for the choice are that the researcher in this study is interested in understanding the actions in the form of unemployment alleviation methods by the local authorities. Furthermore, the researcher will also seek to understand the effect of being unemployed on the lives and

livelihoods of individuals within the CoU. From this understanding, conclusions and recommendations will be made.

According to Saunders (2018:112-113), research can follow one of the three approaches. These are 1. Deduction is a research approach involving testing a theoretical proposition by using a research strategy specifically designed to collect data for its testing; 2. Inductive is a research approach that involves building theory from analysing data already collected; 3. Abduction is an approach to theory development involving data collection to explore a phenomenon, identify themes and explain patterns to generate a new or modify an existing theory which is subsequently tested.

This research approach will be inductive, meaning that knowledge will be gathered through the research, from which theories and conclusions will be made, in line with a “bottom-up” approach as described by (Saunders, 2018:113).

This study will be conducted in two phases. Firstly, a literature review will be conducted; secondly, an interview with participants will be used to collect information. The interview information will be used to perform a qualitative study that will inform the researcher about the unemployment alleviation methods and the effect unemployment has on the participants in the uMhlathuze municipality. In this research, the researcher wants to understand the grass root perceptions about how citizens experience unemployment or employment programmes and whether these programmes are sustainable.

1.5 Definitions of terms used

Rural area (homelands): A standardised definition of a "rural area" does not exist in South Africa. As a result, Statistics South Africa defined "rural" based on many indicators available in Census data, involving whether the area is located outside metros, whether it fell under traditional authority, and if it lacked "urban characteristics" like availability of amenities and infrastructure (Lagarde & Blaauw, 2013). These areas are usually underdeveloped, with a lack of access to

modern services and land infrastructure such as roads, water, electricity, and schools, among many shortcomings.

The City of uMhlathuze: CoU is situated on the northeast coast of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), about 180 kilometres north-east of Durban. The CoU comprises the central business districts of Richards Bay, eMpangeni, Heatonville and Buchanana in Ntambanana. The CoU is one of the five municipalities under the King Cetshwayo District Municipality (KCDM). The N2 highway links the district to other significant economic centres, such as Johannesburg and Durban. It also offers a direct route to Maputo in Mozambique.

The Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone (RBIDZ) development boosts economic activity and attracts international investors (MediaCC, 2021). The City further comprises of the townships of eSikhaleni, eNseleni, Ngwelezana, Felixton, Mandlanzini, uMzingazi, and rural areas which are under traditional authorities, of KwaDube (Inkosi Dube), KwaDlangezwa (Inkosi Mkhwanazi), KwaBhejane (Inkosi Khoza), KwaMadlebe, (Inkosi Zungu), Buchanana (Inkosi Mthiyane and Inkosi Biyela), Obizo (Inkosi Cebekhulu), Somopho (Inkosi Mthembu in Macekane), Luwamba and Fatima (Inkosi Biyela).

Unemployment (Narrow and Broad): The broad definition of unemployment includes discouraged people who are employable but have not been actively looking for jobs for four weeks and say they would accept if a suitable job were to be offered. The narrow definition only includes those who are employable and actively looking for a period including the past four weeks, so the latter excludes discouraged job seekers (Kingdon & Knight, 2007:9).

1.6 Research outline

The study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one is the introduction, problem statement and objectives, whereas chapter two will be the full literature review about the state of unemployment from the world view narrowing down to SA's view covering definitions of different types of unemployment. Furthermore, the sustainable methods of alleviating

unemployment are explored from a world view, SA's perspective and the CoU's view while keeping a focus on rural communities

Chapter three is the description of the methodology that was used in the study. Chapter four will be the presentation and discussion of results which will consist of the demographics descriptions, empirical analysis and results (excel tables and graphs) that were discovered from the unemployed respondents and the employee respondents of the CoU.

Chapter five consists of the conclusion; and the managerial implications and recommendations from this study. Furthermore, included will be the recommendations of future research that can be conducted to better understand the sustainable methods of alleviating unemployment for rural communities and the effect thereof on the livelihoods of the affected and their families; and how both leaders from the community and the municipality can assist to alleviate unemployment under their leadership area.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the comprehensive literature review on the topic of unemployment. Furthermore, the chapter provides insight into the phenomenon under investigation by analysing the discoveries of other same-topic scholars. Many studies have been done on unemployment, but to the author's knowledge, less focus has been dedicated to the rural communities in South Africa, specifically on how to alleviate unemployment in rural areas.

The chapter reviews unemployment and sustainable methods of alleviating unemployment from a global perspective, then narrow down to South Africa, then to provinces, while paying particular attention to rural communities, particularly in the City of uMhlathuze Municipality in KZN.

2.2 The global state of unemployment

Unemployment can be subdivided into many forms depending on its causes. The following types of unemployment can take place as Abdualimov (2022:140) describes them:

- **Frictional unemployment** is voluntary unemployment, in which workers are temporarily unemployed for various reasons, such as a change of job, residence, or profession.
- **Structural unemployment** occurs when changes are made in an organisation when modern automated methods are introduced while existing workers have not yet been trained to master the skills required for the current network.
- **Cyclical unemployment** is a type of unemployment that is connected to the business cycle or cyclical developments in the industry. Cyclical unemployment will be at its lowest while an economy is doing well and at its highest when the economy's growth starts to slow down. This is a forced job loss.

- **Seasonal unemployment** Is when employees with seasonal occupations experience brief unemployment up until the season's conclusion and once more just before the start of the season. Farmers of vegetables are one example of this.

It is essential to present a picture from a positive perspective so that it can be easily understood what the unemployed are missing when they are trapped in the state of being unemployed. According to the theory of employment by Robinson (1937:113-116), employment is a subject of business cycles whereby if an investor's positive sentiment results in an investment decision, more employment will take place; however, if the investor's sentiment is negative, a decision to disinvest will result and therefore lesser employment will take place.

The employment in discussion relates to the means of production such as land, capital, labour, and entrepreneurship. As all these means of production earns income in the form of money which then circulates in an economy, the multiplier effect is experienced which leads to an increase in employment (Robinson, 1937:20). This fundamental employment background gives a good picture of what could be missing when higher levels of unemployment are experienced, as is the case in South Africa in recent years.

According to the World Employment and Social Outlook report by Berg *et al.* (2021:11), the COVID-19 pandemic has caused much disruption worldwide through its devastating impact on employment, public health and livelihoods. Furthermore, the reports state that governments and employers took immediate measures to address the crises, preserve employment opportunities, and safeguard incomes; however, these measures have not completely cushioned against the crisis, as all countries have suffered a sharp reduction in employment and national income. This situation, unfortunately, has worsened the existing inequalities and risks causing longer-term adverse effects on organisations and workers, of which this situation requires a resolute policy response from all key stakeholders to address the resulting imbalance in social and economic conditions through a human-centred recovery (Berg *et al.*, 2021:11).

Figure 2.1 below indicates the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on the global employment opportunities.

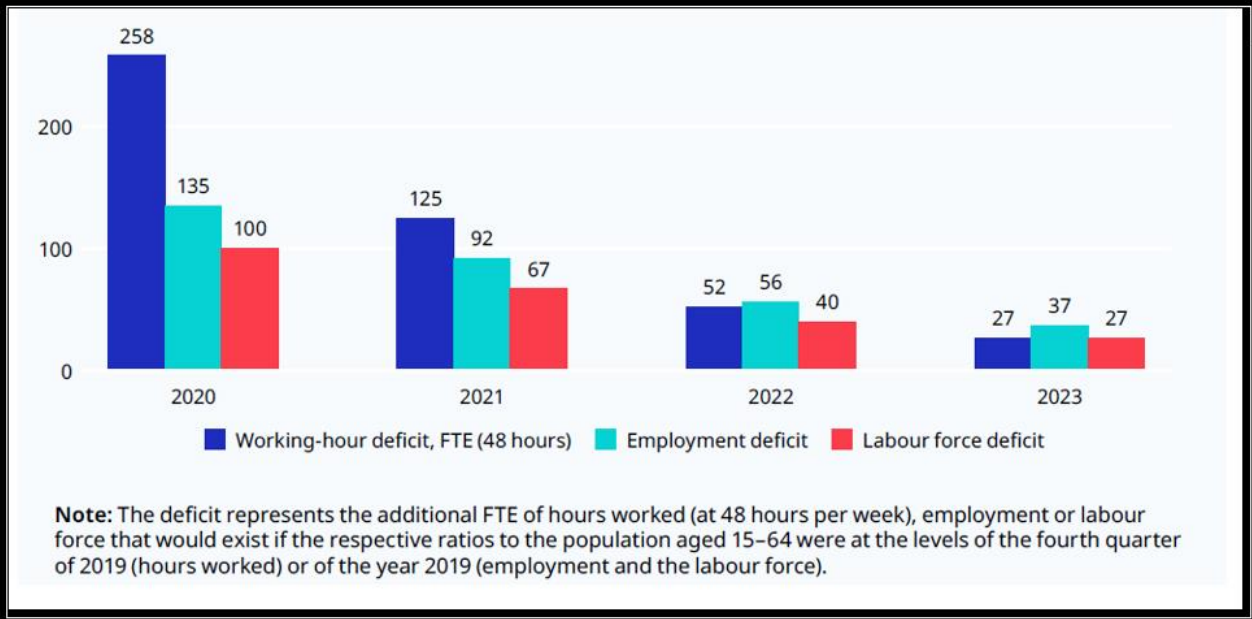


Figure 2.1: Deficit in full-time equivalent of hours worked, employment and the labour force with respect to 2019 (millions)

Source: (ILO, 2022:24)

According to the International Labour Organisation ILO (2022:24-25), instead of an increase in unemployment, withdrawals from the labour force were a significant factor in the employment deficit, with some people choosing to be self-employed. The critical factor in the crisis' long-term effects is anticipated to be the exodus from the labour force, but by 2023, weekly hours worked per worker are anticipated to rebound significantly.

The global stats figures in figure 2.1 above indicate that if a person works a 48-hour workweek, the decrease in hours worked in 2021 compared to the fourth quarter of 2019 would have resulted in a deficit of nearly 125 million full-time jobs worldwide. Ninety-two million individuals were unemployed in 2021, and a (labour force participation rate) LFPR fall from 2019 levels translates to an LFPR deficit of 67 million people in the labour market (Figure 2.1 above). Even

though the deficits are decreasing, it is anticipated that they will still be substantial through 2023. Even while the appropriate ratios, such as the employment-to-population ratio (EPR), are still below their pre-crisis levels, ongoing population growth increases the headcount for important labour market metrics (ILO, 2022:22).

The ILO (2022:22) further anticipates that the expected total worldwide hours worked, employment, and labour force will all exceed their 2019 levels in 2022 if economic activity increases but employment and labour force growth remain subdued, hours worked per person employed are expected to return to levels similar to those before the crisis.

According to Kühn (2019:19), the United Nations estimated that at the end of 2018, an estimated 7.6 billion people were living on the planet. Enhancing the well-being of all these people, especially those less affluent, should be the top priority of any policy agenda (Kühn, 2019:19). Attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) should be an integral part of policymaker's efforts in that respect. Labour markets are central to achieving the SDGs and promoting human-centred development. This is because paid employment is the main source of income for the vast majority of households across the world, and also because the organization of work can help to reinforce the core principles of equality, democracy, sustainability and social cohesion to achieve human prosperity and welfare ultimately (Kühn, 2019:19).

Figure 2.2 below illustrates the global labour market in 2018.

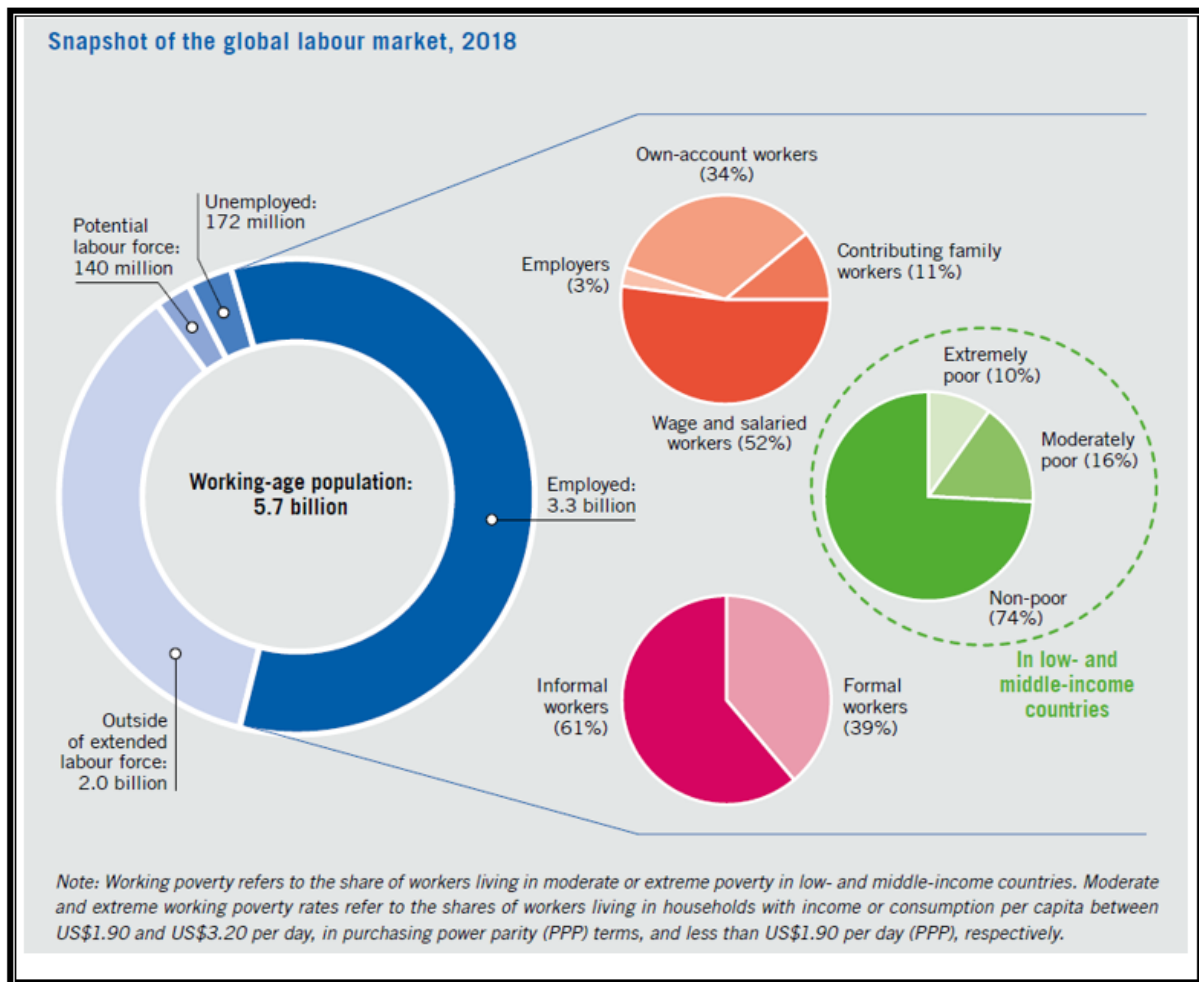


Figure 2.2: Global labour market at a glance

Source: (ILO, 2022:24)

The decline in decent work is widespread across the globe, and as the phenomena persists the well-being, equal opportunity and human development and economic security of people is negatively affected (Kühn, 2019:6). In some instances, however being employed does not always guarantee decent living conditions and resulting is a considerable number of the world's working population being at risk of poverty and taking up vulnerable jobs only for the sake of satisfying their basic living needs and those of their families.

Kühn (2019:6) further states that these vulnerable jobs are mainly in the informal economy, typically coupled with low pay and little or no access to social protection and rights at work. Furthermore, about 360 million or eleven percent of the employed population are contributing family workers who lack effective access to social protection and income security and whose employment status is categorized as informal by definition (Kühn, 2019:6).

According to Kühn (2019:6-7), 34% of all persons of working age worldwide, or an additional 1.1 billion people, work for themselves. Kühn (2019:6-7) argues that even though own-account labour can be a stepping stone to entrepreneurship, a sizable percentage of it consists of subsistence activities that are undertaken due to a lack of social security or job possibilities in the formal economy. According to Kühn (2019:6-7), 85% of own-account workers work in the informal economy, furthermore, 52% of all workers worldwide are wage and salaried workers. Kühn (2019:6-7) states that, although 40% of these occupations are informal, this employment is frequently linked to better working conditions and higher financial, however, this is not always the case around the world. Three out of five (61%) of the world's workforce, or an astounding 2 billion people, are employed in informal jobs, and in addition, a large portion of the world's population, about 55% does not have access to social safety (Kühn, 2019:6-7). More than one-quarter of employees in low and middle-income nations lived in extreme or moderate poverty (i.e., on less than US\$3.20 per day) in 2018, which is another indication of the low quality of many occupations according to the purchasing power parity terms (PPP) (Kühn, 2019:6-7).

According to a study done in Rwanda by Kabanda (2016:42), it was found that the government needed to invest in human capital in the rural areas, educate and highlight the positive results of adopting vocational skills training. In addition, the government had to assist poor households with access to finance.

Kühn (2019:14-15) argues that the efforts to improve working conditions should not be limited only to structural transformation. For example, the agricultural sector can improve its productivity by upgrading the rural household's skills and other initiatives such as developing agricultural value chains. Furthermore, Kühn (2019:15) states that the responsibility of improving working conditions, provision of access to social protection and ensuring fundamental principles and rights against the ongoing changing world of work will require a concerted effort by governments, employers and workers.

2.3 The state of unemployment in South Africa

Patel and Choga (2018) argued that developing regions such as Africa is the most affected by what they term "chronic youth unemployment". This is largely attributed to the population being largely dominated by young people in the African region, making this phenomenon one of the African continent's problems that needs drastic interventions. It is also unfortunate that a correlation between unemployment, poverty, and inequality is witnessed in South Africa, with severe consequences such as crime, substance abuse, and risky sexual behaviour, among a few (Mseleku, 2022:331).

In a study by Powdthavee (2007:1-3) done in the UK on economic psychology, we learned that the stigma of unemployment is reduced when there is more of it (unemployment) around, partly because social rejection of the affected will be less experienced if joblessness hits many other people in the community at the same time. This "unemployment comfort" situation could have varying consequences to the good efforts of reducing the levels of unemployment. This could be worse for rural communities for many reasons, such as people who are able and qualify to get employment could feel comfortable with being unemployed and stop putting in the required effort to get jobs. This could fuel ills such as crime because, as people get comfortable together, they can share unlawful ideas to improve their situation. Though voluntary unemployment can be a possibility for other countries, however evidence for South Africa is contrary to this phenomenon as stated by Kingdon and Knight (2001:13) where he found little support that the unemployed people chose to be unemployed in South Africa.

Furthermore, Powdthavee (2007:11) argues that there is evidence that there is a negative correlation between one's well-being and another's unemployment, i.e. the well-being of the unemployed is often lower when the unemployment rate of others is higher. However, to the contrary, the unemployed report higher levels of well-being as other's unemployment rises (Clark *et al.*, 2010:5). This shows the psychological and social implications of the unresolved unemployment phenomenon.

Bhorat *et al.* (2020:24) state that the unemployment situation in South Africa has been gradually worsening in recent years, caused by many structural problems in the formation of the country's economy, while they further argued that developing a strategy to support the growth of industries with and without smokestacks-specifically, those industries with the potential for high growth levels, coupled with the potential for low and medium-skilled employment creation will be essential for promoting effective structural transformation and significant job creation.

Many people in South Africa have turned to day labour work as a source of income due to the country's higher unemployment rate to make ends meet (Blaauw *et al.*, 2018:11). The day labourers can be found in big cities and small towns congregating on street corners and looking for temporary work for the day or a short length of time (Blaauw *et al.*, 2012:13334) . They gather every day in public areas, where they could be exposed to weather extremes like wind, rain, or heat (Etter *et al.*, 2019). As a result, their working conditions make them highly susceptible to both extreme poverty and health risks.

According to Lilenstein *et al.* (2018:23), rural households tend to be extraordinarily large and vulnerable to poverty, particularly those governed by a chief in 'traditional' communities which support other research from South Africa that contends that the homes willing and able to help the unemployed are found in rural areas, which both exclude the unemployed from employment prospects in metropolitan areas and adds to the burden on rural households.

Figure 2.3 below illustrates a graph of the unemployment stats trend from 2019 to the second quarter of 2022.

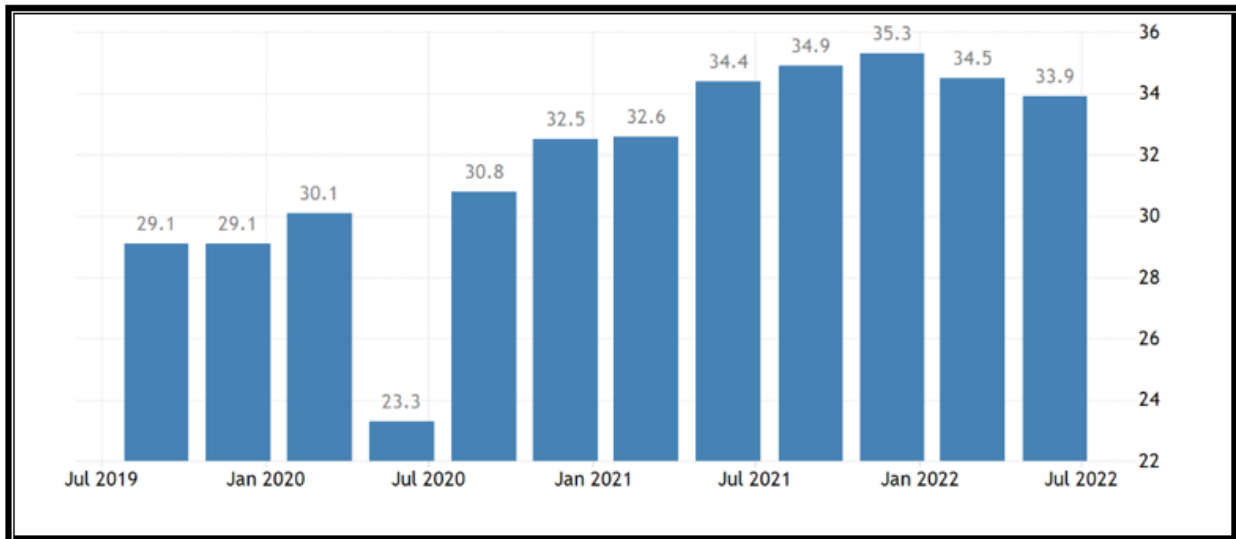


Figure 2.3: Unemployment stats 2019 – 2022-Q2

Source: (Trading-Economics, 2022)

2.3.1 Causes of unemployment in South Africa

According to Abdualimov (2022:139), among the many current problems in the world today is the one of development of socioeconomic and political reforms and measures to prevent unemployment. At a distance, South Africa's higher unemployment rate can be pointed to different reasons, such as the weak labour demand and lack of education (Abdualimov, 2022). Furthermore, Abdualimov (2022:140) states that some of the general causes of unemployment are: technical development, poor organisation of the country's economic system, and the automation of social production. Conclusions from a study by Fourie (2011:9) titled "The South African unemployment debate: three worlds, three discourses?" Suggests that SA's unemployment phenomenon emanates from three discourses, namely: the labour market cluster, poverty-development cluster, and a macro/macro sectoral cluster; of which people operating in each discourse are often only focused and blinded by their own discourse; and not

engaging with information from the other discourses and therefore creating bias and limiting solutions to unemployment.

Furthermore Fourie (2011:2-3) states the following perspectives regarding the three discourses in the SA's unemployment situation:

- Segmentation, informal-formal and rural-urban dualisms, as well as informal sector segmentation, are features of the South African labour market (alongside subsistence and survivalist sectors).
- The characteristics of such multi-segmentation, links between segments in the labour market, and barriers or facilitators to moving into a better segment may be crucial to both unemployment and poverty.
- Information, entry, and mobility barriers, among other things because of poverty and marginalization, are only a few of the elements that structurally prevent people from entering the labour force from a position of poverty or moving from one segment to another. The scope and efficiency with which labour markets operate are inherently constrained by these considerations.
- **The issues cannot be separated I:** Without discussing segmentation, the informal sector, entry and mobility hurdles, the effects of poverty circumstances, and marginalization, one cannot analyse and explain South African unemployment. The same holds true for the discussion of marginalization and persistent poverty without including labour markets and sources of income.
- **The issues cannot be separated II:** Without adequately addressing (a) the actual wage elasticity of the demand for labour, in particular the expected positive vs negative impact, on employment, of wage cuts and rises, respectively, it is impossible to analyse and understand unemployment in South Africa, (b) the output-elasticity of employment, namely the significant but constrained influence of formal sector development on (un)employment.

- Pensions and social benefits form a crucial policy nexus that connects macroeconomic difficulties, marginalization, inequality, labour supply, and (un)employment. It's possible to have complicated incentive and disincentive effects.
- Education may have different and complex effects on poverty, inequality, and unemployment, respectively. Education doesn't seem to have much of an effect on (un)employment until working-age individuals have a matriculation degree or above.
- The complicated causal links including topics like vulnerability, job search, immigration, funding, and education are influenced by factors such as gender, race, age, and generation. Careful, sophisticated study is required of these factors.
- There are signs that poverty and unemployment are causally linked in two ways: poverty contributes to unemployment's occurrence and persistence, and unemployment causes poverty. The consequences of such a relationship for policy that aims to make it easier for persons in poverty to access the labour market can be very significant. This might be a factor in the persistent unemployment that has been reported in South Africa.

Lilenstein *et al.* (2018:1) further adds that the history of Apartheid in South Africa, which led to drastically reduced educational and employment possibilities for African, Coloured, and Asian/Indian people, sets it apart from other nations. At the time of the democratic transition in 1994, this led to very high levels of poverty and inequality that were built along racial lines. This inspired the newly elected democratic administration to make poverty reduction a main focus of the economic strategy. Although there has been a significant change in the economic, political, and social institutions over the past 20 years, colonization and Apartheid's structural impacts remain challenging to reverse. As one of the most unequal societies in the world, South Africa continues to have chronically high rates of poverty in what is now an upper-middle income nation (Lilenstein *et al.*, 2018:1).

Having established that the majority of the unemployed in South Africa is the youth (StatsSA, 2022a), the following causes were discovered pertaining to youth unemployment.

Table 2.1: Causes of unemployment and descriptions

Causes of unemployment in SA	Description
Poor education	Shava (2022:460) concludes that, according to the data, South Africa's young people are not receiving the proper education and training, which results in either a skills gap, a skills mismatch, or both in youth. Training, mentoring, networking, and, most significantly, political voice is all necessary for a young person's business endeavour to be successful. The youth in South Africa don't seem to be getting the strong analytical skills they need to take advantage of existing government initiatives and determine whether they effectively reduce youth poverty, according to the present educational institutions. The current educational system has a number of flaws because it doesn't adequately train the young to become skilled graduates and job-ready individuals.
Lack of youth participation	Shava (2022:450) stated that, drawing on their examination of the literature, many researchers found that, in South Africa, there is little youth participation in the three levels of government (national, provincial, and municipal), which further deters and disempowers the youth. The researchers conclude that while more inclusive economic policies directed at the youth must be implemented to encourage their engagement in decision-making, youth participation is still conceivable (Shava, 2022:450).
Worsening corruption	Shava (2022:458) argues that, low-income nations experience underdevelopment as a result of corruption. Corruption is more uncommon in industrialized nations than in less developed nations. South Africa's youth are harmed by corruption since

	<p>money intended to help them participate in the main economic stream is misappropriated. The major types of corruption at the local government level are fraud, bribery, and the misuse of public funds for private gain. Such actions have a harmful effect on young people, who depend on local governments for life-improving development projects. An enormous amount of taxpayer money is lost each year due to corruption, demonstrating that corruption has increased due to institutional flaws or poor local government architecture.</p>
Poor economic growth	<p>Furthermore, Shava (2022:454) states that, African teenagers have social, political, and economic difficulties that might impede economic growth. In order to boost economic growth and improve youth livelihoods, alternative solutions are needed due to the youth's rising unemployment and poverty rates. The current status that there are few or no opportunities for rural youth in South Africa to actively engage with and contribute to the national economy serves as an example of the suffering of rural youth in the country.</p>
Legacy of apartheid	<p>According to (Meyer, 2017:57), the apartheid system which excluded the majority of South Africans from participating in meaningful economic activities and education is partly to blame for the higher unemployment rates in South Africa.</p>
Business Cycles	<p>According to De Jongh and Meyer (2018:90), the changes in business cycles have a direct impact on the level of employment at any point and time in an economy. De Jongh and Meyer (2018:90) argues that despite the fact that supply-side factors have a significant impact on how successful these job searchers</p>

	are in finding employment, the slow growth and low demand play a major role in the employment equation. South Africa has experienced recession and slow growth recently which may be some so the cause for the higher unemployment rates.
Lack of an entrepreneurship culture	According to Meyer (2017:59), Students and young people could benefit from better education and entrepreneurship training, which could boost their employability and desire to launch their companies. Small businesses are usually the ones that creates most employment in an economy, and the lack of these in South Africa is also a cause for the higher unemployment rate (Meyer, 2017:56).

Source: Compiled by author

2.4 Global/general sustainable methods of alleviating unemployment

In the search to draw from the world's best practices, it is critical to learn from global scholars so that benchmarking can be done while valuable lessons are learnt from the exercise. Christiaensen and Maertens (2022:4) state that the argument about the number versus the quality of rural employment has also been sparked by the Sustainable Development Goals’ (SDG) focus on supporting full and productive employment and decent employment work for all. Recent events give this discussion great urgency. The Covid-19 crisis has accelerated the mechanization and digitization processes already underway in African agri-food systems, which may have significant effects on the growth of rural employment, the shift from agricultural to non-agricultural employment, as well as the overall productivity of labour in rural areas.

2.4.1 Rural transformation

Christiaensen and Maertens (2022:5) define the process of rural transformation as where off-farm and non-farm activities will become more significant, and there will be more interaction between rural areas and urban centres as part of the greater process of rural transformation. Rural development can be facilitated through multiplier effects from agricultural transformation

and spending links between farm and non-farm rural sectors. Increased rural purchasing power fuels demand for regional non-agricultural goods and services and financial opportunities for non-farm business investments as agricultural productivity and farm incomes rise. In addition to this process, structural changes to the economy as a whole, including stronger urbanization and a shift away from agriculture in terms of employment and national revenue, are included in agricultural and rural transformation.

2.4.2 The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

The AfCFTA is expected to boost earnings and employment prospects for unskilled labourers and assist close the gender wage gap (WorldBank, 2020). According to Christiaensen and Maertens (2022:17), the percentage of workers employed in energy-intensive industries would rise overall throughout the continent. In 60% of the countries, there would be an increase in agricultural employment, and where there is an increase in agricultural employment, wages for unskilled labour would rise more quickly. Unskilled labour salaries would be 10.3% higher than the baseline by 2035, while skilled labour wages would be 9.8% higher. As output rises in important industries where women are heavily employed, wages would likewise increase marginally more quickly for women than for men (10.5 vs 9.9 percent).

2.4.3 Improving literacy levels

Harman (1970:3) defined literacy as “the ability to read, write and compute at or above the minimum level of competence needed for meeting the requirements of adult level” for illiteracy and “the ability to hold a decent job to support self and family, to lead a life of dignity and pride, “for functional literacy. In a study in Brazil by Ballara (2007:48), they proved again that, in terms of socioeconomics, there is a definite link between low levels of education and literacy, as well as income and work opportunities. Lower income levels and more difficult access to employment in the formal sector are directly correlated with lower levels of formal education with the then 55 million Brazilians deemed poor out of the country's total population, and 24 million of these individuals experience extreme poverty.

The importance of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all is indicated by the inclusion of this as goal number 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4) by the United Nations (UN, 2019:3). Ballara (2007:246-247) argues that to attain SDG 4, coherent legislation that outlines the ways and means for funding adult learning activities that involve governmental, private, and civil society organizations, as well as the person, should be the consequence of new policies for adult learning. Furthermore, the development of a national and international framework for lifelong learning should take a two-sided approach, with the first focus being on initial formal education, both general and vocational, including preschool education, and the second focus on adult learning, which includes adult literacy and basic education, work-related adult learning and training, as well as social and cultural adult learning. Both are crucial for society and the individual.

2.5 Possible solutions for implementation by the City of uMhlatuze

King Cetshwayo District Municipality consists of category B municipalities such as Nkandla, Mhlatuze, and Mbonambi, where the majority of people are youth and live in rural areas, the unemployment rate is argued to be ranging around 50%, contributing to higher poverty levels (Jili & Nzimakwe, 2019:6).

Under the City of uMhlatuze, the officials could learn from initiatives such as those suggested for Ruanda's rural areas, where according to a study by Kabanda (2016:42), it was concluded that the government needed to invest in human capital in the rural areas, educate and highlight the positive results of adopting Vocational skills training. In addition, the government had to assist poor households with access to finance. The following suggestions were found to be working in one way or another in similar areas as those prevailing in South Africa and specifically under the CoU.

2.5.1 Entrepreneurship fund

The fund was found to be working and implemented by the Eastern Cape (EC) government through the Premier's Office. Shava (2022:458) explains that the EC government established a youth unit with a youth development strategy to empower the youth to guarantee that rural youths are integrated into South Africa's social and economic concerns. The program provided starting cash to finance new business endeavours in order to boost entrepreneurial activities. The Eastern Cape government pushed hard for the rural youth to participate in farming and other rural development initiatives during the COVID-19 outbreak to increase food security. In order to support the Kids Development Fund and help rural youth avoid the repercussions of COVID-19, over R200 million was earmarked. In all districts of the Eastern Cape, rural teenagers are assisted using the District Development Model.

2.5.2 Youth agriculture co-operatives

Shava (2022:458) further discovered that rural youth in the Eastern Cape and Limpopo provinces of South Africa works to improve their quality of life by starting a variety of rural youth cooperatives that cover everything from sewing to agriculture. The need to strengthen rural livelihoods critical, which is consistent with these youth development programs. Because they involve communities and leaders in their efforts to eradicate poverty, youth cooperatives can be used as agents of local economic development. As a result, agricultural cooperatives are essential for the growth of the local economy and the young. Agricultural cooperatives are recognized as ways to empower the youth socially and economically to improve their living standards in light of the rising unemployment in South Africa.

2.5.3 Youth employment service

According to Ferreira (2019:46-47), youth employment service is a positive collaboration between government and business that is a step in the right direction to addressing the youth unemployment crisis in South Africa. However, this initiative is in no way the 'silver bullet' that will instantaneously address the Youth unemployment crisis. The initiative is described by Shava (2022:459) as offering South African unemployed black youth a 12-month quality work experience, one of the organization's basic ideas for reducing youth unemployment. Since its

founding, Shava (2022:459) states that youth employment service has worked with around 190 South African businesses to generate an estimated 72,000 employment opportunities free of charge. These results indicate that youth employment service has closed the inequality gap as a social and economic strategy for including black youth by enabling young people to climb the employment chances ladder. Businesses simultaneously get two levels on the BEE scorecard.

2.5.4 Local economic development (LED)

According to Jili and Nzimakwe (2019:21), the concept of local economic development is seen in many cases as the solution to socio-economic problems such as unemployment, while Rogerson and Rogerson (2010:466) state that modern LED techniques have their roots in 1960s technology. Europe is allegedly "considered as the cradle of LED approaches," Pressure to promote LED has come from at least two different angles: "on the one hand, they are expressions of uneven and inequitable results in the economic landscape, and on the other hand, they reflect variability in the aspirations and concerns of actors about the pace and extent of local investment."

The below figure 2.4 illustrates the framework for an ideal network of crucial role players required for effective LED results to be achieved.

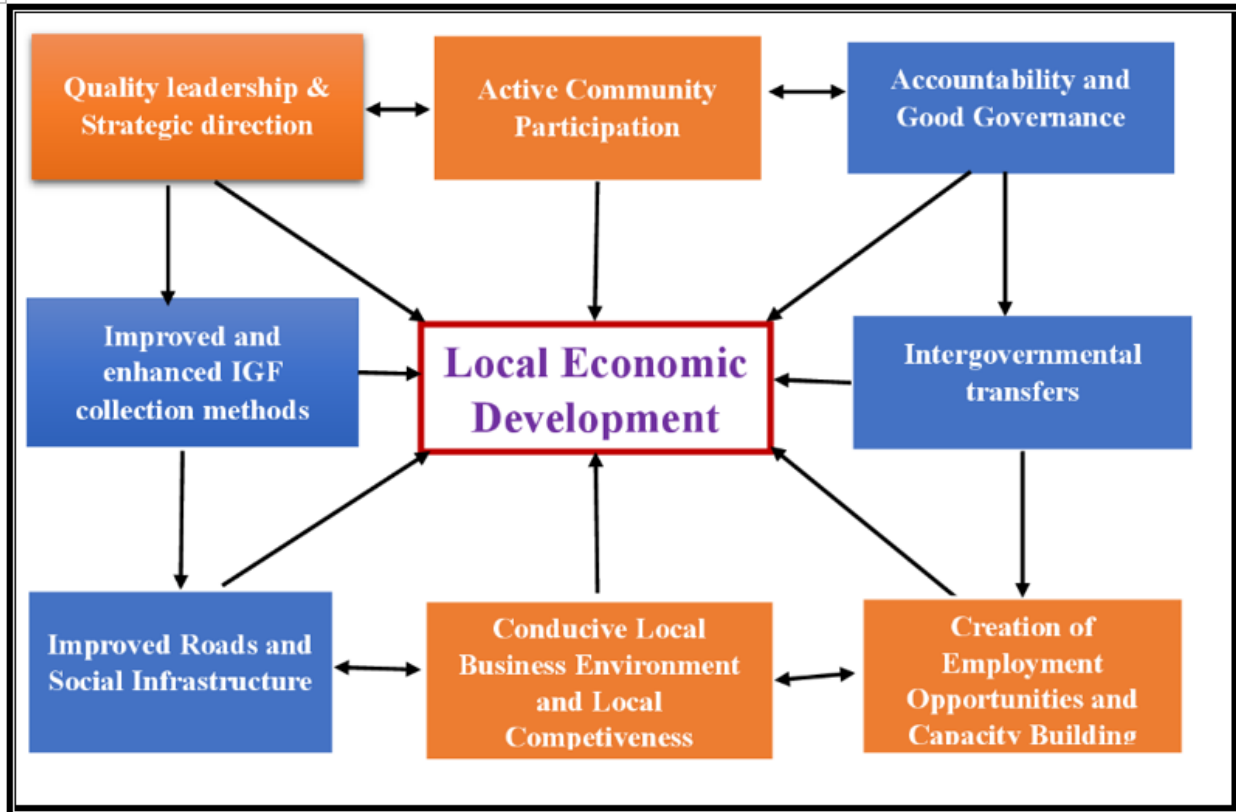


Figure 2.4: Local economic development framework

Source: (Zumegah, 2015)

The framework above is nothing without capable, willing, and above all, “**ethical leadership**”. The implementation of any plans depends on people, so do we have the right people behind all the different key areas of the framework within our communities? Especially within the scope of interest, the City of uMhlatuze. In the study by Shava (2022:460), it was suggested that **ethical leadership** is necessary to better the youth involvement in South Africa's social and economic problems. Ethical leadership is essential to reduce corruption, especially in local government procurement systems. Additionally, demonstrating ethical leadership encourages kids to trust government programs, enhancing their involvement in the nation's economic issues. According

to the author, these ethical leadership suggestions are relevant in the youth space and across all ages and areas of the framework above.

2.5.5 Policy and strategy intent

Jili and Nzimakwe (2019:49) list the following programmes as part of the government's comprehensive strategy to address the socio-economic problems, including unemployment, especially in rural and vulnerable communities. These are part of the policy environment enabling the creation of critical economic growth required for employment opportunities.

- **National Framework for Local Economic Development in South Africa**

According to Nel and Rogerson (2007:4), through the National Framework for LED the government has a clear vision for local economies, which it describes as "robust and inclusive local economies utilizing local opportunities, real potential, and competitive advantages, addressing local needs, and contributing to national development objectives."

- **Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy**

The goal of the Integrated and Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (ISRDS) is to achieve a vision of "socially cohesive and stable rural communities with viable institutions, sustainable economies, and universal access to social amenities capable of attracting and retaining skilled and knowledgeable people, who are equipped to contribute to growth and development." The ISRDS outlines the suggested institutional arrangements for the political and operational spheres.

- **Regional Industrial Development Strategy (RIDS)**

The RIDS urges all regions to develop industrial economies based on regional opportunities and competitive advantages. Based on the NSDP's ideas for spatial development, it seeks to close the gap between South Africa's first and second economies. A strategy like this focuses primarily on overcoming significant economic

barriers through infrastructure improvements that will make it easier for all regions to access markets and resources.

- **Medium-Term Strategic Framework (2014 – 2019)**

According to the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF), the government supports a competitive economy, rapid growth, the creation of good jobs, and investment promotion. This is the first MTSF since the NDP was adopted in September 2012.

- **Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (including the Expanded Public Works Programme)**

In contrast to the "conventional" interventionist strategy, the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP), a strategic objective of the national government's Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF), adopts a proactive participative community-based planning approach. The CRDP's overarching goals are to combat poverty and food insecurity, raise living standards, and rectify unfair distribution and ownership of income and assets.

- **Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)**

Trade and Investment South Africa (TISA) and the National Export Advisory Council assist the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) in administering South Africa's incentive program (NEAC). The DTI's most extensive program in finance is the Enterprise Organization (TEO). It offers incentives, matching grants, and other cost-sharing subsidies to support businesses of all sizes financially and in different ways. The overarching goal is to support exports, grow the industry, and encourage investment.

- **KwaZulu-Natal Provincial LED Policy and pro-poor approach**

Provincial policies of economic development are aligned with that the global and national policy framework. The policies such as: **The Strategic Goals and Objectives for KZN until the year 2030, KwaZulu-Natal Tourism Master Plan, KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Growth**

and Development Strategy (PGDS); highlighted here are intended to direct the actions and resource allocation of all levels of government and to offer recommendations to businesses and non-profit organizations that can aid in the growth of the province.

2.5.6 Zooming into the City of uMhlathuze in KZN

Figure 2.5 below illustrates the official and expanded unemployment stats by province, indicating that KZN where CoU is located, recorded 32.7% and 49.4 % official and expanded unemployment rates, respectively. The province is 1.3 percentage points lower than the country’s 33.9% official employment rate. These numbers indicate the urgency needed to address the country's unemployment crisis.

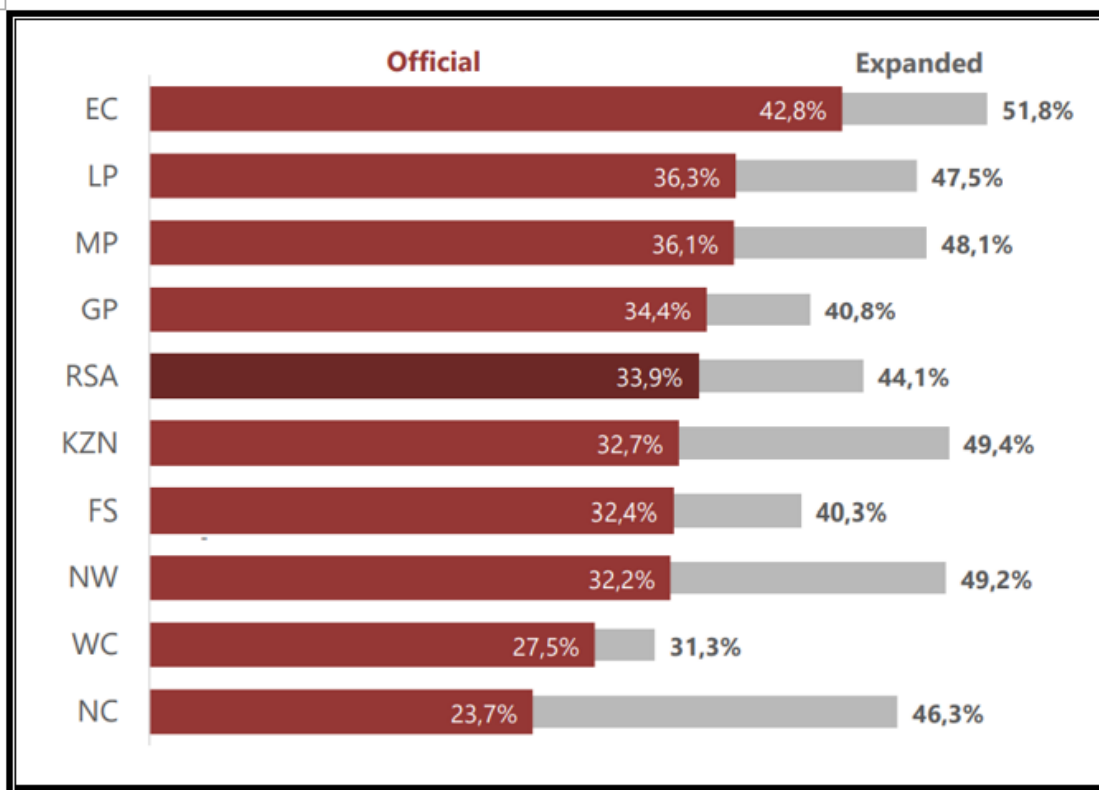


Figure 2.5: SA’s unemployment stats by provinces

Source: (StatsSA, 2022c:6)

According to (StatsSA, 2011), The City of uMhlathuze had a population size of 334 459 people, of which 29.3% are young. The City’s unemployment rate was 31%, while youth unemployment was 40.8%. Agricultural households were 18 755 out of 86 609 City households. If the 2011 Statistics SA figures are extrapolated from 2002 to 2022 using the 2011 Statistics SA growth rate of 1.45%, the current population size can be estimated to be 339 610 people. Figure 2.6 below illustrates on the left, the composition of the working-age population; and on the right the average household income for the City of uMhlathuze.

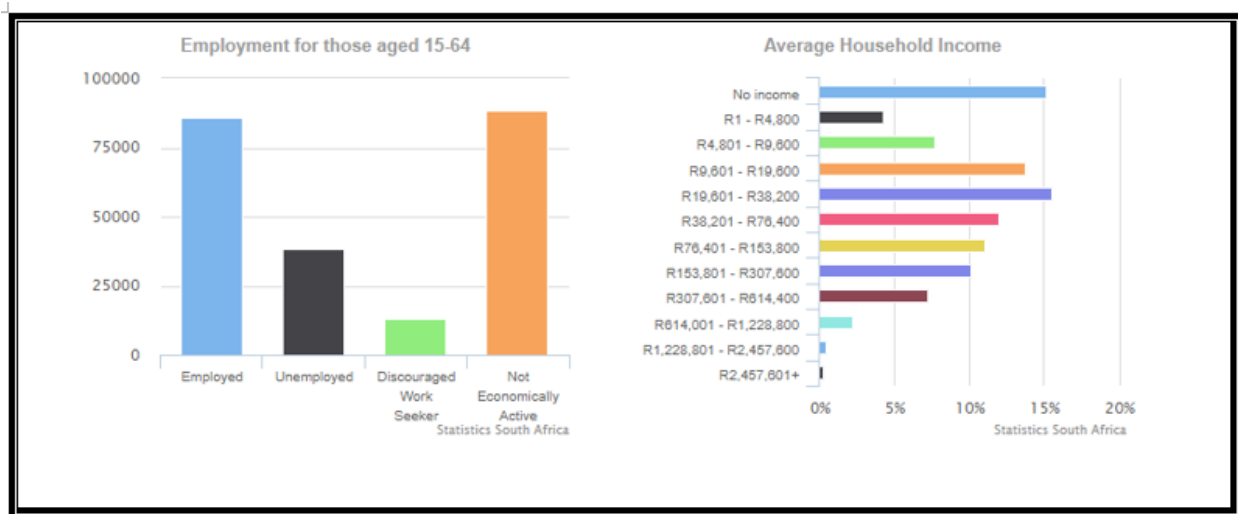


Figure 2.6: CoU employment stats for ages 15-64 & average household income

Source: (StatsSA, 2011)

According to (StatsSA, 2011), BHP Billiton runs the Hillside Aluminium and Bayside Aluminium smelters. At the harbour, a Foskor-run fertilizer facility has been built. Richards Bay Minerals mines iron ore, rutile (titanium oxide), and zircon from the dunes close to the lagoon. The local exports are coal, aluminium, titanium, other heavy minerals, granite, ferrochrome, paper pulp, woodchips, and phosphoric acid. Despite having a mineral-rich environment, the town struggles with a 31% unemployment rate. The youth unemployment rate is 40.8%.

The Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone (RBIDZ)

According to information from the company website RBIDZ (2022), located in KwaZulu-Natal under the City of uMhlatuze, RBIDZ is a state-owned, legally recognised industrial development enterprise. It has to promote export competitiveness on a global scale. This is accomplished in several ways, including tax and duty-free incentives, the provision of first-rate infrastructure, and affordable input costs. The Department of Economic Development, Tourism, and Environmental Affairs (DEDTEA) is the department that KwaZulu-government Natal reports to as the sole owner of the RBIDZ through a board that the MEC selects. Figure 2.7 below, illustrates the RBIDZ site aerial view.



Figure 2.7: The RBIDZ site aerial view

Source: (RBIDZ, 2022)

The RBIDZ has 240 hectares of wholly built and well-serviced property in its two Customs-controlled estates. The RBIDZ aim is to recruit small-medium industrial activities that will foster employment and economic growth while diversifying South Africa's export goods and cluster smaller, downstream manufacturing enterprises around already-existing significant industries in the CoU (RBIDZ, 2022). This developmental great initiative is a sign of good intentions from the

government in growing the economy in partnership with the private sector and creating much-needed employment opportunities for the communities of the CoU.

2.6 Summary and conclusion

This chapter aimed to draw lessons from literature focussing on global South Africa and the City of uMhlathuze, paying particular attention to the rural areas in all the focus area levels. Different types of unemployment were defined, giving context to the phenomenon under investigation; furthermore, literature indicated that the reduction in the need for the means of production is the start of any unemployment situation.

The unemployment problem is not unique to South Africa; however, the globe is facing a similar situation, with 172 Million of the 5.7 Billion working population unemployed. Africa and South Africa's populations are dominated by young people, who are also the casualties of the unemployment problem, with some scholars referring to the situation as "chronic youth unemployment". The latest QLFS report revealed that South Africa's unemployment rate is 33.9%, while the CoU is 31%.

The general causes of unemployment were highlighted, such as technical development, poor organisation of the country's economic system, and the automation of social production. Furthermore, many causes for SA's high unemployment rate were also discovered in literature, such as poor education, lack of participation, worsening corruption, and poor economic growth.

In the search by the author for some general sustainable methods for alleviating unemployment, some interesting links to the Sustainable Development Goals were Discovered (SDG 8) on sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. Amongst the general methods discovered are: Rural transformation, The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and improving literacy levels. Furthermore, as the author searched for the more specific to South Africa and CoU methods, the following were

discovered: Entrepreneurship fund, youth agriculture cooperatives, youth employment service (YES), Local economic development is driven by ethical leadership, policy and strategy intent.

In the CoU, the unemployment rate was found to be at 31%, while the population size is estimated at above 334 489, of which 29.3% are youth. Under the CoU, a development zone has been established by the name Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone (RBIDZ) with the duty to promote global export competitiveness by bringing in small and medium industrial activities that will foster employment and economic growth while diversifying South Africa's export goods. From what has been discovered in the literature, it is apparent that the topic of unemployment is very diverse while also presenting significant opportunities for exploring from different angles, such as the one chosen by the author focussing on rural communities.

The literature review already undertaken forms the basis for the empirical study for this dissertation. In the next chapter, the research methodology will be identified and discussed.

Chapter 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This study aims to investigate sustainable methods of alleviating unemployment in rural communities of the City of uMhlatuze Municipality in KwaZulu Natal (South Africa) as well as the effect that being unemployed has on the lives and livelihoods of the people living in the CoU municipality. This study's methodology is similar to those used by researchers such as Blaauw *et al.* (2006); Van Wyk *et al.* (2020), as these researchers also investigated unemployment and the well-being of day labourers, the unemployed persons and the effects thereof. This chapter will describe the research methods and data used in the study to provide adequate answers to the research objectives stated in chapter one. Furthermore, a description of the area of interest, research design, method of data collection, sampling, estimation techniques, data limitations and ethical considerations is provided.

3.2 Area of interest

The study falls within the sector of the socio-economic impact of unemployment under the economic cluster. This study will investigate unemployment alleviation methods and their implications for rural communities in the CoU. Unemployment is a significant threat to South African society, as many studies have focused on urban and related unemployment areas. According to Visagie and Turok (2021:56), taking the effect of COVID-19 into account, the rural unemployment rate in South Africa shot up to 48% in April 2020 and climbed even higher to 52% in June of the same year.

The data used for this study was collected in the City of uMhlatuze, located in the Northern part of the KwaZulu Natal province.

3.3 Literature review

A wide range of sources was read and adequately referenced to ensure a literature review considering a broad spectrum of scholarly knowledge. These sources comprised textbooks on the subjects, published articles and scientific journals. Relevant literature was found using keywords related to the subject area. These included keywords such as unemployment, City of uMhlatuze, the impact of unemployment, and South Africa, amongst others. Well-known databases that provide reliable articles from accredited sources were consulted.

3.4 Empirical study

This study followed a qualitative research approach using semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interviews were divided into two, one for the unemployed and the other for the municipality employees. The researcher arranged meetings with the municipality employees over two days, four of whom were available for the interviews. The unemployed respondents were met randomly at public spaces such as taxi ranks, cross roads and around residential areas. Following the qualitative approach described by (Saunders, 2018:182), the in-person interviews were conducted using the interview schedule during the researcher's fieldwork exercise. The data gathered from the interviews were analysed using Microsoft packages, i.e., MS Excel tables and graphs.

3.5 Research paradigm

Among the five fundamental paradigms that exist in business and management research which are interpretivism, realism (critical), positivism, postmodernism, and pragmatism (Saunders, 2018:107-111), the nature of this study directed the researcher to follow an interpretive paradigm, a subjective approach suitable for studying social phenomena in their natural environment (Saunders, 2018:109).

The reason for the choice is that the researcher in this study was interested in understanding the current state of unemployment and its impact on those affected. Furthermore, the researcher aimed to investigate the different unemployment alleviation methods by the CoU and whether

the unemployed respondents are aware of these methods/programmes and whether they are also sustainable. Furthermore, the researcher also sought to understand the effect of being unemployed on the lives and livelihoods of individuals within the CoU. From this understanding, conclusions and recommendations were made. The researcher intended to add to the body of knowledge from which bold decisions can be taken to improve the unemployment situation in the CoU and other similar municipalities experiencing similar challenges.

3.6 Research approach

According to Saunders (2018:112-113), the research could follow one of the three approaches. These are 1. Deduction is a research approach which involves the testing of a theoretical proposition by using a research strategy specifically designed to collect data for the purpose of its testing; 2. Inductive is a research approach which involves the building of theory from analysing data already collected; 3. Abduction is an approach to theory development involving the collection of data to explore a phenomenon, identify themes and explain patterns to generate a new or modify an existing theory which is subsequently tested.

This research followed an inductive approach, meaning that knowledge was gathered through the research using the interview schedules, from which theories and conclusions were made, in line with a “bottom-up” approach as described by (Saunders, 2018:113). This inductive approach was enhanced by the ability of the researcher to do in-person interviews with all the respondents. In total, eighteen unemployed and four employee respondents were interviewed.

3.7 Research instrument

The interviews were conducted in the municipality with possible participants. The interview questions were developed using similar methodologies and interviews used by studies such as Blaauw *et al.* (2006); Van Wyk *et al.* (2020). The interview was developed and based on previous ones with which thousands of interviews were previously conducted, so it was not subjected to a separate trial run since the method is a sound, tried and tested method as used by Van Wyk *et al.* (2020). The final interview questions covered various aspects of interest to the researcher to

answer the questions and objectives. It contains questions about the respondent's personal background considering ethical behaviour with no identifying information being asked such as names and birth dates, to identify the essential demographic characteristics of the research population. Further sections included are education, employment history, income earned, emotional wellbeing and effects of the 2021 looting and unrest in KwaZulu-Natal. No information was asked that would negatively affect the respondents' identity, employment prospects and life. There were also several open-ended questions included with the aim to facilitate possible analysis of certain features, such as if the respondents are hopeful of finding employment and how being employed would change their lives.

3.8 Study population and sample

The geographical demarcation of the study was made up of the rural communities in the CoU of the King Cetshwayo District Municipality (KCDM) in the KwaZulu Natal Province. According to the City of uMhlathuze (Final IDP Review, 2020/2021), a total population of 58% resides within tribal areas, 39% of the total population resides in urban areas, and a small population of 3% lives in farmland. This population is predominantly youth which further emphasises the need to create sustainable employment opportunities in the City. The map below indicates the geographical locations of the CoU.

This study sampled 25 respondents, of whom 18 were community members from the selected rural areas, and 4 were CoU municipality employees. The responses received are enough to make up the empirical evidence representing both essential sides to this study: the municipality employees and the rural community unemployed respondents. Figure 3.1 below illustrates the City of uMhlathuze map.



Figure 3.1: City of uMhlathuze map

Source: City of uMhlathuze Municipality, 2021

3.9 Data collection procedure

The study followed a qualitative research approach. The researcher personally conducted the interviews with participants. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016:157), this method is advantageous in three ways, and firstly it helped the researcher to establish rapport with the respondents. Secondly, the researcher could provide clarity sought by participants on the spot. The data could then be compiled and written up after completing the interviews.

The inclusion and exclusion criteria were as follows:

Inclusion criteria

The inclusion criteria required the participant to meet certain requirements. The minimum requirements are tabled on table 3-1 below.

Table 3.1: Inclusion criteria

Unemployed	Employees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be unemployed for at least one year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be employed by the CoU
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be unemployed (for this study, a gender-balanced sample is preferred since the experience of unemployment may vary due to gender, a balanced mix of male and female participants formed the sample). The researcher, however, couldn't predict if more men or women would consent to be interviewed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directly or indirectly involved with the CoU Local Economic Development (LED) projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be between the ages of 18 to 65 years old 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be between the ages of 18 to 65 years old
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be willing to participate voluntarily in the study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be willing to participate voluntarily in the study
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign and return the informed consent form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign and return the informed consent form

Source: Compiled by author

Exclusion criteria

People who were excluded from this study as participants were those who failed to meet the requirements needed. They may possess one or more of the following characteristics tabled in table 3-2 below.

Table 3.2: Exclusion criteria

Unemployed	Employees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those who have stayed in a rural area of the CoU for less than three years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not directly or indirectly involved with the CoU LED programmes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who are visitors to the CoU 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who are visitors to the CoU
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They have been unemployed for less than one year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People not employed by the CoU
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their ages are less than 18 years or more than 65 years 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Males and females who have no employment experience 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They were not willing to participate voluntarily in the study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They were not willing to participate voluntarily in the study
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They wanted compensation for their information since we can't give compensation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They wanted compensation for their information since we can't give compensation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They qualified to be included in the study but failed to sign and return the informed consent form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They qualified to be included in the study but failed to sign and return the informed consent form

Source: Compiled by author

The study gathered primary data through the use of interviews. For the unemployed respondents of the study, the researcher approached individuals in public spaces such as taxi or bus ranks, residential areas, and road junctions, amongst a few places. The researcher approached a minimum of two people or more at a time to explain the purpose of the visit and quickly highlighted the minimum screening requirements in terms of the age and employment status of possible participants. If the response from each participant was positive, then a consent form was given for completion and returned thereof, and the researcher collected signed consent forms. The interviews were conducted away from other individuals so that the participant felt safe and secure.

The process was essentially the same for the municipality employees except that the researcher pre-arranged appointment dates with those few that are directly or indirectly involved with LED

projects in the CoU. This was done via a contact person who assisted with other CoU arrangements, such as the permission letter. The permission letter from CoU dated 01 February 2022 also indicated that The Head of Section: Economic Development Facilitation could be contacted at his office number. The researcher anticipated completing the data collection exercise within seven to ten days.

The researcher anticipated that the time and place were suitable for the participant in facilities where the privacy of the participant was secured; otherwise, an alternative time and place were arranged. Participants were informed in advance that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study if they wished to do so at any time.

Sufficient time was allowed for the respondents to complete the interview process. The researcher also made time and effort to explain the contents of the interview to avoid misinterpretations. Data which could not be collected from the participants, such as unemployment rates and figures, was collected from government institutions, such as Statistics South Africa's Quarterly Labour Survey and Department of Labour unemployment reports because they are well-known and reliable and are updated regularly.

3.10 Data analysis

The reliability of many empirical studies rests much on the accuracy of the responses given, so eliciting truthful answers in interviews is important yet very challenging (Blair & Imai, 2012:47). In this study, limited biographic information was sourced with the purpose of gathering the participant's profile. The names of participants were not taken, and any information may give away their identity. Only biographical information such as age, gender, country of origin and language were collected.

Data collected via in-person interviews were recorded on the interview schedule via handwriting. The handwritten responses on the hardcopies were then digitalised into an Excel spreadsheet file for analysis purposes. This enables the presentation of data in tables, graphs and percentages for

meaningful outcomes. The researcher stayed central in the analysis of the data. The data is kept in secured soft storage. Only the researcher and the supervisor have access to the data being collected. After the specified timeframe, the data collection process stopped, and the data analysis began, which was conducted scientifically and ethically.

3.11 Reliability and validity

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016:220), reliability is a test of how consistently a measuring instrument measures whatever concept it is measuring, while validity is a test of how well an instrument that is developed measures the particular concept it is intended to measure. Validity is further broken down into internal validity, which is concerned with the issue of the authenticity of the cause-and-effect relationships, and external validity, which is concerned with the generalisability of the relationships to the external environment.

The researcher ensured reliability in this study through the use of a variety of sources of evidence and a structured interview process. The design of questions was based on the understanding of the theory from the literature and other previous studies which used similar methods. Since the interview questions were developed with the use of similar methodologies and interviews used by studies such as Blaauw *et al.* (2006); Van Wyk *et al.* (2020) and many of the questions used were previous ones used within which thousands of interviews were previously conducted by the researchers above, so it was not subjected to a separate trial run since the method is a sound, tried and tested method and the above researchers did do pre-testing. External reliability was ensured through the use of many cases to ascertain whether findings can be generalised across rural areas within South Africa. The purpose is to explain the findings and explore generalisability by comparing findings with theory. Therefore, there was no requirement to make a statistical analysis of the results for generalisation here as the approach chosen explored methods and their sustainability. The data was also protected and stored as soft copies on a password-protected cloud storage, and only the researchers had access to the data.

The researcher ensured reliability through structured questions from the literature review to explore the methods in the same way. The in-person interviews were administered at close to the same time and controlled to ensure participant's consistent understanding.

3.12 Ethical considerations

Ethical norms are meant to promote the research aims, such as knowledge, truth, and error avoidance. As an example, prohibitions against fabricating, falsifying, or misrepresenting research data, promote the truth and avoid an error. Furthermore, ethical standards promote important values for collaborative work, such as trust, accountability, fairness, and mutual respect (Gajjar, 2013). The ethical issues anticipated were summarised as follows:

- **Ethical issues anticipated before beginning the proposed study:** The topic might threaten the municipality participants in charge of job creation initiatives because it might reveal their performance levels. Recruitment and accessing of participants will have to comply with the POPIA act. Participants will voluntarily participate or terminate participation at any point when they feel an ethical threat.
- **Ethical issues anticipated during data collection:** The respondents may feel unease about some of the information requested while conducting the interviews. However, this situation was addressed by the informed consent conditions, which explicitly indicated a right to withdraw from participating in the study. The identity of the participants was not requested, and any information that may have revealed it.
- **Ethical issues anticipated during data analysis:** The empirical research process was likely to yield big data from respondents who need time and skill to gather, analyse, interpret and present. The researcher had a hectic schedule with other academic and work commitments, which could have compromised the required time needed for the study. However, this was mitigated by creating a project plan and having the study as part of the immediate goals to be archived.
- **Ethical issues anticipated when reporting, sharing, and storing data:** When reporting and sharing information, it is subject to different interpretations from different recipients.

Storing data was done via computer systems and other back-up devices like google drive and memory sticks, all subject to theft. The researcher backed-up twice and ensured the safekeeping of passwords and portable devices.

Ethical clearance from the relevant Ethics Committees of North-West University (NWU) was sourced. Accepted ethical principles were adhered to at all times during the study. The respondents were made aware of the POPIA act before and after the study to safeguard their sourced personal information. Assurance that information was only to be used for this study's purposes, and nothing beyond that was to be given. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured by the design of the interview questions, as no personal information was asked that could identify an individual participant.

3.13 Summary and conclusion

This chapter described all the techniques and processes used in this study to ensure that the methodology was sound scientifically and that the information sourced from the questionnaires could be used to interpret the research objectives described in chapter one in a meaningful way.

The design of the interview schedules was also discussed in detail, along with how the author will conduct the fieldwork. The procedure for handling ethical issues was presented, and all pertinent ethical issues pertaining to this investigation were detailed. The length of the fieldwork, as well as the data's limitations, were discussed.

Chapter 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

Unemployment is a significant problem for any country, especially if experienced at significantly higher rates like in South Africa (33.9%) and particularly in KZN (32.7%), where the study focus is (StatsSA, 2022b:9). This problem is worsened by the fact that the majority of the unemployed are from the youth category (15 to 34 years old). The results in this section partly confirm the conclusions by Mazorodze (2020:14) that the majority of the unemployed are the youth, and in most cases in KwaZulu- Natal, there is a positive and significant correlation between youth unemployment and homicide rates. This is consistent with most earlier investigations, and it supports the notion that as far as preventing crime is concerned, a failing labour market might be a formula for disaster (Mazorodze, 2020:14). These conclusions support the call for clear and practical policy changes addressing the youth unemployment which could solve problems such as murder crimes and ills in society (Mazorodze, 2020:14).

This chapter covers the presentation and discussion of results in detail. This chapter empirically analyses the unemployment status within the CoU, with the specific aim of investigating the possible methods for alleviating unemployment. The emotional wellbeing of the unemployed respondents is also analysed. This chapter will analyse the data in the study and use the data from the interviews conducted among the unemployed respondents and the municipality employees within the CoU.

The outline of the chapter is as follows: Section 4.2 will be a description of the demographics of the respondents, section 4.3 will be the empirical analysis of the unemployed respondents, followed by section 4.4 will be an empirical analysis of the City of uMhlatuze employees, and a conclusion in section 4.4.

4.2 Description of demographics

The investigation of the sustainable methods for alleviating unemployment for rural communities in the City of uMhlathuze municipality in Kwa-Zulu Natal is the main focus of this study. In order to investigate it fully, one must first understand the demographics of the participants in the study.

4.2.1 Demographics

Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview schedule among the sampled rural communities, and also among the employees of the City of uMhlathuze municipality. Twenty-two interviews were conducted, of which 18 were unemployed community members, and 4 were the municipality employees. For the purpose of the study, the researcher only recorded the demographics relating to community members as those were the most important ones as opposed to the ones relating to the municipality employees. The percentage of females that were interviewed for this study is 56%, as opposed to 44% of interviewed females.

Table 4-1 below, indicates the average and median age of the unemployed respondents of the CoU. The results show that the unemployed are concentrated around age of 33, indicated by the average age. The most recorded age is around age 31, indicated by the median. Both the mean and the median are confirming that the unemployed respondents are dominated by the youth. All the respondents were Zulu speaking and of South African nationality.

Table 4.1: Average and median age of the unemployed respondents

Case no.	City	Age	Language	Nationality
1	Empangeni	54	IsiZulu	South African
2	Empangeni	42	IsiZulu	South African
3	Empangeni	22	IsiZulu	South African
4	Empangeni	21	IsiZulu	South African
5	Empangeni	43	IsiZulu	South African
6	Empangeni	28	IsiZulu	South African
7	Empangeni	23	IsiZulu	South African
8	Empangeni	32	IsiZulu	South African
9	Empangeni	27	IsiZulu	South African
10	Empangeni	37	IsiZulu	South African
11	Empangeni	46	IsiZulu	South African
12	Empangeni	23	IsiZulu	South African
13	Empangeni	42	IsiZulu	South African
14	Empangeni	32	IsiZulu	South African
15	Empangeni	26	IsiZulu	South African
16	Empangeni	33	IsiZulu	South African
17	Empangeni	27	IsiZulu	South African
18	Empangeni	29	IsiZulu	South African
Average age		33 years		
Median		31 years		

Source: Compiled by author

4.3. Empirical analysis of the unemployed respondents

The empirical analysis presented in this section relates to only the unemployed community members of the City of uMhlatuze. This analysis was drawn from the evidence gathered from the ten questions that were part of the semi-structured interview schedule.

4.3.1 Educational information analysis

Table 4-2 below summarises the education information for the unemployed respondents and also provides brief reasons for those that could not finish matric which indicated social circumstances that forced each of them to drop out; however, most of the respondents finished matric and did some form of further training. In educational terms, 78% of respondents completed grade 12 compared to 22% that did not. Furthermore, on education, 89% of

respondents did some further training as opposed to 11% that did not, regardless of whether they finished. Tables 4-2 and 4-3 below summarise the education information analysis.

Table 4.2: Educations details of the unemployed respondents

Case no.	Age	Passed matric	Further training	Reason for leaving school
1	54	No	Yes	Dropped out of Std 4, there was no support for studying further
2	42	No	No	Passed grade 8, dropped because of sickness in family
3	22	Yes	Yes	Passed matric in 2018
4	21	Yes	Yes	Passed matric in 2018
5	43	No	Yes	Passed grade 10 and got pregnant
6	28	Yes	Yes	Passed matric in 2012
7	23	Yes	Yes	Passed matric in 2012
8	32	Yes	No	Passed matric in 2013
9	27	Yes	Yes	Passed matric in 2015
10	37	Yes	Yes	Passed matric in 2003
11	46	Yes	Yes	Passed matric in 2000
12	23	Yes	Yes	Passed matric in 2018
13	42	Yes	Yes	Passed matric in 2003
14	32	No	Yes	Did matric in 2011 but dropped out to do welding training
15	26	Yes	Yes	Passed matric in 2014
16	33	Yes	Yes	Passed matric in 2006
17	27	Yes	Yes	Passed matric in 2016
18	29	Yes	Yes	Passed matric in 2013
Average age	33 years			
Median	31 years			

Source: Compiled by author

Table 4.3: Summary analysis of the education details of the unemployed

Summary of responses	Passed matric?	Did further training?
Yes	78%	89%
No	22%	11%
Total	100%	100%

Source: Compiled by author

4.3.2 The employment history analysis

It is argued that a high GDP growth rate of between 7% and 8% per year in real terms indicates rapid economic development that can raise living standards for its citizens, create jobs for its citizens, and export more goods than it imports to maintain a positive trade balance and stable currency (Bushe, 2019:3). As a result, a country would want to avoid economic growth below the pace of population expansion because it typically decreases people's living standards (Bushe,

2019:3). With the results showing that the majority of the respondents do possess the basics that are needed to get an entry into the job market but yet they are still unemployed, it does indicate that the unemployment reasons are beyond the individual's making but more on the government policy and business environment levels. Table 4-4 below presents some of the respondent's responses quoted.

Table 4.4: The employment history analysis quotes

Respondent number	Quote
Respondent 2	<p>"I worked for two years in a local primary school's feeding scheme project. We were only given one month's notice about the end of our employment. I can't even get the R350 grant because I am told that I am receiving UIF, which I do not receive at all. I have been unemployed since March 2020. The situation is painful, worse is that I am also denied the R350 grant. I get grant for my one child and I must use that money for all our needs. Getting employed will help me build a house for my kids, help my elder child to finish matric."</p>
Respondent 3	<p>"I was unemployed for four months. I am currently employed on a one-year contract. Not being employed stops a lot of plans. Being fulltime employed will get me into debts because of a good credit score as I am against credit."</p>
Respondent 6	<p>"I worked at a laundry at Empangeni Rail for two years, but the company closed down. I have been unemployed for seven years now. Unemployment limits me in fulfilling my needs, life just stops. Fulltime employment will make me change my home situation, build and other good things for my family, I can also pursue studies in other fields."</p>

Respondent 8	“I worked for a BBM company doing cleaning. I worked for one year from 2015 till 2016 the contract ended. I have been unemployed for seven years and this causes stress. I am the main person looking after my siblings. If I get employed, this will be positive because I can support my siblings.”
Respondent 11	“I worked for 15 years in veterinary hospital. My contract was terminated.”

Source: Compiled by author

Most respondents indicated that they worked at some point, but employment was ended because of various reasons such as the employer closing down, contract termination, and a part-time job, amongst other reasons provided. The results indicate that the respondents possess some level of skill because of their previous work experience; however, currently, no job opportunities require their skills. This could be cyclical unemployment resulting from an economic cycle South Africa is experiencing where a slowing economy reduces labour demand and therefore increases the unemployment rate as defined by Abdualimov (2022:140).

The results also indicate that the respondents are not happy with their current situation; however, they have good plans for when they get employed again. The respondents mention plans such as building a house for their families and assisting family or siblings with furthering their education. This indicates that when respondents cannot meet these basic needs, it affects them emotionally and maybe a broader intervention plan by the government as a minimum to ensure that at least the people can fulfil their basic minimum needs.

4.3.3 Income analysis for the unemployed respondents

As expected, most of the unemployed respondents expressed a bleak picture of their current income as they do not have a stable source of income. Some of the respondents take some ad-hoc part-time jobs if they become available, while some appreciate the child support grant as the

only reason they can still survive. The below table 4-5 presents some of the respondent's responses quoted:

Table 4.5: Income analysis for the unemployed respondent's quotes

Respondent number	Quote
Respondent 2	"I survive on one child support grant of about R480 of which myself and two kids depend on this money. I do not have any temp employment for now"
Respondent 7	"I currently run my small business (selling clothes). I have one dependent child. I make about R300 to R500 monthly"
Respondent 9	"Currently I am self-employed selling fast food like quarter legs on the side of the road in the community. I make about R500 to R700 per week income"
Respondent 11	"I do piece jobs which are very ad-hoc and scarce. It is difficult to say how much I get, maybe R200 to R500 per week. I don't get any grant"
Respondent 16	"I live by chances. I negotiate discounts for people at shops and they pay me for that. Friends also assist me. Family does not assist. I got R350 at some point, but I get declined now. I have no dependants"
Respondent 18	"I only get income from current temp jobs. I am not getting R350 grant because I am an NSFAS student. I support more than seven people, six kids and three adults"

Source: Compiled by author

As evident from some quoted statements above, the unemployed are trying different means to survive. The evidence also discovered that none of the respondents was currently getting the R350 grant for various reasons, amongst which was them being told that they are receiving UIF while not getting this benefit. This can be because the R350 Social Relief of Distress Grant (SRD

Grant) excludes people contributing to or eligible for UIF payment (SASSA, 2022). This maybe also be the case with the respondents as they indicated they worked at some point; perhaps they are getting or got UIF payments at some stage. The evidence also revealed resilience in some of the unemployed respondents through trying informal business opportunities by selling fast food on the side of the road and clothes to the community to get going while they are in search of stable jobs or studying further.

4.3.4 Awareness of LED opportunities

The majority of the respondents were unaware of the LED opportunities that are running under the City of uMhlatuze, with only a few indicating they were aware while also expressing very interesting views about the opportunities they have seen. Table 4-6 below presents quotes from some of the responses when questions about LED opportunities were asked.

Table 4.6: Awareness about LED opportunities quotes

Respondent number	Quote
Respondent 2	“I am not aware of any LED programmes. We only hear that some people have been employed while we were not even invited to apply. I don't even know what qualifications are required.”
Respondent 5	“Yes, I am aware of LED programmes under the old Ntambanana Municipality but when we changed to uMhlatuze, our documents were lost and never found. The councillor took our documents, and our names were never found because he put other people in our places. They don't require complicated qualifications as long as you are a South African with an ID.”
Respondent 13	“People do get employed per rural sub-sections (Izigodi), but I miss out because I am mostly at the bus rank Baber shop. I know some people have been employed to build a water reservoir. I have also seen some getting employed in local companies, but I also miss out because I am at the Baber shop most of the time.”

Respondent 15	“We see posts advertised, but we are not aware of LED opportunities because it's like we don't have a councillor. We applied for seven posts using hard-earned money, and our CVs were literally thrown away. Since the new political party took over, we see infrastructure.”
Respondent 16	“I don't believe in those LED programmes because favouritism is the order of the day in those things. CVs get thrown away in numbers.”

Source: Compiled by author

The evidence presented above indicates that the majority of respondents are not aware of the LED programmes in their area, while in some cases (Respondent 2), they are told that some people have been employed after the fact, which makes them late or not able to apply for some opportunities. This means that the LED officials have more to do to ensure that all or most unemployed people know their LED programmes so they can apply on time. The officials could be part of the regular community meetings so that they are seen in the community and must also present updates about possible opportunities. In some cases, those respondents that are occupied by their small businesses miss out on job-related opportunities because they are not around the community when recruiters look for people to take part.

The evidence also indicated that the minority that were aware of the opportunities were not entirely happy, such as Respondents 5, 15 and 16. They mention worrying experiences such as favouritism and CVs being thrown away. This may require an ethical culture to be promoted amongst all LED officials and local community leaders so that they act with honesty, integrity and impartiality when recruiting for these LED programmes.

4.3.5 Emotional well-being of the unemployed respondents

The majority of the respondents expressed being emotionally not well because of being unemployed and the suffering thereof. Table 4-7 below presents some of the quotes from the unemployed respondents.

Table 4.7: Emotional well-being quotes of the unemployed respondents

Respondent number	Quote
Respondent 2	“I don't have hope because I am always left out. I am thankful for the child support grant. I watch TV and sleep. I am not happy at all, and it is painful to see people being paid, and alone you don't have anything.”
Respondent 6	“Seating at home is stressful, and one ends up losing hope. Studying gives me hope that after graduating, I will get employed. I do send my CVs out, but I don't get anything. On a scale of 1 to 10, I am on 2 because the situation is not good.”
Respondent 10	“I was unemployed for 9 years. I have two kids, so being unemployed was bad because I also had to care for them. I used to stress a lot, and it was difficult.”
Respondent 15	“I am not emotionally well. I end up drinking alcohol because I get bored. I have accepted that only connection works in getting jobs. My kids keep me going and my studies. My parents died in 2016, and things changed for the worse. My partner encourages me to study. Emotionally some days are worse, but the support structure I have from my partner, friends, and family helps. I am not satisfied. I have ambition, but I can't delegate to government, councillor or whoever.”
Respondent 16	“I am not looking for a job. I do have hope of getting funding for my business from Angel Investors. I am not ok because people expect you to be alright, but I am trying; emotionally, I am not ok. Patience is costly. I know I will be ok because I have great ideas. Maths taught me to solve a problem without breaking the law.”
Respondent 17	“I do have hope because "Ithemba Alibulali" (Hope does not kill). Knowing that I have a qualification keeps me going. I am not ok

	because I am being left behind as people; I started with have finished and am stuck because I can't get in-service training."
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Source: Compiled by author

The evidence above is discussed in the summary below. The results show that rural community members have expectations towards their community leaders, such as councillors; however, they are losing hope because those expectations are not met in many instances. Furthermore, the results show that those unemployed respondents who are occupied by either study, small business, or trying to get funding do have a better perspective towards life because they believe that once those materialise, their situation will improve, which is contrary to those that do not have hope who may end up being vulnerable to negative behaviour as stated by Vhumbunu (2021:10) that severe socioeconomic problems faced by hungry, displeased, and needy people, particularly in townships and rural areas, serves as a breeding ground for social instability

4.3.6 The effect of the July 2021 unrest/looting on the unemployed respondents

All the respondents felt that the July 2021 unrest/looting in the province of KwaZulu-Natal specifically worsened the provincial unemployment situation and the CoU. This is in line with the discovery in the literature review where Harding (2021) stated the unrest worsened the unemployment situation in South Africa, especially in the affected provinces. The bad impact of the unrest is further supported by Vhumbunu (2021:5-6), where he stated that the protests threatened the lives and livelihoods of those already suffering from the impacts of COVID-19 and caused significant harm to the economy and companies. Most respondents also complained about food prices that escalated after the unrest, and also, they noticed some community members now seating at home with no jobs, and some businesses still closed and struggling to rebuild the destroyed infrastructure. Table 4-8 below presents are some of the quotes from the unemployed respondents:

Table 4.8: The effect of the July 2021 unrest/looting on the unemployed respondent's quotes

Respondent number	Quote
Respondent 1	“Looting killed the nation, that is all I can say.”
Respondent 2	“Looting added to unemployment. More people were retrenched, and prices went up now at the shops.”
Respondent 9	“Looting had too much impact. Plans were halted, and some lost their jobs and are not working until now. I also know one person who is waiting for repairs to his shop that was burnt down in Esikhaleni.”
Respondent 13	“Most people lost their jobs when shops closed down. I have a relative that was never called back to work because the company closed. We also lost a lot in the shop because the equipment was stolen.”
Respondent 15	“I was never affected personally by looting. I am happy that looting passed the message to the authorities because the old people don't listen, and the only language they understand is violence.”

Source: Compiled by author

Below are some images of the before and after of the Esikhaleni Plaza that some respondents quote as still not operational, where some of the community members worked. Respondent 9 in the table above explicitly mentioned that he knows one person employed in Esikhaleni Plaza (indicated in figure 4.1 below) that was burnt down and is still waiting for the employer to call him back when the shop is up and running again. The unfortunate part is that there is no certainty as to when the plaza will be rebuilt. It is important to note the quote from respondent 15 in table 4-8 above where he said, “the old people don't listen, and the only language they understand is violence” which supports Vhumbunu (2021:9) when he states that the government's failure to address issues of poverty, unemployment, and inequality, which frequently result in areas of communities that are economically excluded, in need, and marginalized is one of the reasons that may have caused the July 2021 unrest. Figure 4.1 below illustrates the before and after images of the Esikhaleni Plaza that was burnt down during the July 2021 unrest.



Figure 4.1: The before and after images of the Esikhaleni Plaza

Source: (1stCloudProductions, 2022; Graham, 2021)

4.3.7 Suggestions for alleviating unemployment among the employees of CoU

The unemployed respondents were also allowed to suggest to the authorities what they would like to see implemented or done to alleviate unemployment. Table 4-9 below summarises some of the quotes from the interviews:

Table 4.9: Suggestions for alleviating unemployment from the employees of CoU quotes

Respondent number	Quote
Respondent 1	“Create opportunities for all ages. Assist people of all ages with skills where they can use their hands.”
Respondent 2	“Municipality must try to create job opportunities for us. Open centres in the community where we can learn skills, just to make

	some income. I like selling, so assistance with poultry, fruit and veg business will assist where one can be involved either helping or having an own stand/table to sell.”
Respondent 4	“Municipality must invest in infrastructure, especially a digital one, so that use of paper is eliminated, and people can gain new skills.”
Respondent 5	“Municipality must come to the people, including the mayor to listen to the people's problems. We don't have work, or water. We are only asking then to help us so that we can self-sustain "Ukuziphilisa". Leaders must stop taking only their favourite people for jobs that belonged to us because if it was not for that I am sure I would be working in my old job, under Ntambanana Municipality.”
Responded 10	“Train people with skills that they can use. Train for skills like plumbing business running which is more practical. Provide support for small businesses. Provide lighting here at the bus rand because it gets dark because of no lighting.
Respondent 14	“Create job opportunities. Tenders must be accessible to all and not only the selected.”
Respondent 15	“EPWP must take local people to do hygiene in the area, make schemes for agriculture so that people can take part. Make a skills centre where youth can get trained in farming, computer, and night watch, and guards can use bicycles to patrol the area. They must install Apollo, it gets dark in the area, and that increases crime.”
Respondent 17	“A lot of people are stuck. Support for people to start their businesses and jobs to be created. Assist in mobilising companies to offer required training for people to finish their studies.”

Source: Compiled by author

The respondents had many suggestions put forward, ranging from just asking to be heard, skills centre project requests, to job creation requests, amongst many others. More respondents expected that the municipality should provide job opportunities; while this expectation is understandable in the circumstances they are in where any assistance may help, it is also essential to manage these types of expectations because the municipality's responsibility as part of local government is to create an enabling environment where businesses are quickly established and thrive creating economic activities and jobs. Other strong suggestions, as stated by respondents 1, 2, 4 and 10, were for the municipality to invest in infrastructure and focus on practical skills development for the community; support for small businesses, as stated by respondents 2, 10, and 17, which are good suggestions as they are inherent with job opportunities. Respondent 15 detailed suggestion also suggests a crime in the area where he indicated that lighting should be improved and patrolling services can be organised using local unemployed people, which also addresses crime and unemployment.

The suggestions received from the unemployed are in line with what was discovered during the literature review, where solutions such as the entrepreneurship fund were suggested by (Shava, 2022:458) in line with the suggestion from respondents 2 & 17.

4.4 Empirical analysis of the City of uMhlatuze employees

The empirical research analysis presented in this section relates only to the municipality employees of the City of uMhlatuze. This analysis was drawn from the evidence gathered from the seven questions that were part of the structured interview schedule.

4.4.1 Employment information

According to the length of experience working with the municipality, 100% of respondents had a minimum of five years. About 75% of respondents were directly involved with LED-related programmes, while only 25% were indirectly involved. It concerns that 75% are part of LED; however, the community does know about their programmes.

4.4.2 Role in LED projects of the municipality

Respondents worked in different municipal offices: the tourism office, skills development office, and informal traders, who all fall under the LED department, while the others were from the central administration of the municipality, such as the finance department. The respondents performed different duties mandated to the office they occupied. The below table 4-10 summarised some of the quoted responses when they were asked about their role in the LED projects of the municipality.

Table 4.10: Role of LED projects of the municipality quotes

Respondent number	Quote
Respondent 1	“The municipality keeps a register of SMMEs and co-ops. There are poultry programmes, fresh food products, sewing projects and bricks building projects. No qualifications are required, just a SA ID because skills are provided. Municipality gets funding from different sources, such as the National Lottery, to fund community projects. Reports are published to the funders. Some projects have conditions such as submissions of a viable business plan. Some reports are published on the municipality website.”
Respondent 2	“There are tourism attractions in rural areas. There is a cultural village (Egugwini) in the mix of a rural village. The Thula game reserve employs youth and trains them in nature conservation. The game reserve works well with tribal leadership. The collaboration keeps the community happy, so they don't participate in animal poaching. We do have leadership programmes funded by the national government available for youth where 15 to 60 people are accommodated. The municipality also takes local youth and place them at tourism attractions such as beaches, water fronts, and they get a stipend over 12 months. The national government funds this.”

Respondent 3	“Community projects are scattered. Our projects run from July to June every year. We have 34 wards, and we train one entrepreneur per ward. CHIETA gave us funding as an example and we trained 10 people, and some were from rural areas. Recently 2 got bursaries to study at UP, one doing Mining Engineering and the other doing Bcom Informatics.”
Respondent 4	“We have built markets, but nothing has been built yet for rural communities. We have built an informal stall at taxi ranks funded by transport department, then handed over to LED to manage. One is required to show proof of SA citizenship, woman, live under CoU, black, unemployed, labour department issues letter to prove unemployment. Another office in Richards Bay keeps reports on projects, it's been 4 years since these were done. The last ones were done in Ngwelezana and Nseleni. People selling used to be subjected to different weather conditions. Priority was given to those already on the side of the road.”

Source: Compiled by author

The evidence from the municipality employees indicated that the respondents represented different LED offices within the CoU, of which Tourism and Hospitality, Skills Development and Training, and The Informal Traders office. The one respondent that was indirectly involved was from the finance department. Respondent 1 revealed that the municipality gets funding from different sources such as the National Lottery, supporting various LED programmes. For the community to qualify, they only need to present some form of SA ID, and the training will be provided. This indicates that programmes are there, and they get supported; however, what remains a mystery is why the respondents claim that they are not aware, which could be a public relations and communications issue that needs to be sorted out as soon as possible.

Respondent 2 from the tourism and hospitality office mentioned different projects that they run involving community members, such as the Thula Thula game reserve one; Egugwini cultural village; and leadership programmes; however, none of the community members mentioned one of these, which might indicate that only some parts of the communities are made aware or the rural communities are left out of these key economic activities.

Respondent 3 from the skills development and training office mentioned that their projects are scattered; however, only one funding from CHIETA, where 10 people were trained. This shows that the need is more than the resources available if only ten people can be mentioned as having benefited; she further noted that two matriculants got bursaries to study at the University, indicating the shortage of resources. These two examples could also explain why the community is unaware of these opportunities. It can also be an issue of officials being reluctant to reach out to too many community members because they know they have limited resources or funding.

Respondent 4, who works at the informal trader’s office, indicated that they had built markets; however, nothing has been made for rural communities yet. The two areas mentioned as having received the last markets built are Ngwelezana and Nseleni, townships under the CoU. Why have they not built anything for the rural community members? Because in most cases, they are the people with some extra piece of land that they use to plough some vegetables, of which, if they are encouraged to plant more, they can sell surpluses to other community members in the local markets.

4.4.3 Employment opportunities for rural community members

The respondents were asked a direct question regarding their view on the availability of employment opportunities specific to rural communities. Their responses were recorded as presented in table 4-11 below:

Table 4.11: Employment opportunities for rural community members quotes

Respondent number	Quote
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Respondent 1	“The community is given skills that will enable them to gain employment or start their own businesses. The fresh food farming and dairy farming are sustainable. More municipality programmes can be sustainable if LED becomes first priority for municipality budgets.”
Respondent 2	“There are tourism projects. Somopho hills is a start-up employing local youth. Some projects are sustainable except for the learnerships which are for a specific period of time. Community receive support in the form of training and business development where an expert comes in to train business owners.”
Respondent 3	“We cater for all the wards regardless whether rural or urban. There are opportunities in agriculture and also different cooperatives. The challenge is budget for these initiatives, we rely on external stakeholders, CoU does not provide funding for these projects. Now the city issued a tender for accredited training providers who will assist CoU by applying for training directly with SETAs.”
Respondent 4	“Our task is to assist the informal business to grow to be an SMME. The transition depends on hard work, so SEDA offers more training. However, some people are happy being small, but they do get training support. Funding support is from SEDA; the municipality only provides the infrastructure.”

Source: Compiled by author

The evidence above is an indication direct from the municipality employees that they do have programmes; however, if 75% of the community respondents are not aware of these, it is not helpful. The projects mentioned are good ones such as Somopho hills mentioned by respondent 2; training and business development; agricultural opportunities and co-operatives mentioned

by respondent 3; support to grow from informal to SMME mentioned by respondent 4 are all indicators of LED programmes that are available for the community, however, if these are available at an enough scale compared to the demand or if rural communities do take advantage of these if they are made available to them are questions that can be explored further as this study is enhanced in the future.

Furthermore, from the responses received it is noted that respondent 1 indicated that LED is not a first-priority municipality budget which supports respondent’s 3 statement where she pointed out that the budget is a challenge for her training initiatives; however, it is encouraging to see that the municipality has responded by issuing a tender to bring in accredited training providers who will assist by applying for funding directly with the SETA. The points raised in this part of the discussion can be considered by the CoU leadership so that they can improve their LED programmes and therefore have an impactful strategy that will be felt by most of the community members that need it so desperately.

4.4.4 The effect of the July 2021 unrest/looting on the unemployed respondents

The question on the respondent’s viewpoint about the effect of the July 2021 unrest or looting was also directed to the municipality employees. Their responses were noted and are presented in table 4-12 below:

Table 4.12: The effect of the July 2021 unrest/looting on the unemployed respondent’s quotes

Respondent number	Quote
Respondent 1	“The rural areas were affected a lot because they have more unskilled people, so when shops closed down, more people lost jobs. The worse is that some people were stealing from their workplaces and cameras showed this, and they were fired.”
Respondent 2	“The unrest affected and crippled CoU economy, instilled fear to tourists, and gave a bad name to the province. Things are getting

	better and recovering well. Businesses are doing their best to survive. We are hoping for a vibrant summer season.”
Respondent 3	“Situation got worse. In Esikhaleni, the shopping plaza was heavily damaged, Sanlam centre in Empangeni Town, Ngwelezana, Nseleni, Dlangezwa, almost all the townships were damaged.”
Respondent 4	“We see a lot of new people selling because of lost jobs. Storage facilities were broken into, especially at A rank. They were not able to sell for a long time. Older ladies could not even come out, even during Covid. Things are getting better as some came back but some couldn't afford to set up again, so they are coming back but not at the levels like before the looting.”

Source: Compiled by author

The evidence presented in table 4-12 above indicates that 100% of the respondents felt that the July 2021 events had a negative impact on employment opportunities within the CoU and KZN at large. Respondent 1 points out an irony that came with the looting situation whereby some people looted their own place of work, and when video footage showed this, they were fired from their jobs. The questions are what could have made people be so naïve and destroy their own livelihoods? Could this be an indication of moral degeneration in society? Could it be a desperation signal propelled by Covid-19 lockdown restrictions? Could it be a lack of pride in one’s country and all that represents it? These are questions that the leaders in charge must explore so that spot-on interventions can be developed and implemented to prevent such from happening ever again.

Respondent 4 alludes to the fact that the looting exacerbated the already worse situation that was started by the Covid-19 pandemic, where people lost jobs and started their informal trading businesses.

4.4.5 Suggestions for alleviating unemployment among the employees of CoU

In the same manner as in the preceding section, a question about suggestions now from the employee’s point of view was also asked. The following table 4-13 summarises the responses which largely cover the unemployment alleviation methods that could be adopted.

Table 4.13: Suggestions for alleviating unemployment from the employees of CoU quotes

Respondent number	Quote
Respondent 1	<p>“LED has a great potential because it gives a person an alternative to being employed. Cadre deployment is a big problem because people with no LED skills are employed in LED departments. There must be LED KPAs. Municipalities must prioritise LED as the number one.”</p>
Respondent 2	<p>“Municipality must invest in skills development, practical, something that people can do for themselves. Youths should be able to be self-employed. TVET colleges should be used more to train people to be more practical. People should be taught to create opportunities than to be employed.”</p>
Respondent 3	<p>“This is a national crisis. EPWP can assist even though it is temporally, but it does make a difference. Community works programmes (CWP) is also a solution.”</p> <p>Additional: “Some people decline EPWP & CWP programmes because of lesser salaries. Linking a trainee with industry is still a challenge. A forum was started with the industry, but the industry was not comfortable with signing the terms of reference. The council adopted a community skills audit and interviewed youth from 34 wards. Community skills were matched to industry, and this is still happening; the problem is funding.”</p>

Respondent 4	“Things have gotten worse. More people need assistance. The municipality must open more trading sites. Formalise flea markets to take place over weekends or monthly bases. People are showing interest in selling; this is evident at the Esikhaleni flea market. The problem is the availability of sites because the busy corners are already occupied.”
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Source: Compiled by author

The employees of the CoU suggestions were precise and to the point and are summarised below. Respondent 1 highlighted that LED has excellent potential as it gives the community an alternative to being employed and the possibility of creating more job opportunities, however, cadre deployment was killing the potential because people with no LED skills are used in LED departments. LED must be part of the municipality KPA’s and must get priority in the CoU and other municipalities. Respondent 2 also emphasised the potential of LED in creating opportunities for entrepreneurship which creates job opportunities in line with Respondent 1 views. Furthermore, respondent 2 emphasised practical skills development through collaboration with TVET colleges.

Respondent 3 acknowledged that EPWP and CWP programmes are a solution though these are temporal ones though some community members reject these opportunities because of lesser salaries. Furthermore, respondent 3 highlighted the challenge of linking a trainee with the industry of which a forum was established which was to assist with solving this problem; however, the industry was not comfortable with the terms of reference. This issue needs to be revisited with a following and updating the terms of reference so that the youth, especially, can get access to the industry to gain the necessary skills and possible employment. A community skills audit was also mentioned as ongoing; however, what the purpose and actions are when the results come out is still unclear; these are good initiatives that need monitoring and evaluation for implementation and improvements.

Respondent 4 stated that more people now need informal trading assistance and agreed that the municipality must open more trading sites and maybe a pragmatic focus on rural areas must be adopted, especially in the area of fruits and vegetables selling. This suggestion is in line with respondent 2 view point from the unemployed respondents, where she indicated that she likes selling and would appreciate a market where she can help have her own stand/table to sell. Respondent 15 from the unemployed also suggested that schemes for agriculture should be established for people to participate.

4.5 Summary and conclusion

This chapter managed to present and discuss the results of this study in detail. The results from the empirical analysis done on both the unemployed respondents and the employees were presented, covering the impact of unemployment on the unemployed people of the rural communities of the CoU.

A specific focus on the role of LED, the emotional well-being of the unemployed respondents, and the impact of the July 2021/looting on the unemployment status of the City of uMhlathuze was exercised, resulting in the attainment of the rich empirical evidence presented in this section. The empirical evidence, to a large extent, indicates a desperate call from the unemployed respondents to be heard for solutions in addressing their socio-economic issues to be found. In contrast, on the side of the employees, the evidence suggests that the current plans are reasonable; however, the unemployed respondents, especially the youth, have not seen the impact of these programmes.

The possible methods of alleviating unemployment were sourced from both the unemployed respondents and the employees of the CoU. The suggestions sourced will form part of the policy recommendations of this study to be presented in the next chapter of the conclusion and recommendations.

Table 4-14 below summarises the key takeaways aligned with this study's objectives.

Table 4.14: The key findings summary

Study objectives	Status
To investigate and recommend different sustainable unemployment alleviation methods for rural communities of the CoU.	This was achieved, the key finding was that the municipality has programmes in place; however, the majority of the respondents were not aware of these programmes, and the minority that was aware were also not happy with how these programmes are run.
To investigate unemployment's effect on the lives and livelihoods of individuals in rural communities of the CoU at the time of interviews being conducted.	This was achieved, and the key finding was that the unemployed respondents are negatively affected emotionally, with some indicating that they have lost hope and some indicating that they become too emotional sometimes. Their lives and livelihoods are negatively impacted when they can't fulfil some basic needs such as building themselves houses and educating families and kids.
To investigate the effect of the 2021 unrest on the unemployment alleviation methods in the CoU.	This was achieved, and both the unemployed and employee respondents agreed that the 2021 unrest/looting had a negative impact on employment opportunities and the unemployment alleviation methods, such as LED programmes where more people needed assistance because they lost employment and are now taking part in the informal trading businesses.

Source: Compiled by author

The achievement of the research objectives in table 4.14 above indicates that the research questions in section 1.3 were answered fully.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to summarise the overall findings and results of this study and the conclusions from the empirical analysis. The conclusions in this research study will be made consistent with the study's primary objective, which aimed to investigate sustainable methods of alleviating unemployment in rural communities of the City of uMhlathuze Municipality in KwaZulu Natal (South Africa), as well as the effect that being unemployed has on the lives and livelihoods of the people living in the CoU municipality.

Managerial implications will also be presented, and recommendations on future studies that can be conducted to enrich the subject of this study.

5.2 Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate sustainable methods of alleviating unemployment in rural communities of the City of uMhlathuze Municipality in KwaZulu Natal (South Africa), as well as the effect that being unemployed respondents, have on the lives and livelihoods of the people living in the CoU.

This was to be achieved through the four secondary objectives: 1. To investigate and recommend different sustainable unemployment alleviation methods for rural communities of the CoU, 2. To investigate unemployment's effect on the lives and livelihoods of individuals in rural communities of the CoU at the time of interviews being conducted, and 3. To investigate the effect of the 2021 unrest on the unemployment alleviation methods in the CoU.

The empirical evidence that was gathered from the unemployed respondents of the CoU largely suggested a bleak status based on different questions that were part of the structured interview schedule:

5.2.1 Demographics

The study confirmed that the majority of people affected by unemployment in Africa and South Africa, mainly, are the youth, with the average age of the unemployed respondents being 33 years. The study sample was largely dominated by males at 56%, while females were 44%. The age distribution does not necessarily mean males are more affected than females; however, it helps in getting a balanced view between genders of how they are affected by unemployment, especially the emotional well-being of each gender group. In this study, 70% of males were hopeful, while 30% were hopeless about the unemployment situation turning for the better; however, with females, only 38% were hopeful, while 63% were hopeless about a better unemployment situation.

5.2.2 Educational information analysis

The study revealed that the majority (78%) of respondents had completed matric, and some were also busy with further studies or having completed some form of tertiary education, while the minority (12%) did not complete matric. This implies that the unemployed respondents of the CoU are not necessarily unemployable because they possess the basic qualification, which is mostly the minimum requirement for meaningful work in South Africa. However, the common issue they are raising is the lack of opportunities for employment in the municipality. The results under this section should also be viewed in conjunction with the results under the section where the unemployed respondents were asked to suggest solutions to the municipality, where they suggested skills centres where they can be skilled for relevant jobs that are in demand from different industries.

5.2.3 The employment history analysis

The study revealed that 100% of the unemployed respondents worked at some point for periods ranging from four months to fifteen years, but employment was ended because of various reasons, such as the employer closing down, contract termination, and a part-time job. These results first indicate that the unemployed respondents do possess skills that are/were required by the market. Furthermore, other conditions are prevailing in the market, leading to reduced

labour demand. Among a few noted, these conditions could be attributed to slow economic growth and recession.

5.2.4 Income analysis for the unemployed respondent

Most of the respondents indicated that they do not currently have a stable source of income, with some relying on ad-hoc part time jobs, selling clothes and fast foods to community members, and a child support grant. The R480 child support grant is meant for the child's needs and cannot be counted as a source of income for the adult; however, it features in this case because of the worst-case scenario presented by respondent 2. The R300 to R500 mentioned by respondent 7 is not even near the minimum living income as stipulated by the UN's SDGs under goal number 8, which addresses decent work and economic growth. In summary, this section revealed that there needs to be economic growth paired with decent work creation, bringing a positive change to the rural communities of the CoU.

5.2.5 Awareness of LED opportunities

The results of the study revealed that most respondents were unaware of the different LED programmes running under the CoU. The other interesting part was that those who were aware also did not trust the processes followed in selecting the beneficiaries of these programmes. Some respondents mentioned favouritism in the selection process, some programmes are not advertised, and they only see people already working. Some have given up because of negative experiences such as CVs being thrown away. These responses have very crucial policy considerations for the authorities of the CoU.

5.2.6 The effect of the July 2021 unrest/looting on the unemployed respondents

The results revealed that 100% of respondents felt that the July 2021 unrest/looting in KZN province worsened the unemployment situation in the province, specifically in the CoU. The empirical evidence supported scholars that already wrote about the effects of unrest in the affected provinces, such as Vhumbunu (2021:6), where he stated that the protests threatened the lives and livelihoods of those already suffering the impact of COVID-19 and caused significant

harm to the economy and companies. This part of the study will have key and strategic policy considerations for the CoU and government authorities at large.

5.2.7 Empirical analysis of the City of uMhlathuze employees

In this section, the empirical evidence gathered from the CoU employees is summarised and concluded.

The municipality employees were all found to have solid experience in their area of speciality, with years of experience ranging from five to fifteen years. The information they shared was very relevant as 75% were directly involved with the LED programmes of the municipality, while only 25% were indirectly involved but still provided a different perspective from within the municipality.

On the question of their role as employees in LED projects of the municipality, which indirectly also asked if there are LED projects within CoU, they responded positively, contrary to what the unemployed respondents perceived of these programmes. The employees mentioned programmes specifically from different LED focus areas, such as 1. Tourism where projects such as Egugwini cultural village, Thula Thula game reserve, and Somopho hills; 2. Informal Trading where markets were built but nothing yet for rural areas, informal stalls at the taxi ranks funded by the transport department but handed over to LED for management; 3. Skills Training where many scattered community projects were alluded to running from July to June every year, Training of one entrepreneur per ward of out of 34 wards, CHIETA funding which assisted training of 10 people from different wards including rural areas, Bursaries awarded to two young people to study at the University of Pretoria doing Mining Engineering and Bcom Informatics; and 4. General programmes such as the register of SMMEs and Co-Ops, poultry programmes, fresh food products, sewing projects, and brick building projects.

On the question of their perception of the employment opportunities for rural community members within the CoU? The employees indicated that when opportunities are created, there

is no specification that these will be for rural areas vs other urban areas; however, everyone is welcome to participate, unless for community-specific programmes where local people will be prioritised.

In tourism, communities are absorbed in projects such as Somopho Hills, a start-up that employs youth to assist with adventure activities such as hiking and quad biking, and Thula Thula game reserve, which works closely with tribal leadership to foster collaboration and also avoid animal poaching. In the informal trading section, the task is to assist the informal businesses to grow into SMMEs, SEDA provides more training and funding support, while CoU provides the infrastructure. In the skills training section, all wards are catered for regardless of rural or urban; however, the challenge is the budget, as CoU does not budget for their LED activities but only outside funding assists; CoU has recently issued a tender to source accredited training providers to assist with applying for funds directly with the SETAs to assist community.

In general, the CoU aims to equip the community with skills to either gain employment or start their own business; however, more LED programmes could be sustainable if the municipality makes LED one of their priority programmes with a budget.

On the questions of the effect of the July 2021 unrest/looting, the employees agreed that the looting severely affected the CoU and worsened the unemployment situation. Furthermore, in the specific areas of speciality, the impact was experienced in different ways such as: In tourism, the unrest was said to have crippled the CoU economy and instilled fear in tourists and gave a bad name for the province; however, they were hopeful for a vibrant summer season. In the informal trading section, storage facilities were broken into, especially at A Rank (A rand is a rank where the unemployed respondent 13 working in the barber shop mentioned that their equipment was stolen, affecting their operations for several months), COVID-19 also affected this sector negatively because old ladies could not come out to operate their stalls, more people were now joining this sector because of lost jobs, things were noted as getting better with some coming back but more of new faces than the old ones.

In general, the rural areas were affected a lot because they had more unskilled people, so when shops closed, more people lost jobs. The worst is that some people were looting from their own workshops, so they were fired when video footage was seen.

5.2.8 Suggestions for alleviating unemployment for CoU

The structured questionnaire included a question for both the unemployed respondents and the employees of the CoU. The results for the two groups are summarised in table 5-1 below for conclusion purposes:

Table 5.1: Suggestions for alleviating unemployment from both respondent groups

Unemployed respondents	Employees	Conclusion deduction
Create opportunities for all ages.	LED has great potential because it gives a person an alternative to being employed.	Employees appreciate the potential of LED in addressing the unemployment crises; however, there is a gap in making LED visible and accessible to all in the communities.
CoU must create job opportunities for its people.	LED has great potential because it gives a person an alternative to being employed.	The unemployed respondents expect that CoU must create job opportunities; however, CoU uses LED to equip the community for jobs and opening of own businesses. There is an opportunity to clarify roles, so that community expectations are properly managed. CoU must

		also remember its role of creating an enabling environment for businesses to prosper so that employment can thrive.
Open skills centres that accommodate all ages in different practical skills training.	Municipalities must invest in practical skills development; something people can do for themselves. Youths should be able to be self-employed. TVET colleges should be used more to train people to be more practical. People should be taught to create opportunities than to be employed	The unemployed respondents and the employees agree that more skills centres must be opened, and more collaboration must be established between industry, CoU and the communities. CoU needs to take a leading role in facilitating this much-needed intervention.
CoU must come to the people, including the Mayor, to get first-hand experience of the people's frustrations.	No match.	From the employees' responses, nothing could be linked to CoU's interest in hearing the people's frustrations. CoU must consider formal engagement sessions with communities so that at least the community is updated about running programmes and their resulting benefits, especially the on-employment

		opportunities. Community views can also be noted.
Favouritism must stop, and people must be treated equally.	Cadre deployment is a big problem because people with no LED skills are employed in LED departments. There must be LED KPAs. Municipalities must prioritise LED as the number one	Favouritism and cadre deployment are similar, so there is a commonality in terms of both groups seeing this as a problem. The unemployed respondents see this as a hindrance to them getting opportunities, while employees see this as resulting in the not so fit people getting LED roles which may lead to non-performance.
Provide support for small businesses.	The municipality must open more trading sites. Formalise flea markets to take place over weekends or monthly bases. People are showing interest in selling; this is evident at the Esikhaleni flea market. The problem is the availability of sites because the busy corners are already occupied	Both groups agree that more support should be provided to small businesses in many ways, such as formalising flea markets, skills training, and funding.
Tenders must be accessible and rotate to avoid only one group getting opportunities.	No match.	People see opportunities in tendering; however, they feel these opportunities go to the

		<p>same people over and over. No comment from the employees could be linked to this item. This indicates some missed opportunities by the authorities to use all the available economic opportunities to uplift their communities equally.</p>
<p>EPWP must involve local people in needed services such as night watch and hygiene services.</p>	<p>Unemployment is a national crisis. EPWP can assist even though it is temporally, but it does make a difference. Community works programmes (CWP) are also a solution.</p>	<p>Both groups acknowledge that Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) is one of the temporal solutions; however, the unemployed respondents even see more opportunities where the idea of EPWP can be used, such as in community night watch and hygiene services.</p>
<p>CoU must mobilise companies to offer in-service training for local youth to get their needed University qualifications.</p>	<p>TVET colleges should be used more to train people to be more practical.</p>	<p>Municipality employees also see a need to work with TVET colleges. However, unemployed youth need in-service training. The thinking is the same; however, a gap is still to be filled.</p>

Source: Compiled by author

5.3 Managerial implications and recommendations

5.3.1 South Africa's unemployment problem is real and needs urgent attention

During the empirical evidence-gathering process, the author faced the real day-to-day experiences of the unemployed respondents. This experience made it clear that South Africa and the CoU are sitting on a ticking time bomb. The people on the ground are hungry, angry and unhappy. The challenge is that if the situation continues unattended, these people become desperate and vulnerable to bad manipulation and ideas. This situation was seen during the July 2021/looting where people participated in the wrong doing because some were made to believe it was the right thing to do for many unjustified reasons. The results indicated a distrust from the unemployed respondents of the authorities, such as when respondent 5 mentioned that another person unjustly replaced her in her job by the councillor, respondent 15 noted that their CVs were thrown away, and respondent 16 singled favouritism in the employment processes.

It is recommended that leaders, especially those in public service, be reminded of the spirit of Ubuntu and ethical leadership, whereby they put their people first in everything they do. This recommendation is supported by Feng *et al.* (2019:112), where a higher level of ethical leadership was found to enhance customer orientation culture and the meeting of ethical needs of customers.

5.3.2 The level of skills available under the CoU must be aligned to the opportunities created by economic growth

Economic growth is important in addressing the unemployment problem as it is believed that as economic activities occur, there will be a need for human capital or labour to produce. However, this cause-and-effect process is not always true when not properly understood and managed. The authorities should always ensure that the people, especially the youth, are equipped with the relevant skills required by the type of economic growth taking place at a point and time.

It is recommended that the CoU improve its skills development office to include strategic personnel that will focus on strengthening industry relations and partnerships and educational

institutions such as high schools, TVET colleges, and Universities. A clearly defined policy framework must guide the two new focus areas with a clear mandate and deliverables which aims to foster alignment between industry needs, skills demand and supply, and productivity.

5.3.3 All key stakeholders, such as the government, local authorities and community leaders, need to work together to find solutions

A platform similar to NEDLAC must be created at a local municipality level, where local government, local municipality, local industry, local education institutions, and community leaders meet to discuss critical issues such as unemployment and skills development. The focus should be to provide solutions rather than to blame each other and personal benefits.

In this platform, a collective set of values should be adopted. These values should be directed at creating a culture of what being a CoU citizen and what being a South African means, fostering a culture taking pride in the achievements of the CoU and SA at large. When this is achieved, people will feel like part of a bigger vision by CoU; therefore, they most likely don't support any act of criminality, such as the July 2021 unrest/looting but will protect their infrastructure. This was evident in some communities where they stood up to protect their local businesses and infrastructure.

5.3.4 Already existing positive initiatives should be scaled up

Some significant unemployment alleviation initiatives have been started in some parts of South Africa, specifically in the City of uMhlathuze, such as the entrepreneurship fund and RBIDZ, respectively; these must be scaled up while adequately managed.

5.3.5 Roles and responsibilities clarification

A gap in the understanding of the role of CoU in some instances by the unemployed respondents was identified where CoU was expected to create employment opportunities, however in the same light a gap in CoU's employees understanding of their role as the enabler for an environment that is friendly for business to prosper was identified.

It is recommended that in all engagements, the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved must be clarified and documented for all to refer to at any point and time of the relationship to avoid unjustified expectations from any parties involved.

5.3.6 Creation of a sovereign wealth fund

South Africa should start collecting ideas for building a sovereign wealth fund, which is meant to build the economy and close gaps that come with economic cycles such as unemployment. The fund should be highly regulated and operated by highly skilled and ethical people who always prioritise the interests of the people and the country.

The fund can be funded from the royalties that accrue from the rich resources that the country has, such as gold, platinum and heavy minerals such as zircon, ilmenite and rutile, amongst others. The new tertiary industries will contribute, including financial services, technology and other sectors. The fund can also take kind donations from the wealthy, and if the fund is well run and managed for the good of humanity and in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the fund will get a lot of international support. From the fund, grants such as the unemployment grant can then be entertained with a strict follow-up in making sure that the beneficiaries make the efforts to get the skills needed by the economy and also try to find employment.

Similar funds have been created by countries such as Russia and Saudi Arabia, as stated by Kozhanov (2018:242), even though these may have been made for a different reason, including their region's reconstruction.

5.3.7 Prioritisation of funding for LED programmes and their KPAs

The evidence presented by the municipality employees suggests that LED programmes do not take priority in the municipality and therefore do not get budgets as stated by municipality employees Respondents 1 and 3 that these programmes are not internally funded and are also

not part of the municipality KPA's. How do we expect these programmes to yield positive results if we do not fund and performance measure them? This, therefore, means that the leaders must correct these shortcomings so that LED programmes can be enhanced and sustained.

5.3.8 The informal trading office must prioritise rural communities when building markets

As stated by Respondent 4, a pragmatic focus on rural areas must be adopted, especially on the area of selling fruits and vegetables. This suggestion is in line with Respondent 2's viewpoint from the unemployed respondents, who indicated that she likes selling and would appreciate a market where she can help or have her own stand/table to sell. Respondent 15 from the unemployed also suggested that schemes for agriculture should be established for people to take part in. This suggestion is further justified by the fact that in most cases, rural communities' people with some extra piece of land that they use to plough some vegetables of which, if they are encouraged to plant more, they can sell surpluses to other community members in the local markets.

5.3.9 Practical skills development centres in communities

More respondents from the unemployed and the municipality employees alluded to the need for the skills development centres to be established in communities so that the unemployed can be trained and be given practical skills such as plumbing, welding, sawing, and baking, amongst other skills. Furthermore, the skills audit and the matching to industry needs must be revived such that any issues with the terms of reference that the industry refused to sign are resolved for a healthy and effective working relationship to be re-established.

5.3.10 Promotion of ethical behaviour amongst all officials and community leaders.

The evidence suggests that there is already a culture of mistrust between the community, the municipality employees, and the community leaders. This is from the statements made by employee respondents 5 and 16, where they respectively indicated that the councillor put his own people in her positions and the municipality employees threw away their CVs. All the officials and community leaders must sign a code of conduct and be trained about the high level of ethical behaviour required from people holding the type of positions they have.

5.4 Recommendations for future studies

This study only focused on investigating the topic of the CoU municipality. The strict time frame that the researcher had may have resulted in a smaller sample, all IsiZulu speaking and originating from South Africa. The factors mentioned may limit the scope of generalising the findings of this study.

However, the study will allow policymakers to better understand unemployment's impact on the unemployed respondents in rural communities and possible methods to alleviate it. The results and related recommendations can be applied fully especially by municipalities with rural communities as part of their populations, and in other cases, be generalised.

It is recommended that further research be done on the same topic, however, covering urban areas of the same municipality for a better comparison of the results; furthermore, a similar study can be done but allowing the researcher more time to reach people from different origins residing in the CoU to understand perspectives from diverse backgrounds. The other option could be to do the study covering the broader KZN to get a more comprehensive sample from which the results can be more generalisable.

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Appendix A: Unemployed Respondents Interview Schedule

Unemployment interviews in South Africa, City of UMhlatuze Municipality, KZN

NWU Business School

Ethics nr: NWU-00606-22-A4

Interview details:

(Can be completed after the interview)

Date of interview: _____

Time of interview: _____

Fieldworker's name: _____

City/Town: _____

Rural Area:

Buchanana	KwaMadlebe	Obizo	Somopho	Other

QUESTIONS

1. Type of site: Mark all applicable (This is where you encounter the respondent)

Public Space	
Residential area	
Related business/shops	
Warehouse	
Taxi rank	
Transport hub	
Open space (Like a veld)	

Road junction	
Municipality building	
Other (Specify)	

THIS SECTION OF THE INTERVIEW RELATES TO THE RESPONDENT YOU ARE INTERVIEWING

Interviewer: Explain to the respondents that these questions are about their personal background

2. Please tell me about yourself.

Prompts:

Respondent must not give his/her name.

Language predominantly spoken

Country he/she originates from

Age

EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION

3. Please tell me about your educational background.

Prompts:

Highest school level passed

Did they leave school and why?

What other training or courses have they completed?

4. Please tell me and elaborate on your employment history.

Prompts:

Period of employment

Period of unemployment

Why did they leave their fulltime job if they had one?

How has unemployment affected them?

How would being employed change their life?

5. Please tell me about how you receive income being unemployed and about your dependants (People they care for)

Prompts:

Government grants, UIF, Peace jobs

The amount of money they receive: Good month, Bad month

How many dependants do they have?

What type of dependants? Parents, children, Grandchildren, brothers/sisters, Wife/Partner

6. What do you know about any employment and local economic development (LED) opportunities in the City of uMhlatuze municipality?

Prompts:

Programmes sustainable?

Qualifications needed for those programmes.

7. Please tell me about your emotional wellbeing.

Prompts:

Are they hopeful in finding a job?

What keeps them going?

How satisfied/happy are they with their lives?

8. What is the effect that the July 2021 unrest/lootings had on you and unemployment in the municipality?

9. What is your opinion, that the municipality should do to alleviate unemployment?

10. Is there anything else you want to say or add that we did not cover, regarding the unemployment situation in the municipality?

Interviewer: Thank the respondent for their participation

Appendix B: Municipality Employees Interview Schedule

Unemployment interviews in South Africa, City of UMhlatuze Municipality, KZN

Municipality Employees Interview

NWU Business School

Ethics number: NWU-00606-22-A4.

Interview details:

(Can be completed after the interview)

Date of interview: _____

Time of interview: _____

Fieldworker's name: _____

City/Town: _____

QUESTIONS

1. Where did the interview take place

EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

2. Please tell me about your position in the City of uMhlatuze ?

Prompts:

Position and how long they have worked in the position

3. What is your involvement in the local economic development (LED) projects of the municipality?

Prompts:

Are there any LED programmes?

What is their role in the programmes?

Minimum qualifications for the programmes.

Do they publish progress reports on the programmes?

4. Please elaborate on the employment opportunities for rural community members within the municipality?

Prompts:

What opportunities are there?

Are they sustainable?

Do the community members receive support from the municipality?

5. What is the effect that the July 2021 unrests/looting had on the unemployment situation in the municipality?

Did it add to the unemployment situation?

Has the situation improved or worsened to date?

6. As a municipality official, what do you think the municipality should do to alleviate unemployment?

7. Is there anything else you want to say or add that we did not cover, regarding the unemployment situation in the municipality?

Interviewer: Thank the respondent for their participation